

2020

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CORONIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THE INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF JOANNE LEA LOVELOCK**

TABLING STATEMENT

**Presented by
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health
20 August 2020**

Madam Speaker, I rise to table the ACT Government's response to Coronial recommendations from the inquest into the death of Joanne Lea Lovelock.

I acknowledge Joanne Lovelock and her life and offer my sincere condolences to her family and friends for their tragic loss.

Acting Chief Coroner Theakston found Ms Lovelock died on 25 December 2015 from the combined effects of alcohol, and the prescription medications Amitriptyline and Methadone.

The Government has considered the Coroner's report and supports the recommendation for national real-time prescription monitoring, with auditing functionality.

I can advise that work is already underway to implement the national Real Time Prescription Monitoring system in the ACT in 2021, which will address the Coroner's recommendation.

The ACT Government is also working to address the Coroner's desire to see a broader range of medicines in the ACT's online remote access real time prescription monitoring website, DORA. The Government is already committed to commence the monitoring of some schedule 4 medicines through national Real Time Prescription Monitoring by June 2021.

Madam Speaker, monitoring the dispensing of controlled medicines is only one piece of the puzzle. We also need to focus our efforts on harm reduction in the community and the delivery of alcohol, drug and mental health services.

The ACT Government has a comprehensive plan to tackle the issues associated with drug and alcohol harm. The ACT Government met Action 16 of the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021*, by implementing the DORA Real Time Prescription Monitoring system for practitioners in 2019.

Our focus has now moved to upgrading to nationally consistent prescription monitoring next year, as agreed to by Council of Australian Governments Health Council in April 2018.

Consultation will also soon be undertaken to determine the list of schedule 4 medicines that will be monitored by the ACT's prescription monitoring system.

These measures will further improve oversight of prescriptions and dispensing of medicines that may cause harm in the ACT due to abuse, misuse or diversion.

In accordance with the ACT Government's obligations under the *Coroners Act 1997*, I commend the response to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

ENDS