



Your Ref: COR 2020 6727 & Ors

3 December 2024

Alex Cottrell, Principal Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street, Southbank VIC 3161

Via email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Cottrell

Investigation into the deaths of Bridget Flack, Matt Byrne, Heather Pierard, 'AS' & Natalie Wilson (Trans & Gender Diverse Suicide Cluster)

I refer to the findings and recommendations made on 29 August 2024 by her Honour Coroner Giles following the inquest into the deaths of Bridget Flack, Matt Byrne, Heather Pierard, 'AS' and Natalie Wilson.

I note that Coroner Giles observed that it is crucial that Coroners Court processes accord cultural safety, visibility, dignity and respect to all deceased persons and their loved ones. Her Honour noted that it is critical that transgender and gender diverse (**TGD**) communities are able to participate safely and comfortably in coronial proceedings, and that strategies to improve the degree of accessibility and cultural safety of the Coroners Court must be informed, shaped and advanced by lived experience.

Coroner Giles directed a recommendation to the State Coroner to:

under the guidance of experts from TGD communities, consider introduction of a LGBTIQ+ awareness training module, with a TGD-specific component, into the induction training for all staff and Coroners, specifically addressing the factors that can contribute to the risk of suicide in these communities.

I accept the recommendation and have directed that the Coroners Court's Diversity & Inclusion Committee lead the consideration of the implementation of this recommendation. I have further requested that in considering the nature and content of any additional training, that the Committee consult with experts from TGD communities including the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, as well as Court Services Victoria and the Judicial College of Victoria who provide ongoing professional education and training to court staff and coroners respectively.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact my Executive Assistant, Sophie Friggens [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Judge John Cain
State Coroner