

Marde Bevan
Coroner's Registrar
cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au



Dear Marde

Investigation into the death of Isabella E Rees

Thank you for your letter dated 8th April 2019 accompanying Coroner Caitlin English's findings into the tragic death of Isabella E Rees.

We refer to the Coroner's recommendation:

"that Kidsafe Victoria consider running button battery awareness campaigns, particularly prior to public events such as Moomba, major sporting events and the Royal Melbourne Show, when children may be more likely to be exposed to products containing button batteries, including information about safe storage and disposal."

This recommendation has and will continue to be implemented by Kidsafe Victoria as best as possible with our limited capacity as a not for profit organisation, as outlined below.

Button battery safety has been a priority topic for Kidsafe for a number of years – over this time we have implemented and been involved in a number of initiatives and awareness campaigns, including the national [Battery Controlled Campaign](#) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and local activities such as a media campaign with Consumer Affairs Victoria and Monash Health in 2014 for the [International Awareness Week on Button Battery Safety](#).

Button Battery Safety Campaign

In 2017, Kidsafe was provided with a once off funding contribution to deliver a button battery safety campaign to health professionals and the community. On September 5th 2017, Kidsafe Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network through Safer Care Victoria, launched a comprehensive, state wide campaign to address the issue of button battery ingestion. The campaign launch date was chosen to coincide with a time that the Victorian Poisons Information Centre typically see a spike in calls relating to button batteries.

As part of the campaign, a number of resources and activities were developed and distributed including:

Public resources

Public resources with key information about the dangers posed by button batteries, examples of products that contain button batteries, key actions that parents and carers can take to reduce the risk of button battery related injuries in their homes (including information on safe storage and disposal) and the call to action to contact the Poisons Information Centre if a button battery ingestion is suspected. The resources included:

- [A3 poster](#)
- [DL flyer](#)

- Fridge magnet

As well as being made available for free download from the [Kidsafe Victoria website](#), hard copies of the resources were also printed and distributed through a number of means, including:

- Local councils - campaign packs were distributed to each of the 79 local councils across the state, with resources to be distributed through services closely linked with parents and carers, including maternal and child health and early childhood centres, in the local municipalities. Over 68,000 resources were included in the council packs.
- Kidsafe Victoria's face to face activities, including our Community Outreach Program which provides approximately 300, 1 hour face to face presentations to new parents groups across Victoria, our Community Support Centre at the Monash Children's Hospital and through the two state wide parenting expos Kidsafe Victoria attends each year.

Hospital resources

A number of resources were developed for use by hospitals, including:

- [A3 poster directed to clinicians](#) - the poster contains information on the dangers posed by button batteries, possible symptoms that patients who have ingested a button battery may present with and information on the types of x-rays that may be needed to detect an ingested button battery; this includes the importance of urgently processing the x-rays.
- Digital screen slides and staff intranet content – hospitals who expressed interest were provided with cobranded digital slides to display on screens around their hospitals (e.g. in waiting rooms) to convey messages to the public, as well as information to place on their staff intranets.

Copies of the clinician's A3 poster were distributed to the 17 hospitals across Victoria with paediatric emergency departments.

General Practitioner resources

An [A3 poster](#) was also developed for GP's – this poster contains information on the dangers posed by button batteries, possible symptoms that patients who have ingested a button battery may present with and information on the need for urgent x-rays to be completed. The poster also refers GPs to the Poisons Information Centre as a source of advice and is available for download from the Kidsafe website. We also published an article regarding the dangers of button batteries in the February 2018 edition of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) newsletter.

Media campaign

A media event was held for the campaign launch and involved spokespeople from key stakeholders including the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network, Victorian Poisons Information Centre and Monash Health. The launch attracted widespread media coverage including segments on [Channel 7](#), Channel 10 and [Channel 9](#) news.

Social media campaign

A comprehensive social media campaign was implemented through Kidsafe Victoria's Facebook page to assist in increasing the reach of the campaign messages.

Ongoing activities

Kidsafe Victoria is committed to continuing to raise awareness of the dangers posed by button batteries, particularly prior to major public events and key times of the year such as Christmas.



As a small, independent, not for profit organisation, ongoing funding to deliver a continued comprehensive, multi-faceted campaigns is a challenge for Kidsafe Victoria. We support investment into an ongoing button battery awareness campaign which we would be pleased to implement to ensure that parents, grandparents and other carers receive regular information about how to keep their children safe. This is particularly critical with over 80,000 babies born in Victoria alone each year and 35,000 of these born to first time parents who may not be aware of the dangers of button batteries.

We extend our sincerest condolences to Isabella's family and in particular, Allison Rees who we commend for her tireless advocacy regarding button battery safety in Bella's memory.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on the details below.

Yours sincerely,

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