

# MEG WEBB MLC

*Independent Member for Nelson*

The Hon. Guy Barnett MP  
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice  
Executive Building  
Hobart TAS 7000

Via email: [guy.barnett@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:guy.barnett@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Friday 31 January 2025

Dear Minister Barnett,

**Re: Coronial Project and the need for trauma-informed public communications**

I am writing with some urgency regarding concerns raised with me this week by members of the Tasmanian community following the publication in the *Saturday Mercury*, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, of the 126 names of deceased persons subject to the current Coronial Project investigation.

It is clear from hearing from some of these people's reactions at suddenly seeing their siblings, children, and other loved ones' names included in this list, and in the context of some of their family members' bodily remains still apparently being retained by authorities, came as a deep and triggering shock.

As I have stated publicly, I recognise the Coronial Project has a difficult task in investigating and addressing the historic ramifications of earlier behaviour and decisions made. However, the distress and trauma experienced by many Tasmanians is not historic but is ongoing, and therefore it is incumbent on all involved to apply a compassionate and trauma-informed approach at all stages of the Project, particularly any public communications.

Considering current government and public entities stated commitment to entrenching a trauma-informed approach as a standard operating policy, the blunt appearance of these names in this manner is, quite frankly, disappointing and hard to fathom.

In light of this, can you please detail the following:

1. Was any effort made to first identify and contact living next of kin prior the decision to publish the names as part of a call for people to come forward? If not, why not?
2. What was the decision-making process undertaken regarding the publication of the 126 names, and was a trauma-informed lens applied to those discussions and final decision?



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Also, for your information, I did write to the Coronial Project on Tuesday the 28th this week once these concerns were raised with me, to request that the specific Project webpage be updated to include trauma assistance and support contact details:

<https://www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/coronerscourt/news/coronial-project>

At the time of writing to you, this request has yet to be acknowledged and the website remains without these support contact details.

I am aware that the Magistrates Court website more broadly does include quite comprehensive information of Grief management on a separate page beneath the drop down menu of 'Resources and forms'. However, shocked and traumatised people are not necessarily going to be aware or be in a frame of mind to search for this information. In this context, even a link on the Coronial Project webpage to this information provided elsewhere on the Magistrate Court website would be consistent with a trauma-informed communication approach.

Further Minister, I am sure you would agree that due to the acute distress caused to many Tasmanians through no fault of their own, the least that could be offered by government is a prompt and unequivocal apology for that distress caused by the blunt publication of their loved ones' names which also, in many cases, was the first time they were aware of the possibility their loved ones' partial remains had not been buried with them.

Additional to such a prompt and unequivocal apology, I urge you to consider providing a public commitment to review the decision-making processes that resulted in this situation and to ensure lessons are learned to prevent any possible repeat in the future.

Minister, I do urge you take action on this matter as soon as possible. Not only would that go a long way to assist those affected deal with their shock personally, but it could also help them still consider assisting the Coronial Project with its task. Currently, there is a real risk they will not wish to participate, as well as a risk that such interaction may cause further trauma and harm.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss further.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meg Webb', written in a cursive style.

**Meg Webb MLC**  
**Independent Member for Nelson**

Cc: Ms Kristy Bourne, Secretary, Department of Justice