



## Department of Primary Industries

closed

C. J. O.



Our Ref: SI006786

Ms Emma Choy  
Coroner's Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
Level 1, 436 Lonsdale Street  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3000**



1 Spring Street  
GPO Box 4440 Melbourne  
Victoria 3001 Australia  
Telephone: (03) 9658 4000  
Facsimile: (03) 9658 4400  
ABN 42 579 412 233  
DX 210404

Our Ref:

Dear Ms Choy,

### **INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF KARA LENNAH COMPTON (COURT REFERENCE 0441/06)**

I refer to your letter dated 21 February 2011 and to the findings made by Coroner John Olle on 12 November 2010 in relation to the death of Kara Compton in February 2006.

#### **Recommendations**

Coroner Olle made the following recommendations:

- a) *That the DPI, DHS and DEAT work together to ensure that parents and guardians of infants are provided with a copy of the DPI booklet "We are Family".*

*Potential points of distribution would likely include hospitals with obstetric departments, maternal and child health services, primary schools, preschool/kindergarten/crèche and local councils (at the time of dog registration renewal notices), pet shops;*

- b) *Victorian primary schools consider the implementation of the "Responsible Pet Ownership Education Program" developed by the Bureau of Animal Welfare.*

#### **DPI's response**

##### **Recommendation 1**

*'Provision of the booklet 'We are Family'*

The Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) 'Responsible Pet Ownership Education Program' (the Program) aims to educate preschool children, primary school children, (and their parents) and the general community regarding safety around dogs and to prevent dog attacks.

The Program is provided by DPI free of charge to all users and suppliers (kindergartens, schools and hospitals).

The "We are Family" project and its booklet was developed in 2008 to specifically educate expectant and new parents on the safety and benefits of child/pet relationships and to inform them of the risks, skills and strategies at home to ensure a positive and safe child/pet relationship. It is offered free to all antenatal hospitals in Victoria and, in 2010, was extended to allow maternal and child health centres to participate. Using the listings of the Department of Health and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the project and its booklet is currently provided in 64 of the 70 hospital antenatal programs and 450 of the 700 maternal child health centres in Victoria.

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Since Coroner Olle made his recommendations in relation to the death of Kara Compton, the project and its booklet has been promoted at the National Association of Childbirth Educators to ensure its provision to all maternal health nurses and childbirth educators.

DPI continues to evaluate the project. One area of extension that DPI has identified is young parents at secondary schools. A pilot program has commenced and, following evaluation, DPI may look at extending the project to other secondary schools. Preliminary work is also occurring on the development of materials for urban indigenous communities.

## **Recommendation 2**

*Victorian primary schools consider implementing the Program*

As part of the broader Program, in 2000 DPI developed a targeted 'schools program' which has grown at a rapid rate each year. In 2005, it was extended to kindergartens. In the 2009-2010 financial year, DPI made over 800 school visits and over 1,300 kindergarten visits.

This equates to audiences of over 165,000 children and 45,000 kindergarten parents. It is expected in 2011 that there will be the creation of an extra 200 visits available and the possibility of further growth in 2012.

## **Statement of action**

DPI remains committed to the Responsible Pet Ownership Education Program and to its extension where appropriate.

## **Contact details**

Dr Stephen Tate, Director of the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Department of Primary Industries, 475 Mickleham Road Attwood, VIC 3049 on telephone (03) 9217 4200 or Fax (03) 9217 4416, is the key contact person regarding DPI's Responsible Pet Ownership Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your findings.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Bolt**  
Secretary

7/6/2011