



Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services



66 Lansdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 650 172
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
DX 210081

e4908244

██████████
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
66 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear ██████████

Re: Investigation into the death of ██████████

Thank you for your letter to the department of 20 April 2018 which included Coroner Mr Peter White's finding without inquest into the death of ██████████ in January 2016. ██████████ was formerly a resident of Airlie supported residential service (SRS) in Ivanhoe.

The Coroner recommended that the department in conjunction with the SRS sector, mental health services and consumer representation, develop a guide that improves the safety of SRS residents experiencing an acute deterioration in mental state, who are engaged with acute or continuing care teams, rehabilitation-recovery focused or other community mental health services.

Supported residential services are not clinical settings but private businesses that provide accommodation and meals to their residents as well as some assistance with personal care to residents who need this support. They are regulated by the department under the *Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010*.

The department has accepted the Coroner's recommendations and is currently revising existing guidelines for mental health services and SRS which are aimed at mutual understanding, collaboration and information sharing. This work is being led by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, in consultation with consumer and carer consultant policy advisors.

The revised guidelines will contain additional information for mental health services providing care to SRS residents who are experiencing an acute deterioration in their mental state. They advise mental health services to –

- develop safety plans which provide clear guidance for SRS staff about the symptoms and behaviours which should prompt requests for help to psychiatric triage and/or emergency services;
- involve the resident (if possible) and the appropriate SRS staff member in the development of the safety plan; and

- take into account that SRS are not clinical settings and be aware of the limits of SRS staff knowledge and training.

The revised guidelines will also contain important information for SRS staff including the importance of seeking help from the resident's case manager or psychiatric triage quickly, following recommendations provided by mental health services and encouraging SRS staff to activate safety plans when required.

I anticipate that the revised guidelines will be finalised and published on the department's website by 28 September 2018, and the department will provide you with a copy once this process is complete.

Should you have any queries you are welcome to contact the following departmental officers:

Margaret Summers, Manager, Supported Residential Services Regulation
Phone: 9096 6962 email: Margaret.Summers@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Daniel O'Connor, Deputy Chief Psychiatrist
Phone: 9096 7571 email: Daniel.O'Connor@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Kym Peake
Secretary

31 / 7 / 2018