



Secretary

Department of Health

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Coroner Darren Bracken
Coroners Court of Victoria

Via e-mail: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Bracken

REF: COR 2019 5125 – Investigation into the death of Jordan White

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2021 addressed to Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services in relation to the Finding without inquest into the death of baby Jordan White. As the Department of Health has responsibility for the state-wide Maternal and Child Health program, your letter has been referred to me for reply.

The department acknowledges the tragic death of baby Jordan White and I would like to offer my deepest condolences to his family and loved ones.

The Department of Health has consulted with Safer Care Victoria and across portfolio areas to prepare the following response to Recommendation One, as follows:

Recommendation 1

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and Kidsafe Victoria, together develop and implement a strategy to increase public awareness of the potentially fatal dangers of parents using faulty or damaged 'baby care equipment' such as portacots with a view of reducing, if not eradicating accidental deaths such as that of Baby Jordan caused by such use.

Response

The coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

The Department currently provides annual funding to Kidsafe Victoria to deliver evidence-based child safety and injury prevention information and to Red Nose Australia to deliver evidence-based safe sleep messaging information.

To support this recommendation, the Department has provided additional funding in 2020-21 to both organisations to strengthen injury prevention and safe sleep resources for parents, carers and service providers, including highlighting the fatal dangers of using faulty or damaged baby care and nursery equipment such as portacots.

In addition to the work currently being undertaken with Kidsafe Victoria and Red Nose Australia, other actions underway to support this recommendation include:

- Discussion and assessment of safe sleeping practices and environments by Maternal and Child Health Nurses as part of Key Age and Stage visits. At the first home visit consultation, the child's sleep environment is sighted and assessed with the parent and/or carer using the *Safe Sleeping Checklist* produced by Red Nose (**Appendix 1**). Future Key Age and Stage consultations, up to one year of age, follow-up on any issues raised from previous assessments.
- Provision of safe nursery equipment, including cots, to vulnerable Victorian families through the Nursery Equipment Program, where a safety concern is identified by a Maternal and Child Health nurse.
- Delivery of sleep and settling training to the Victorian Maternal and Child Health workforce to promote positive infant and early childhood sleep patterns and behaviours, including safe sleeping practices and environments.
- Development and publishing of contemporary, evidence-based guidance and practical advice for health services who are supporting parents and caregivers before and after the birth of their baby on safe infant sleeping. The guidance includes advice regarding fragile or broken infant and nursery products and notes that the use of these products may increase the risk of entrapment and fatal sleeping accidents (**Appendix 2**).

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Camilla Macdonell, Director, Maternal Child Health and Parenting at the Department of Health via Camilla.Macdonell@health.vic.gov.au.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Euan M Wallace', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Professor Euan M Wallace AM
Secretary

28/07/2021