



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

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Our ref: 25086124

His Honour Coroner Paul Lawrie
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner Lawrie

I refer to your findings and recommendations made on 4 July 2025 following the inquest into the death of Brent Reker who passed away at Ravenhall Correctional Centre (Ravenhall) on 12 December 2019.

Of your four recommendations, I note three were directed to the department and one was for the operators of Ravenhall – GEO Group Australia.

I accept recommendation 1 and accept in principle recommendation 4, and have requested that Corrections Victoria oversee implementation of both recommendations. I respectfully do not accept recommendation 3.

In response to recommendation 1, Corrections Victoria will explore the feasibility of the history of the SASH rating and context behind each episode being more readily available and visible in the Individual Management Plan hard copy file and other systems.

In response to recommendation 4, Corrections Victoria agrees that cameras such as a borescope may provide a valuable tool to observe inside a barricaded cell. Corrections Victoria will explore options for the Security and Emergency Services Group and Emergency Response Group members at maximum-security prisons within high-risk areas to have access to this technology. This will include mental health units and high security units but not all prison units.

Ravenhall operator GEO accepts and has implemented recommendation 2.

My decision not to accept recommendation 3 relates to my concerns about the blanket introduction of cameras in all management and high security unit cells. Such an approach would not be compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and engages s13 *privacy and reputation* and s22 *humane treatment when deprived of liberty*.

In designing prisons and prison policies, consideration is given to where CCTV is located. Where CCTV is placed in cells, it is for the specific purpose of monitoring people with a higher active risk of SASH.

Placement in a CCTV monitored cell is determined through an assessment process in response to identified safety concerns or behavioural risks. This targeted use of monitoring is designed to enhance the safety and wellbeing of the individual, as well as support the operational security of the prison. While CCTV can act as a deterrent and a reliable source of evidence, in a prison setting the ongoing monitoring or perception of ongoing monitoring in a cell, may have a detrimental impact on people in custody, in addition to the engagement of their human rights. This is especially important noting that most prisoners in management cells are placed there for long periods of time without SASH risks being present and that the cells are effectively their bedrooms.

Should you require any further information, please contact Melissa Westin, Deputy Commissioner, Custodial Operations Division, Corrections Victoria [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

If the department's response is to be published on the court's website, we would be grateful that Ms Westin's mobile and email address be redacted.

Yours sincerely



Kate Houghton PSM
Secretary

22/09/2025