

Ms Penny Armytage
Chair of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System
Commissioners
Dr Alex Cockram,
Professor Allan Fels AO
Professor Bernadette McSherry

Dear Ms Armytage and Commissioners,

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My work over this period focused on work-related harm, specifically families bereaved by work-related death, including work-related suicide. From this work I have researched work factors in suicide, data weaknesses in the coronial and Victorian WorkCover Authority regarding work factors in suicide, mental illness in Australian Defence Force veterans, and mental illness of long-term injured workers on the Victorian workers' compensation system. The agency developed a successful peer companionship support program for bereaved families, a contemplative spirituality program for veterans, and framed a restorative justice service to respond to work-related harm.

In addition, our agency's work (Work Factors in Suicide. 2002) led to significant research and development by other organisations:

- Work related suicide stressors. Department of Forensic Medicine, Monash University (2010)
- Suicide and work related stress in Victoria. Department of Forensic Medicine, Monash University (2011)
- Work and suicide prevention: position statement. Suicide Prevention Australia (2014)

We published 'Suicide and Work: the need for improved data collection on work factors in suicide as a contribution to suicide prevention' in 2010, but I do not believe there has been significant progress on resolving the issues we raised then.

As a result of a disturbing finding on the possible contribution of the workers' compensation system to long-term injured workers on the compensation system, our agency completed a study into the experience of fifteen injured workers. All experienced a deterioration of their mental health and a small number reported suicide ideation. The study is 'Filling the dark spot' (2014). The findings of this study were validated by a stinging report by the Victorian Ombudsman, 'Investigation into

