



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-27504
COR 2020 005219

Coroner Sarah Gebert
Coroners Court of Victoria
Via e-mail: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Gebert

Thank you for providing me your findings and recommendations in relation to the tragic death of Mr P in May 2022. My sincere condolences go to Mr. Ps family and loved ones.

I note your recommendation for both a drug checking service and an early warning network in Victoria.

The Department of Health (department) acknowledges that drug checking services and an early warning system can provide information in support of reducing drug related harms. We continue to consider evidence for additional harm reduction approaches for Victoria.

For example, in relation to surveillance we are continuing to work with our partners on improving surveillance and system intelligence, primarily through the ongoing pilot of the Emerging Drug Network of Australia – Victoria (EDNAV). The surveillance work being undertaken through EDNAV is useful in understanding emerging harms. This work will inform our future prevention, early intervention, treatment, and harm reduction measures.

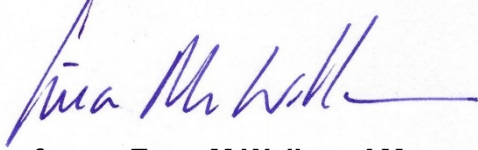
However, there are no current plans to implement a drug checking service of the kind you have recommended in your findings.

Nonetheless, if the Court is in a position to do so, I would welcome a discussion about how the sharing of toxicological and contextual drug-related harm data between us could assist in the development of an effective surveillance program. I hope that this may be of interest to the Court.

The relevant contact for this work is Krista Vanderheide, Director, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy and Policy at the Department of Health, via krista.vanderheide@health.vic.gov.au.

Again, thank you for the recommendations. They will continue to be considered by the department as we progress our work to enhance harm reduction initiatives.

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

27/07/2022