



Department of Justice

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Coroner K Parkinson
Coroner's Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Parkinson

Court Reference: 2012 004225

With reference to correspondence received 11 December 2013 and the three recommendations directed to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). CAV's response to the recommendations is detailed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Minister for Consumer Affairs through the "Department of Consumer Affairs" immediately issue a warning to parents that in making purchasing decisions or using adults sized beds and bed ends for toddlers and young children that entrapment may be an issue.

When CAV became aware of this Coronial investigation in early December a 'news alert' was developed and posted on the CAV website (6 December 2013). The news alert warned parents of the possible dangers of placing toddlers in adult sized beds and referenced the SIDS and Kids publication 'Cot to Bed safety'. A copy of the alert and publication is attached.

Recommendations 2 and 3

That at point of sale all single beds ought to be required to carry a warning as to suitability for use by toddlers and young children with particular reference to entrapment hazard and that the responsible authorities at Federal and State level take immediate steps to institute such a requirement.

That the same product safety design standards applicable to bunk beds and cots be required to be applied in the manufacture and design of any bed designed or marketed or sold for use by toddlers or young children.

Under the Australian Consumer Law responsibility for the making of mandatory safety standards and mandatory information standards resides with the Commonwealth. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is the Commonwealth agency responsible for product safety standards. In December 2013, CAV provided a copy of the Coroner's report to the ACCC.

At a national teleconference of product safety regulators in February 2014, the Coroner's report was addressed with consideration to be given to a mandatory safety standard for adult sized beds, to remove entrapment hazards. The ACCC advised that they had received a copy of the Victorian Coroner's report and the matter is currently under consideration. The ACCC has informed CAV that it will report directly to you with the results of its deliberations.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. Should you have any questions regarding the above response please do not hesitate to contact Christine Rowley, Project Officer Coordination and Strategy, phone 03 9304 2331 or email christine.rowley@justice.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Noone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dr Claire Noone
Executive Director
Consumer Affairs

Attachments.

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Buying safe beds for young children – News alert

Buying safe beds for young children - News alert

6 December 2013

The Victorian Coroner has made recommendations following an inquest into the death of a two-year-old child who tried to crawl backwards out of her single bed.

Consumer Affairs Victoria will work with other Australian Consumer Law regulators across Australia to implement the Coroner's recommendations.

These may include warning notices and applying the standards for bunk beds to any bed designed, marketed or sold for use by toddlers or young children.

Small children that sleep in adult-sized beds can get trapped in gaps and may suffer serious injuries or die.

Consumer Affairs Victoria advises parents to carefully check for gaps in bed-ends that could trap them.

Parents should read the [mandatory product safety standards for bunk beds and cots on the Product Safety Australia website](#), and apply them to any bed to be used by a small child, including adult single beds. There are currently no safety standards for adult single beds.

The bunk bed standards require that there must be no:

- gaps large enough to trap a child's head or limbs
- protrusions over 8mm which may snag a child's clothing, risking strangulation.

Parents can also read the [Cot to bed safety guidelines \(PDF, 467KB\)](#) on the Sids and Kids website, which advise them to:

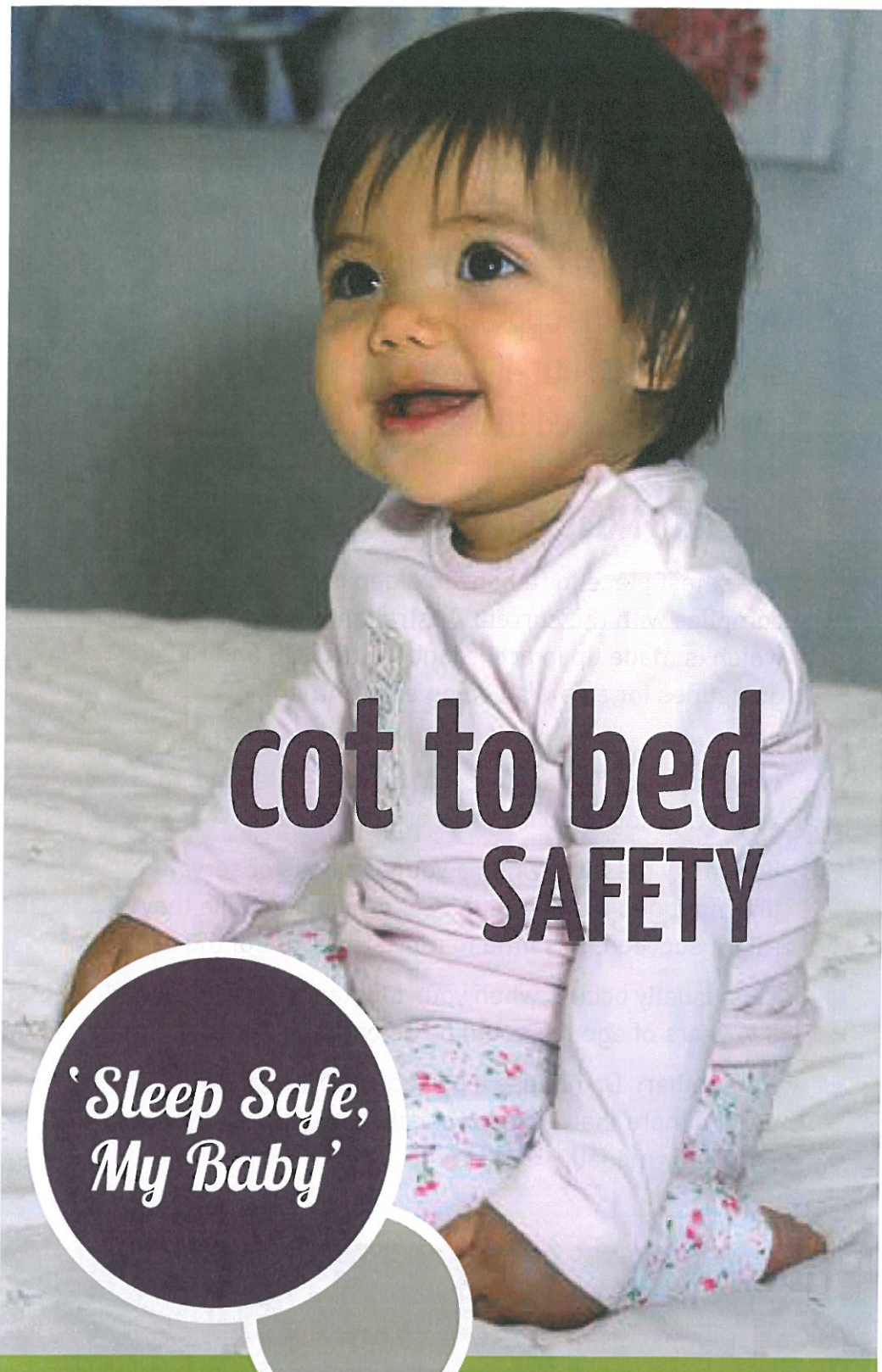
- make sure there are no spaces between bars or panels bigger than 95mm
- minimise the distance a child could fall out of the bed
- use soft flooring materials or a mattress around the bed to minimise injury from a fall
- keep the area into which a child could fall free of furniture, toys and other hard objects.

Category: [News alerts](#)

Tags: [Businesses](#), [Fair trading](#), [Product safety](#), [Resources and education](#), [Shopping](#), [Small business](#)

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A SIDS AND KIDS PUBLICATION



cot to bed SAFETY

*'Sleep Safe,
My Baby'*

sids and kids[®]

'COT TO BED' SAFETY

In Australia an increasing number of babies and toddlers are sustaining injuries from falling out of cots and beds. This is due to either not recognising the appropriate time to move a baby or young child out of a cot, or a baby or young child being placed too early in an adult bed.

WHEN TO MOVE YOUR CHILD OUT OF A COT?

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in a cot that complies with the current Australian Standard and which is made up in accordance with SIDS and Kids' guidelines for a safe sleeping environment.

Keep the cot free of toys, pillows, bumpers, activity centres and anything else that could be 'stacked' to assist a young child to climb out of the cot.

For safety reasons, when a young child is observed attempting to climb out of a cot and looking like they might succeed, it is time to move them out of the cot.

This usually occurs when your toddler is between 2 and 3 ½ years of age but could be as early as 18 months.

Remember: Do not use a portable cot if your child weighs more than 15kg (or check instructions of your particular model).



Where to sleep a child who has moved from a cot

Floor mattress

Providing the floor is clean and clear, the mattress from the cot could be lifted out and made up on the floor. A mattress from a full height single bed could be used in the same way.

Ensure the mattress is positioned away from the walls as young children can become trapped between the mattress and wall. A child's mattress needs to be relatively firm to prevent sleep accidents.

Keep the area around the mattress clear of soft toys, bean bags, plastic bags or similar objects that a young child can roll onto. Soft objects could mould around a young child's face, resulting in suffocation.

Toddler bed

Reasons to consider toddler beds:

- They are a safe intermediate step due to their low level, which reduces the injury risks from falling out of a bed
- They are cost effective, as the cot mattress and bedding can be transferred to the toddler bed to provide a bed for toddler once the cot is no longer suitable for them.

Adult height bed

Babies and young children are at a high risk of injury from falls or becoming trapped between the bed and the wall.

If you have decided to use an adult height bed:

- Make sure there are no spaces between bars or panels bigger than 95mm. Bigger gaps can cause a young child to become trapped.
- Keep the fall distance to a minimum and use soft flooring materials or a mattress around the bed to minimise injury from a fall.
- Keep the area into which a child could fall free of furniture, toys and other hard objects.

Bed rails are sometimes attached to adult height beds to prevent the risk of a child falling. Children can become trapped if the rails are not fitted properly. Before placing your child to bed check that the portable bed rails fit tightly against the side of the mattress and there are no gaps between the mattress and the bed rail. This will help prevent a child's body or head slipping through and becoming trapped.

Pillows and toys should not be placed against the bed rail. There have been cases of asphyxia in environments cluttered with soft toys. A young child can suffocate if their face becomes pressed against them.

Making your home safe before the move

A child no longer sleeping in a cot has greater access to all living areas. Before your child graduates to a bed, check your child's room and throughout the house for possible hazards.

Ensure the environment is safe:

- Pay special attention to potential hazards that may result in falls, drowning, strangulation, entrapment or poisoning.
- Keep dangling cords, strings and mobiles out of reach as they could get caught around a child's neck.
- Keep heaters, electrical appliances and access to power points well away to avoid the risk of overheating, burns and electrocution.
- Ensure all furniture and TVs are attached with wall brackets¹, so they cannot be readily tipped over.
- Ensure stairs and windows are not accessible.

1. Most furniture is now supplied with wall brackets



Sleep young children safely:

- Safe bed
- Safe mattress
- Safe bedding
- Safe sleeping environment night and day

ALERT:

- Bean bags, sofas, large cushions and air mattresses are not safe places for young children to sleep.
- Bunk beds are not recommended for children under nine years of age.
- If a child is wearing a baby sleeping bag whilst sleeping outside of a cot be careful!
A child wearing a baby sleeping bag and not confined to a cot is at a higher risk of falling and being injured. The child must be actively supervised and the sleeping bag removed as soon as the child wakes.

sids^{and}kids[®]

For further information talk to your child and family health nurse or doctor; call SIDS and Kids in your state or territory on

1300 308 307

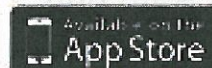
or visit www.sidsandkids.org



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In memory of Ava

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