

**news**

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**From:** Thomas, Hedley <thomash@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news  
**Cc:** David Murray  
**Subject:** Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Nigel

Hi

My name is Hedley Thomas and I've been investigating the stabbing murder in February 2013 of Shandee Renee Blackburn, 23, in Mackay.

The investigation is being published by The Australian as a podcast - called Shandee's Story - and in related articles in The Australian newspaper and digital site under the byline of my colleague David Murray who is copied on this email.

Part of the investigation of this case relates to the forensic work and testing for DNA by scientists at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory.

I seek responses to the following questions by next Tuesday 23 November. By noon if possible - however, if you need more time to 5pm that's fine.

Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards  
Hedley Thomas

Q1: Can QHFSS DNA experts explain why a majority of samples from the vehicle of John PEROS were not analysed past the quantitation step (labelled in part V1 to V51)?

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Q13: Were the QPS or any members of the Queensland criminal justice system made aware that there may be DNA profiling issues affecting the reliability of results previously reported as 'no DNA detected' for QPS1300165446? If yes, please provide a copy of the communication/s, including the date of the advice and who it was directed too? If no, please explain why this did not occur.

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**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

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**Kat Acampora**

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**From:** Kat Acampora  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:34 PM  
**To:** news  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Thanks – remind me in the morning and we'll chat through it.

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:23 PM  
**To:** Kat Acampora <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

not urgent - For discussion/consideration

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <thomash@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** David Murray <murrayd@theaustralian.com.au>  
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National Chief Correspondent

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RTI Release

**news**

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**From:** news  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 November 2021 5:21 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Nigel,

One for next week.

Are you able to give FSS a call – I think Brett Bricknell <s.73@health.qld.gov.au> Will be your best bet

Can you run through the below questions and see if they are something we can even answer? We may not be able to go into specifics for certain cases...

We can chat through on Monday anyway.

Thanks,  
Sarah

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <thomash@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** David Murray <murrayd@theaustralian.com.au>  
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RTI Release



**Kat Acampora**

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**From:** FSS Corro  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 11:20 AM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Nigel

Please see email below.

Kind regards Sandy

**From:** FSS Corro  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 11:19 AM  
**To:** s.73 @health.qld  
**Cc:** Pathology Queensland s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Lara Keller <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; FSS Corro <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Justin Howes <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Nigel

Thank you for your email request below. All media requests are usually sent to us from our Comms Unit in the Prevention Division, we will therefore need to seek advice on what information can or can't be released and this may take some time. Therefore the response timeframe of 23/11/21 will need to be reviewed.

We will get back to you once we receive departmental advice.

Kind regards, Sandy

**Sandy Sinclair**

Executive Assistant

**Executive Directorate, Forensic and Scientific Services**

Prevention Division, Queensland Health

p [redacted]  
 a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains

e [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au w [www.health.qld.gov.au/fss](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/fss)

*Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.*

**From:** FSS Corro <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:08 AM  
**To:** Pathology Queensland <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Gemma

The request below was just emailed to Lara. Usually we receive these requests via the usual chain of command, i.e. from Prevention Division. Lara asked me to check whether you/PD are aware of this request?

Kind regards Sandy

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Good morning Lara,

Please find below the enquiry we discussed. Can you take a look and let me know which questions (if any) we can answer?

# Sch 3(7), s.73

Cheers,  
Nigel



**Nigel Jacobs**  
 Senior Media Officer  
 Strategic Communications  
 Branch | Queensland Health

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 A L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane

MENTAL  
WELLBEING

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**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** David Murray <murrayd@theaustralian.com.au>  
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**From:** [Justin Howes](#)  
**To:** [Lara Keller](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS - urgent media enquiry  
**Date:** Monday, 22 November 2021 3:11:41 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)

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Hi Lara

We (Rhys and myself) strongly recommend sending the request for information to QPS media to handle. We perform work on request from QPS and if they require more from FSS, then we can work with them at that stage.

It is very dangerous for us to be involved in a matter where we have no knowledge of what might be occurring behind the scenes. It doesn't matter if it is 'active' or not – best to take that advice from QPS at this early stage in addressing these questions.

Justin

**Justin Howes**

A/Managing Scientist

**Police Services Stream, Forensic & Scientific Services**

Prevention Division, Queensland Health

p 07 s.73 m s.73

a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains, QLD 4108

e s.73 @health.qld.gov.au w [www.health.qld.gov.au/healthsupport/businesses/forensic-and-scientific-services](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthsupport/businesses/forensic-and-scientific-services)

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**From:** Lara Keller s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>

**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 2:59 PM

**To:** Justin Howes s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS - urgent media enquiry

**Importance:** High

FYI from Brett

He has not sent it yet. Concerns? Changes?

Thanks

Lara

Sch 3(7), s.73

**From:** [Pathology Queensland](#)  
**To:** [PDCorro](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS  
**Date:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 2:14:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [RE Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS.msg](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)

Hi team

Brett Bricknell has responded to Nigel Jacobs (Media) with a holding statement as FSS are unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active – see attached.

**s.73, Sch 3(7)**

I think this can be closed.

Kind regards  
 Gemma

---

**From:** PDCorro <**s.73** @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 11:02 AM  
**To:** Pathology Queensland <**s.73** @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Thanks for keeping up in the loop

Thank you  
 Maddy

	<p><b>Correspondence Team</b>  <b>Prevention Division</b></p> <p>Queensland Health  <b>Madison Crofts – Senior Briefings Officer</b>  <b>Tracey Dean – Correspondence Officer</b>  <b>Reena Prasad – Correspondence Officer</b>  <b>Contactable via Skype Messenger and Teams</b></p>
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**E** **s.73** @health.qld.gov.au  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](#)  
**A** Level 2, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

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---

**From:** Pathology Queensland **s.73** @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:57 AM  
**To:** PDCorro **s.73** @health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi team

Just a heads up that FSS received the below request from Strategic Comms for response. I have asked FSS to respond to let them know that we will need to seek clearance through DDG Prevention Division before responding. I will send you our response for clearance once received.

Many thanks  
Gemma

---

**From:** FSS Corro <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:08 AM  
**To:** Pathology Queensland <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Gemma

The request below was just emailed to Lara. Usually we receive these requests via the usual chain of command, i.e. from Prevention Division. Lara asked me to check whether you/PD are aware of this request?

Kind regards Sandy

---

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Good morning Lara,

Please find below the enquiry we discussed. Can you take a look and let me know which questions (if any) we can answer?

**s.73, Sch 3(7)**

Cheers,  
Nigel



**Nigel Jacobs**  
Senior Media Officer  
Strategic Communications Branch |  
Queensland Health

**P** (07) s.73 | s.73  
**E** s.73@health.qld.gov.au  
**W** health.qld.gov.au  
**A** L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane

campaign image



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---

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <[thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** David Murray <[murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Subject:** Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

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Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards  
Hedley Thomas

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Q8: What do you say to the suggestion that issues arising from the introduction of



PowerPlex 21 and STRmix in December 2012 had a detrimental impact on the laboratory's profiling of samples for DNA in this case in the weeks and months afterwards?

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Q12: Is it unusual for the QHFSS DNA laboratory to report incorrect results to the QPS? If yes, please explain why so many incorrect results were reported to the QPS for QPS1300165446? If no, please provide how many samples were reported as 'Incorrect result' in 2013 and 2014.

Q13: Were the QPS or any members of the Queensland criminal justice system made aware that there may be DNA profiling issues affecting the reliability of results previously reported as 'no DNA detected' for QPS1300165446? If yes, please provide a copy of the communication/s, including the date of the advice and who it was directed too? If no, please explain why this did not occur.

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Q15: Can a QHFSS DNA expert explain how samples relating to QPS1300165446 that were correctly packaged, correctly stored, and well-preserved fail to produce a profile due to the purported presence of bacteria?

--

**HEDLEY THOMAS**

National Chief Correspondent

Cnr Mayne Road & Campbell Street Bowen Hills QLD 4006

T +61 7 3666 7463 M +61 417 797 419

E [thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au) W [theaustralian.com.au](http://theaustralian.com.au)

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RTI Release

## news

**From:** Ben Armstrong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 5:25 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Cc:** Brad Gardner; news  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Nigel, info only

Hi Nigel, I'm ok with the response – can I just confirm it has been FYI'd to the relevant DDG and the DG?

Ben Armstrong  
M: s.73

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 15:17  
**To:** Ben Armstrong <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Brad Gardner <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Ben,

We've received an in depth enquiry from the Australian about forensic testing that occurred on a murder case back in 2014. I have liaised with the Forensic services team and they have sought legal advice (see email trail). Sch 3(7)

Sch 3(7)

QPS were also consulted and advised they have no issue with us directing the journalist to submit an RTI (attached).

s.73, Sch 3(7)

Cheers,  
Nigel

**From:** Brett Bricknell <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 1:58 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Gemma Daynes <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>; Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>; Keith McNeil <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
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Hi Nigel

s.73, Sch 3(7)

Thanks  
Brett

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
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Good morning Lara,

Please find below the enquiry we discussed. Can you take a look and let me know which questions (if any) we can answer?

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Nigel



**Nigel Jacobs**  
Senior Media Officer  
Strategic Communications  
Branch | Queensland Health

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E s.73@health.qld.gov.au  
W health.qld.gov.au  
A L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane



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Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards  
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--

**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

Cnr Mayne Road & Campbell Street Bowen Hills QLD 4006  
T +61 7 3666 7463 M +61 417 797 419  
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## news

**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 9:07 AM  
**To:** Police Media  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Nigel

Good morning,

If possible, can I please get a response to this email this morning? The journalist is hoping for a response today.

At this stage we are planning on advising them they will need to submit an RTI for that level of detail, but we need to confirm there are no further complications at your end.

Cheers,  
 Nigel

**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 3:09 PM  
**To:** Police Media <PoliceMedia@police.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

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Below is an enquiry from Hedley Thomas at the Australian requesting information on forensic work and testing for DNA by scientists at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory following the murder of Shandee Blackburn in 2013.

Are QPS aware of any legal reasons that would prevent Queensland Health from commenting on the case? (i.e. is it still under investigation or subject to appeal?)

Cheers,  
 Nigel



**Queensland  
 Government**

**Nigel Jacobs**  
 Senior Media Officer  
 Strategic Communications  
 Branch | Queensland Health

**P** (07) [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]  
**E** [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au  
**W** health.qld.gov.au  
**A** L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane

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**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

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**news**

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**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 2:15 PM  
**To:** Brad Gardner  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Nigel

Hi Brad,

Are you comfortable with the response below provided by Forensic services?

Cheers,  
Nigel

**From:** Brett Bricknell <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 1:58 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Gemma Daynes <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>; Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>; Keith McNeil <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Nigel

Sch 3(7), s.73

Thanks  
Brett

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Lara Keller <s.73@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Kat Acampora**

---

**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 1:47 PM  
**To:** Brett Bricknell  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Brett,

FYI – QPS have replied.

They have no concerns about us responding to the journalist advising he will need to submit an RTI for the level of detail in their request (see below).

Cheers,  
 Nigel

**From:** Police Media <[REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 1:39 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

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---

Hi Nigel,

Sincere apologies for the delay. No issues from our end.

Kind regards,



**Penny Dahl**  
 Acting Senior Media and Public Affairs Advisor, Shift Supervisor  
 Media and Public Affairs  
 Communications, Culture and Engagement Division  
 Queensland Police Service

---

(07) [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 09:07  
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---

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 Branch | Queensland Health

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I seek responses to the following questions by next Tuesday 23 November. By noon if possible - however, if you need more time to 5pm that's fine.

Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards  
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**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

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T +61 7 3666 7463 M +61 417 797 419  
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RTI Release

**Kat Acampora**

**From:** Police Media <[REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 10:57 AM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

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Nigel apologies I haven't heard back, will chase.

**Penny Dahl**

Acting Senior Media and Public Affairs Advisor, Shift Supervisor  
 Media and Public Affairs  
 Communications, Culture and Engagement Division  
 Queensland Police Service

(07) [REDACTED] s.73  
 [REDACTED] s.73 @police.qld.gov.au

**From:** Nigel Jacobs <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 09:07  
**To:** Police Media <PoliceMedia@police.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of Queensland Police Service. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

If possible, can I please get a response to this email this morning? The journalist is hoping for a response today.

At this stage we are planning on advising them they will need to submit an RTI for that level of detail, but we need to confirm there are no further complications at your end.

Cheers,  
 Nigel

**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 3:09 PM  
**To:** Police Media <[REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Good afternoon team,

Below is an enquiry from Hedley Thomas at the Australian requesting information on forensic work and testing for DNA by scientists at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory following the murder of Shandee Blackburn in 2013.



Are QPS aware of any legal reasons that would prevent Queensland Health from commenting on the case? (i.e. is it still under investigation or subject to appeal?)

Cheers,  
Nigel



**Nigel Jacobs**

Senior Media Officer  
Strategic Communications  
Branch | Queensland Health

P (07) s.73 | s.73  
E s.73 @health.qld.gov.au  
W health.qld.gov.au  
A L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane



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**From:** Thomas, Hedley <[thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** David Murray <[murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Subject:** Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

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**Kat Acampora**

---

**From:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 9:07 AM  
**To:** Brett Bricknell  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Brett,

No word yet, but I've sent them another email chasing an answer.

I'll let you know as soon as I hear back.

Cheers,  
Nigel

**From:** Brett Bricknell <s.73 [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 8:15 AM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs <s.73 [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Good morning Nigel

How did you get on with your QPS colleague?

Having discussed this with legal and my DDG Keith McNeil s.73, Sch 3(7)

**s.73, Sch 3(7)**

But please still speak to your QPS colleague – it is still a bit of missing information to complete the picture  
Note if you haven't already – the podcast is Shandee's Story and six episodes have been released so far  
Thanks  
Brett

**From:** Brett Bricknell  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 November 2021 2:47 PM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs s.73 [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Nigel

Can you please call me back this afternoon, about the below matter. Mobile is best  
Thanks  
Brett

Brett Bricknell GM Pathology Queensland and Forensic and Scientific Services s.73 [REDACTED]

s.73, Sch 3(7)

## news

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 7:11 PM  
**To:** John Wakefield  
**Cc:** Kirsten MacGregor; Ben Armstrong; Dawn Schofield; news  
**Subject:** DG Daily Media Wrap - 24 November 2021  
**Attachments:** RE: s.73  
 Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS; s.73

s.73

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed  
**Categories:** info only

Good evening DG,

**Hot issues**

Please find below today's media wrap up, highlighting significant media enquiries or issues:

- s.73
- s.73
- The Australian: Enquired last week about murder of Shandee Renee Blackburn, who was killed in 2013 in Mackay. Journalist wanted specific forensic information about the case. After substantial follow up, minimal information was able to be given publicly. Journalist was given a one line response that summarised the role of forensic services and was otherwise told that we could not share specific information in cases that were still active. Response is attached.
- s.73

s.73

s.73

s.73

Kind regards

RTI Release

## news

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 12:53 PM  
**To:** Kat Acampora  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Kat, FYI -



### Media and Issues Team

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
 Health

**P** s.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** 33 Charlotte St, Brisbane

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <[thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 12:46 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)  
**Subject:** Re: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Kat

I have a very accurate record of exactly what was said on the phone to your colleague today.

Your claims about my behaviour are false and should be withdrawn.

Last Thursday shortly after 2pm I sent your office a list of questions and I asked for responses by noon yesterday, or 5pm if you needed more time.

This gave your office five days to achieve responses or to contact me about my questions and explain your position.

My questions concern the slaying of a young woman in Mackay in an alleged domestic violence murder. An unsolved murder.

Neither you nor your colleagues bothered to acknowledge the receipt of my questions.

When both deadlines lapsed I called this morning and I was told I'd receive a response some time today.

Under all the circumstances, it was a cavalier and very unprofessional way to treat a serious investigation into this murder of Shandee Blackburn.

Until I called this morning to check on the progress of your handling of my questions of six days earlier, neither you nor your office had bothered to inform me that you would not meet either of the deadlines.

I informed your colleague that it was unprofessional conduct and I would be making these concerns known to the Premier and the Health Minister.

The other key point is that you deemed it appropriate to wait six days to say, essentially, 'no comment' in your response to my questions.

This speaks volumes about your office and how seriously it takes public interest investigations into unsolved murders of women.

I hope we will be able to work more co-operatively in future. You might start by sharpening up response times and information flow from your office.

Regards  
Hedley Thomas

On Wed, 24 Nov 2021 at 12:12 pm, news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Hedley,

Queensland Health has looked into what we are able to get for you on your enquiry, and unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.

The age of the case, the complexity of the questions you asked, and the detailed information you are seeking would also require a significant amount of research and investigation before a detailed response could be provided. This would not be possible in the timeframe you have requested. It is recommended that you submit a Right To Information Request if detailed information is still required.

I understand you spoke to one of my team members on the phone this morning. We do not accept being spoken to that way and I urge you to conduct yourself professionally and courteously in future if you'd like assistance from Queensland Health. I do hope we can work better together in the future.

**Please attribute the following to a Queensland Health spokesperson:**

The role of Forensic and Scientific Services is to provide analysis to the Queensland Police Service and provide professional evidence in Court describing that analysis.

**ENDS**

Cheers,

Kat





## Media and Issues Team

Strategic Communications  
Branch | Queensland Health

P s.73  
E [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
W [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
A [L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane](#)

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**Cc:** David Murray <[murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)>  
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**news**

---

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 10:44 AM  
**To:** Kirsten MacGregor  
**Cc:** Kat Acampora  
**Subject:** FW: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Hi Kirsten,

Not sure if you had a copy of the Hedley Thomas enquiry so sending it through as an FYI.

Kat will call Hedley.

Cheers,  
 Nigel

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:27 AM  
**To:** Martin Philip <s.73@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Lucy Collier <s.73@ministerial.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Good Morning Marty and Lucy,

Health Media received an in-depth enquiry from Hedley Thomas at *The Australian* about forensic testing that occurred on the 2014 murder case of Shandee Blackburn.

We liaised with Forensic and Scientific Services <sup>s.73, Sch 3(7)</sup> Queensland Police was also notified and had no issues with our response.

Please find below the response we plan to issue to the journalist this morning.

**ENQUIRY**

Hi

My name is Hedley Thomas and I've been investigating the stabbing murder in February 2013 of Shandee Renee Blackburn, 23, in Mackay.

The investigation is being published by The Australian as a podcast - called Shandee's Story - and in related articles in The Australian newspaper and digital site under the byline of my colleague David Murray who is copied on this email.

Part of the investigation of this case relates to the forensic work and testing for DNA by scientists at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory.

I seek responses to the following questions by next Tuesday 23 November. By noon if possible - however, if you need more time to 5pm that's fine.

Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards  
Hedley Thomas

Q1: Can QHFSS DNA experts explain why a majority of samples from the vehicle of John PEROS were not analysed past the quantitation step (labelled in part V1 to V51)?

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Q14: Did the QHFSS DNA laboratory provide any other advice (apart from suggesting the possible 'presence of bacteria') to the QPS explaining why DNA profiles weren't being obtained when they were expected to for QPS1300165446? If yes, please provide that advice, including the date of the advice and to whom it was directed.

Q15: Can a QHFSS DNA expert explain how samples relating to QPS1300165446 that were correctly packaged, correctly stored, and well-preserved fail to produce a profile due to the purported presence of bacteria?

## **RESPONSE**

Hi Hedley,

*Unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.*

*The age of the case, the complexity of the questions you asked, and the detailed information you are seeking would also require a significant amount of research and investigation before a detailed response could be provided. This would not be possible in the timeframe you have requested.*

*It is recommended that you submit a Right To Information Request if detailed information is still required.*

**Please attribute the following to a Queensland Health spokesperson:**

*The role of Forensic and Scientific Services is to provide analysis to the Queensland Police Service and provide professional evidence in Court describing that analysis.*

**ENDS**

Cheers,  
Nigel



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
Health

P **s.73**  
E [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
W [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
A 33 Charlotte St, Brisbane

RTI Release

**news**

---

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:50 AM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** Sarah, Nigel, info only

Hey Nigel,

Just an FYI on this – Hedley called around 5 minutes ago and was incredibly agitated. He spent most of the phone call yelling and saying how “unprofessional” we are and how he plans to file multiple complaints about us.

He has stated that if we don’t get this information to him by 12pm today, he will be reflecting his poor opinion of us in the podcast.

Sarah will give him a call, just wanted to let you know of the revised deadline.

Thanks,  
Alani

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <thomash@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** David Murray <murrayd@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Subject:** Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi

My name is Hedley Thomas and I've been investigating the stabbing murder in February 2013 of Shandee Renee Blackburn, 23, in Mackay.

The investigation is being published by The Australian as a podcast - called Shandee's Story - and in related articles in The Australian newspaper and digital site under the byline of my colleague David Murray who is copied on this email.

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Regards  
Hedley Thomas



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Q15: Can a QHFSS DNA expert explain how samples relating to QPS1300165446 that were correctly packaged, correctly stored, and well-preserved fail to produce a profile due to the purported presence of bacteria?

--

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*For the informed Australian*

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land in all states and territories on which we work and report. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging, and honour their history, cultures, and traditions of storytelling. Proudly supporting [1\\_degree](#), A News Corp Australia initiative.

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RTI Release

## news

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:25 AM  
**To:** Nigel Jacobs  
**Subject:** FW: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

**From:** Keith McNeil <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:24 AM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Looks good!

Ta  
k

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:22 AM  
**To:** Keith McNeil <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Hi Keith,

Thanks for taking a look at my response – just to confirm, are you happy with the response as it stands? Or would you like me to make it less specific?

Cheers,  
Nigel



Queensland  
Government

**Nigel Jacobs**  
 Senior Media Officer  
 Strategic Communications  
 Branch | Queensland Health

**P** (07) [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
**E** [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au  
**W** health.qld.gov.au  
**A** L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane

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Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

**From:** Keith McNeil <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 7:44 AM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>; John Wakefield <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** DDGandCMO\_PreventionDivision <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten MacGregor <[REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>; Ben Armstrong

<s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; DG correspondence <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** RE: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Thanks

My strong sense was to be bland and non-committal given the time lag and the complexity of the questions asked

Bw

k

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 November 2021 5:47 PM

**To:** John Wakefield <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Keith McNeil <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>

**Cc:** DDGandCMO\_PreventionDivision <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten MacGregor <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; Ben Armstrong <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; news <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>; DG correspondence <s.73 @health.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Good evening John and Keith,

Health Media received an in-depth enquiry from Hedley Thomas at *The Australian* about forensic testing that occurred on the 2014 murder case of Shandee Blackburn.

We liaised with Forensic and Scientific Services <sup>s.73, Sch 3(7)</sup> Queensland Police was also notified and had no issues with our response.

Please find below the response we plan to issue to the journalist tomorrow morning. Please let me know if you have any concerns.

#### ENQUIRY

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Regards

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## **PROPOSED RESPONSE**

Hi Hedley,

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**ENDS**



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
Health

**P** s.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [33 Charlotte St, Brisbane](#)

RTI Release

**Sarah ORourke**

---

**From:** Sarah ORourke  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 10:39 AM  
**To:** Kat Acampora  
**Subject:** FW: FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

Hey Kat,

As discussed, here's the final response that was FYI'd to the MO earlier today.

Hedley's number is 0417 797 419.

Thanks,  
 Sarah

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 9:27 AM  
**To:** Martin Philip <s.73@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Lucy Collier <s.73@ministerial.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FYI - Media enquiry | Shandee Blackburn homicide case | The Australian

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Hedley Thomas

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## **RESPONSE**

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**ENDS**

Cheers,  
Nigel



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
Health

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- W [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)
- A [33 Charlotte St, Brisbane](http://33.Charlotte.St.Brisbane)

RTI Release

**Kat Acampora**

---

**From:** Kat Acampora  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 1:06 PM  
**To:** Ben Armstrong; Kirsten MacGregor  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

FYI

**From:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 12:53 PM  
**To:** Kat Acampora <Kat.Acampora@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Kat, FYI -



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
 Health

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**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [33 Charlotte St, Brisbane](#)

**From:** Thomas, Hedley <[thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 12:46 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)  
**Subject:** Re: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi Kat

I have a very accurate record of exactly what was said on the phone to your colleague today.

Your claims about my behaviour are false and should be withdrawn.

Last Thursday shortly after 2pm I sent your office a list of questions and I asked for responses by noon yesterday, or 5pm if you needed more time.

This gave your office five days to achieve responses or to contact me about my questions and explain your position.

My questions concern the slaying of a young woman in Mackay in an alleged domestic violence murder. An unsolved murder.

Neither you nor your colleagues bothered to acknowledge the receipt of my questions.

When both deadlines lapsed I called this morning and I was told I'd receive a response some time today.

Under all the circumstances, it was a cavalier and very unprofessional way to treat a serious investigation into this murder of Shandee Blackburn.

Until I called this morning to check on the progress of your handling of my questions of six days earlier, neither you nor your office had bothered to inform me that you would not meet either of the deadlines.

I informed your colleague that it was unprofessional conduct and I would be making these concerns known to the Premier and the Health Minister.

The other key point is that you deemed it appropriate to wait six days to say, essentially, 'no comment' in your response to my questions.

This speaks volumes about your office and how seriously it takes public interest investigations into unsolved murders of women.

I hope we will be able to work more co-operatively in future. You might start by sharpening up response times and information flow from your office.

Regards  
Hedley Thomas

On Wed, 24 Nov 2021 at 12:12 pm, news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Hedley,

Queensland Health has looked into what we are able to get for you on your enquiry, and unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.

The age of the case, the complexity of the questions you asked, and the detailed information you are seeking would also require a significant amount of research and investigation before a detailed response could be provided. This would not be possible in the timeframe you have requested. It is recommended that you submit a Right To Information Request if detailed information is still required.

I understand you spoke to one of my team members on the phone this morning. We do not accept being spoken to that way and I urge you to conduct yourself professionally and courteously in future if you'd like assistance from Queensland Health. I do hope we can work better together in the future.

**Please attribute the following to a Queensland Health spokesperson:**

The role of Forensic and Scientific Services is to provide analysis to the Queensland Police Service and provide professional evidence in Court describing that analysis.

**ENDS**

Cheers,

Kat



## Media and Issues Team

Strategic Communications  
Branch | Queensland Health

P (07) s.73  
E [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
W [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
A L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane

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**From:** Thomas, Hedley <[thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** David Murray <[murrayd@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:murrayd@theaustralian.com.au)>  
**Subject:** Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

Hi

My name is Hedley Thomas and I've been investigating the stabbing murder in February 2013 of Shandee Renee Blackburn, 23, in Mackay.

The investigation is being published by The Australian as a podcast - called Shandee's Story - and in related articles in The Australian newspaper and digital site under the byline of my colleague David Murray who is copied on this email.

Part of the investigation of this case relates to the forensic work and testing for DNA by scientists at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory.

I seek responses to the following questions by next Tuesday 23 November. By noon if possible - however, if you need more time to 5pm that's fine.

Please refer these questions to the forensic laboratory. The reporting scientist involved at the time in Shandee Blackburn's murder investigation was Rhys Parry.

My mobile number is 0417 797 419. I look forward to your written responses.

Regards

Hedley Thomas

Q1: Can QHFSS DNA experts explain why a majority of samples from the vehicle of John PEROS were not analysed past the quantitation step (labelled in part V1 to V51)?

Q2: What criteria is used by the QHFSS DNA laboratory to assess whether analysis of samples from a major crime should be either stopped after quantitation or fully tested?

Q3: Under what circumstances is it possible for a crime scene sample to have no DNA detected at the quantitation stage, to then be fully tested resulting in the generation of a reportable DNA profile?

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Q5: If yes in one or more instances, why weren't all vehicle samples - and all crime scene samples - which were initially reported as 'no DNA detected' further analysed?

Q6: Would a Combur positive swab taken from a pool of blood at a crime scene by a Scientific Officer only hours after a homicide be expected to produce a DNA profile?

Q7: Can QHFSS DNA experts explain why no DNA was detected from the sample a QPS Scientific Officer stated had come from a pool of blood, and which he labelled as 'S14: Swab of blood from gutter on Boddington Street' (barcode 572572940)?

Q8: What do you say to the suggestion that issues arising from the introduction of PowerPlex 21 and STRmix in December 2012 had a detrimental impact on the laboratory's profiling of samples for DNA in this case in the weeks and months afterwards?

Q9: Did any of the scientists in the QHFSS DNA laboratory express concerns to management over unusual or poor results being obtained in the case of Shandee Blackburn by PowerPlex 21 after it was implemented?

Q10: Was the QHFSS DNA laboratory experiencing any difficulties interpreting mixtures from crime scene samples during the period samples from QPS1300165446 were being analysed?

Q11: Can QHFSS DNA experts explain why the following DNA mixtures from QPS1300165446 were reported as 'Incorrect result' to the QPS? 572573268 (on 24/09/2014); 572984091 (on 03/04.2013); 572984407 (on 03/04/2013); and 572984416 (on 28/03/2013).

Q12: Is it unusual for the QHFSS DNA laboratory to report incorrect results to the QPS? If yes, please explain why so many incorrect results were reported to the QPS for QPS1300165446? If no, please provide how many samples were reported as 'Incorrect result' in 2013 and 2014.

Q13: Were the QPS or any members of the Queensland criminal justice system made aware that there may be DNA profiling issues affecting the reliability of results previously reported as 'no DNA detected' for QPS1300165446? If yes, please provide a copy of the communication/s, including the date of the advice and who it was directed too? If no, please explain why this did not occur.

Q14: Did the QHFSS DNA laboratory provide any other advice (apart from suggesting the possible 'presence of bacteria') to the QPS explaining why DNA profiles weren't being obtained when they were expected to for QPS1300165446? If yes, please provide that advice, including the date of the advice and to whom it was directed.

Q15: Can a QHFSS DNA expert explain how samples relating to QPS1300165446 that were correctly packaged, correctly stored, and well-preserved fail to produce a profile due to the purported presence of bacteria?

--

**HEDLEY THOMAS**

National Chief Correspondent

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 E [thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au) W [theaustralian.com.au](http://theaustralian.com.au)

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**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

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E [thomash@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:thomash@theaustralian.com.au) W [theaustralian.com.au](http://theaustralian.com.au)

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**news**

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2021 12:12 PM  
**To:** thomash@theaustralian.com.au  
**Cc:** news; murrayd@theaustralian.com.au  
**Subject:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Kat

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**ENDS**

Cheers,  
 Kat



**Queensland  
 Government**

**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communications  
 Branch | Queensland Health

**P** 5.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/locations/brisbane)

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**From:** Thomas, Hedley <thomash@theaustralian.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 November 2021 2:18 PM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** David Murray <murrayd@theaustralian.com.au>  
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**HEDLEY THOMAS**  
National Chief Correspondent

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November 2021  
25 Thursday Week 47 329-36

Media day re Blackburn  
podcast, The Ad.  
DOH RTI 2959

RTI Release

7:30  Whole team meeting Friday / invite Lara Keller

8:00		
8:30		
9:00		
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RTI Release

9:30



s.73, Sch 3(7)



10:00

← asphalt review

10:30

11:00

s.47(3)(b)

11:30

12:00

- DDG

Sch 3(10)(1)

12:30

- introduce RSP

1:00

- Cathie & Lara

1:30

- Registrar

2:00

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Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere. - Albert Einstein

July : 21

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August : 21

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September : 21

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October : 21

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November : 21

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December : 21

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30	31					

**news**

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:32 AM  
**To:** s.73  
**Cc:** s.73 news  
**Subject:** RE: A CURRENT AFFAIR - RESPONSE REQUEST - URGENT

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Sarah

Hi s.73,

Thanks for your time on the phone just now, as discussed here is what we provided to the Australian.

///

Queensland Health has looked into what we are able to get for you on your enquiry, and unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.

The age of the case, the complexity of the questions you asked, and the detailed information you are seeking would also require a significant amount of research and investigation before a detailed response could be provided. This would not be possible in the timeframe you have requested. It is recommended that you submit a Right To Information Request if detailed information is still required.

**Please attribute the following to a Queensland Health spokesperson:**

The role of Forensic and Scientific Services is to provide analysis to the Queensland Police Service and provide professional evidence in Court describing that analysis.

**ENDS**

Thanks,  
Sarah



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
Health

**P** s.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** 33 Charlotte St, Brisbane

**From:** s.73@nine.com.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 9:02 AM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s.73@nine.com.au  
**Subject:** A CURRENT AFFAIR - RESPONSE REQUEST - URGENT

Hi,

My name is s.73 and I am a producer with A Current Affair.

We are running a story tonight on the back of this article in The Australian today, questioning the DNA testing that took place at the Queensland Health Forensic and Scientific Services lab, following the murder of Shandee Blackburn in 2013.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/shut-lab-down-dna-fiasco-in-shandee-blackburn-murder-case/news-story/3c4a064595eda573a0a9bd6b0c763f1c>

The article has brought into question anomalies in the findings from evidence that was handed over to the lab from police, from John Peros's vehicle as well as the Mackay crime scene.

We are hoping to include in the story a response from Queensland Health, in the form of a statement, to the following questions:

- Will you investigate concerns over the lab's processes in regards to the Shandee Blackburn case?
- Is Queensland Health confident the work that's carried out at the lab is accurate?
- In December 2012, just weeks before Shandee's murder, the lab implemented a new computer program for DNA profiling called STRmix, and a new DNA profiling kit called PowerPlex 21 – are there any concerns that there are problems with this technology? Is it still being used by the lab?

Our deadline is 3pm today.

Please confirm this request has been received.

Thank you,

s.73

Senior Producer



T: +61 7 s.73

A: Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mount Coot-tha QLD, 4066

E: s.73@nine.com.au

**news**

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 11:06 AM  
**To:** RTI-Privacy  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** Journalist advised to submit an RTI  
**Attachments:** RE: Questions - Shandee Blackburn case - forensics - QHFSS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Good morning team,

This is just a quick FYI that we received an in-depth enquiry from Hedley Thomas at the Australian about testing that occurred at the Queensland Health forensic laboratory back in 2014.

Given the amount of detail requested and the relatively short timeframe, as well as the age of the case, and following advice from the forensics lab we recommended that the journalist submit an RTI request if they still wanted the information (see attached).

Cheers,  
 Nigel



**Nigel Jacobs**  
 Senior Media Officer  
 Strategic Communications  
 Branch | Queensland Health

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**E** [s.73@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:s.73@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [L3, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane](https://www.google.com/maps/place/L3,+33+Charlotte+Street,+Brisbane)

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**news**

---

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 11:27 AM  
**To:** Kat Acampora  
**Subject:** FW: Ch7 query - alleged lab failures in Shandee Blackburn murder investigation

FYI – for discussion please as slightly different line of questioning

**From:** s.73 @Seven.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:37 AM  
**To:** news <news@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Ch7 query - alleged lab failures in Shandee Blackburn murder investigation

Good morning,

Forensic scientist Kirsty Wright is demanding a public enquiry and suspension of Queensland Health's forensic lab. Dr Wright told the Shandee's Story podcast she uncovered failings in DNA testing, namely that no trace DNA was detected in the prime suspect's car, which he had driven for years. She also said sample S14, which was taken from a pool of blood, returned a "no DNA detected" result.

Dr Wright says this was highly unusual and should have raised red flags. She says the samples should be re-tested and re-analysed, as the lab processes might have missed DNA evidence linking the suspect to the killing.

What is Queensland Health's response to Dr Wright's comments?

[Shut lab down: DNA fiasco in Shandee Blackburn murder case \(theaustralian.com.au\)](http://theaustralian.com.au)

Cheers,

s.73

Journalist, News

T +61 7 s.73

M +61 s.73



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 560 Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mount Coot-Tha QLD 4066 Australia  
 GPO Box 604, Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia

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**news**

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 3:25 PM  
**To:** s.73  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** RE: Ch7 query - alleged lab failures in Shandee Blackburn murder investigation

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Hi s.73,

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Health

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Dr Wright says this was highly unusual and should have raised red flags. She says the samples should be re-tested and re-analysed, as the lab processes might have missed DNA evidence linking the suspect to the killing.

What is Queensland Health's response to Dr Wright's comments?

[Shut lab down: DNA fiasco in Shandee Blackburn murder case \(theaustralian.com.au\)](http://theaustralian.com.au)

Cheers,

s.73

Journalist, News

T +61 7 s.73

## news

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 3:27 PM  
**To:** s.73  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** RE: ABC inquiry: Shandee Blackburn DNA failures

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Brad

Hi s.73

Unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.

**Please attribute the following to a Queensland Health spokesperson:**

The role of Forensic and Scientific Services is to provide analysis to the Queensland Police Service and provide professional evidence in Court describing that analysis.

Kind regards



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
 Health

**P** s.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** 33 Charlotte St, Brisbane

**From:** s.73 @abc.net.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 12:58 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** ABC inquiry: Shandee Blackburn DNA failures

Hello,

Please can I request a response to allegations made by a senior forensic expert today about the DNA samples used on the Shandee Blackburn case.

Was the John tonge Centre responsible for this case?

Dr Kirsty Wright says she has identified numerous errors and failures in the way the DNA samples were dealt with. She said the samples should all be re-tested at an independent facility.

Dr Wright also says the testing lab has systemic failures that casts doubt on it's ability to be relied upon for testing in other cases.

What is Qld Health's response to these claims?

Can the samples be submitted for re-testing?

My deadline is as soon as possible.

Cheers,

s.73



s.73

Senior Journalist, Qld

P s.73 E s.73 @abc.net.au  
M s.73



RTI Release

M +s.73



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RTI Release

## news

**From:** news  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 3:37 PM  
**To:** s.73  
**Cc:** news  
**Subject:** RE: Shandee Blackburn

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Brad

Hi s.73

Unfortunately the Forensic and Scientific Services is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases without first undertaking a full privacy assessment and ensuring that the case is not currently active.

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Kind regards



**Media and Issues Team**

Strategic Communication Branch | Queensland  
Health

**P** s.73  
**E** [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [33 Charlotte St, Brisbane](#)

**From:** s.73 @abc.net.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 2:33 PM  
**To:** news <[news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Shandee Blackburn

Hi Queensland Health media team,

s.73 here from the ABC in Mackay.

Dr Kirsty Wright, a forensic scientist, has been reviewing evidence analysed by Queensland Health forensic services as part of a murder investigation into Mackay woman Shandee Blackburn.

She spoke with a News Corp podcast about her concerns around this, and today addressed more media about it, including the ABC.

She is basically saying there were errors all throughout the DNA profiling process done by Queensland Health services, and this may have prevented an offender being identified.

This has led to the family of Shandee Blackburn calling for a public inquiry into the handling of the case by the forensic lab.

Basically we're just after a response from Queensland Health in relation to this, and the department's reactions to those comments. If you could get back to me as soon as possible that would be greatly appreciated.

Cheers,

Tobi



s.73

News Reporter, ABC Tropical North

P (07) s.73

M s.73

E s.73 @abc.net.au



We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

RTI Release

**Kylie Rika**

---

**From:** Matthew Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:30 AM  
**To:** Sharon Johnstone; Kylie Rika  
**Subject:** RE: News today

Hi,

The interview with Kirsty is also on Youtube as a video segment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGHTUxVXT6U>

Thanks,



**Matthew Hunt**

Scientist – Forensic Reporting and Intelligence Team

**Forensic DNA Analysis, Police Services Stream**

Forensic & Scientific Services, Prevention Division, Queensland Health

p (07) s.73  
a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains, Qld, 4108  
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---

**From:** Sharon Johnstone @health.qld.gov.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:09 AM  
**To:** Abigail Ryan @health.qld.gov.au; Adam Kaity @health.qld.gov.au; Adrian Pippia @health.qld.gov.au; Alanna Darmanin @health.qld.gov.au; Alicia Quartermain @health.qld.gov.au; Allan McNevin @health.qld.gov.au; Allison Lloyd @health.qld.gov.au; Amy Cheng @health.qld.gov.au; Angela Adamson @health.qld.gov.au; Angelina Keller @health.qld.gov.au; Anne Finch @health.qld.gov.au; Belinda Andersen @health.qld.gov.au; Biljana Micic @health.qld.gov.au; Cassandra James @health.qld.gov.au; Cecilia Flanagan @health.qld.gov.au; Chantal Angus @health.qld.gov.au; Cindy Chang @health.qld.gov.au; Claire Gallagher @health.qld.gov.au; Dasuni Tennakoon @health.qld.gov.au; Deborah Nicoletti @health.qld.gov.au; Emma Caunt @health.qld.gov.au; FSS.FDNA.Admin @health.qld.gov.au; Generosa Lundie @health.qld.gov.au; Helen Williams @health.qld.gov.au; Ingrid Moeller @health.qld.gov.au; Jacqui Wilson @health.qld.gov.au; Janine Seymour-Murray @health.qld.gov.au; Josie Entwistle @health.qld.gov.au; Julie Brooks @health.qld.gov.au; Justin Howes @health.qld.gov.au; Kerry-Anne Lancaster @health.qld.gov.au; Kevin Avdic @health.qld.gov.au; Kim Estreich @health.qld.gov.au; Kirsten Scott @health.qld.gov.au; Kristina Morton @health.qld.gov.au; Kylie Rika @health.qld.gov.au; Lai-Wan Le @health.qld.gov.au; Lisa Farrelly @health.qld.gov.au; Louise Benincasa @health.qld.gov.au; Luke Ryan @health.qld.gov.au; Madison GULLIVER @health.qld.gov.au; Maria Aguilera @health.qld.gov.au; Matthew Hunt



< [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Megan Mathieson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Melissa Cipollone [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michael Goodrich [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michael Hart [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michelle Margetts [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Naomi French [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Paula Brisotto [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Penelope Taylor [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Phillip McIndoe [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Pierre Acedo [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Rhys Parry [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Ryu Eba [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sandra McKean [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharelle Nydam [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharon Byrne [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharon Johnstone [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Suzanne Sanderson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Tara Prowse [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Tegan Dwyer [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Thomas Nurthen [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Valerie Caldwell [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Vicki Pendlebury-Jones [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Wendy Harmer [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Yvonne Connolly [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** News today

Morning everyone,

I am writing on Justin's behalf to inform you that there has been an article printed in today's paper The Australian (as attached) that slanders our laboratory and the quality of our work. We want you to know that we are working with Lara Keller and Brett Bricknell (GM of FSS & PQ) and the QPS on a response to the article. Please know that we have the full support of QPS, Brett and Lara and that there is no doubt that our work is of a high quality and is truly valued. Unfortunately papers write stories to sell more papers, or to promote their podcasts and not necessarily to be seekers of the facts.

If you have any questions please chat with your line manager.

Regards,  
Sharon

## Sharon Johnstone

Senior Scientist – Forensic Reporting and Intelligence Team

### Forensic DNA Analysis, Police Services Stream

Health Support Queensland, Queensland Health

p 07 s.73 [redacted]

a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains, QLD 4108

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**Justin Howes**

---

**From:** Justin Howes <Justin.Howes@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:50 AM  
**To:** s.73 @anzpaa.org.au  
**Cc:** Lara Keller  
**Subject:** Forensic DNA lab in the news  
**Attachments:** Australian\_25Nov2021\_p\_1\_7.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Hi all

I am sure many of you would have read the attached article already. I am sending some info on to you in the expectation that some of your staff will have read the article already too, and may have questions.

We received some questions this week from the author of a Podcast ('Shandee's Story' through The Australian) that related to some work conducted in 2013/2014 on the murder of Shandee Blackburn. s.73, Sch 3(7)

We expected something more, and today this article arrived.

Sch 3(10)(1)

s.47(3)(b)

We are not concerned with the material presented in the media. We are concerned with the details in this matter, nor with any processes in the laboratory at the time. There is a podcast to sell afterall, and this type of media may go some way to help that.

Please let me know if you want any more information to help with any questions that you may get from your own staff.

Regards  
Justin



**Justin Howes**  
A/Managing Scientist

**Police Services Stream, Forensic & Scientific Services**  
Prevention Division, Queensland Health

p 07 s.73 m s.73  
a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains, QLD 4108  
e s.73 @health.qld.gov.au w [www.health.qld.gov.au/healthsupport/businesses/forensic-and-scientific-services](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthsupport/businesses/forensic-and-scientific-services)

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**Rhys Parry**

**From:** Kylie Rika  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:52 AM  
**To:** Matthew Hunt; Thomas Nurthen; Allan McNevin; Deborah Nicoletti; Claire Gallagher; Ingrid Moeller; Penelope Taylor; Angelina Keller; Tegan Dwyer  
**Cc:** Adrian Pippia; Rhys Parry  
**Subject:** FW: News today  
**Attachments:** Australian\_25Nov2021\_p\_1\_7.pdf

Hi all

We can talk more about this in our R2 meeting today as I've asked Rhys (the reporter of this case) to come along to answer questions. [s.47\(3\)\(b\)](#)

Thanks  
 Kylie

---

**From:** Sharon Johnstone [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 10:09 AM  
**To:** Abigail Ryan [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Adam Kaity [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Adrian Pippia [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Alanna Darmanin [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Alicia Quartermain [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Allison Lloyd [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Allan McNevin [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Amy Cheng [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Angela Adamson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Anne Finch [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Belinda Andersen [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Biljana Micic [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Cassandra James [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Cecilia Flanagan [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Chantal Angus <[redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Cindy Chang [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Claire Gallagher [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Dasuni Tennakoon [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Deborah Nicoletti [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Emma Caunt [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; FSS.FDNA.Admin [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Generosa Lundie [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Helen Williams [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Ingrid Moeller [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Jacqui Wilson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Janine Seymour-Murray [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Josie Entwistle [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Julie Brooks [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Justin Howes [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kerry-Anne Lancaster <[redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kevin Avdic [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kim Estreich [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten Scott [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kristina Morton [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Kylie Rika [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Lai-Wan Le [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Lisa Farrelly [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Louise Benincasa [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Luke Ryan [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Madison GULLIVER [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Maria Aguilera [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Matthew Hunt [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Megan Mathieson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Melissa Cipollone [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michael Goodrich [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michael Hart [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Michelle Margetts [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Naomi French [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Paula Brisotto [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Penelope Taylor [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Phillip McIndoe [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Pierre Acedo [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Rhys Parry [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Ryu Eba [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sandra McKean [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharelle Nydam [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharon Byrne [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Sharon Johnstone [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Suzanne Sanderson [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Tara Prowse [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Tegan Dwyer [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Thomas Nurthen [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Valerie Caldwell [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Vicki Pendlebury-Jones [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Wendy Harmer <[redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>; Yvonne [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>

Connolly [REDACTED]@health.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** News today

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If you have any questions please chat with your line manager.

Regards,  
Sharon

[REDACTED]

## Sharon Johnstone

Senior Scientist – Forensic Reporting and Intelligence Team

### Forensic DNA Analysis, Police Services Stream

Health Support Queensland, Queensland Health

p 07 s.73

a 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains, QLD 4108

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**Alison Slade**

---

**From:** Justin Howes  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 November 2021 3:01 PM  
**To:** FSS Corro  
**Cc:** Alison Slade  
**Subject:** Points for briefing

Hi  
Here are some points that might be of relevance:

- An article appeared in the The Australian newspaper (25 November, 2021) entitled 'Shut lab down: DNA fiasco in murder case' by journalist David Murray. The article was issued in relation to a podcast called 'Shandee's Story', by Hedley Thomas available through subscription to The Australian.
- The article featured claims made by Dr Kirsty Wright about processes and results issued by Forensic DNA Analysis (Forensic and Scientific Services) in relation to the death of Shandee Blackburn in February 2013.
- Statements of Witness were prepared for the matter (R vs PEROS) and issued on 29 September 2016, 15 December 2016 and 23 February 2017 detailing work performed by the laboratory. These statements were peer reviewed in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures. Expert evidence was provided by a competent DNA Analyst from Forensic DNA Analysis on 27 March 2017 in the Supreme Court in Mackay.
- The Forensic DNA Analysis laboratory participates in a Proficiency Testing Program and is externally audited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) in accordance with International Standards. Accreditation against ISO/IEC 17025 has consistently been achieved since 1999. Quality Assurance procedures including, but not limited to, audit and calibration schedules, use of Quality control samples (positive and negative controls), peer reviewing of results, and a competency-based training program are key components to the Quality System within Forensic DNA Analysis.

Sch 3(10)(1)

I will send some responses to the 15 questions shortly.

Regards  
Justin