



19 January 2018

Coroners Court of Victoria  
Reference: COR2015 004118

The Coroner, Rosemary Carlin  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank, Victoria

**Response to the Coroner's findings into the death of Dannika M Smith**

Dear Madam,

In response to the Coroner's Registrar letter dated 1 November 2017 please find the below response to recommendations made under section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008*, directed to the former Department of Immigration and Border Protection (now the Department of Home Affairs).

**Coroner's recommendation**

As a result of the investigation of the death of Dannika M Smith the following recommendation was directed towards the Department of Immigration and Border Protection:

*That the Department of Immigration and Border Protection establish processes to ensure that when a mail stopper is issued, officers who examine items seized under the auspices of that mail stopper are aware of why it was issued. This would enable officers to focus their attention on known risks when examining items, and select tests and examination techniques that are appropriate to the risks.*

**Departmental response**

The Coroner's recommendation has been fully implemented.

## Details of implementation

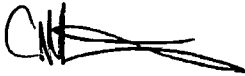
The Australian Border Forces (ABF's) Regional Command Victoria/Tasmania appointed an Executive Level officer to conduct a review of the mail stopper process. This review was completed in May 2016. As a result of this review, the ABF has refined the communication processes used in relation to mail stoppers. Specifically, officers examining items as a result of a mail stopper now have access to all information relating to that mail stopper. In summary the new procedure is as follows:

1. Request for mail stopper is made to a central coordination point for action.
2. Request validated and if appropriate, request is passed on to Australia Post for action.
3. An electronic mail stopper document is created and distributed to relevant ABF officers. This document includes reference to an intelligence report to enable examining officers to readily access all available information prior to any examination activity.
4. Mail articles returned to an International Mail Gateway (including Melbourne) are marked to the attention of ABF Supervisors who are required to undertake research regarding the reason for the examination and provide this to officers undertaking the examination.

These procedural changes were implemented immediately following the review (May 2016). The new procedures were formalised after the receipt of the findings of the Coroner. Formalised procedures were promulgated and are accessible to all ABF officers on the Policy and Procedure Control Register.

In addition to the above changes, the First Defender substance catalogue was updated in October 2016 to include testing for pentobarbital.

Yours sincerely



**Clive Murray**  
Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Operations Group

Contact Officer:

[REDACTED]