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30 December 2019

Sanchia Nigli
65 Kavanagh St
Southbank 3006
DX 212560
cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Sanchia

Coronial investigation into the death of Antonios VITOU (DOB 17 June 1926)

Court ref: COR 2019 000591

We refer to the above matter, and to your letter dated 2 October 2019 attaching a copy of Coroner Simon McGregor's Finding into death without inquest dated 2 October 2019 (**Finding**).

In your letter, you indicated that the Finding includes recommendations necessitating a response by AQA Victoria (**AQA**).

In light of Coroner McGregor's recommendations included in the Finding, we provide the below response.

1. Recommendation at paragraph 44 of the Finding:

"AQA continue the re-evaluation of their communications strategies" and AQA Victoria provide "an outline of the new system detailed at paragraph 41" (being the 'customer relationship management system' and 'rostering system')

AQA response:

The Coroner's recommendation has OR will be implemented.

AQA has reviewed the preferred communication method and contingencies with all clients and is including this in Client Service Partnership Agreements.





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AQA are in the advanced stages of a review of its systems across the organisation. This includes the review and update of its Customer Relationship Management System and Rostering System.

At the date of this response, AQA have:

- commenced the implementation stage of a new Customer Relationship Management System; and
- selected its new digital Rostering System.

AQA has ensured that through the process of assessing and selecting its new systems, it has considered the objectives and required capabilities of the systems at all times. This has included ensuring that the systems allow:

- staff and clients to access rosters in real time;
- back fill shifts to be offered, accepted and updated into live rosters;
- staff to sign in and out of shifts, with live updating;

The select systems, once fully implemented, will have customisable options allowing AQA to be alerted where a staff member has not signed in for a rostered shift, signalling the need for a response and follow up to determine if contingencies are required. As AQA will have live rosters, accessible by itself and its staff, AQA will no longer rely on SMS to confirm shift bookings.

The implementation of the new Customer Relationship Management System will replace manual data collection and streamline the completion of documentation required as part of the client relationship with AQA. This will include the ability for staff to make and access notes on the system and have these available to service coordination staff in real time. This system will present data in a more efficient and effective manner, allowing AQA to review and update client information and ensure the related provision of direct services and support, is also up to date and current.

The full implementation of the new systems, is a significant undertaking, and the associated transition impacts each area of AQA's business. The implementation will be rolled out in stages, and as at the date of this response we consider that we are 60% through the rollout. We anticipate launching the Digital Rostering Portal in July with a full rollout of integrated Rostering and Customer Relationship Management System by September 2020.





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2. Recommendation at paragraph 46 of the Finding:

"'correspondence books' and mandatory entries by disability support workers after every shift be implemented for all high-level care patients. Training should be provided to all disability care workers to identify in these books when a shift has not been attended. This should then be communicated back to AQA for follow-up."

AQA response:

An alternative to the Coroner's recommendation has OR will be implemented.

The model of support offered by AQA is a service partnership with the client, their family, and their treating teams. AQA recognises that not all clients have the same capacity to engage, and as such, AQA works with the client, their family and treating team to identify and implement strategies to manage their supports and identify, assess, and reduce risk.

In our partnership with clients, where we are supporting the client to manage their needs at home, at work and in their community, staff are instructed to report any observations or questions arising on a shift to the client so that the client is aware and can make decisions arising. In addition, where staff have an issue or concern about any aspect of the client's program, they are required to contact the service coordination team to report the issue and have it addressed.

In considering this recommendation, AQA have recognised the varying capacities, needs, and wants of its clients. AQA understand that a number of its clients value the current AQA approach, and would not want what might be considered a more formal or 'institutional' communications process in their homes. AQA have also identified that a strategy such as a correspondence book can be challenging to monitor and review, particularly where services are delivered remotely.

As such, and in light of the varying needs of clients, AQA are of the view that a mandatory rollout of correspondence books would not necessarily be appropriate, or enhance its services and may lead to circumstances where issues or questions that would be appropriately raised immediately with a client or with AQA are recorded in a correspondence book.

AQA instead consider that the suggestion and option of correspondence books be made to clients and implemented where agreed with the client and client's family.





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As client's services and support plans are reviewed, the communication needs and strategies of the program will be reviewed and discussed. On this basis, AQA will suggest the use of correspondence books to new and existing clients on a non-compulsory, opt in, basis. Where this occurs staff will be instructed in the use of the communication book in addition to the standing requirement to contact the service coordination team should they have an issue or concern about any aspect of the client's program.

As identified in its response to the recommendation at paragraph 44 above, AQA anticipate that its new systems will mitigate the risk of AQA not being made aware if a rostered shift is unattended.

3. Request at paragraph 48 of the finding:

"I have requested a copy of this protocol to retain on this investigation file"
(being the shift backfill protocol)

AQA response:

AQA note that this protocol was requested by Rebecca McCourtie, Coroner's Solicitor, on 25 September 2019. AQA provided the protocol via return email on the same day. The corresponding communication is attached for reference.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Trethewey
Chief Executive Officer

Michelle O'Sullivan
Chairperson

