

Obese man told to lose 100kg before treatment

Jennifer Eliot

eliotj@tcp.newsltd.com.au

DOCTORS have told a morbidly obese patient who claims he was discriminated against to lose weight for his own sake.

Tony Melksham was taken to Cairns Base Hospital last week suffering abdominal pains and was upset when he was told to "drop a 100kg" if he wanted treatment.

But Queensland Health said the patient had at all times been treated properly for his various chronic conditions – despite being abusive and aggressive to staff.

Mr Melksham weighs 205kg and admits to a continuing battle with his weight over many years but said the health system had bullied and victimised him.

"In early 2008, after a gall-bladder operation in Toowoomba, the hospital put me on a lap-band list but I keep telling them that I don't want the

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invasive surgery," he said. "I keep refusing the surgery and now I've been told that I'm a public liability and they will not help me unless I drop 100kg.

"The hospital system used to support me to lose weight but now there is no support.

"They just don't want to put in the hard work."

Mr Melksham is also outraged the police are now called when he presents at the Chillagoe Hospital and hotly contests a claim that he has been aggressive.

He said he was discharged from Cairns Base Hospital without adequate pain relief and instead of investigating his abdominal pains, the hospi-

tal blamed his condition on obesity. Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District acting executive director of medical services Dr Neil Beaton said the patient and partner had been extremely abusive and aggressive to the single nurse at Chillagoe Hospital on numerous occasions.

"The pattern of abuse and aggression has led to a requirement that Chillagoe's single police officer be present at the hospital whenever the patient is being seen by the nurse," he said.

Dr Beaton said the patient was too large to fit in the CT scanning machine at Cairns Base Hospital but numerous other diagnostic tests – including ultrasounds – were carried out.

"The surgical team could find no specific reason or cause for his pain, or of any acute issues, and he was advised of this," he said.

"At no time during his presentations at Cairns Base Hospital was the patient pressured to have lap-band surgery – but he was advised to lose weight in order to improve his condition."