



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

Level 26
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: (03) 9915 3759
www.justice.vic.gov.au

Our ref: EBC: 24085358

His Honour David Ryan
Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner Ryan

I refer to your findings and recommendations made on 1 July 2024 following the inquest into the passing of Yorta Yorta, Gunnai Kurnai man, Joshua KERR (Josh), who passed away at Port Phillip Prison on 10 August 2022.

You made five recommendations directed at G4S and St Vincent's Correctional Health Service, one recommendation for St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and one for Corrections Victoria, a business unit of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (the department). The department's response to the recommendation is as follows:

Recommendation 7

Corrections Victoria develop and implement a training program, to be undertaken by correctional staff and medical staff together: (a) to enhance their mutual understanding of each other's respective roles in Victoria's prison system; and (b) to encourage a co-ordinated and cooperative relationship which recognises the respective roles and their corresponding authority in a way which reduces hierarchical barrier.

This recommendation is accepted in principle. While directed at Corrections Victoria, the recommendation will be managed jointly with Justice Health, a separate business unit in the department that is responsible for oversight of health service provision in custodial facilities. Corrections Victoria and Justice Health will work collaboratively together to identify and implement any necessary further initiatives to strengthen health and correctional staff's relationships.

Since the passing of Josh, DJCS has made a number of policy and procedural changes to strengthen health and custodial staff's understanding of each other's respective roles and working relationships. These include minimum expectations around regular joint corrections and health staff briefings and joint training exercises, as well as clearer guidance and processes on how and when health information should be shared with custodial staff to support people in custody and how health and custodial staff should escalate concerns in relation to health deterioration. These changes include the development of a new Commissioner's Requirement – Prisoner Health which issued in August 2024.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Melissa Westin, Deputy Commissioner, Corrections Victoria [REDACTED] or Susannah Robinson, Executive Director, Justice Health [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KATH'.

Kate Houghton PSM
Secretary

06/09/2024