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Coroners Registrar  
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65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank VIC 3006

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your letter of 23 February 2017 (court reference COR [REDACTED]) regarding Coroner Parasa Spanos's finding without an inquest into the death of 'PAR', which included a recommendation to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) under the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic).

#### Coroner's recommendation

*"That the National Health and Medical Research Council considers how it might improve the way it promulgates clinical practice guidelines and draws the attention of clinicians to them."*

#### NHMRC's response: the Coroner's recommendation is unable to be implemented

In her comments Coroner Spanos attributed the development of the *Clinical Practice Guideline on Depression in Adolescents and Young People (2011)* to NHMRC; however these guidelines were developed by *beyondblue* and submitted to NHMRC for its approval under section 14A of the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992*. NHMRC's guideline development framework ensures that guidelines submitted for approval are developed to the highest methodological development standards which include public consultation, stakeholder engagement and a plan for disseminating and implementing the guideline; however responsibility for doing this remains solely with the developer.

In addition I would like to advise that NHMRC approval of a clinical practice guideline is limited to a period of no longer than five years, after which time approval lapses as the guideline is then considered out of date. In the case of the *beyondblue* guidelines, NHMRC approval has now lapsed.

Notwithstanding these comments, NHMRC agrees with the implication of the Coroner's recommendation that clinical practice guidelines could be more effectively disseminated amongst, and implemented by, clinicians. NHMRC is currently reviewing the methodological advice it offers guideline developers to promote evidence-based, best practice methods for guideline dissemination and implementation. The implementation advice will be released as an on-line module late in 2017, with the dissemination module to follow.

For further information please contact Geraint Duggan, Director - Clinical Guidelines on (03) 8866 0403 or [geraintduggan@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:geraintduggan@nhmrc.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Professor Anne Kelso AO  
Chief Executive Officer

21 March 2017