



## Secretary

Department of Health

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COR 2022 006970

Coroner Ingrid Giles  
Coroners Court of Victoria

**Via e-mail:** [cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)

Dear Coroner Giles

Thank you for providing your findings on 13 March 2024 in relation to the death of [REDACTED] who died after using substances believed to be heroin but found to be metonitazene. My sincere condolences go to [REDACTED] family and community.

You have recommended the Department of Health (the department) trial a drug checking service in the State of Victoria to gather evidence, experience, and insights into how drug checking might reduce risks (including preventable deaths) associated with the use of drugs obtained from unregulated drug markets.

I recognise the work of the Coroners Court of Victoria in advocating for a trial of drug checking services to minimise harms associated with drugs obtained from the unregulated drug market.

The Victorian Government has recently announced it will undertake an 18-month implementation trial of drug checking services. Planning is underway for a mobile service to attend festivals and events from December 2024. A fixed site service is anticipated to open in mid-2025 in a Melbourne location close to transport services. Trained staff will be present to test the make-up of substances and provide personalised and confidential health information to help people make better, safer and more informed decisions. The trial will test how drug checking services might best work to help Victorians.

The drug checking service will also generate important data to feed into the department's drug monitoring capability. This capability produces timely, actionable intelligence on drug-related public health and community safety issues, providing early warning of changes in drug market trends and conditions and improving responsiveness.

I thank you again for the investigation and presenting of findings to make recommendations will help address drug-related harms in Victoria.

Yours sincerely

**Katherine Whetton**

Acting Secretary

28 / 06 / 2024