



9 August 2021

Coroner Bracken
Coroner's Court of Victoria
cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner,

Investigation into the death of Barry Brown – COR2013 001298
Response to Coroner's recommendation

I refer to the Coroner's Findings and Recommendations delivered on 20 July 2021 ("Findings") in relation to the death of Barry Brown.

The Findings included a recommendation pursuant to *s.72 Coroners Act 2008* that:
"The Australian Medical Council include in the syllabus for training those who wish to practise as physicians (and to the extent that it is included highlight) explicit and detail material analysing 'confirmation bias', its nature, manifestation and potentially fatal effects." (Paragraph 272(b))

This letter responds to that recommendation.

The Australian Medical Council Limited ("AMC") is appointed as the accreditation authority for medicine by the Medical Board of Australia ("MBA") via a contract with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency ("Ahpra") pursuant to *ss. 43 and 44 Health Practitioner Regulation National Law ("National Law")*.

As such its functions include:

- a) The development of an accreditation standard for medicine (*s.46 National Law*) for approval by the MBA, and
- b) The accreditation of programs of study and the education providers which provide them (*s.48 National Law*). This applies to undergraduate courses, the internship, and specialist training.

The accreditation standards for medicine approved by the MBA can be found on their website at <https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx>

These standards do not prescribe specific course content or a specific syllabus. That is not the function of the AMC or the MBA. These accreditation standards set the broad framework for the development, delivery, governance and continual renewal of primary medical and specialist medical training programs and continuing professional development programs.

It is the medical schools and specialist medical colleges, which hold the relevant medical and educational expertise, that are responsible for setting the detailed training programs leading to general and specialist registration with the MBA.

The mandating material concerning a specific topic such as “confirmation bias” for inclusion in individual training courses therefore is not a matter for the AMC in exercising its accreditation functions. Accordingly, the AMC is unable to implement the Coroner’s recommendation and would suggest reference to the relevant specialist medical college, and medical schools in general, may be more appropriate.

The AMC also notes that prior to receipt of the Findings it had not had any contact with the Coroner’s office concerning this matter.

For the purposes of the *Coroners Act 2008*, I am the responsible contact person for the AMC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Pigou', written in a cursive style.

Philip Pigou
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Medical Council Limited