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Shadow Minister for Health
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INFANT MORTALITY INQUIRY

The failure of Royal Darwin Hospital to report the death of Georgia Rae Tilmouth on the 23rd of August 2006 to the Coroner illustrates the culture of cover-up that has engulfed the RDH in recent years.

“There was no excuse for RDH not reporting the tragic death of the infant to the Coroner immediately,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Minister for Health.

“The Coroner found that: deficiencies in the care provided contributed to the death of this little girl.

“The RDH had a legal, moral and ethical responsibility to ensure the circumstances of Georgia Rae’s death were properly investigated.

“It was only the tenacity of the Georgia Rae’s mother, Juliana De Castro Matos, in taking the matter to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commission that ensured the death of her child was eventually investigated.

“This raises the serious question as to how many other infant deaths at Royal Darwin Hospital have not been reported to the Coroner when they should have been.

“An independent inquiry into all infant deaths at Royal Darwin Hospital during the past decade is the only way to ascertain whether there are systemic problems with the care of infants at RDH.

“The new Health Minister has a chance to break with the culture of cover-up that characterised the health system under his predecessor, Chris Burns.

“If the Health Minister refuses to initiate an inquiry into infant deaths at RDH during the last decade we will know nothing has changed.”

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