

6 July 2018

Coroner White  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner White

**Re: Gerard Francis Helliard - COR 2012 004 865**

We refer to Your Honour's Finding into the death of Mr Helliard, dated 18 April 2018.

Following paragraph 352, Your Honour makes four recommendations (A-D). You have asked Peninsula Health to address recommendation D, in that:

*Peninsula Health creates a new audit team to be responsible for risk assessment concerning the existence of ligature points, within ward 2b Frankston Hospital, which team is to be answerable directly to the Chief Executive Officer Peninsula Health and is to be chaired by an independent person who is possessed of appropriate training and experience in risk assessment in a hospital setting.*

Peninsula Health has reviewed its ligature point audit practices in view of Your Honour's recommendation. Peninsula Health has also considered the guidelines recommended by the Chief Psychiatrist in respect of ligature point auditing. In response, we confirm that future ligature point audits will be conducted, using a standardised audit tool. The audit will be conducted by auditors experienced in the recognition of ligature points but who are working outside of the clinical mental health area being audited. One of the independent assessors will be an Occupational Health and Safety Consultant. These audits will be conducted on a bi-annual basis. The findings of these audits will be reported by Mental Health's internal governance processes to the Chief Executive (and Board) via Peninsula Health's Quality, Safety & Clinical Governance Committee.

I trust this information satisfies your request for a response to the recommendation under section 72(3) and 72(4) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic).

In addition to responding to the above recommendation, Peninsula Health makes the following comment in respect of Your Honour's Finding.

Peninsula Health is committed to taking every opportunity to learn and to deliver safer and more effective care. However, Peninsula Health is concerned that some of Your Honour's comments, in respect of ECT, may result in some members of our community, for whom this treatment is effective, refusing this important treatment. According to the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrist's 2014 position statement, ECT is a highly effective treatment with a strong evidence base for the treatment of severe depressive disorders. Evidence in medical literature demonstrates its effectiveness and its safety. Peninsula Health is committed to the highest standards of care around

the use of ECT, including obtaining second opinions where appropriate. In addition, Peninsula Health endeavours at all times to take the views of patients and their carers into account when making treatment decisions, in accordance with the *Mental Health Act 2014* (Vic).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Newton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Associate Professor Richard Newton

Clinical Director Mental Health

Peninsula Health