

6 May 2026

Olivia Collard
Coroner's Registrar – Coroners Support Services

Via email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Olivia,

**Re: Response to the Coroner's Findings and Recommendations
Investigation into the death of Darren Atkinson COR 2024 005426**

Eastern Health thanks the Court for the opportunity to respond formally to the recommendations arising from the findings of Coroner David Ryan dated 18 November 2025. We remain committed to continuous improvement and to ensuring the safest possible care for our community.

In accordance with the Court's guidelines, Eastern Health provides the following response to the recommendation.

Response to Recommendation

Murnong Community Mental Health Clinic review its process, procedures and training to ensure that, wherever possible and appropriate, staff involve family in the treatment planning of their clients.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The service acknowledges Coroner Ryan's findings and recommendation and supports the importance of involving families and carers in consumer care where appropriate, particularly during periods of acute deterioration, and of clearly documenting that involvement.

The findings and recommendation were disseminated to the relevant clinical team and discussed. That discussion confirmed that current clinical practices, which require the exercise of professional judgment on a case-by-case basis, are consistent with the Coroner's recommendations.

As part of ongoing governance and quality improvement activities, clinicians are reminded of the importance of documenting family and carer involvement, including the clinical rationale where decisions are made to involve or not involve family members, in accordance with applicable policies and privacy requirements. This includes reinforcement of existing clinical guidance regarding the identification of family members and carers, documentation of risk and decision-making, and the availability of escalation pathways where consent, privacy or safety considerations are unclear or where continuity issues arise.

Relevant clinical guidance has also been scheduled for further discussion at an upcoming team meeting to support consistent understanding and application of these principles.



These steps demonstrate that the Coroner's recommendations have been addressed through communication, education, and reinforcement of existing clinical practice, while preserving appropriate clinical discretion.

Closing

Eastern Health remains committed to continuous improvement and to implementing systems and processes that enhance patient safety. We thank the Court for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Couper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeremy Couper

Clinical Director – Adulthood Community and Rehab Services
Mental and Wellbeing Program