

Nick Boesten
Coroner's Registrar
Coroner Support Services
By email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

1 September 2026

Epworth HealthCare
Corporate Offices

Dear Mr Boesten,

21-31 Goodwood Street
Richmond VIC 3121

**Investigation into the death of Helen Mahlis
COR 2024 002242**

Postal Address
89 Bridge Road
Richmond VIC 3121

We refer to your correspondence 16 June 2026 enclosing Coroner Peterson's Findings without inquest into the death of Helen Mahlis.

Phone (03) 9426 6666
epworth.org.au

We note that as part of those Findings Coroner Peterson made two recommendations directed to Epworth HealthCare. We respond to those recommendations as follows:

ABN 97 420 694 950

Recommendation 1: I recommend that Epworth Healthcare consider increasing the stock of 30 mm Rigiflex balloons available to practitioners at the Epworth Richmond operating theatre(s)

Response: The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented

- On 17 August 2026, three sizes of Rigiflex balloons (30mm, 35mm and 40mm) were added to the Epworth HealthCare imprest system. The imprest system is a fixed-inventory replenishment system.
- The imprest system has a set par level of stock for designated consumable items, and the system replenishes back up to that level before the available stock becomes exhausted.
- The relevant par level is based on usage and lead times. For the Rigiflex balloons (of all 3 sizes) the par level has been set at three units for each size.
- The Epworth HealthCare Supply Team conducts routine stock audits of items in the imprest system by scanning item barcodes. In theatre areas, scanning is performed daily.
- This process reduces the need for nursing staff to manually monitor inventory levels and place orders (as was previously done), while supporting consistent stock availability.
- This will support the ongoing availability of Rigiflex balloons (of all 3 sizes) for use in Epworth operating theatres.
- The imprest system also enables monitoring of usage patterns across the different balloon sizes, allowing minimum stock levels to be reviewed and adjusted in line with demand over time.

Recommendation 2: I recommend that Epworth Healthcare review its policy on ordering special equipment ahead of a procedure to ensure there is clarity for practitioners as to what specific equipment must be requested and how it must be requested, with the view that future shortages of required equipment can be avoided.

Response: the Coroner's recommendation is under consideration

- Under the Epworth Theatre Booking Guide, Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) across all Epworth sites are required to submit a Theatre Booking List to the Patient Services Centre by email or fax at least seven days before the scheduled procedure date, with final confirmation of the list provided no later than three days before the operating session.

- VMOs are required to identify on their theatre list any specialised equipment, implants or prostheses needed for the planned procedures.
- The Theatre Bookings Team reviews and cross-checks all booking lists to confirm that requested equipment is available ahead of time. The team also meets daily at 1.00 pm to verify equipment availability for procedures scheduled the following day.
- The Theatre Booking Rules are provided to all VMOs upon credentialling at Epworth and are reissued annually to reinforce these booking requirements.
- Epworth HealthCare remains confident in the effectiveness of this process and expects VMOs to comply with the requirement to identify any specialist equipment or prostheses required for their procedures on their Theatre Lists.
- As part of the annual distribution of the Theatre Booking Rules, Epworth HealthCare will reinforce the requirement for VMOs to clearly specify any specialist equipment or prostheses needed for their operating lists in their Theatre Lists and that these must be emailed or faxed through to the Patient Services Centre in accordance with the prescribed timeframes.

Yours sincerely



Allison Evans
Executive General Manager – Richmond
Epworth HealthCare