AN inquest into the death of a patient who fell over in the Royal Darwin Hospital emergency ward found overcrowding played a part in his death.

Kerry Murphy, 73, fell on his way to the emergency department bathroom in July 2014, where he was being treated because every other bed in the hospital was full.

Mr Murphy, a retired dairy farmer, lumberjack and soldier was admitted after a dizzy spell at home and was being treated for pneumonia.

The inquest heard Mr Murphy was “double-bunked” in an overcrowded emergency department, where nurses were dealing with more patients than usual.

Coroner Greg Cavanagh said without the overcrowding Mr Murphy would most likely have been placed on a ward.

“Overcrowding of the hospital during that time was obviously a contributor to the fall,” he said.

“But for overcrowding he would have likely been on the medical ward and assessed for his falls risk and the appropriate mitigation strategies put in place.”

The inquest heard RDH had since implemented a falls risk policy and increased capacity in its emergency department by 13 beds a day.

Mr Cavanagh recommended RDH continue to review its falls policy and improve communication between medical staff at shift changes.

“I therefore recommend that Royal Darwin Hospital ensure through continued education and audit that the Falls Risk Policy is appropriately used in the emergency department,” he said.

“I also recommend that handovers (both nursing and medical) and transfers to Darwin Private Hospital continue to be audited to ensure those systems are functioning in the intended manner.”

Mr Cavanagh said RDH had indicated changes had been put in place to address the issues outlined in the inquest.

“In this case the Royal Darwin Hospital has presented significant evidence that they have made or were making changes to their policies, procedures and systems to ensure that the failures identified were less likely to reoccur in the future,” he said.

“These changes however were not well embedded into the hospital systems by the date of hearing.”

The most notable example of that was that the falls risk audits were finding increasing (rather than decreasing) numbers of patients at risk without falls mitigation strategies in place.”

---

Arnhem Land co-op invests $16 million back into its own communities

AN Arnhem Land co-operative of remote community stores has grown into Australia’s largest Aboriginal Corporation employing more than 1000 indigenous people and investing $16 million back into the communities where it operates.

Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA) chairman Djinjuyu Gundarra said the board was very proud of the milestone in its mission to improve the health, quality of life and economic development of the members.

“As a fully indigenous owned and financially independent corporation operating remote retail stores since 1972, ALPA’s total group turnover now exceeds $80 million per annum,” he said.

“ALPA’s success is built on a desire for opportunity and cultural heritage, dignity and respect for the land,” Mr Gundarra said.

Mr Gundarra said ALPA’s success was also built on its commitment to be a leading provider of accessible services to remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA’s total group turnover now exceeds $80 million per annum.

Mr Gundarra said ALPA’s success was built on a desire for opportunity and cultural heritage, dignity and respect for the land.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.

ALPA operates 14 company stores across the NT and Far North Queensland as well as 13 other retail businesses on behalf of their owners in remote Aboriginal communities.