

10 July 2025

Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
Southbank VIC 3006

Court Reference: COR 2021 000204

Subject: Response to Recommendation from the Coroner Regarding the Death of [REDACTED]

Dear Principal Registrar

Thank you for your letter regarding the Finding without Inquest into the death of [REDACTED] issued by Coroner Despot. We acknowledge receipt of the Coroner's recommendation made under section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)*, directed to Safe and Equal.

The recommendation proposes that Safe and Equal update the *Code of Practice: Principles and Standards for Specialist Family Violence Services for Victim-Survivors*, or a similar practice-guiding document, to include:

- a) Clear instructions not to allocate workers to clients they know personally, including family friends and acquaintances;
- b) Clear guidance on what workers should do if they identify a personal connection to a client after a referral has been made; and
- c) Guidance for services managing referrals where the client has a personal association with all available workers.

After careful consideration, Safe and Equal advises we have concerns regarding this recommendation in its entirety for some critical reasons.

While we acknowledge and respect the intent of the recommendation, we hold significant concerns that implementing it in its entirety may unintentionally limit service access for some victim survivors – particularly in rural and regional settings or in targeted, cohort specific service contexts where personal connection to workers is more likely due to the size and nature of the community.

Additionally, the Code of Practice functions as a principle-based framework designed to guide service delivery across diverse settings. It does not provide detailed operational or procedural instruction.

Whilst we do not consider the Code of Practice the appropriate vehicle for prescriptive guidance of this nature, we will commit to update and inform relevant operational practice guidance to better address this issue when:


- a personal connection to a client after referral has been made and
- for services managing referrals where a client has a personal associate with all available workers.

We can also address this issue through the various community of practice forums we facilitate for specialist family violence services.

We thank the coroner for raising this important issue and reaffirm our ongoing commitment to improving safety and accountability within the specialist family violence response system.

If you require further information, please feel free to contact me directly or my colleague, Ellen McGregor [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Tania Farha
Chief Executive Officer