



## Secretary

Department of Health

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**BAC-CO-16430**  
COR 2016 003441  
COR 2016 005703  
COR 2016 006116  
COR 2017 000214  
COR 2017 000216

Coroner Paresa Antoniadis Spanos  
Coroners Court of Victoria

Via e-mail: [team6@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:team6@courts.vic.gov.au)

Dear Coroner Spanos

Thank you for providing your findings in relation to the tragic deaths of Anson, Ilker, Jordan, Jason and James who died after using substances believed to be MDMA but that in fact contained a dangerous combination of two novel psychoactive substances, 25C-NMBOME and 4-fluoroamphetamine. My sincere condolences go to their families and loved ones.

You have recommended the Department of Health implement a drug checking service in Victoria and implement an early warning network to reduce the number of preventable deaths (and other lesser harms) associated with the use of drug obtained from unregulated markets.

The department is committed to reducing harm caused by alcohol and drugs. The 2021-22 State Budget provides a total of \$330.2 million for alcohol and drug services. This includes funding for critical harm reduction initiatives such as the Victorian Needle and Syringe Program, opioid substitution treatment and overdose education and training incorporating use of the life-saving medication naloxone.

As referenced in your report, the department also funds harm reduction services such as DanceWize which involve peer educators attending dance parties, festivals and nightclubs, hosting chill-out spaces, discussing safer drug use with people and disseminating health resources.

The department takes a health-led approach to substance use. While there is no active plan for implementation of a drug checking service, the department continues to consider evidence for additional harm reduction approaches that will prevent further deaths and support improved health and social outcomes for people who use drugs.

The department is also exploring opportunities to enhance Victoria's drug monitoring systems to protect public health. As part of this work, the department has provided funding to the Victorian Poisons Information Centre in 2021-22 to monitor the substances involved in drug-related hospital emergency department presentations.

Each week, the Centre will work with emergency clinicians across Victoria to identify the most severe or unusual cases and comprehensively analyse blood samples. The Centre will report regularly to the department to support understanding and response to drug related harms. The outcomes of this initiative will inform longer-term planning for enhanced drug surveillance in Victoria.

Your findings and recommendations will continue to be considered by the department as further work is progressed to enhance harm reduction initiatives.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Euan M Wallace', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Professor Euan M Wallace AM**  
Secretary

06/07/2021