



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

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Inquiries:

Hon Adele Farina MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Ms Farina

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION - INQUIRY INTO
WORKSAFE WA**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 9 July 2018, requesting information to assist the above inquiry.

Western Australia Police Force (WA Police Force) officers are appointed as coroner's investigators, acting on the Coroner's behalf, under the provisions of Section 14(2) of the *Coroners Act 1996* (the Act). The Coronial Investigation Squad investigates all reportable deaths on behalf of the Office of the State Coroner, including suicide.

WA Police Force policy exists for the Scene of Death to notify appropriate authorities, which includes WorkSafe WA. WA Police Force policy exists where WorkSafe WA should be contacted where the death of a person occurred at a worksite and there are no suspicious circumstances. A copy of this policy is attached for the information of the committee.

In relation to the specific questions from the committee, the WA Police Force provide the following responses:

1.1

Are WA Police required as part of their investigation of a suicide, to inquire whether the suicide was caused by or connected to the person's employment?

Police attend all Reportable Deaths as defined within Section 3 of the Act and undertake investigations with the principal role of making an initial determination of whether the death has occurred under any suspicious circumstances.

Police officers are prohibited by the Act from making comment on the cause and manner of death as only the Coroner can make a finding and comment as prescribed in Section 25(1) of the Act.

All information collected in the course of the police investigation is provided to the Coroner in accordance with the Act.

1.1.2

If the answer to question 1.1 is no, why not?

See response to 1.1.

1.1.3

Is there a policy or procedure that the WA Police follow in relation to referring suicides to Worksafe WA?

Not for suicide specifically. Notification of appropriate authorities, which includes WorkSafe WA is determined by the WA Police Force policies and

1.1.4

If there is a policy or procedure that the WA Police follow in referring suicides to Worksafe WA, would you please provide the Committee with a copy or describe the policy or procedure to the Committee?

See response to 1.1.3.

1.1.5

Is it the Police officer investigating the suicide the person who determines whether or not the suicide is referred to Worksafe WA?

See response to 1.1.3.

1.1.6

Is the decision whether or not to refer a suicide to Worksafe WA reviewed by a more senior officer?

See response to 1.1.3.

1.1.7

If there is no policy or procedure that the WA Police follow in referring suicides to Worksafe WA, how do Police officers make a decision whether to contact Worksafe WA in relation to a suicide?

See response to 1.1.3.

1.2

If the WA Police have referred a suicide to Worksafe WA for investigation, does Worksafe WA inform the WA Police about the outcome of their investigation?

No.

1.2.1

If the answer to question 1.2 is yes, what information does Worksafe WA give to WA Police and how does Worksafe WA supply the WA Police with the information?

Not applicable.

1.2.2

Do WA Police need to ask Worksafe WA for information about the outcome of its investigation or is this information automatically provided to WA Police?

Yes. WA Police are required to ask for information.

1.2.3

Does Worksafe WA provide WA Police with a copy of its investigation report?

No.

1.2.4

If the answer to question 12.3 is no, would it assist WA Police if Worksafe WA provided WA Police with a copy of its investigation report and if yes, how?

Yes. The Worksafe WA investigation would be considered with information obtained by WA Police Force when preparing the coronial investigation file for the Coroner.

Yours sincerely

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CHRIS DAWSON
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

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September 2018