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## Law change after tragedy

Bankstown Canterbury Torch, Sydney



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## Bub gassing prompts call for licensing

FOUR years after the tragic gas mix-up up at Bankstown Hospital in 2016 left one baby dead and another with serious brain damage, the State Opposition is calling for changes to ensure only licensed people can carry out high-risk medical gas work.

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## Laws must change over baby gas mixup

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Labor MLC Mark Buttigieg introduced legislation into State Parliament and has urged the State Government to support the passage of his Bill and says any opposition to the legislation to protect members of the public "is inexcusable".

"The time to act is right now and without delay," he said.

A NSW Health report into the incident, found both babies were given nitrous oxide, or 'laughing gas', instead of oxygen after gas pipes were incorrectly installed in 2015.

SafeWork NSW launched criminal proceedings against Bankstown Hospital which were later dropped in favour of an enforceable undertaking overhauling the way it manages medical gas installation, and last month a court also cleared gas company BOC.

However Christopher Turner, the subcontractor who installed the gas lines, was found guilty and fined \$100,000.

Under existing requirements in NSW, anyone doing water plumbing work needs a licence but there is no requirement for individuals to be licensed to work with medical gas.

Mr Buttigieg said the devastating death of baby boy John Ghanem and the life-altering and serious brain damage sustained by Amelia Khan, were completely preventable.

"I have been extremely fortunate to have spent time with the beautiful Kahn family," he said.

"It broke my heart to see Amelia speechless and cognitively impaired due to a human error, which was totally and absolutely avoidable.

"Nothing can ever bring back John or change what happened to Amelia, but we can act to prevent such tragedies from happening here again."