



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

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Mr Nick Boesten
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

By email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Boesten

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF [REDACTED] – COR 2019 005378

I refer to your letter of 11 December 2020 to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), enclosing a copy of Coroner John Olle's findings into the tragic death of [REDACTED] in 2019.

This letter sets out the response of the Department and Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) (which includes CAV) to Coroner Olle's recommendations at paragraph 34 of his report, namely that:

- (a) Since 2010, it is apparent that the initiation of the Consumer Affairs Victoria blind cord safety campaign has been beneficial. However, in the period 2019-20, following three years of no accidental deaths relating to curtain and blind cords, four infants have died in these tragic circumstances.*
- (b) It is paramount that public safety authorities continue to provide ongoing information and warning campaigns to inform those with young children and their family and friends of the risks associated with curtain and blind cords and the need for vigilance in relation to installation and maintenance.*
- (c) I acknowledge and commend Consumer Affairs Victoria for the initiatives undertaken in the past decade, and urge that they continue their campaign of curtain and blind cord product safety; publicising this risk on all media platforms by distribution information regularly to the entities already targeted.*
- (d) Further, I encourage Consumer Affairs Victoria to increase promotion of their blind cord safety kits.*

I confirm DJCS accepts the recommendations and will implement them.

In his report, Coroner Olle noted the campaign initiated by CAV in 2010 highlighting the risks associated with curtain and blind cords and the distribution of CAV's free safety kits. Some 17,000 kits were distributed following the campaign launch. Coroner Olle also noted the ongoing initiatives by CAV since 2010 to promote public awareness of this serious risk.

CAV remains committed to these initiatives and will continue to use a wide range of media and communication channels to amplify public safety messaging, both directly to the public

and via strategic partnerships with targeted service providers, such as hospital maternity wards and community and multicultural educators.

A recent example is an initiative from November and December 2020 in which CAV continued its partnership with KidSafe (Vic) to promote public awareness of curtain and blind cord safety issues and the use of safety kits. A key element of that campaign included urging families to check existing curtains and blinds, especially in older properties where such products might not have been captured by the introduction of the relevant safety standards.

The next batch of safety kits is currently being prepared for distribution from April 2021. These kits will be available directly from CAV as well as from KidSafe (Vic) and distribution will be accompanied by public promotion.

The commencement of the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018* on 29 March 2021 will provide a further opportunity to highlight curtain and blind cord safety across various channels. As part of those upcoming changes, renters will no longer require permission to attach child safety devices such as blind or cord anchors.

The safety promotion opportunities around each of these events will be supplemented with publications on social media and other platforms as part of CAV's general consumer protection awareness programs. In addition, CAV will continue to maintain and promote the webpage it has specifically dedicated to this issue: consumer.vic.gov.au/products-and-services/product-safety/curtain-and-blind-cord-safety.

In line with its commitment to increase promotion of its blind cord safety kits, CAV will also continue to engage with its key strategic stakeholders on the issue and will monitor public engagement with its web and media publications to ensure its advice continues to remain readily accessible to consumers.

Thank you for sharing Coroner Olle's report on this important matter and his recommendations. Should you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Nicole Rich, Executive Director, Regulatory Services and Director, Consumer Affairs Victoria at nicole.a.rich@justice.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Falkingham
Secretary

05/03/2021