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**NSW Police Force**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

6 September 2023

F/2023/17884

The Hon. Michael Daley MP  
Attorney General  
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SYDNEY NSW 2001

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Dear Attorney

On 3 March 2023, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Erin Kennedy finalised the inquest into the death of Mr Darren James Higgins. The Deputy State Coroner made two recommendations to the NSW Police Force.

These recommendations, along with the NSW Police Force position on each of the recommendations, are included in the attached table.

Yours sincerely

**Karen Webb APM**  
**Commissioner of Police**

*Encl. NSWPF's response to the recommendations*

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**Inquest into the disappearance of Mr Darren James Higgins**  
*(Responsible Command column to be removed by MinEx prior to dispatch)*

Rec No.	Recommendation	NSW Police Force (NSWPF) response
1	<p>To the Commissioner of Police, New South Wales and to the Commissioner of Police, Victoria:</p> <p>a. To give consideration to developing a memorandum of understanding between the two Police forces, applying to circumstances where a person goes missing in a border region adjacent to the Murray River in either New South Wales or Victoria AND that person is considered by either a New South Wales or Victorian missing person risk assessment to be a high risk of misadventure or death if not located as soon as possible, addressing:</p> <p>b. the exchange of information obtained by each Police force in relation to that person; and</p> <p>c. co-ordination between the two Police forces of search and investigative resources, where feasible;</p> <p>d. In addressing point (a) above, to consider including as part of that information exchange process, a requirement that an officer of Inspector level or higher in each relevantly adjoining New South Wales and Victorian local regional command have direct oversight of the information exchange; and that the officer in charge of the New South Wales missing person investigation and their Victorian counterpart immediately liaise and continue to directly liaise as part of that information exchange;</p> <p>e. To consequently update the relevant New South Wales and Victorian Missing Persons Standard Operating Procedures and Policies should any of proposed recommendation 1(a) and/or (b) be implemented;</p> <p>f. To give consideration to identifying in such Standard Operating Procedures and Policies (as referred to in (c) above) how an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer may be used to help provide a culturally safe context when</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>The NSWPF and VICPOL are participating in regular meetings to discuss cross border management arrangements.</p> <p>High risk missing persons have an Inspector appointed as forward commander with appropriate resources allocated.</p> <p>Murray River PD review all missing person reports which are shared with VICPOL. Investigative records are updated to include current information such as the details and status of active land/marine searches</p> <p>The current 2023 Missing Persons and Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains SOPs, as well as the ANZPAA Missing Person Policy (2020) address the recommendations.</p> <p>An Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer is appointed to all operational responses involving Aboriginal persons. This is NSWPF standard operating procedure.</p>

	dealing with families and relevant extended kin of a missing First Nations person, including when obtaining information to assist in a missing person investigation and when conducting a land or water search.	
2	<p>2. To the New South Wales Commissioner of Police:</p> <p>a. To give consideration to arranging and offering currently available New South Wales Police training, in cultural safety and cultural awareness when dealing with First Nations persons, to officers within the New South Wales Missing Persons Unit.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>The NSWPF provides several training packages directly related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and engaging with these communities. This training is mandatory for all NSWPF staff.</p> <p>The NSWPF Working with Aboriginal Communities workshop is currently under review. The revised iteration will include a section dedicated to missing persons.</p>