

## Carer Michelle Stitt to face trial charged over 'disturbing' neglect of elderly woman who ended up in intensive care

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Michelle Leanne Stitt is accused of grievous bodily harm and failing to supply the necessities for life of a 77-year-old woman. (ABC News: Baz Ruddick)

A Queensland carer accused of neglecting and mistreating an elderly woman so badly she was in intensive care for weeks has been committed to stand trial.

Paramedics were called to a property at Tarampa in the Somerset region in May 2019, where 77-year-old Margaret Hoffman had gone into cardiac arrest.

When Ms Hoffman was admitted to Ipswich Hospital, her carer, Michelle Leanne Stitt, 57, was [charged with grievous bodily harm and failing to provide the necessities of life](#).

Her hospitalisation prompted police to search the woman's property, where officers allegedly uncovered "extremely unhygienic" conditions that they said had caused Ms Hoffman's health to deteriorate.

Dr Judith Ochola, who worked in intensive care when Ms Hoffman was presented to Ipswich Hospital, told Thursday's committal hearing she noticed large bruises on the woman's abdomen.

She told the court the wounds were 8 to 10 centimetres in width and looked to be days old.

She said the placement of the bruises around her abdomen indicated they might have been caused by "band-like" pressure for a prolonged period of time.

Ms Hoffman was put on life support after she suffered multiple organ failure as a result of hypothermia.

### Key points:

- Michelle Leanne Stitt is charged with grievous bodily harm and failing to provide the necessities of life
- An intensive care doctor told the court the woman had large bruises on her abdomen that looked to be days old
- The court heard of "hoarder type" living conditions that were "extremely unhygienic"

Dr Ochola told the court there was no evidence to suggest Ms Hoffman suffered major blood loss, but she presented with "chilblains" — an inflammation of small blood vessels on her feet that can occur from exposure to the cold.

She said typically chilblains appeared when someone was exposed to temperatures of 10 degrees Celsius or less for between 12 and 24 hours.

Senior Sergeant Travis John Erich attended the Tarampa property and described "hoarder type" conditions, with chickens living both inside and outside.

Senior Sergeant Erich told the court a significant amount of dried blood was found on the floor downstairs.

Ms Stitt did not enter a plea and was granted bail.

The matter will return to the Ipswich Magistrates Court next year on a date yet to be determined.