

2 July 2025

The Honourable John Cain  
State Coroner  
Coroners Court of Victoria

**Re: Noeline Michelle Dalzell, Case ID COR 2020 000670**

Dear Judge Cain,

I write on behalf of the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA), in relation to the preventable homicide of Noeline Dalzell, and your subsequent recommendations regarding systemic accountabilities to people experiencing family violence when offenders progress through the judicial system.

Like multiple Coroner's reports since the Royal Commission into Family Violence have consistently recommended, Noeline's homicide reflects the cumulative effects of continuing system fragmentation and accountability gaps.

VAADA has been actively engaged in addressing these system-level failures through our leadership of the **Information Sharing Schemes Systems Network** — a multi-agency network established to address precisely the operational challenges highlighted in your findings. This work is directly informed by the frontline expertise of the Specialist Family Violence Advisors (SFVAs) embedded within both the alcohol and other drug (AOD) and Mental Health sectors, who navigate these intersecting issues daily.

Across this work, we continue to observe persistent systemic limitations, including:

- Unclear proactive sharing obligations across agencies and sectors.
- Absence of cross-sector accountability for notifying people experiencing family violence when risk escalates, both within and outside of judicial processes.
- Ongoing failures to respond to misidentification of people experiencing family violence as people using family violence, particularly where substance use and/or mental health present as interrelated factors that contribute to both risk escalation and increased complexity in system identification and response.
- Fragmentation between information sharing authorities, where Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) are limited in their authority to access or share information across parties.

As has become increasingly evident across sectors, while agencies such as AOD services may identify risk escalation, they are frequently unable to contact or notify people experiencing family violence directly. This reflects not a reluctance to act, but a structural limitation within the legislated information sharing pathways. While the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme authorises proactive sharing of risk-relevant information across services, it does not authorise direct contact with people experiencing family violence where that information — including safe and current contact details — is not already held within the agency identifying the risk.

When collaborative risk pathways to support this process are not clearly defined or visible within the system, trauma-informed practice would ideally locate the obligation of contacting people experiencing family violence, where risk is escalating, within specialist family violence services funded to support people experiencing family violence, such as The Orange Door network. However, operational advice from Family Safety Victoria has made clear that, in practice, this responsibility sits with Victoria Police, who hold the legal authority and the system access necessary to facilitate contact where other sectors cannot.

We note that Victoria Police, in its response to your recommendation, acknowledges that notification obligations cannot rest with police alone and require shared system responsibility. We fully agree that a shared system response is required — but respectfully observe that this shared responsibility remains undefined and inconsistently operationalised in practice.

Noeline's homicide reflects the impact when systems inadvertently cause harm, when multiple agencies each hold fragments of risk information without a clear governance framework and resourcing to be able to ensure integration and coordinated protective action. This absence of system stewardship allows escalating risk to continue in full view of the system.

Additionally, seeking to retrofit proactive sharing mechanisms into a system not originally designed to support integrated victim notification — particularly where people experiencing family violence are not formal parties to judicial proceedings — further amplifies the importance of cross-sector systems stewardship. Without clear governance, role clarity, and coordinated pathways, sectors remain reliant on workarounds rather than embedded system design capable of consistently responding to risk escalation.

We respectfully submit that in future similar inquests, the presiding Coroner consider as a recommendation:

- Dedicated cross-sector stewardship to govern shared responsibilities for proactive information sharing and notification;
- Resourcing to enable sectors to operationalise proactive sharing obligations as the Information Sharing Scheme reforms intended;
- Formal mapping of cross-sector information sharing authorities, limitations, and role responsibilities across sectors.

VAADA remains committed to contributing to this ongoing work and welcomes the opportunity to continue our sector leadership through the Information Sharing Systems Network and the Specialist Family Violence Advisor workforce, to strengthen cross-system governance, address these known operational gaps, and fully realise Victoria's family violence reform vision.

Yours Sincerely,



Meg Bagnall

Lead, Family Violence and Alcohol & Other Drugs