



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT ACTS ON CORONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

New procedures will ensure important recommendations from coronial inquests are followed up promptly as part of a more open and transparent process, NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos said today.

“Coroners conduct inquests into death, fires and explosions and often make valuable recommendations to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“It is vital that the process of responding to Coroner’s recommendations and implementing them where necessary is completely open and transparent.

“That is why the Premier Nathan Rees will this week issue a memorandum to all NSW Ministers underscoring their responsibility to respond to coronial recommendations within six months.”

Under the new guidelines, NSW Government agencies who receive a recommendation from the coroner will be required to advise the Attorney General within six months on whether it will be adopted.

“These procedures will reduce the risk of any recommendations falling through the cracks,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“While it is not always possible to implement the recommendation in the way that is suggested, government agencies will be required to publicly report on the outcome of each and every recommendation.”

Summaries of coroner’s recommendations and responses from ministers and public officials will be posted on the website of the Attorney General’s Department www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au every six months.

Mr Hatzistergos said publicising the outcomes of coronial recommendations may assist in the grieving process for families and friends of a person whose death prompted an inquest.

“It can be of comfort to a family who has lost a loved one to know that the tragedy of that person’s death will lead to changes to public health and safety standards or services provided by government agencies,” he said.

“Over the years, coroner’s recommendations have led to speed limits being reduced in school zones, dangerous stretches of roads being improved and changes to hospital procedures to protect patients from being given the wrong dose of medicine.”