

**Amaze**

24 Drummond St, Carlton VIC 3053  
PO Box 374, Carlton South VIC 3053  
T 03 9657 1600 F 03 9639 4955  
E info@amaze.org.au  
W amaze.org.au



28 April 2020

Court ref: COR 2018 001218

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

Dear Mr Doolan,

**Response to the Coroner's Recommendation (COR 2018 001218)**

I refer to your letter of 28 January 2020 enclosing Deputy State Coroner Caitlin English's finding into the death of Kyle Horne. Amaze wishes to express our sincere condolences to Mr Horne's family for their tragic loss.

The Coroner made the following recommendation pursuant to section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008*:

*The Department of Health and Human Services and the Chief Psychiatrist work with AMAZE to identify opportunities to increase the access by private practitioners, primary care, and public mental health services to information, education and training specific to the risk of suicide for adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder especially in the context of relationship breakdown and social stressors.*

**Statement of Action**

Since receiving the Coroner's findings, Amaze has commenced work with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office of Chief Psychiatrist in relation to the Coroner's recommendation.

In March 2020, Amaze spoke with the Deputy Chief Psychiatrist regarding the Coroner's recommendation to identify opportunities to increase access for those practitioners and workers identified by the Coroner to information regarding the risk of suicide for autistic people.

Amaze has also been engaging with relevant staff within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) involved in the development and distribution of training and resources regarding mental health and suicide prevention. This has included engaging with the Mental Health Professional Online Development (MHPOD)<sup>1</sup> Program Manager at DHHS, and the Acting Manager of Suicide Prevention within the Mental Health Branch at DHHS.

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<sup>1</sup> MHPOD is an online learning portal that was originally designed for particular health professionals working in the mental health sector, but it is available to all health workers as well as others in the community.

While this work is ongoing, the work that has occurred has included:

- Information sharing;
- discussing opportunities to utilise MHPOD to increase awareness, including the resources that would be required to develop an online learning module; and
- identifying potential opportunities for Amaze to engage with the Mental Health Reform Victoria in relation to their work implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Further to the above, in December 2019, the Victorian Government released the Victorian Autism Plan. Key initiatives in the Plan include building autism understanding and competency among staff in the health and mental health sector. The Victorian Government's commitments to enable this include identifying needs for accredited autism training to improve services for autistic people, and identifying further information that needs to be developed in consultation with peak bodies.

As the peak body for autistic people and their supporters in Victoria, Amaze has also been in contact with the Office for Disability at DHHS, seeking to discuss this potential opportunity to develop further information.

Amaze is eager to continue working with DHHS to support any opportunity to increase awareness of the risks of suicide for autistic people, including the development of any advice or resources, for those providing health care and mental health services.

Should you wish to discuss this correspondence further, please don't hesitate to contact me at [ceo@amaze.org.au](mailto:ceo@amaze.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



**Fiona Sharkie**  
Chief Executive Officer