



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

Level 29
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: (03) 8684 0501
justice.vic.gov.au
DX: 210077

10 FEB 2020

Coroner Caitlin English
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006



Our ref: BC/19/33431

Dear Coroner English

I refer to your findings without inquest delivered on 7 October 2019 regarding the death of Mr Tre Leigh Lawson (COR 2017 5779) and your recommendation that:

The Forensic Mental Health Implementation Plan and corresponding Mental Health Advice and Response Service be expanded to operate in regional areas that have been identified with high rates of indigenous suicide. In particular I recommend the expansion of the program to the Mildura Magistrates Court.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency for the Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) and funding of an expansion is within its remit. The Department of Justice and Community Safety (the department) works collaboratively with DHHS to monitor and support the delivery of MHARS at designated court locations. The department will continue to do so at any locations designated for funding.

The department also wishes to express its in principle support for improving access to forensic mental health services, particularly for Aboriginal Victorians in regional areas. I note that such services are currently the subject of ongoing examination by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Should you require any further information on this matter, please contact Ms Allison Will, Director, Justice Assurance and Review Office, Department of Justice and Community Safety on (03) 8684 6303.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Falkingham
Secretary