



Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services

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DHHS ref: e5161401

Court ref: COR 2017 003115



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

Dear Mr Doolan

RE: Coroner Bracken's findings into the death of Ms Emma Louise Saunders (without inquest), Court Reference: COR 2017 003115.

Thank you for your letter of 21 June 2019 enclosing the findings described above.

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) acknowledges the tragic and unexpected death of Ms Emma Saunders who died as a result of a ruptured myocardium in an off-road motorcycle incident.

I extend my sincere condolences to Ms Saunders' family.

I refer to the Coroner's recommendations, pursuant to section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)* and with a view to improve public health and safety, that:

1. *"The Department of Health and Human Services consider including in the next iteration of the 'State Public Health and Wellbeing Plan' (to be released in September 2019) under the priority of 'Preventing violence and injury', an action to develop and launch a public awareness campaign aimed at off-road motorcycle riders regarding the importance of wearing appropriate chest protection."*
2. *"Alternatively, the Department of Health and Human Services consider actioning the public awareness campaign referred to in Recommendation 1 through the 'Victorian Injury Prevention Program'."*

The department will develop and launch a public awareness campaign aimed at off-road motorcycle riders regarding the importance of wearing appropriate chest protection, in line with the Coroner's alternate recommendation. The department's Injury Prevention Program is well placed to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to improve measures to prevent off-road motorcycle fatalities and raise community awareness of the importance of using personal protective equipment and clothing.

While the next Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is expected to include a priority on injury prevention, it may not provide the level of specificity required to action a public awareness campaign aimed at off-road motorcycle riders.

The department notes the Coroner's report advised Ms Emma Saunders' tragic death was one of 33 off-road motorcycle related deaths in Victoria over the past 10 years between 2009 and 2019. The department understands that for every off-road motorcycling fatality there are numerous hospitalisations resulting from off-road motorcycling injuries and the department will work with the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit to capture latest data to inform the prevention effort.

VicRoads register recreational and agricultural motorcycles and operate a licensing scheme in Victoria. To address off-road motorcycle fatalities, the Prevention and Population Health Branch will liaise with VicRoads, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DWELP) and Parks Victoria to develop appropriate safety messaging targeted at off-road motorcycle riders who ride on public land in Victoria.

While motorcycle registration is a legal requirement to ride on public land, unlicensed motorcycle riders and riders with unregistered motorcycles are limited to private land and motorcycle club venues. The department will therefore also liaise with Agriculture Victoria, Motorcycle Victoria and other relevant agencies to ensure the campaign reaches all potential off-road motorcycle riders.

Should you require further information please contact David Malone, Assistant Director, Population Health Unit, Prevention and Population Health Branch, on telephone 9096 5209 or email david.malone@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Kym Peake
Secretary

5/9/2019