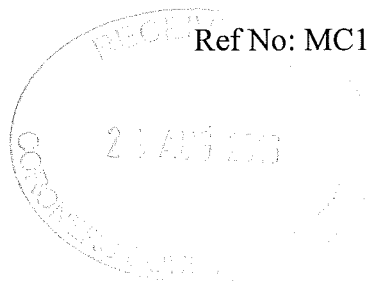




**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

Ref No: MC16-025473

Mr Josh Munro
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006



Dear Mr Munro

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 July 2016 regarding the findings of the inquest into the death of Mrs Doris P Townsend, reference number COR2015004244.

I am sorry to hear of the circumstances surrounding Mrs Townsend's death.

I note the Coroner's recommendation for the Australian Government to consider regulating the configuration of rooms in aged care facilities to ensure that residents' beds are not placed in dangerous positions, such as being proximate to hydronic heaters.

Commonwealth subsidised aged care providers are required by law to meet the Accreditation Standards (the Standards) to ensure quality care and services are provided to all care recipients. Under the Standards approved providers are required to provide a safe and comfortable environment that ensures the quality of life and welfare of care recipients, staff and visitors. To demonstrate effectiveness in this area, the aged care home must have practices and procedures in place that ensure the home's environment is safe and comfortable consistent with the care recipients' care needs. These requirements are monitored by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency in its assessment of a home against the Standards.

More specific requirements around issues such as structural safety and accommodation requirements are set out in state and territory building codes and regulations.

I understand that the aged care home concerned has taken a number of restorative actions, including moving care recipients' beds away from heaters to prevent any further incident occurring.

In line with the Department of Health's (the department) practice to alert and educate aged care providers where quality of care issues arise, the department will issue an industry alert to Commonwealth aged care service providers to make them aware of the Coroner's findings and to remind them of their responsibilities under Commonwealth law. The industry alert will also be published on the department's website.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sussan Ley', is written over the typed name.

The Hon Sussan Ley MP

16 AUG 2015
