



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

Level 26
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: (03) 9915 3759
justice.vic.gov.au

Our ref: 25081280
Your ref: COR 2020 007005

Her Honour Ingrid Giles, Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner Giles

I refer to the findings and recommendations made without inquest into the death of Ms HRZ on 25 December 2025.

My Department has contributed to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's (DFFH) response to the recommendations directed to the Victorian Government (recommendations 2 and 3). I wanted to advise you that the Coroner's first recommendation is under consideration and the Department's response is set out below:

Recommendation 1

That the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety consider the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service's submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence and conduct sector-wide consultation and research about the feasibility of the same (specifically, to seek feedback from and conduct consultation with the family violence sector regarding the feasibility of the use of Applicant and Respondent Workers' risk assessment by the Magistrates Court of Victoria). Feedback should be obtained from (but not limited to) Applicant and Respondent workers, specialist family violence staff, Magistrates, Victoria Police and Victoria Legal Aid.

Department's response

The Coroner's recommendation is under consideration.

The submission referred to by Coroner Giles made by the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service to the Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) focuses on the experiences of women through the Magistrates' Court and in particular the cross application of intervention orders as a form of systems abuse. The submission touches on the importance of police and Magistrates being cognisant of the definition of the predominant aggressor of family violence, and considers the use of risk assessments, such as those completed by applicant and respondent practitioners, in supporting Magistrates to make informed decisions.

Since the Royal Commission, the Victorian Government has implemented sweeping changes to strengthen risk assessment and management across all parts of the family violence response system, ensuring visibility and responsibility is shared across police, courts and specialist services and not limited to one part of system and the limitations that may impose.

While the Coroner's recommendation was not made on the issue of misidentification of the predominant aggressor (misidentification) more broadly, the Department notes the Coroner's finding that Ms HRZ was likely misidentified, and the recommendation seeks to prevent instances of misidentification in the future. Reforms that aim to prevent and rectify misidentification will require both agency-led and system wide responses that considers all relevant actors in the family violence system, including the Magistrates' Court of Victoria.

Recognising the significance and ongoing prevalence of the issue of misidentification, particularly for migrant and refugee women, the Department, in partnership with Family Safety Victoria (FSV) has recently re-established a whole-of-Victorian-Government (WoVG) Predominant Aggressor Working Group comprising representatives from government departments and agencies relevant to ensuring effective and integrated system-wide responses to family violence (including Victoria Police and Magistrates' Court of Victoria).

The Working Group is one forum that is considering system-wide improvements and practice responses to support accurate identification of the predominant aggressor and rectification as well as oversight of WoVG work underway related to misidentification.

The Department is committed to further considering the Coroner's recommendation through government's existing program of work on misidentification, including potentially through the Working Group.

The relevant contact for this work is [REDACTED], Director, Policy Reform and Programs and can be contacted via email at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Kate Houghton PSM

Secretary

05/09/2025