

Date: 19/08/2014 15:37
Subject: Re: Fw: Excess deaths - private research enquiry

Thanks Liza.

Erin, I have just answered an abusive letter from Dr Gunter on the quality of DH's information during the fire. Your decision on his request is obviously yours; if you refer him to us my response will be that there has been an independent inquiry into the fire, and we have nothing further to add. Obviously his "research" is up to him.

Cheers

Rosemary

health

Dr Rosemary Lester PSM
Chief Health Officer
Health Protection Branch
Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/

Liza M Kelsall Good morning Rosemary, I've received an e... 18/08/2014 09:34:50 AM

From: Liza M Kelsall/HeadOffice/DHS
To: Rosemary Lester/HeadOffice/DHS@DHS,
Cc: Sandra Falconer/HeadOffice/DHS@DHS, Joanna Gaston/HeadOffice/DHS@DHS, Graeme Gillespie/HeadOffice/DHS@DHS
Date: 18/08/2014 09:34 AM
Subject: Fw: Excess deaths - private research enquiry

Good morning Rosemary,

I've received an email (see below) from Erin at BDM in relation to an independent researcher who has been looking at excess deaths during the Hazelwood coalmine fire period earlier this year. She will probably refer the researcher on to Public Health re: concerns raised.

Best Regards,

Liza Kelsall.

health

Liza Kelsall
Senior Epidemiologist | Health Intelligence Unit
Department of Health | 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

----- Forwarded by Liza M Kelsall/HeadOffice/DHS on 18/08/2014 09:08 AM -----

From: Erin Keleher/Person/DOJ@DOJ
To: Liza M Kelsall/HeadOffice/DHS@DHS,
Date: 17/08/2014 04:03 PM
Subject: Excess deaths - private research enquiry

Hello Liza

I thought you may be interested in this request and may have had contact with Dr Gunter previously. One of my team is in discussion with him to determine what it is that he wants from BDM. Would you object if we suggested that he raise his questions/concerns with Public Health?

Regards

Erin



Erin Keleher
Director and Registrar

Victorian Registry of Births,
Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 4332, Melbourne VIC 3001

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Website: www.bdm.vic.gov.au

Securing today's records and creating services for the benefit of the community now and into the future

This office is based on the land of the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations.
We acknowledge their history, culture and Elders both past and present.

----- Forwarded by Erin Keleher/Person/DOJ on 17/08/2014 16:02 -----

From: DOJ-BDM-Online Enquiries
To: Erin Keleher/Person/DOJ@DOJ,
Date: 04/08/2014 10:29
Subject: Fw: PRIVATE, attention The Registrar BD&M
Sent by: Linh Hong

Hi,

Could you please advise this client.

Thank you.

Kind regards,



Online Enquiries Team
Victorian Registry of Births,
Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 4332, Melbourne VIC 3001

Email: vlcbdm@justice.vic.gov.au
Website: www.bdm.vic.gov.au

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----- Forwarded by Linh Hong/Person/DOJ on 04/08/2014 10:29 -----

Michael Gunter



04/08/2014 10:27

To The Registrar BD&M <vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au>
cc
Subject PRIVATE, attention The Registrar BD&M

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am an independent researcher with a medical degree, having retired from active medical practice over two decades ago.

In recent weeks I have done a meticulous study of deaths notices in the Latrobe Valley Express, done in the mistaken belief that much better quality de-identified data by postcode or LGA was not publicly accessible at BD&M. Now I learn that metadata for LGA Latrobe City Council may be available pursuant to s.3 of the Births Deaths and Marriages Act 1996. Please advise also if data is available by postcode, as it seems reasonable to postulate that any possible "harvesting" effect would have been greatest in Morwell, postcode 3840.

What my spreadsheet on death announcements in the newspaper seems to be showing is an approximate 40% spike in March 2014 above the average for the previous four years (i.e average death announcements for the four months of March in years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013).

My research has looked at five years of historical newspaper death notice statistics for the first half of each year from 2009 to 2013, and four months of 2014, namely January to April 2014. I was very careful to weed out all duplicate notices, not only within each edition, but looking back across several past issues as well. A tedious task!

The local funeral home tells me their estimate is that about 80% of deaths locally make it into the Latrobe Valley Express. My own estimation is that drug overdoses, suicides and stillbirths may not rate so highly. The biggest possible confounding factor is deaths occurring outside the LGA, even interstate and overseas, but no attempt was made to weed out those from the raw spreadsheet data.

What you will see in the attached spreadsheet is an apparent harvesting effect in Feb-March of both 2009 and 2014. On the face of it such data may provide reasonable grounds to call for an investigation by the coroner into the Hazelwood mine fire, or for the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry (HMFI) itself to be re-opened so that new evidence can be considered. The case would be a lot stronger if the indicative deaths notices stats are reflected in your official deaths data.

To sort out possible statewide effects such as heatwaves and 'flu epidemics from any possible 2014 smoke effect in the Latrobe Valley, death rates for the whole of Victoria for those 34 same months are requested. I understand that the 2009 statewide data will show a February "harvesting" effect due to the extreme heat event alone, even after the 173 firestorm deaths on 7th Feb are separated out.

Please advise at your earliest convenience your decision on this request, and the data format to be provided, e.g. csv.

Yours faithfully,

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Michael Gunter MB BS (Melbourne University, 1976)

http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Electricity_Industry_and_Bushfires_1969_to_1994

<http://www.voltscommissar.net/bushfires>

<http://youtube.com/user/voltscommissar>

PS I am working informally with a Facebook group that was formed during the Hazelwood mine fire crisis "Voices of teh Valley" and they know that I am writing to you today.

[attachment "LV Express unique death notice stats.ver3.ods" deleted by Rosemary Lester/HeadOffice/DHS]