VICTORIA POLICE

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CORONER'S COURT OF VICTORIA

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Our Ref: FF-099058
Your Ref: COR 2013 000122

Judge Sarah Hinchey
Coroner's Court Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK Vic 3006

Dear Judge Hinchey

Victoria Police response to recommendations arising from the Inquest into the death of Leanne Margaret Patterson

This document provides the Victoria Police response to the State Coroner's recommendation directed at the Chief Commissioner of Police (recommendation 1), arising from the Inquest into the death of Leanne Margaret Patterson at Indented Heads between 5-8 January 2013.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Pursuant to section 72(2) of the Coroners Act 2008, I make the following recommendation(s) connected with the death: I recommend that Victoria Police members should be advised that where a person contacts a police station out of hours to express concern for the safety or welfare of another, and that call is diverted to a second, open station, Victoria Police should:

a. *assess the call in the ordinary manner, including by obtaining information from the reporting person about the nature, reason and background for the report or request;*
b. *determine whether police attendance is warranted, including for the purpose of conducting a welfare check; and*
c. *if it as assessed that police attendance is warranted, ensure that a job is created and allocated accordingly, without requiring the caller to phone around or phone back to coordinate a response.*

(1) Police Station Contact Out of Hours

a. The Coroner's recommendation that Victoria Police *'should assess the call in the ordinary manner, including by obtaining information from the reporting person about the nature, reason and background for the report or request'* is supported and aligns with operational practice.

b. The Coroner's recommendation that Victoria Police *'should determine whether police attendance is warranted, including for the purpose of conducting a welfare check'* is supported and aligns with operational practice.

c. The Coroner's recommendation that Victoria Police *'should, if it as assessed that police attendance is warranted, ensure that a job is created and allocated accordingly, without requiring the caller to phone around or phone back to coordinate a response'* is supported and aligns with operational practice.

Victoria Police supports the Coroner's recommendations and has conducted a review of current practice including the assessment and determination of the need for a welfare check to be undertaken at any time. Current Practice is underpinned by training and, since 2011, all police recruits participate in the Dedicated Training Workplace program as part of their field placement. This includes Watch House training. Prior to this program, new recruits were mentored by an experienced police member at the Watch House. Therefore practical field training is provided to support new recruits in the Watch House role.

Incidentally, Professional Standards Command is developing a Customer Service Charter with the aim of improving customer service to the community. Developing standards for customer service should support police member's capacity to maintain a proactive approach to thorough information gathering, including circumstances where this information gathering may disclose the need for a welfare check to be undertaken.

Yours sincerely

Graham Ashton AM
Chief Commissioner

29/2/16