



Secretary

Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 650 172
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.health.vic.gov.au
DX 210081

BAC-CO-9822

Coroner Audrey Jamieson
Coroners Court of Victoria
cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Jamieson

COR 2018 006222 – Investigation into the death of Nguyen Dinh Pham Le

Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2021 regarding the Finding without inquest into the death of Mr Nguyen Dinh Pham Le. I was saddened to learn of the loss of such a young man. It was particularly concerning to learn that Mr Le had not sought any help and that his worries must have been a large burden to carry alone.

My condolences go out to Nguyen Dinh Pham Le's family and loved ones, and to the staff and students at the University of Melbourne who tragically witnessed his death.

The Department of Health (DH) has consulted with Study Melbourne at the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), and Multicultural Affairs of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to consider your recommendation and determine what response(s) might reduce the likelihood of future students taking their own lives.

Recommendation 1. With the aim of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that the Department of Health and Human Services takes on the role of leading and coordinating efforts to support mental health and wellbeing of international students studying in Victoria, and to ensure international students can access mental health treatment.

On 16 February 2021, DH convened a working group comprising Study Melbourne of DJPR, and Multicultural Affairs of DFFH, to discuss the investigation findings and associated recommendation. Members agreed that DH would convene a taskforce, including lived experience representatives, to work through the key themes identified in your Finding and consider those themes in the context of available relevant research, such as the recent Orygen National report *International Students and their Mental Health and Physical Safety*. The taskforce will determine immediate and longer-term actions to promote mental health and wellbeing and to prevent suicide in Victoria's international student population.

As you are likely aware, the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System released its final report on 2 March 2021. The report makes recommendations that will transform mental health and wellbeing services in Victoria over the next decade, including several recommendations about suicide prevention. Specifically, recommendation 26.1 is to

establish a new Suicide Prevention and Response Office, led by a Suicide Prevention and Response Advisor. Suicide prevention and response for international students will be part of this Office's remit. This new Office will be briefed on this matter for as soon as it is established and asked to progress both suicide prevention in general and preventative measures specific to international students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Euan M Wallace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Euan M Wallace AM
Secretary

06/04/2021