



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

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Our ref: 26066227

State Coroner, Her Honour Judge Liberty Sanger
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Judge Sanger

Finding into death with inquest – LX – COR 2020 2744

I refer to the Finding of Coroner Audrey Jamieson, published on 15 April 2026, following the inquest into the passing of LX. I extend my sincere condolences to the family of LX.

Of the 18 recommendations arising from the Finding, 16 recommendations are directed to the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (**the Department**). My responses to those recommendations are set out within this letter, including information about action that has been, is being, or will be, undertaken directly in response to the recommendations. Recommendations requiring ongoing consideration have been marked as 'under consideration'.

Please contact [REDACTED], Deputy Commissioner, Reintegration and Engagement Services Division, Corrections Victoria at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you require any further information about the Department's response.

Yours sincerely

Emma Cassar PSM

Secretary

1 / 07 /2026

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the post sentence scheme

The *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) (**SO Act**) provides a civil non-punitive scheme that allows for court-ordered continued supervision or detention of persons who have committed a serious sex and/or violence offence and who pose an unacceptable risk of committing a further such offence in the community upon the expiry of their custodial sentence. The primary purpose of the SO Act is community protection, and the secondary purpose is to facilitate treatment and rehabilitation. The County and Supreme Courts of Victoria make Supervision Orders, impose discretionary conditions and review the progress of people on these orders. The Supreme Court of Victoria makes Detention Orders. The Post Sentence Authority (**Authority**) is the independent statutory body responsible for the monitoring and oversight of persons on post sentence orders.

There are several accommodation options available to people on Supervision Orders, including residing at a Corrections Victoria operated "residential facility", Corella Place (main facility) or Corella Place 228 (together, **Corella Place**). Corella Place provides a supervised and supported environment in which residents are managed in a way that is consistent with their status as community members. Residents are encouraged to lead independent lives while working towards transition into the wider community. The Multi Agency Panel is an interdepartmental executive panel established to ensure oversight of service provision for people on post sentence orders. The Department and Victoria Police also have a joint unit which has a responsibility for responding to any escalation of risk, and to respond to any incidents and/or non-compliance and to ensure the protection of the community.

Responses to recommendations

The responses below include information about action that has been, is being, or will be, undertaken directly in response to the recommendations. Recommendations requiring ongoing consideration have been marked as 'under consideration'.

Recommendation 1: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that Corella Place institute a policy whereby residents are required to disclose if they are prescribed any Schedule 8 medications (including methadone) and all Schedule 8 medications should be centrally controlled and administered at Corella Place, subject to limited exceptions overseen by the Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Team.

The Coroner's recommendation is under consideration as part of a broader review of medication management at Corella Place.

The Department recognises the importance of appropriate medication management practices at Corella Place, particularly in relation to Schedule 8 medications, given the associated risks to resident health and safety. The Department is committed to strengthening existing medication management processes at Corella Place and exploring options to strengthen controls relating to Schedule 8 medications, including consideration of centrally controlled storage and access arrangements for all residents. Any such measures need to be carefully considered within the legislative framework governing Corella Place, including the SO Act the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) (**Charter**).

The Coroner's recommendation that the Department require all residents to disclose their prescribed Schedule 8 medications requires residents to voluntarily disclose their confidential

health information. The entitlement of the Department to require residents to act contrary to lawful rights to privacy enshrined at law regarding their confidential health information needs to be considered in light of the legislative framework governing Corella Place, noting there is an absence of any provisions in the SO Act authorising express or implied interferences with health privacy, as well as informational privacy obligations and the rights protected for those residents under the Charter.

Recommendation 2: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that serious consideration be given as to whether controls are placed in relation to pregabalin so that it is centrally controlled and administered at Corella Place, given its potential for abuse, its dangerousness in combination with other medications and its prevalence.

The Coroner's recommendation for what is described as "serious consideration" is accepted.

The Department acknowledges the risks associated with pregabalin, including its potential for misuse and diversion and the increased risk of harm when used in combination with other medications. The Department is committed to strengthening its existing medication management processes at Corella Place and will explore options to strengthen controls relating to pregabalin at Corella Place, including consideration of centrally controlled storage and access arrangements for all residents. Any such measures need to be carefully considered within the legislative framework governing Corella Place, including the SO Act and the Charter.

Recommendation 3: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths within the correctional facility of Corella Place, I recommend the Department of Justice and Community Safety review the medication management policies at Corella Place with a view to giving consideration to adopting a system of dispensing medication that replicates the system or systems in place in other correctional facilities known as prisons.

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted.

The Department acknowledges the importance of effective medication management practices across all Corrections Victoria operated facilities, including Corella Place. Corella Place operates under a fundamentally different legislative and operational framework to a prison. It is a community-based residential facility, rather than a secure custodial facility.

Accordingly, medication management practices at Corella Place must be appropriate to the facility's distinct purposes, which include transition and reintegration to the wider community. Any measures must also be applied consistently within the existing legal and policy framework, including the SO Act which establishes a civil non-punitive scheme. While the Department is undertaking a broader review of medication management at Corella Place, involving strengthening existing practices and exploring new practices, it does not consider it appropriate or justified to adopt a medication dispensing system equivalent to those used in prison settings.

Recommendation 4: With the aim of supporting mental health and wellbeing within the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that serious consideration be given to making improvements to Corella Place so that appropriate family visits can occur at the facility. In the interim, serious consideration should be given to allowing residents at Corella Place to access the purpose-built facilities at Rivergum for appropriate family visits. I further recommend that all staff and residents are informed that family visits can occur at Corella Place in accordance with the relevant Local Operating Procedure.

The Coroner's recommendation was accepted and serious consideration has been given to the matters raised.

The Department accepts that Corella Place staff and residents be informed that family visits can occur at Corella Place within its current operating environment and will ensure that residents and staff are informed of the arrangements in accordance with the relevant Local Operating Procedure.

The recommendation that Corella Place residents be allowed access to the purpose-built facilities at the Rivergum Residential Treatment Centre (**Rivergum**) for family visits is under consideration. As part of this process, the Department will undertake a review of relevant policies and procedures to assess the appropriate governance and operational arrangements that would be required to support any future implementation.

The Department has determined not to undertake capital works at Corella Place for the purpose of family visits. One reason for this is that Corella Place residents are strongly encouraged to have family visits in the wider community where prosocial skills can be practised in public settings, with the aim of promoting resocialisation and reintegration. The Department considers that this achieves the primary and secondary purposes of the SO Act, being to ensure the safety and protection of the community and the treatment and rehabilitation of residents. Further, the Department also does not have the budget allocation to establish a purpose-built visitor centre within Corella Place.

Recommendation 5: With the aim of best supporting and meeting the individual needs of the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that Specialist Case Managers and Specialist Case Workers receive mandatory, regular and specific training in relation to working with people with acquired brain injury, intellectual disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted, noting the Department already provides regular training that reflects current challenges, emerging best practice and the complex and evolving needs of the resident cohort at Corella Place.

All Corella Place staff, including Specialist Case Managers (**SCMs**) and Specialist Case Workers (**SCWs**), are required to undertake extensive training before commencing their roles and must undertake additional regular and ongoing learning and development once in their roles. This includes specialised training to build their capacity to work with residents with complex needs, such as intellectual disabilities (**IDs**), acquired brain injuries (**ABIs**) and other psychosocial and mental health concerns.

The Department will not commit to providing regular training specifically focussed on working with people with ABIs, IDs and ADHD as this would be narrower in scope than the Department's existing approach. Instead, the Department delivers training that is tailored to the dynamic needs of the resident cohort and responsive to identified risks, needs and emerging practice considerations.

For example, in the 2024-2025 financial year, training was delivered to enhance the capacity of Corella Place staff to work with residents with IDs; ADHD; ABIs; Autism Spectrum Disorder; complex behavioural presentations; disability needs; mental health conditions; deafness; suicide and self-harm behaviours; childhood trauma; personality disorders; substance abuse histories; and responsiveness issues.

Recommendation 6: With the aim of best supporting the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that supervision meetings between Specialist Case Managers and residents be held in person or if necessary, by video. Supervision meetings should not be held by telephone only.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted in principle, noting the current policy already aligns with this recommendation.

The current policies regarding the manner in which supervision meetings are conducted between people on Supervision Orders and SCMs provide that supervision sessions are to be held in person where possible. However, where approval is granted, and only in exceptional circumstances, appointments may take place remotely via video technology.

The telephone supervision sessions with LX in the period just prior to his passing occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those phone calls occurred in exceptional circumstances and in line with health advice provided by the Chief Health Officer of the Department of Health and policies which are no longer in force. As such, those circumstances are not reflective of the current general approach to supervision at Corella Place.

Recommendation 7: With the aim of best supporting the residents and staff at Corella Place, I recommend that the Department of Justice and Community Safety recommit to and emphasise the importance of Principal Practitioners engaging in at a minimum, fortnightly supervision with Specialist Case Managers, a recommendation from the Justice Assurance and Review Office accepted by Corrections Victoria following the death of Gregory Sedgman. I further recommend that all handover meetings are properly documented and that all staff at Corella Place are made aware of these requirements.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted.

The Department's current policy for supervision sessions between SCMs and Principal Practitioners (PPs) and handover meetings between practitioners align this recommendation. The Department mandates three supervision sessions for SCMs per month, of which at least two of these sessions are with a PP. The Department's policies for handover meetings between practitioners include several mandatory requirements, including that all handover meetings are documented on file.

Recommendation 8: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths at Corella Place, I recommend that steps are taken to improve general awareness of the signs and symptoms of drug overdose/misuse including but not necessarily limited to providing information to all residents on how to respond.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted.

The Department recognises the importance of promoting resident awareness of the signs and symptoms of drug overdose and misuse, including appropriate responses to suspected

overdose and other drug-related harms. Corella Place currently adopts a harm minimisation approach under which residents are offered quarterly harm minimisation sessions delivered by a service provider specialising in drug and alcohol education and treatment. These sessions include information on recognising the signs of substance-related harm, strategies to reduce risk and the actions to take in the event of a suspected overdose or medical emergency. Residents are provided with supporting written information and resources.

The Department will continue to ensure delivery of regular education sessions to residents and will improve the accessibility of written information and resources throughout the facility to ensure residents have ready access to information about overdose risks, warning signs and appropriate emergency responses.

Recommendation 9: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths at Corella Place, I recommend that regular and specific training is provided to staff at Corella Place on the signs and symptoms of drug misuse and overdose and what to do in case of an emergency.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted in principle, noting the current policy already aligns with this recommendation.

The Department acknowledges the importance of ensuring staff are equipped to recognise and respond to drug misuse, overdose and other medical emergencies. The Department considers that the intent of this recommendation is already met through the existing staff training framework at Corella Place.

Staff undertake regular mandatory and ongoing professional development sessions covering harm reduction, recognition of substance-affected presentations, incident management and emergency response procedures. In addition, quarterly psychoeducation sessions and accompanying written resources, delivered by a service provider specialising in drug and alcohol treatment and education, provide staff with the knowledge and skills contemplated by this recommendation. For this reason, the Department does not consider that the introduction of additional or separate training requirements is necessary to ensure the recommendation is implemented. The Department will continue to ensure the implementation of its applicable policies while monitoring and reviewing its training programs to ensure they remain effective and responsive to emergency risks and best practice.

Recommendation 10: With the aim of best supporting and meeting the individual needs of the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that Specialist Case Managers and Specialist Case Workers receive regular, updated training in relation to their obligations under the *Charter of Human rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), including with regard to the rights of residents to equality and freedom from discrimination. This training should be specific to Corella Place and include practical scenarios in which staff are required to consider human rights and to identify lawful and unlawful limitations on human rights.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted.

The Department recognises the importance of staff understanding their obligations as public authorities under the Charter. Corella Place staff complete a mandatory online training program developed by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) on a biennial basis. In addition, the Department will introduce a training program

which is being developed by lawyers specialising in the Charter and which is tailored to Corella Place.

The new training program will take into account the legislative requirements in the SO Act and explore the practical complexities that arise as a result of these statutory requirements, human rights obligations and the management of residents at Corella Place. Staff will be supported to understand and navigate these competing considerations in their day-to-day decision making.

Recommendation 11: With the aim of best supporting and meeting the individual needs of the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that the Department of Justice and Community Safety request the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission review its training in relation human rights and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) to assess its adequacy in relation to its specific application in the unique environment of Corella Place.

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted.

The Department considers that the intent of this recommendation is addressed through the combination of the existing training program which is developed by the VEOHRC and the new training program which will be specific to the unique environment of Corella Place. The new training program is being developed by experts who specialise in the Charter, SO Act and public administration. Representatives from DJCS will be consulted in the development of the new program for their subject matter expertise of Corella Place.

Recommendation 12: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths at Corella Place, I recommend that Corella Place guidelines are updated to make clear whether, and in what circumstances, a resident in quarantine may be required to undertake urinalysis.

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted, noting the referenced guidelines are no longer in place.

At the time of LX's death in May 2020, he had been in protective quarantine in accordance with the advice, directions and policies in place from the Chief Health Officer of the Department of Health, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no longer any directions in place across the State of Victoria, nor are there specific policies or procedures in place at Corella Place for the management of COVID-19.

Should a pandemic, epidemic or infectious disease situation occur in the future, Corella Place has a Business Continuity Plan which contemplates isolation or quarantine as a potential mitigation and that in such a circumstance, there may be changes to urinalysis requirements. However, further health advice reflective of any pandemic, epidemic or infectious disease situation applicable at that point in time, would guide the Department as to whether, and in what circumstances, protective quarantine could be mandated or any changes to urinalysis requirements would occur.

It is accepted that in such an exceptional scenario, any change to policies should, to the extent possible, be clear whether, and in what circumstances, a resident in quarantine may be required to undertake urinalysis.

Recommendation 13: With the aim of supporting mental health and wellbeing within the vulnerable population of Corella Place residents, I recommend that improvements are made to Corella Place 228 so that residents have access to activities and facilities that are commensurate with those provided at Corella Place Main.

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted.

The Department seeks, and will continue to seek, to ensure that residents across Corella Place (main facility) and Corella Place 228 have access to comparable activities and facilities. As noted in evidence during the inquest, two Activities Coordinators facilitate both onsite and offsite activities for residents at both locations. Purpose-built facilities are available across the two campuses, including gym equipment (at both main and 228), woodwork spaces (at both main and 228), walking tracks (at both main and 228), activities shed (at 228) and a living skills room (at main). These facilities support the delivery of a range of recreational and educational activities, including but not limited to horticulture, woodwork, various sports and games, welding and art.

Residents at 228 may also attend the main facility to participate in activities offered at that campus. The Department will not make the facilities at the main facility and 228 identical because they are designed to reflect the distinct purpose and operational philosophy of each campus, as well as the needs of their respective resident cohorts. The Department will continue to implement policies that ensure residents at 228 have access to facilities and activities at both campuses and through external outings.

Recommendation 14: With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths at Corella Place, I recommend that the Department of Justice and Community Safety take steps to ensure that all correspondence and concerns from family members of Corella Place residents is properly logged and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted in principle, noting the current policy already aligns with this recommendation.

The Department already has a system in place to record, track and respond to letters received by mail. There is also already a central system for electronic communication which enables families to send correspondence to Corrections Victoria. This system tracks and records correspondence and ensures that the correct division of Corrections Victoria is assigned the correspondence so that it can be considered and, where appropriate, replied to. Further, it is a requirement that phone calls from family members are to be recorded by way of a case note. The Department will continue to ensure implementation of these procedures.

Recommendation 15: With the aim of engaging residents of Corella Place in their own rehabilitation and transition to the community, I recommend that the Department of Justice and Community Safety give serious consideration to providing a clearer articulation within the supervision framework of what is required by each individual resident to achieve their transition to the community.

The Coroner's recommendation will be considered as part of the Department's review of Practice Guidelines.

However, the Department considers that the intent of this recommendation is already addressed through the current supervision framework which is underpinned by the

Correctional Practice Framework.¹ It is a requirement that all individuals subject to a Supervision Order have an Intervention Plan completed which provides a framework for the management of an individual, with a focus on reducing the risk of re-offending and its consequences. The Intervention Plan outlines risk factors, interventions strategies, responsivity factors, a supervision plan and case plan that details the resident's goals. The Intervention Plan is informed by an assessment report or progress report which is prepared by an independent medical expert as legislated by the SO Act. Together, the Intervention Plan and recommendations made by the independent medical expert provide a framework for identifying the interventions and progress required to support a resident's readiness for transition into the wider community. Residents are actively involved in the development and ongoing review of the Intervention Plan through the supervision framework.

Once a resident is considered ready for transition into the wider community and a suitable property is identified, the Department establishes a transition plan. Many elements of transition plans are determined by the Authority and/or the courts, such as the approval of appropriate residences and directions allowing increased outings and overnight visits into the wider community. The Department avoids developing a transition plan in circumstances where the resident is not ready for transition as this risks there being a range of detrimental impacts on residents. In such circumstances, a step-down plan may instead be established to identify opportunities to reduce restrictions and support the resident's progression towards readiness for a future transition plan. Residents are actively involved in the development of both step-down plans and transition plans through the supervision framework.

The Department is committed to ongoing continuous improvement in line with best practice for case management and will continue to ensure implementation of these policies.

Recommendation 16: With the aim of engaging residents in, and improving residents' access to, rehabilitation services, I recommend that the Department of Justice and Community Safety undertake a review of the current rehabilitation services offered at Corella Place, with a view to providing a suite of services that are tailored to the specific needs and requirements of the Corella Place cohort.

The Coroner's recommendation is not accepted.

The complex needs of individuals subject to Supervision Orders under the SO Act require a coordinated multi-agency response. The planning, coordination and delivery of services are subject to ongoing oversight through established statutory governance arrangements, including the courts and the Authority. The Multi Agency Panel, comprising the Department, Department of Families Fairness and Housing, Department of Health and Victoria Police, oversees the coordination and delivery of services, with all members legally required to cooperate, share information and provide reasonable assistance. Each individual subject to a Supervision Order has a Coordinated Services Plan (**CSP**) that identifies and coordinates services tailored to their individual needs and circumstances, with the aim of reducing their risk of re-offending. The CSP is endorsed by the Authority which is mandated to review the CSP and may issue notices to responsible agencies if service delivery concerns arise.

Under the SO Act, Corella Place is not a "residential treatment facility" (like Rivergum) nor a "rehabilitation centre" but a "residential facility". Unlike a "residential treatment facility", the purposes of a "residential facility" do not include "intensive treatment". In line with the secondary purpose of the SO Act, residents of Corella Place are offered offence-specific

¹ <https://www.corrections.vic.gov.au/about-the-corrections-system/frameworks-policies-and-standards/correctional-practice-framework>.

treatment and access to a forensic support program. They may also be referred to alcohol and other drug treatment services, psychological services and other specialist supports where appropriate and clinically indicated. Access to external services (and specifically residential rehabilitation facilities for drug and alcohol treatment) are subject to the eligibility criteria, assessment processes and acceptance requirements of the relevant external service provider. As community members, residents may also access broader community services, including through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Department considers that existing arrangements already provide for the ongoing assessment, referral and coordination of services tailored to individual needs. Accordingly, the Department does not consider that a separate review of rehabilitation services at Corella Place is required.