



Secretary

Department of Health

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Coroner Sarah Gebert
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

team11@courts.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Gebert

Thank you for the letter of 17 August 2022 that included a copy of your findings regarding the death of [REDACTED] (Coroner's reference: COR 2020 003913). I was saddened to hear of the passing of [REDACTED] and I wish to offer my sincerest sympathy to her family and loved ones.

In line with my obligations under the Coroners Act 2008, I am responding to your recommendation addressed to the Secretary of the Department of Health.

Recommendation: The Victorian Department of Health, as part of their responsibility to support independent living for the State's older people, provide clear public advice to Victorians about the potential risk to life of the KA524 bed pole or similar style, and of the risks posed by improperly used bed poles in particular

As you detail in your findings, [REDACTED]'s death was in addition to 3 others that have been directly linked with the use of the KA524 model of bed pole. I note the consideration made by the Coroners Prevention Unit that the use of bed poles, particularly this model, in a private home with limited access to professional nursing care, may pose a serious risk of harm.


In these circumstances the department acknowledges that, while the KA524 model of bed pole is not government issued, there are steps the department can and will take to address your recommendation. These steps include:

- Working with the Commonwealth to ensure older people who are receiving home care support are advised about the safe use of aids and equipment
- Alerting the Commonwealth of the need to issue public advice regarding the potential risk to life of the KA524 bed pole
- Alerting Consumer Affairs Victoria to the risk posed by the KA524 model of bed pole and seeking them to provide consumer advice where applicable
- Ensuring that Victorian funded programs providing home-based aids and equipment are aware of all safety aspects of equipment provided, bed poles in particular, and, in turn, there are processes in place that advise clients of appropriate and safe use to avoid harm.

The Department of Health is committed to ensuring Victorians are safe and well in all aspects of their lives and I thank you for passing on your recommendations.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Louise Galloway, Executive Director, Community Health Based Services at the Department of Health on 0409 171 652 or louise.galloway@health.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

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

Professor Euan M Wallace AM
Secretary

28/10/2022