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Death by hammer

MURDER Bashed grandmother put off life support system

By TIMOCI VULA

A FORMER Fiji resident is dead and a man is to face the courts in Brisbane with a murder charge after he allegedly bashed her with a hammer.

Katarina Alexander, 62 died at the Royal Brisbane Hospital on Tuesday night from severe injuries she sustained from the alleged incident at her Zillmere home on Monday this week.

The woman's younger brother, Walter Alexander, told *The Fiji Times* that his sister was on life support system that was turned off on Tuesday.

"I was in Natovi (Talevu) heading to Levuka when I was told of the news so I had to make plans to come back (to Australia)," Mr Alexander said.

"I was devastated," he told this newspaper from his Bray Park home in Brisbane yesterday.

"Right now, we're awaiting the coroner's report and outcome of the police investigation before we can finalise funeral arrangements.

"It may take a week and a half to get the coroner's report."

In the meantime, Mr Alexander, 60, said they would inform relatives of his sister's death while at the same time draw up plans for the funeral.

"We are getting a lot of support from friends and relatives and the Rotuman community here, both spiritual and in monetary terms so it's good," he said.

Meanwhile, the *Courier Mail* reported that 69-year-old Lawrence Alfred Gaskell appeared in the Brisbane Magistrates Court on Tuesday charged with attempted murder.

On Wednesday, media reports revealed that charges against Mr Gaskell was upgraded to murder following Ms Alexander's death.

Mr Gaskell is now scheduled to reappear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court on November 14.

Originally from Motusa, Rotuma in Fiji, Ms Alexander moved to Australia in the early 70s.

She is survived by her four children and a grandchild.



Katrina Alexander

Picture: ROTUMA WEBSITE



Fiji Bati players Apisai Nabou, left, and Meli Kunadrau train at Suva's Albert Park yesterday in preparation for the tour to Papua New Guinea on October 26. Story: PAGE 55.

Picture: ELIKI NUKUTABU