



Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing Response to Coroner Recommendations (COR 2021 002294)

Background to the Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing

1. The legislative functions of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Collaborative Centre) are set out in the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* (Vic), including ‘to provide, promote and coordinate activities that support the continuing education and professional development of service providers and persons who work or conduct research in the field of mental health and wellbeing’¹.
2. The Collaborative Centre has a system leadership role to bring together clinical, academic and Lived and Living Experience expertise to ensure translation of evidence into practice, including through workforce training and capability development for better outcomes of consumers, their families, carers and kin. The Collaborative Centre’s long-term goal is to ‘promote a high quality and efficient continuing education and professional development ecosystem that supports all mental health and wellbeing workers – regardless of professional discipline, background, role, setting and location – to have a core set of shared mental health and wellbeing capabilities’².
3. The Collaborative Centre’s workforce development function commenced in July 2025, at the conclusion of operations of the Centre for Mental Health Learning (CMHL), an organisation that provided workforce development specifically for specialist clinical mental health services.
4. The legislated workforce functions of the Collaborative Centre extend beyond specialist public mental health services, supporting the whole public mental health and wellbeing workforce across the lifespan, with a focus on uplifting the 15 core capabilities outlined in *Our workforce, our future: The capability framework for Victoria’s mental health and wellbeing workforce*³. Workforce development funding of \$2.7M annually is provided by the Department of Health to support this function.
5. A Workforce Development Needs Analysis project is currently underway at the Collaborative Centre to determine priority mental health workforce capability requirements to inform strategic planning for the Centre as well as the Department of Health. Initial data analyses indicate that workforces are seeking to build their capability with understanding and responding to mental health crisis and suicide, as well as understanding and responding to trauma. The Collaborative Centre is still finalising the foundations for development and delivery of its workforce development functions with a whole-of-workforce development plan expected to be released later in 2026.

¹ [Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022 | legislation.vic.gov.au](https://legislation.vic.gov.au)

² [Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2024-2027.pdf](#)

³ [Our workforce, our future | health.vic.gov.au](https://health.vic.gov.au)

Coroner Report and Recommendations

6. The Collaborative Centre thanks the Coroner for sharing the report and the recommendations. We would like to acknowledge the experiences and distress of Miss RST and her family, and we are deeply sorry for their loss. The Collaborative Centre, alongside other system steward organisations, exists to drive system and service improvements to ensure people experiencing mental health challenges and distress, as well as their families, carers and kin, can access the support they need, when they need it.
7. In Report COR 2021 002294, the Coroner has made the following Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing develop and deliver training and awareness programs for Emergency Department staff on the risks or possibility of death by suicide by children and young adolescents, particularly within the context of acute severe behavioural disturbance. The training should be delivered jointly to Emergency Department clinicians and emergency mental health staff. Such training should be made available to all Emergency Department staff and emergency mental health clinicians in Victoria.

Recommendation 2

The Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing develop and deliver training on trauma-informed responses to children and young adolescents presenting to Emergency Departments in states of distress and serious behaviour dysregulation. The training should be delivered jointly to Emergency Department clinicians and emergency mental health staff. Such training should be made available to all Emergency Department staff and emergency mental health clinicians in Victoria.

Response to Recommendation 1

8. The Collaborative Centre has identified that *Workforce Capability 5: Understanding and responding to mental health crisis and suicide* is a priority capability for the whole public mental health and wellbeing workforce.
9. With relatively new workforce training and capability development functions, it has been important for the Collaborative Centre to build relationships and understand system leadership roles to inform planning for focused work that is built on the latest evidence and complements existing activity to address gaps and avoid duplication of effort. To this end the Collaborative Centre has worked with Safer Care Victoria (SCV) and system stewards within the Department of Health including the Suicide Prevention and Response Office (SPARO), the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP) and Workforce System and Planning to map roles and responsibilities as well as current and planned activities to ensure alignment. A draft outline of these roles and activities can be found in **Attachment 1**.
10. Scoping work to support workforce capability 5 led by the Collaborative Centre has involved government, academic and Lived and Living Experience expertise, and is broadening to services including Area Mental Health Services, Community Mental Health Services and Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals.
11. The Collaborative Centre will develop child and young person specific content as part of a broader program of work focusing on *Capability 5* to improve responding to mental health crisis and suicide. This work includes bringing together relevant subject matter experts, identifying, developing and delivering training and workforce resources, and a focused campaign to highlight key frameworks, guidelines and best practice. Our approach will be evidence-based, in partnership with subject matter experts from a diversity of perspectives

(including Lived and Living experts) and will draw on the most recent guidelines and practice tools. The work will be enabled by Collaborative Centre infrastructure such as the Knowledge Sharing Platform and integrated with planned mental health leadership and culture change programs. A full outline of the proposed activities can be found in **Attachment 2**.

12. The Collaborative Centre will bring together specialist clinical, academic, Lived Experience and service partners with expertise in emergency, youth and acute mental health care settings to develop and disseminate resources that can be shared and promoted to Emergency Department staff on the topic of *Risks or possibility of death by suicide by children and young adolescents, particularly within the context of acute severe behavioural disturbance*. Resources to raise awareness will include papers summarising the latest evidence, recorded webinars delivered by experts sharing the latest evidence in practice, and the promotion and adaptation of current guidelines. This work will remain focused on resources directly relevant to Emergency Department practice and settings. It should be noted that Victorian specific guidelines for the management of suicidal persons in the Emergency Department were developed in 2010 and that there are other States with more recent guidelines that may be relevant once adapted to the Victorian context.
13. The Collaborative Centre is aware that the Murdoch Children's Research Institute has recently published guidelines for the identification, assessment and management of suicide and non-suicidal self-injury in children and adolescents aged 0–19 years; *Suicide and Non-suicidal Self-injury in Children and Adolescents (2026)*⁴. The guidelines include specific recommendations for care in emergency or urgent care settings (Section 4). These recommendations will be reviewed for implementation options and applicability across Emergency Department settings and could form the basis of tailored future training programs.
14. The planned activities for *Capability 5* utilise existing Collaborative Centre funding and resources primarily focused on mental health and wellbeing workforce in public mental health service. Whilst there is scope to review and share evidence, adapt training and make resources available to Emergency Department staff, this does not fully meet the Recommendations of the Coroner to develop and deliver training to Emergency Department staff across Victoria. The Collaborative Centre would need significant additional resources to develop and deliver training on this scale and would need Department of Health endorsement to expand workforce development scope to the broader public health workforce.
15. The Collaborative Centre will work with subject matter experts and system leaders to identify the evidence base, any existing training, and specialist expertise in Victoria to inform any requests for further resources.

Response to Recommendation 2

16. The Collaborative Centre is cognisant of the challenges of the Emergency Department environment and that there are improvements and alternatives that need to be explored to ensure that trauma-informed responses can be provided⁵. The Victorian Government has invested in the establishment of six mental health and alcohol and other drug Emergency Department hubs to ensure that people in crisis receive access to specialist mental health supports⁶. Findings from an evaluation of these hubs will be considered as part of the Collaborative Centre's planning for addressing *Capability 4: Understanding and responding to trauma* in conjunction with *Capability 5*.

⁴ [Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Children and Adolescents: Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline \(2026\)](https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Foundations-Improvements-and-alternatives-to-ED-1.pdf)

⁵ www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Foundations-Improvements-and-alternatives-to-ED-1.pdf

⁶ www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-12/guideline-for-the-mental-health-and-alcohol-and-other-drugs-emergency-department-hubs.docx

17. More broadly, the Collaborative Centre will address Recommendation 2 within the context of scoping a broader program of workforce development that is currently underway relating to *Capability 4*.
18. The Collaborative Centre will work with leading experts to explore adaptation of existing resources to support trauma-informed responses to children and young adolescents in the Emergency Department setting. This work will build on recently co-designed tools to support trauma-informed practice developed by the Collaborative Centre in partnership with Phoenix Australia⁷, as well as a Trauma-Informed Care Training package already delivered by the Collaborative Centre to clinical mental health services.

Attachments

Attachment 1. System and service roles mapping for suicide prevention and response in the MH sector

Attachment 2. Workforce development plan to support *Capability 5: Understanding and responding to mental health crisis and suicide*.

⁷ [Trauma-Informed Practice Tools - Phoenix Australia](#)