

COR 2020 006727, COR 2021 001636
COR 2021 002457, COR 2021 002415
COR 2020 004857

05 December 2024

Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street,
Southbank, Victoria, 3006

By email to: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Giles

RE: COR 2020 6727 Investigation into the death of Bridget Flack, Matt Byrne, Heather Pierard, 'AS' 1 & Natalie Wilson (Trans & Gender Diverse Suicide Cluster), Findings Hearing recommendations.

On behalf of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP/the College), I acknowledge your recommendations made on 2 September 2024 (amended Coroner's Finding), following the Findings Hearing investigation into the deaths of five individuals undergoing gender affirming care, between September 2020 and May 2021. We extend our condolences to the family, friends, kin, and community affected by these losses.

I note the Coroner's Recommendation 9 as it relates to the RANZCP. As a member organisation, this has been considered by the RANZCP Education and Training and the *Steering Group into evidence-informed mental health care for people experiencing gender dysphoria* (the Steering Group), which includes psychiatrists with direct experience working with individuals who are transitioning.

We advise that a review of [RANZCP Training curriculum](#) is in progress. The RANZCP regularly updates the curriculum to reflect emerging mental health conditions and treatments, as well as the impact of technological, demographic, and social changes on mental health and wellbeing. I can advise that there will be significant updates to the curriculum relating to research and developments in our understanding of sexuality and gender diversity since the previous revision in 2012. We believe this approach is more impactful to specialist foundational training in the long term.

The RANZCP has demonstrated interest in improving mental health care for people who are transitioning. Psychiatrists are well-positioned to provide aid and advise on these issues due to their extensive academic, clinical and service delivery expertise, and ongoing professional development. This includes comprehensive clinical knowledge developed through extensive training, education, and research-based evidence to inform current approaches, including cultural safety and suicide prevention.

We welcome opportunities to co-design and implement policies, programs, and services to support individuals transitioning and to target suicide prevention—including Position Statement 103: [*The Role of Psychiatrists in Working with Trans and Gender Diverse People*](#), last updated in December 2023. This, together with other documents noted within; provides the RANZCP's position on the role of psychiatrists in working with trans and gender diverse individuals. These have been formed through extensive consultation with the RANZCP Committees, including people with lived experience, and the Steering Group.

To discuss this further, or in relation to any other matter, please contact Ms Jo Balmforth, Policy and Advocacy Advisor [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Dr Elizabeth Moore
President

Ref no: 4688