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**COR 2021 003810: Investigation into the death of XY**  
**Response to Coroner's Recommendations to Barwon Health**

1. This letter provides Bendigo Health's response to the recommendations recorded at Appendix E to the Finding into Death with Inquest of Coroner Simon McGregor dated 19 June 2024 which are directed to Bendigo Health, or which require input from Bendigo Health.

**Recommendation 7:**

- (a) *That DFFH in consultation with the Department of Health and Bendigo Health, develop and implement more focused Social and Emotional Wellbeing approaches to the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people requiring mental health diagnosis and treatment, and do so in consultation with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations such as BDAC, and that appropriate and ongoing training be provided to clinical and Child Protection staff to support these approaches;*
  - (b) *That DFFH in consultation with the Department of Health and Bendigo Health, develop and implement systems for the cultural support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people admitted to hospital for acute and other mental health episodes, to ensure that Aboriginal health liaison officers are actively made available to the young person at the time of admission and that that cultural connection is available beyond crisis admissions;*
  - (c) *That DFFH in consultation with the Department of Health and Bendigo Health, take appropriate steps to ensure that its practice of offering contact with an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer upon admission is effected on each occasion that a young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is admitted with mental health issues.*
2. The Coroner's recommendations 7(a)–(c) are under consideration.
  3. These recommendations are directed to the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH) but are to be actioned in consultation with Bendigo Health.
  4. Bendigo Health has contacted DFFH to commence engagement around the recommendations and is awaiting information in response. It is therefore not yet possible to confirm the process by which these recommendations will be implemented, or the timeframe for implementation.

The Bendigo Health contact person who will be responsible for consideration of this recommendation is the office of the Clinical Director of Psychiatry at Bendigo Health, contactable via:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**Recommendation 9:**

(e) *Bendigo Health consider developing and implementing integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worker and lived experience workers within the Bendigo health system itself.*

5. The Coroner's recommendation 9 has been implemented by Bendigo Health, as follows:

- (a) Bendigo Health currently employs a female Koori Mental Health Liaison Officer (**KMHLO**) within the Aboriginal Services team at 0.78 FTE (though this is a 1.0 funded role);
- (b) The KMHLO works in Bendigo Health Mental Health inpatient wards and the service will be expanding into community facilities, Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (**YPARC**) and Adult Prevention and Recovery Care (**APARC**); and
- (c) The referral process for engagement of the KMHLO is via Bendigo Health's electronic patient record (ePR) with patient consent. The KMHLO also conducts a daily check of patient lists to ascertain if *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander* who have not yet been referred to the service require support.

**Recommendation 10:**

*That the Department of Health, DFFH and Bendigo Health coordinate culturally appropriate drug and alcohol support for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who present with drug/alcohol misuse, including by adequately funding and liaising with appropriate ACCOs such as BDAC and/or suitable family/community supports.*

6. The Coroner's recommendation 10 is under consideration.

7. Bendigo Health has contacted DFFH to commence engagement around the recommendations and is awaiting information in response. It is therefore not yet possible to confirm the process by which these recommendations will be implemented, or the timeframe for implementation.

8. The Bendigo Health contact person who will be responsible for consideration of this recommendation is the office of the Clinical Director of Psychiatry at Bendigo Health, contactable via:

[REDACTED]

**Recommendation 11(a):**

*That DFFH in association with its ACCO partners, the Department of Health and Bendigo Health, urgently consider how existing mental health services and new mental health service options could be developed to provide care that is accessible to and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with complex mental health needs.*

9. The Coroner's recommendation 11(a) is under consideration.

10. Bendigo Health has contacted DFFH to commence engagement around the recommendation and is awaiting information in response. It is therefore not yet possible to confirm the process by which these recommendations will be implemented, or the timeframe for implementation.

11. The Bendigo Health contact person who will be responsible for consideration of this recommendation is the office of the Clinical Director of Psychiatry at Bendigo Health, contactable via:

[REDACTED]



Signed on behalf of Bendigo Health by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer:



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Dr Yvonne Higgott

Deputy Chief CMO, Bendigo Health

