

Coroner Catherine Fitzgerald
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh St.
Southbank VIC 3006
Via email: team9@courts.vic.gov.au
16 March 2026

To Coroner Fitzgerald.

Re: Court reference number COR 2022 005138

I write on behalf of **Speech Pathology Australia** in response to the recommendations made under section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic) in Coroner Fitzgerald's Finding without inquest into the death of Keith Fisher.

Pursuant to section 72(4) of the Act, Speech Pathology Australia provides the following statement of action in relation to each recommendation directed to it as outlined in Section 69 of the Findings into the death of Mr Keith Fisher.

Recommendation: *That Speech Pathology Australia advise their members to discontinue categorical descriptors of supervision such as "distant" or "close" supervision of persons identified at risk of choking due to swallowing problems and/or unsafe eating and drinking behaviours.*

Response:

Speech Pathology Australia will:

- amend content within the Speech Pathology Australia *Dysphagia Practice Guideline (2025)* to:
 - include explicit instruction to discontinue categorical descriptors of supervision such as 'distant' or 'close' in relation to mealtime supervision
 - highlight and promote the *Safer Care Victoria Communicating safe eating and drinking: Best practice guideline* (SCVBPG) (2020) as best practice
 - communicate this amendment to its' members and stakeholders.

The Speech Pathology Australia *Dysphagia Practice Guideline (2025)* is a member resource that highlights best practice for dysphagia and mealtime management in all contexts, including management of individuals identified at risk of choking due to swallowing problems. Within this guideline, the SCVBPG (2020) is described and advocated for as best practice.

Recommendation: *That Speech Pathology Australia endorse individualised plans that align with the six elements described in the Safer Care Victoria Communicating safe eating and drinking: Best practice guideline or develop a similar guideline.*





Response:

Speech Pathology Australia will:

- amend the *Dysphagia Practice Guideline (2025)* to recommend that descriptions of mealtime supervision in individual mealtime plans align with the six elements of the SCVPBG (2020)
- communicate this amendment to members and stakeholders.

Recommendation: *That Speech Pathology Australia collaborate with the residential aged care sector and other stakeholders to support education and documentation for residential aged care staff in relation to care planning for residents identified at risk of choking (due to swallowing problems and/or unsafe eating and drinking behaviours), to align with the Safer Care Victoria Communicating safe eating and drinking: Best practice guideline or develop a similar guideline.*

Response:

Speech Pathology Australia will:

- continue to work collaboratively with the residential aged care sector and other stakeholders to support staff education and improve care-planning documentation for residents at risk of choking due to swallowing difficulties and/or unsafe eating and drinking behaviours, consistent with *Safer Care Victoria's Communicating safe eating and drinking: Best practice guideline (2020)*.

If further detail or comment is required, please contact Ms. Stacey Baldac, Chief, Speech Pathology Advancement [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lyn Brodie'.

Lyn Brodie
Chief Executive Officer
Speech Pathology Australia

