

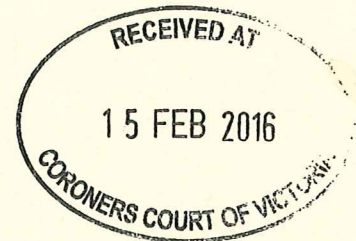


The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria

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Melbourne Victoria 3002
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Judge Ian Gray
State Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

D15/182825



Dear Judge Gray

I am writing in response to the letter from your office regarding the investigation into the death of Sargun Ragi, dated 30 October 2015 (Coroners Court of Victoria reference COR 2012 004184).

I acknowledge the tragic death of Ms Sagun Ragi. This case represents a shocking instance of family violence. Violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, or former partner, is particularly devastating given that the family structure is expected to be a place of care and protection.

Thank you for your thorough investigation and consideration of the circumstances of Ms Ragi's death. I note your findings on Family Violence Advocates and the police response to the escalation of the breaches of Family Violence Intervention Orders by Mr Singh. I also note your acknowledgement of the cultural factors which hold relevance in this case.

The government is deeply committed to reforming Victoria's family violence system to reduce the prevalence of violence in our community. We will consider your recommendations in conjunction with those made in previous coronial inquests, as well as the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, which is due to report on 29 March 2016. In accordance with sections 72(3) and (4) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)*, I enclose a detailed response to your recommendations which were directed to the State of Victoria.

Should you require any further information regarding the Victorian Government's response to your recommendations, please contact Ms Anna Faithfull, Executive Director, Department of Premier and Cabinet at anna.fairthfull@dpc.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier

Victorian Government Response to the Coroner's Findings into the Death of Sargun Ragi (Coroners Court of Victoria reference COR 2012 004184).

The Victorian Government Response addresses recommendations directed to the State of Victoria through the agency of the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC). The Response has been developed in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR), which will each play a key role in the implementation of the recommendations.

The Victorian Government will work to implement both recommendations directed to it. This Response provides further information as to how each recommendation will be implemented. The implementation process will involve extensive consultation and co-design with stakeholders and the community.

The Government is aware that its implementation of the recommendations may intersect with recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, which is due to publish its final report by 29 March 2016. The Government notes that the Coroner has provided a copy of the findings to the Royal Commission. The Government will implement systemic reform of the family violence system following the Royal Commission making its findings, and will make those reforms in line with the Royal Commission's recommendations, as well as those of the State Coroner.

Recommendation 2: In line with my recommendation in the Luke Batty finding, I recommend that the State of Victoria give consideration to the creation and resourcing of a Family Violence Advocate service to provide advocacy services for women and families modelled on the UK Domestic Advocate position.

The Government will implement this recommendation. The Government agrees that stronger advocacy for victims to support them to navigate relevant services is a key component of an effective response for victims of family violence.

The Government currently funds an alternative form of advocacy services for women and families as part of its outreach and case management services. These services, which incorporate an advocacy function, were given a funding boost through the 2015-16 State Budget amounting to \$2.6 million, and a further allocation of \$1.4 million for case management is proposed to be allocated from the demand fund.

The Government understands that the creation of new Family Violence Advocate roles has also been recommended in submissions to the Royal Commission. The Government will determine how best to implement the recommendation following completion of the Royal Commission's final report and in consultation with existing advocacy services, stakeholders and the community.

Recommendation 3: Accepting Dr Ruchita’s proposal, I recommend that the State of Victoria, working in conjunction with the family violence sector, give consideration to the development of education programs for CALD men who are perpetrators of family violence and who currently have limited or no access to such programs.

The Government will implement this recommendation, cognisant of recommendations made to the Royal Commission. The Government understands that family violence is experienced differently by people including people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important to avoid a ‘one size fits all’ approach in family violence prevention, response and perpetrator accountability.

The Government agrees that it is important to develop a specialised prevention strategy and develop culturally appropriate and accessible responses to perpetrators in the CALD community, who may face unique barriers to engagement in court processes and behaviour change programs. Work will be undertaken to examine the "Challenge Family Violence" crime prevention project. The Government will work with stakeholders and the community to review existing services and co-design programs to implement the recommendation. In doing so, the Government will draw on learnings from existing CALD-specific and mainstream men’s behaviour change programs.