

## 2. Coroner's Recommendations

SCC welcomes recommendations in relation to how it can improve the services it provides to clients. Despite this, some of the recommendations made by the Coroner have already been implemented by SCC.

- 2.1. *Recommendation 1: To ensure SCC staff are qualified to complete their role and responsibilities, the organisation review the existing system of governance for human resource procedures and establish checking mechanisms to monitor compliance.*

**SCC's Response:** As noted in the Agreed Statement of Facts, SCC has completely reviewed its procedures in relation to Community Support Worker (CSW) qualifications to ensure that each CSW is appropriately qualified to complete their role and responsibilities.

As noted on page 24, paragraph 8.6 of the Agreed Statement of Facts, SCC now uses a central training register which records the qualifications and training undertaken by each staff member. As outlined on page 15, paragraph 8.2 of the Agreed Statement of Facts, the SCC roster clerks use this system to allocate CSW's with clients. The roster clerk is then required to check the allocation with a team leader or manager as per the 'CSS Delegation of Authority Instrument'. If the allocation involves a client who is under the age of 18 years, the allocation must be approved by the Community Support Service Coordinator.

The systems in relation to the qualification register and the allocation of CSW's with clients are also subject to regular reviews to ensure compliance, as outlined on page 27, paragraph 8.9 of the Agreed Statement of Facts.

At the Inquest, found at page 358 of the transcript, Therese Desmond gave evidence in relation to the qualifications required for CSW's and the checking mechanisms in relation to same. Ms Desmond explained to the Court that the skills, experience and qualifications required for each client are discussed with the City of Yarra prior to the allocation of the client with the CSW. In addition to the supervision of allocation required in the policies, Ms Desmond explained that there are also software screening tools which prevent the allocation of a child with an underqualified CSW.

SCC advise that on-site audits have revealed that delegation and consultation with senior staff is occurring as required by the policies and procedures and the skills register is up to date and used appropriately.

Accordingly, SCC believes that it has already complied with this recommendation. If the Coroner has further recommendations in relation to this review and process, SCC would invite further clarification of same.

- 2.2. *Recommendation 2: To improve a CSW capability to provide respite care to a child with a disability, SCC implement and document an education session in the child's home with the child, their family, the CSW, the SCC Care Coordinator to review the capacity and competency of the CSW to provide safe care according to the HCTS, prior to sole caring sessions commencement.*

**SCC's Response:** Since the contract between the City of Yarra and SCC stipulates that the City of Yarra is responsible for initiating all contact for assessment and review with the client's family, this recommendation was discussed at the recent Contract Meetings with the City of Yarra. At those meetings, the City of Yarra advised that it will implement an education session as recommended and SCC will support this practice.

The City of Yarra has advised SCC that it will work towards the provision of an in-home education session for clients under the age of 18 with a culturally or linguistically diverse background and for clients under the age of 18 who have complex care needs. An education session shall also be conducted for clients who do not fit the above criteria, but the education session is deemed necessary by the City of Yarra, SCC or the client's family.

If the City of Yarra implements this recommendation, SCC is willing to assist with this process and ensure that the relevant CSW and SCC Care Coordinator / Team Leader are made available to attend each education session. SCC will be updating its current policies and procedures to reflect these changes once implemented by the City of Yarra.

- 2.3. *Recommendation 3: To increase the safety of a child with a disability from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background where the family does not speak English as their first language, the education session in the child's home should also include access to an interpreter service to enable discussion of the HCTS by all parties.*

**SCC's Response:** Since 2011, the City of Yarra have maintained a bank of specialist home care providers. If a client requires a CSW with a specific language, and SCC is unable to provide a CSW who can speak that language, the City of Yarra now seeks out an alternative provider.

SCC also has access to interpreters as required. This can be useful if the CSW speaks the client's language, but the client needs to be contacted by another SCC employee or a review of the CSW's care is undertaken.

In relation to the education session in the child's home, SCC agrees that an interpreter should be provided where the client and/or the client's family are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background.

- 2.4. *Recommendation 4: To increase the safety of a child with a disability from a CALD background where the family does not speak English as their first language, SCC should establish regular and documented review with the family and the CSW, including access to an interpreter service to assess ongoing appropriateness, satisfaction of care and identification of risks.*

**SCC's Response:** SCC agrees that the care of children should be reviewed with the client's family and the CSW regularly to assess ongoing appropriateness, satisfaction of care and identification of risks.

As noted above, the contract between the City of Yarra and SCC stipulates that the City of Yarra has the responsibility of initiating all contact for assessment and review with the client's family. Accordingly, while SCC is prepared to conduct regular review of the care with the family of a child with a disability, it suggests that the City of Yarra's policies should also be amended to include this recommendation, as the City of Yarra will be responsible for its implementation.

SCC otherwise notes that it regularly reviews the care provided by CSW's as outlined in the Agreed Statement of Facts.

- 2.5. *Recommendation 5: To improve the safety of a child with a disability receiving respite care from SCC, the Council should review the Instructions Manual, Client Reviews Work Instruction, to include the requirement for a contracted service to initiate a regular review of the care with the family of a child with a disability at least every three months.*

**SCC's Response:** SCC and the City of Yarra review the care provided to clients under the age of 18 on a three monthly basis at the Handover meetings. Prior to this meeting, the City of Yarra provide SCC with a feedback form. SCC is required to report on the type of care the client is receiving, the progress of this care and any issues that have been encountered.

This process does not currently involve the client's family, and SCC agrees with the Coroner's recommendation that the care should be reviewed with the client's family at least once every three months.

Pursuant to the contract between the City of Yarra and SCC, the City of Yarra has the responsibility of initiating all contact for assessment and review with the client's family. Accordingly, while SCC is prepared to amend the 'Client Reviews Work Instruction' policy to stipulate that the City of Yarra will conduct regular review of the care with the family of a child with a disability, it suggests that the City of Yarra's policies should also be amended to include this recommendation, as the City of Yarra will be responsible for its implementation.

- 2.6. *Recommendation 6: To increase the safety of a child with a disability with out of home respite sessions as part of the HCTS, the HCTS should include listed sites for visiting that are agreed to by the family, client, SCC Coordinator, CSW and are based on the needs of the child and safety and appropriateness of the environment.*

**SCC's Response:** This has already been implemented. Page 21, paragraph 8.4(d) of the Agreed Statement of Facts states that the Task Sheets given to CSW's are now more specific. If respite care is required, or the client is to be taken somewhere, the agreed location is listed on the Task Sheet.

If a client requests a change of the location of the respite care, the CSW is required to notify their team leader and authorisation from the City of Yarra must be received prior to any changes being implemented.

In the case of children, the location of the respite care is one aspect that is discussed at the three monthly meeting outlined in response to Recommendation 4.

We hope this information is of assistance and satisfies the requirements of the recommendations.

Yours faithfully

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