



Department of Health & Human Services

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Office of the Secretary

e3670916

Ms Hannah Summerhayes
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC

Dear Ms Summerhayes

Re: Inquest into the death of Zachary Harvey, Taylah Mahon, Stephanie Winberg, Taylor Janssen and Chanelle Rae (court references 2009 001426, 2009 001767, 2009 003500, 2009 003966, 2009 004922)

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2014 regarding the findings of the inquest into the deaths of Zachary Harvey, Taylah Mahon, Stephanie Winberg, Taylor Janssen and Chanelle Rae (the reports). As I have statutory responsibility for responding to coronial recommendations directed to the Department of Health and Human Services, I will be responding as the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, and also on behalf of the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr Mark Oakley Browne who has been consulted in the preparation of this response.

The Department has considered the recommendations that you have provided in the reports and has provided a response below.

Recommendation

That the Department together with Victoria Police, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Chief Psychiatrist undertake a review of these reports (the *1997 Suicide Prevention Task Force Report* and the University of Melbourne's 2012 report *Developing a community plan for preventing and responding to suicide clusters*) and develop a policy framework that aligns, where appropriate, with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Department response

The Department accepts the recommendation. The Department is committed to working with other government departments and community agencies to reduce the incidence and impact of suicide in Victoria.

The Department will include the development of a Victorian Suicide Prevention Framework as a priority in the Victorian Government's 10 year plan for mental health. It is proposed that the framework be developed in consultation with Victoria Police, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and the Chief Psychiatrist. The input from academics and organisations with specialist expertise in suicide prevention will also be sought, and the framework will align with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy where appropriate.

The Department has been in contact with Victoria Police regarding this matter. The matter will also be raised and progress monitored closely through the Department's Inter-Departmental Liaison Committee with Victoria Police.

I wish to again thank the Coroners Court for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pradeep Philip". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Pradeep Philip
Secretary