

Investigation of Dr Claude Calandra widens

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AN investigation into a doctor accused of multiple cases of medical negligence has widened, with numerous women coming forward.

There are allegations a hospital knew of complaints against Dr Claude Calandra, an obstetrician and gynaecologist, as far back as 1998.

A woman claimed that in 1998 she met hospital officials who asked her, "What do you want to go away?"

"They were surprised that I just wanted to make them aware of what was going on," Vanessa, who did not want her surname published, said.

"All I asked for was an apology. Though it was written on the doctor's letterhead and signed, it sounded like it had been written for him."

Lawyer Anne Shortall, of **Arnold Thomas & Becker** (<http://www.arnoldthomasbecker.com.au/>), said she was reviewing 21 medical negligence claims against Dr Calandra, who operates in the western suburbs.

A further 11 cases have been settled out of court.

Ms Shortall said the **Medical Practitioners Board** (<http://medicalboardvic.org.au/>) was encouraging anyone with complaints to come forward.

A medical specialist who worked at the **Werribee Mercy Hospital** (<http://www.mercyhealth.net>) with Dr Calandra said he had complained to hospital management about complications with Dr Calandra's patients in the early 2000s.

He is one of many people who have lodged a complaint with the Medical Practitioners Board since the *Sunday Herald Sun* revealed complaints against Dr Calandra involving five dead babies and numerous gynaecological complications.

Vanessa lodged a formal complaint with the board last week. She mistakenly believed the hospital passed on her original concerns to the board in 1998.

She said Dr Calandra failed to give her enough anaesthetic during a surgical procedure despite her "begging and crying out in pain".

"He scolded me like a child and told me to be quiet," she said.

The medical board by law cannot reveal or comment on any investigation unless allegations are proven.

A hospital spokesman did not comment on Vanessa's allegations.

Instead, he issued a written statement that all staff "must meet or exceed the standards outlined by their professional bodies".

Dr Calandra said he had not been notified of any complaints.

"Is this a witch-hunt? Once I have been notified, I will be happy to discuss it," he said.