



15 February 2014

Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11
222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE

Death of Glenn Andrew Fisher - Court Reference: COR 2012 000683

On 3 December 2013, Fiona Hayes, Coroner, released a finding into death without inquest in respect of Glenn Andrew Fisher who died consistent with drowning on 19 February 2012.

The Coroner made three recommendations connected with the death, of which one related directly to Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA).

"That the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, Victoria, investigate the options for the provision of communications to emergency services in case of an emergency, at points closer to the beach".

ESTA was established as a statutory authority on 1 July 2005 under the *Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority Act 2004 (Vic)*. ESTA is vested with responsibility for the provision of multi-agency emergency services communications across Victoria.

ESTA provides the critical link between the Victorian community and the State's emergency services organisations and provides State-wide, around the clock emergency call taking and dispatch services for police, fire, ambulance and VicSES. In this respect, the integration of emergency services communications within a single Authority like ESTA is unique in Australia and rare worldwide.

In the year to 30 June 2013, ESTA managed more than 2.3 million calls (an increase of 6.7 percent over the previous year), and dispatched more than 1.8 million events (an increase of 9.9 percent over the same period). On average, this equates to ESTA taking a call every 13 seconds and dispatching an event every 18 seconds, 24 hours per day, every day. Each one of these events represented a personal emergency for someone, somewhere in Victoria.

ESTA also manages the provision of advanced operational communications for Victoria's emergency services. These operational communications support police, fire, ambulance and VICSES personnel in the field by carrying close to 20 million calls over the Metropolitan Mobile Radio Service; supporting 6.7 million data transactions on the Mobile Data Network (MDN), and delivering more than a million messages to CFA, VicSES and AV volunteers and staff via the State-wide Emergency Alerting System (EAS).

ESTA's call taking and dispatch services are delivered from three State Emergency Communications Centres (**SECCs**) located at Ballarat, Tally-Ho in East Burwood and the World Trade Centre at Docklands.

At the time of Mr Fisher's death, ESTA did not have statutory responsibility for call-taking and dispatch services for Victoria Police in the Gippsland region. Responsibility for these services rested with Victoria Police. Triple Zero calls for this area were handled by the D24 Police Communications Centre in Moe.

ESTA's only involvement in Mr. Fisher's case was to handle a request from the Moe D24 to respond VicSES to assist in the search of Mr. Fisher. The request was received at 4.27pm and the Yarram SES Unit was dispatched at 4:29pm. At 4.49pm, Police communications called back to cancel VicSES following the discovery of Mr. Fisher's body.

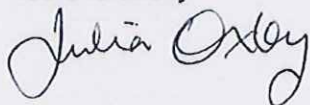
Outlined in her finding, Coroner Hayes referred to difficulty getting mobile phone coverage on the beach, which resulted in a delay in placing a call to Triple Zero. It is worth noting that Mr. Fisher and the group he was with took more than 45 minutes walking up the beach to reach their site. The site was remote from the car park.

Responsibility for mobile phone coverage is vested in commercial arrangements by mobile phone providers. ESTA has no responsibility or authority under its Act to require mobile phone providers to enhance mobile phone coverage to areas of the State with limited or poor mobile phone reception. Coverage maps by the two leading mobile phone providers indicate limited coverage in the McLaughlin's Beach area.

As ESTA have no authority under its Act to require mobile phone providers to enhance mobile phone coverage to areas of the State with limited or poor mobile phone reception ESTA is unable to implement the coroner's recommendation.

It is recommended that the major mobile phone providers receive a similar coronial recommendation to consider the enhancement of mobile phone reception in the area in order to fulfill the coroner's recommendation.

Yours faithfully



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