

22 August 2023

Ms Amber Wylie  
Coroner's Registrar  
Coroners Support Services  
[cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)

Dear Ms Wylie,

Re: Implementation of Coroner Spanos' Recommendation - APS Response

On 24 April 2023, the Coroners Court of Victoria issues coronial recommendation directed to Australian Psychological Society (APS) in relation to the death of [REDACTED]. We greatly appreciate your diligence in communicating Coroner Spanos' Finding and Recommendation regarding the unfortunate passing of [REDACTED]. The APS acknowledges the pain and suffering of the deceased, their family and friends and the treating psychologist.

The APS communicated the matter to members in line with the Coroner's recommendations as seen in Attachment A.

In addition, we would like to kindly request that all future communications by Coroners Court Victoria pertaining to Coronial Inquests be initially sent to our CEO, Zena Burgess, and APS Professional Standards at [REDACTED].

Please feel free to reach out if you have any further inquiries or require additional information.

Thank you again for providing the APS with the opportunity to collaboratively respond to the important matters affecting the court and the community.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Zena Burgess FAPS FAICD**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **Appendix A- APS Response to Coronial Inquest- Member communications.**

Earlier this year the Coroners Court of Victoria issued findings on the death of a young person who died by suicide.

The Australian Psychological Society acknowledges the pain and suffering of the deceased, their family and friends and the treating psychologist.

The inquest found that there was no evidence that the psychologist's treatment of the young person was below the expected standard of care and the APS thanks the Coroners Court for the opportunity to respond to its recommendation.

The Coroner recommended the APS provide communication to its membership that when treating young persons in relation to self-harm and suicide issues, and unless clear reasons contraindicate such actions, psychologists should seek to:

1. *...Improve access to services and continuity of care for patients deemed to be vulnerable and/or at risk, I recommend the Australian Psychological Society advise its members that when confronted with evidence of a problem or situation beyond their capacity, or when a client is not benefiting from their psychological services, psychologists should take reasonable steps to ensure that the patient has been able to access the recommended alternate services if they choose to do so, and/or provide a handover to another health professional (such as a general practitioner) who can ensure that the patient is able to access the recommended services and can assist them to manage any barriers to accessing appropriate care.*

A range of APS member resources are available to assist psychologists in dealing with this or similar issues in your practice:

- [APS Code of Ethics](#),
- [Ethical guidelines on confidentiality](#)
- [Ethical guidelines relating to clients at risk of suicide](#), and
- [Making sound ethical decisions](#)

The APS recognises that psychologists' ability to provide referral information and support can vary based on capacity, access to information, time constraints and various other factors. We also recognise the increasing pressure on members as demand for psychologists' services continues to increase.

If you have questions regarding this matter, or regarding supporting resources, please get in touch with the Professional Advisory Service at [REDACTED]