



## Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services

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Ms Jacqui Hawkins  
Coroner  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
Email: [cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)

Dear Coroner Hawkins,

### **COR 2017 005305 – Investigation into the death of [REDACTED]**

Thank you for your letter of 28 September 2020 regarding the Finding without inquest into the death of [REDACTED]. At such a young age, the years of life lost is particularly tragic. My deepest condolences go out to the family and loved ones of the deceased.

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) and Victoria Police have consulted across portfolio areas to prepare responses to your recommendations below.

#### **Recommendation 1**

*I recommend that Victoria Police amend the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence to include guidelines about police-initiated intervention order applications against children and young people, and ensure police are aware of appropriate referral pathways for families experiencing adolescent violence in the home, including alternate accommodation options. The Code of Practice should also prioritise cautions and diversion where appropriate.*

#### **Department response to Recommendation 1**

Victoria Police will respond to this recommendation.

#### **Recommendation 2**

*I recommend that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police conduct a joint review on the incidence and numbers of youth that are issued with a FVIO and require emergency and short-term crisis accommodation, to identify any areas in Victoria that may be in need of these additional resources. The review should inform funding decisions by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide additional youth crisis accommodation in targeted areas where the demand has been identified.*

## **Department response to Recommendation 2**

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

The department will review the number and geographic distribution of young people issued with a FVIO who require emergency and crisis accommodation. Victoria Police has agreed to support the department in conducting this review including providing information to assist decision-making regarding funding and placement of youth crisis accommodation.

## **Recommendation 3**

*I recommend that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services consider funding existing specialist youth services to extend their services and support to vulnerable youth to a 24-hour operational model.*

## **Department response to Recommendation 3**

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

The department will review its funding of youth homelessness services with consideration to extending the services to a 24-hour operational model. Family Safety Victoria (FSV) also supports this recommendation and the response by the department.

The department notes that this recommendation will require collective implementation by FSV and the department (including child and family services and Homes Victoria).

Further, the department notes that the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (due to be released in February 2021) will guide the department's mental health and suicide prevention reform agenda to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people.

## **Recommendation 4**

*I recommend that the Victorian Government and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services explore options to address the legislative anomaly between the Family Violence and Protection Act 2008 (Vic) and the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) in relation to the definition "child".*

## **Department response to Recommendation 4**

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

This recommendation will be built into the next review of the CYF Act, which will be led by the department in consultation with FSV.

Thank you once again for providing the Finding. The new Department of Family, Fairness and Housing will be established from 1 February 2021, and will continue to work with the Coroners Court of Victoria in the coming months and years to continue to reduce the incidence and impact of family violence and suicide in Victoria.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Euan Wallace', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Prof Euan Wallace AM**  
Secretary

04 / 01 / 2021