Hospital chief hits red tape

Government policy forces hospitals to buy shoddy goods and faulty equipment, according to the chief executive officer of Gosford District Hospital.

He said hospitals were required to buy from Government Stores and the Government Printer to qualify for subsidy but quality control in Government Stores appeared to be at fault.

Exceedingly long delays occurred in obtaining stationery from the Government Printer. The hospital frequently had to get temporary supplies from a local printer at extra expense.

Automation

Mr Boyce sought flexibility for hospitals when buying stores or equipment.

He said Health Commission officers making policy decisions often had little understanding of a hospital’s operation and made little effort to discuss proposals before they became commission policy.

A report 21 years ago had recommended a free exchange of staff between the Public Service and public hospitals but the Health Commission had done nothing.

Mr Boyce said it was difficult to understand why Gosford District Hospital, with an annual budget of $19 million, could not qualify for an automated accounting system.

He said the Health Commission had failed to come to grips with modern accounting methods.

A manual accounting system prohibited significant advances in accounting and costing.

Mr Boyce said if the hospital could buy its own ambulances and buses it could move its patients for much less than the annual $500,000 charged by the ambulance service.

The inquiry will take evidence in other States.