



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Secretary

Ms Kate Sanderson
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Sanderson

Re: Investigation into the death of Shane Tuck COR 2020 003895

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 December 2023, regarding the Victorian Coroner's investigation into the death of Mr Shane Tuck. The Department acknowledges the Coroner's detailed consideration of the circumstances around Mr Tuck's death and will use the findings to inform policy development and advice to Government around concussion in sport.

On 1 December 2022, the Australian Senate referred an inquiry into concussions and repeated head trauma in contact sports to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry. The committee reported on 5 September 2023. The committee recommended the Australian Government consider measures to encourage Australians, in the event of their death, to donate their brain to a brain bank for scientific research into brain health and disease, including Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. The inquiry heard from Ms Renee Tuck, the sister of Mr Tuck, at one of the four public hearings and received a submission from Mrs Katherine Tuck, the widow of Mr Tuck.

The Government is currently considering the recommendations from the Senate Committee's inquiry, including the role that Government may play in further supporting the health and safety of all sports participants.

I note your specific recommendation that the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care facilitate the adequate funding of brain banks nationally. The Government is committed to identifying better health treatments and pathways for people with mild, moderate and severe traumatic brain injury through its existing research initiatives and already funds traumatic brain injury (TBI) research through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

From its inception in 2015 to 31 December 2023, the MRFF has provided \$15.6 million to 15 TBI research grants. Between 2014 and 2023, NHMRC has expended \$92.3 million towards research relevant to TBI.

The MRFF's Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Mission is providing \$50 million over 10 years to improve patient recovery after brain injury. It will support projects that predict recovery outcomes or identify the most effective care and treatments. The Mission's Roadmap and Implementation Plan are key documents developed by an expert advisory committee to advise the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, on the strategic priorities for research investment through the Mission.

Minister Butler has recently requested a review of the TBI Mission's Roadmap and Implementation Plan to ensure the Mission accounts for emerging evidence and is consistent with the Government's responses to the Senate Inquiry into concussions and repeated head trauma in contact sport. An independent Expert Advisory Panel is currently being established to guide the review and outcomes are expected to be available in late 2024. The review will inform future investments through the TBI Mission.

Additionally, regular competitive opportunities are available through the MRFF's National Critical Research Infrastructure Initiative to potentially consider funding the development of brain banks. Through this Initiative, the Government is providing \$650 million over 10 years to establish and extend critical research infrastructure, which may include brain banks, particularly through its dedicated funding stream for 'innovation enablers'.

Thank you again for providing the Victorian Coroner's findings. If you would like any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Travis Haslam PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Office for Sport [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Blair Comley PSM

8 February 2024