



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

AIHW



Court ref: COR 2016 006067

William Doolan
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Mr Doolan

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2019 accompanying Coroner English's Finding without inquest into the death of Nathan Shanahan. I and my staff would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mr Shanahan.

Our response to Coroner English's recommendation at paragraph 63 of the Finding is set out below.

On receipt of your letter, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) engaged with the Coroners Court of Victoria (CCOV) to explore the opportunities for sharing data on Victorian suicides among current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members.

The data that contain the ADF service characteristics that the AIHW analysed to report on incidence and prevalence of suicide in current and ex-serving ADF personnel are extracted from the Personnel Management Keys Solution (PMKeyS) data set. The data are provided to the AIHW for this purpose by the Department of Defence, the data custodian.

Under Section 29 of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* (Cth), the AIHW requires permission from the data provider to supply this data to the CCOV. We have consulted the Department of Defence on this matter and the Department has advised that a request for PMKeyS data be referred directly to the Department of Defence or that the CCOV address correspondence to the Secretary of Defence.

The AIHW report *Incidence of suicide in serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel: detailed analysis 2001–2015* identifies characteristics that may be associated with suicide risk in current and ex-serving ADF members. The report examines service characteristics including service, rank, operational service, length of service, reason for discharge and timing of suicide death. The Coroners Prevention Unit may find this information useful to inform the design and implementation of suicide prevention initiatives.

The AIHW continues to monitor suicide rates over time, to help track the progress of programs and guide future initiatives to provide support to Australia's military community and reduce suicide rates. We acknowledge and pay our respects to those who have passed away, or been affected, by suicide. We are committed to ensuring our work continues to inform improvements in mental health, and suicide awareness and prevention.

Should you require further information or assistance on this or a related matter, please contact Michael Frost, Group Head, Primary Health Care and Veterans Group on michael.frost@aihw.gov.au or (02) 9268 6001.

Yours sincerely



Matthew James
Acting Chief Executive Officer

24 May 2019