

25 September 2024

Coroner David Ryan  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank VIC 3006

Dear Coroner Ryan,

**Finding into the Death of Joshua Steven Kerr  
St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Limited response to recommendations**

I refer to the findings delivered by you on 1 July 2024 in relation to the death of Mr Joshua Steven Kerr at Port Phillip Prison on 10 August 2022.

Pursuant to section 72(3) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic), St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Limited (**St Vincent's**) provides the following response to the recommendations made by you, as they relate to St Vincent's.

**Recommendation 1) G4S and SVCHS staff receive training to assist them in recognising and managing drug affected prisoners, including those who may be experiencing ABD and drug toxicity, and its effect on their decision-making capacity.**

St Vincent's accepts recommendation one so far as it relates to the training of St Vincent's Correctional Health Service (**SVCHS**) staff. SVCHS have worked with the St Vincent's Education and Learning team to develop a learning package for all SVCHS staff which will be uploaded to the Workday online education platform. The training includes evidence based practice for the recognition and management of drug affected prisoners, including those who may be experiencing an Acute Behavioural Disturbance (**ABD**) and its effects on their decision-making capacity. The training is designed to be a mandated competency for all clinical health staff working on site at Port Phillip Prison (**PPP**).

Since Mr Kerr's passing, St Vincent's has provided simulation training to its staff at PPP focusing on prioritising early recognition of patient deterioration, effective communication and prompt escalation of care, as well as the management of patients affected by drugs and alcohol.

**Recommendation 2) SVCHS receive training about the practical application of the *Acute Poisoning Management Guideline*.**

St Vincent's accepts recommendation two and can confirm that training has been provided to SCVHS staff on the practical application of the Acute Poisoning Management Guideline. This training is being delivered through clinical simulations and mock codes to give staff practical experience in the application of the Acute Poisoning Guidelines within realistic scenarios. This training is being provided on an ongoing basis and is embedded into the mandated Workday training noted above.

**Recommendation 3) SVCHS staff receive training to reinforce their authority and responsibility to advocate for the treatment of prisoners in their care and to escalate where appropriate.**

St Vincent's accepts recommendation three. Since Mr Kerr's passing, a review of the escalation of care process for SVCHS was conducted to enhance staff understanding of their role in accessing patients and to set out escalation points for staff if, and when, access is not provided.

Comprehensive training has been developed and provided to SVCHS staff in relation to the escalation of patient care to enhance management of situations where access to the patient is restricted. Additional training has been offered to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff in advocating for access to provide essential patient care. This training is offered on an ongoing basis.

In addition to this, SVCHS staff are able to refer to the SVCHS Code Black and St. John's Observation Cell Clinical Deterioration and Escalation Flowchart which outlines the process for escalation when access to a patient is restricted for security reasons.

**Recommendation 5) SVHM ED staff receive training about the limitations of providing medical treatment in prison; the benefit of communication of a prisoner's treatment plan with escorting correctional staff; and the importance of prompt preparation of a discharge summary including the treatment plan.**

St Vincent's accepts recommendation five. St Vincent's Emergency Department (**ED**) staff have been provided with training in relation to the limitations of providing medical treatment at PPP (and all other correctional facilities), with further training scheduled for December 2024. In addition to this, information in relation to the limitations of care for prisoners at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre is also available to staff.

Since Mr Kerr's passing, St Vincent's developed a flow chart relating to the Management of Custodial Patients in the Emergency Department with Escalating Behaviours of Concern (**MCPED**). The MCPED prompts ED staff to communicate with correctional staff when a patient's behaviour is escalating and there is a risk of care being terminated. The MCPED also provides guidance for staff to assist in rapidly deciding on appropriate next steps in patient assessment and management and rapid escalation to senior support if required. The MCPED forms part of training for all ED clinical staff and is readily accessible on the ED clinical resources intranet page.

St Vincent's has also developed a communication flow chart for ED and SVCHS staff to ensure shared understanding and consistent practice in documentation and handover for transfers in, and discharges from, the ED to Port Phillip Prison. In addition to this, St Vincent's ED staff

have been instructed of the requirement to promptly provide both written and verbal discharge information to prison health service clinicians for all prisoners discharged from the ED.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Tweddle', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Nicole Tweddle  
Chief Executive Officer  
St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Limited