



Secretary

Department of Health

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Colleen Bebbington
Senior Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
Via e-mail: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Bebbington

I write to provide additional information to previous correspondence from the Department of Health (department) dated 24 October 2022 regarding Coroner Sarah Gebert's investigation and findings into the death of Master S (COR 2017 003163).

In those findings, Coroner Gebert recommended that the department review resources relating to volatile substance misuse, and to update and relaunch the booklet *About Inhalant Abuse: For Health and Community Workers*.

My department has reviewed these materials and identified that volatile substance use remains a small but significant contributor to drug related harms in the community, particularly among young people. These resources are now outdated and do not reflect contemporary understanding of harm reduction. Accordingly, the department will develop a new resource for people who work with or support people at risk of volatile substance use and related harm. This resource will supersede existing resources (*About Inhalant Abuse: For Health and Community Workers* and *Management Response to Inhalant Use: Guidelines for community care and drugs and alcohol sector*) and will be developed in partnership with alcohol and other drug experts, with contemporary advice published by December 2025.

The department has also worked with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to update, based on the context in which Master S passed, the resource 'Inhalants'¹, and will continue to ensure this is regularly reviewed given the transient nature of volatile substance use.

These initiatives will support the availability of contemporaneous advice for people at risk of (or those supporting people at risk of) harm related to volatile substance use in Victoria.

I trust this information will be of assistance to the Court.

Yours sincerely

Professor Euan M Wallace AM

Secretary
06/02/2024

¹ See: <https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/inhalants/>