



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Consumer Affairs Victoria

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24/10/2022

Our ref: 22078127

Mr Simon McGregor
Coroner
Coroner's Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner McGregor

I refer to your findings and recommendations in the matter COR 2021 003131 dated 19 July 2022 regarding the death of [REDACTED]. I extend my deepest condolences to [REDACTED]'s family and those affected by his passing.

Recommendation 4 is directed to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), which falls within the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). DJCS's response to the recommendation has been prepared in consultation with the Department of Health (DoH) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and is as follows:

The Coroner's recommendation is under consideration

I can confirm that CAV and DJCS will continue to consider regulatory interventions that may be available in the State of Victoria, as well as approaches already considered by the ACCC at the Commonwealth level to reduce the accessibility of helium as a means of suicide.

DJCS has been engaging with the ACCC on potential national interventions available. DJCS understands that the ACCC is in the process of refining evidence-based solutions that are practicable and reasonable for the helium gas industry to implement.

While there are some measures available to the Victorian Government to regulate the sale of helium gas for domestic use, the effectiveness and likelihood of success of these measures continues to require further evaluation in consultation with health agencies and the ACCC.

A holistic approach to mental health and suicide prevention in Victoria

DJCS recognises the importance of a holistic approach to mental health and suicide prevention and aligning any regulatory interventions with the health response.

The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (the Royal Commission).

The final report of the Royal Commission recommended that the Victorian Government coproduce, implement and monitor a new Victorian Suicide Prevention and Response

Strategy (the strategy) with people with lived experience of suicide (recommendation 26.2.b). The strategy will build an evidence-informed, systems-based, whole-of-government and community-wide approach to suicide prevention and response.

Public engagement on the strategy commenced in July 2022 with the release of a strategy discussion paper on the Engage Victoria platform. Targeted engagement with the suicide prevention sector and government departments and agencies has also commenced. From October to December 2022, a series of roundtable discussions will be held with organisations representing priority groups and higher-risk communities and codesign workshops with people with lived experience of suicide will also take place. It is anticipated the strategy will be publicly released in mid-2023.

DJCS and CAV will continue to consider the regulatory options available in the State of Victoria to reduce the accessibility of helium as a means of suicide while continuing to work with the ACCC on delivering a national co-ordinated approach to this issue.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Jaklin Trajkovski, Director, Regulation Policy at Jaklin.Trajkovski@justice.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Nicole Rich
Executive Director, Regulatory Services and
Director, Consumer Affairs Victoria