

QUAKERS HILL

# Forensic material scrutinised

## INVESTIGATORS EXAMINE 2700 PAGES OF EVIDENCE

Ben McClellan

POLICE are still linking 11 deaths to the Quakers Hill nursing home fire.

The male nurse accused of lighting the fire did not appear in Central Local Court last Thursday.

Roger Dean, 35, has been charged with 10 counts of murder. Mr Dean lives near the Hambledon Rd home where he allegedly lit two fires just before 5am on November 18.

The court heard investigators had examined 2700 pages of evidence but needed additional time to examine digital, expert and forensic evidence.

The Director of Public Prosecution's Michael Day said detectives were working through a "literal mountain of material".

Investigators have now linked 11 deaths to the fire, three women who died in the blaze and eight more residents who died on November 18 and in the following 11 days in hospitals across Sydney.



A "mountain of evidence" is being examined following the Quakers Hill nursing home fire.

The unofficial toll from the fire is 21.

Mr Dean has not been charged with the death of Neeltje Valkay, 90, who died at Liverpool Hospital four days after the fire on November 22 but was named by investigators as an alleged victim. Mrs Valkay's daughter Elly said her

mother's windpipe was completely burnt and her death certificate stated she died of smoke inhalation and suffered a skull fracture.

Thirty-two residents were hospitalised after the blaze, including 15 in intensive care and five with severe burns. The case was adjourned until April 19.

## Victims' families might sue

LAW firm Maurice Blackburn said families of Quakers Hill nursing home fire victims may have grounds to sue if it could show the home was negligent.

Lawyer Majed Issa said the case would rest on

whether the Domain Principal Group had poor fire evacuation procedures, other emergency procedures and if there were any breaches of safety procedures including staff training and regulations.

### GRIM NUMBERS

The 11 residents who died as a result of the fire are:

- Dorothy Wu, 85, who died at the scene on November 18
- Alma Smith, 73, who died at the scene on November 18
- Dorothy Sterling, 80, who died at the scene on November 18
- Lola Bennett, 86, who died at Royal North Shore Hospital on November 18
- Ella Wood, 97, who died at Concord Repatriation Hospital on November 19
- Urbana Alipio, 79, who died at Liverpool Hospital on November 20
- Caesar Galea, 82, who died at Hawkesbury Hospital on November 21
- Doris Becke, 96, who died at Blacktown Hospital on November 21
- Neeltje Valkay, 90, who died at Liverpool Hospital on November 22
- Reginald Green, 87, who died at Westmead Hospital on November 25
- Verna Webeck, 83, who died at Royal North Shore Hospital on November 29

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## Superannuation payouts if you can't work

It pays to check your superannuation policy if you can't work because you could get a disability lump sum. "Many people don't know they are covered for disability benefits under their super" said lawyer, Josh Mennen.

**Have you stopped work?**  
Jim (not his real name) was a labourer. He suffered a number of disabilities over several years which eventually meant he had to stop work.

He was paid workplace compensation but his previous lawyers didn't tell him that he was also covered for a disability lump sum under his work super.

Jim came to Maurice Blackburn who told him he could make a claim. They got medical reports which said he couldn't do heavy work and he didn't have the skills for office work.

**Josh Mennen Associate Maurice Blackburn**

Maurice Blackburn lodged a claim and Jim was paid a lump sum of \$160,000.

**Are you on a Centrelink Disability Pension?**  
Michelle (not her real name) was on a Centrelink Disability Support Pension because of a mental illness.

Her guardian contacted Maurice Blackburn who found out that Michelle had super from an old job as a hotel worker and she was covered for a disability lump sum of \$50,000. Although Michelle hadn't worked for many years, Maurice Blackburn made a claim for Michelle and won.

**Millions of dollars in super claims**  
Maurice Blackburn has helped thousands of people who can't work to get hundreds of millions of dollars in super disability benefits.

"Superannuation payments are different to workplace compensation payments and workers can claim both," Mr Mennen said.

"We have the largest legal department dealing with super claims in Australia. We are experts in tracking down your super and will take on your claim on 'no win, no charge' (conditions apply)."

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