

17 March 2014

**Our ref: FOL/12/2324**  
**Court ref: COR 2011/1180**

Emma Lindsey  
Coroners Registrar  
Level 11, 222 Exhibition St  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3000**



Dear Ms Lindsey

**RECOMMENDATION IN THE MATTER OF THE FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT  
INQUEST OF MAURO AMATO**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 17 December 2013.

The Coroner's recommendations in relation to the death of Mauro Amato on 26 March 2011 were:

*1. To promote the awareness of and compliance with PFD regulations amongst human-powered vessel occupants, I recommend retailers of canoes and kayaks, in consultation with Maritime Safety, consider the distribution of the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group's Paddle Safe Brochure to consumers at point of sale for both online and face-to-face transactions.*

*2. To promote the awareness of and compliance with PFD regulations amongst human powered vessel occupants, I recommend that Canoeing Victoria, the Victorian Canoe Association Inc and Victorian Sea Kayaking Club consider the distribution of the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group's Paddle Safe brochure to their members.*

Please find enclosed TSV's response to these recommendations.

**Statement of Action- Recommendation 1**

In consultation with the Coroner's Prevention Unit, TSV produced a media release entitled *Kayaker drowning prompts lifejacket reminder* (Attachment 1) on 19 December

2013 to support the call to action to retailers to take a more active role in educating operators of human powered vessels. Prior to the release of the findings of this case (and as noted in the findings), TSV had approached three major retailers in September 2013 (Attachment 2) with an offer for senior kayak retail staff to participate in a kayak skills training course designed to enhance awareness of the safety equipment and skills required to paddle safely. The aim of this program was to provide retail staff with the knowledge to better inform purchasers of paddle craft on various safety matters including the wearing of PFDs. In addition, TSV offered to provide expert paddle safety trainers to deliver a paddle safety presentation for customers (Attachment 3).

These initial letters, the follow up media release and considerable attempts to further engage with retailers have resulted in the delivery of two training courses to retail staff to date, with a further two courses planned for April. The response from industry so far has been disappointing particularly given that, from 1 July 2012 with the commencement of the *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic), suppliers of vessels and marine safety equipment are required to uphold safety duties under sections 26 and 27 of that legislation in relation to the design, manufacture and supply vessels and marine safety equipment.

TSV plans to approach a second tranche of retailers by the end of March 2014 and is continuing to contact the initial set of retailers approached. TSV considers that making contact at the point of sale is a critical pathway to reach operators of paddle craft in the absence of the mechanisms available to communicate on safety issues with the broader boating population such as registration.

### **Statement of Action- Recommendation 2**

Following the media release of 19 December 2013 (Attachment 1), TSV successfully engaged with Canoeing Victoria and is currently in discussions regarding a formal partnership that seeks to distribute paddling safety messages and to promote awareness of the availability of safety advice from both TSV and Canoeing Victoria to clubs and individuals. The partnership proposal includes preparation and distribution of a range of communication materials including a fact sheet, brochure, stickers and a communique. The communique includes a call to action for experienced paddlers to assist in disseminating the paddle safety message to friends and family via dialogue and role modeling.

Given this successful start, TSV now plans to make contact with the Victorian Sea Kayaking Club and the Victorian Canoe Association by the end of March 2014.

I trust that this information satisfies your request for a response to these recommendations under section 72(3) and 72(4) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic). We are happy to discuss the marine safety issues with you and your colleagues and to provide any further assistance that we can to further improve marine safety.

Yours sincerely



**PETER CORCORAN**  
Director Maritime Safety

**Attachments**

1. Media release 19 December 2013 "*Kayaker drowning prompts lifejacket reminder*".
2. Letter to retailers, September 2013.
3. Sea safety evening presentation.



For immediate release – Thursday, 19 December 2013

## Kayaker drowning prompts lifejacket reminder

Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) has described the Coroner's recent finding into the 2011 drowning of a male kayaker as a safety wake up call for retailers of kayaks, canoes and other paddle craft.

The Coroner has released her findings into the death, which occurred on 26 March 2011 on Lake Eildon. In her recommendations, the Coroner highlighted the link between the increase in drowning involving canoes and kayaks and the absence of wearing lifejackets.

The Coroner has recommended greater awareness of and compliance with lifejacket regulations among operators of human powered vessels, such as kayaks and canoes.

TSV incident statistics show that 13 human powered vessel operators drowned on Victorian waters between 1 January 2000 and 30 November 2011. A lifejacket was not worn by the operator in more than half of these incidents.

Peter Corcoran, Director, Maritime Safety, said the Coroner's finding supports the regulator's committed approach to improving paddling safety and emphasises the need for retailers to play a more active role in educating their customers.

"TSV fully endorses the Coroner's findings and recommendations. We have already identified paddling safety as a key area of focus and developed a program aimed at providing safety information at the point of sale.

"Retailers of vessels and marine equipment should ensure that their customers are provided with adequate information on how to operate their vessel safely.

"We expect the retailers to contribute to paddling safety by providing information about lifejacket wearing and safety equipment requirements," Mr Corcoran said.

Mr Corcoran has reminded paddlers that it is a legal requirement that they wear a lifejacket at all times when underway.

"This tragedy serves as a reminder to all kayakers and canoeists to always wear an approved lifejacket when they are out on the water," Mr Corcoran said.

The findings can be obtained from the Coroners Court of Victoria website (<http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/>)

Visit the TSV website ([www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)) to download the Paddle Safe Paddle Smart brochure and other information relating to paddle safety.

For further information please contact Karin Limon, Manager, Strategic Communications on (03) 9655 8955, 0428 286 449 or by email at [karin.limon@transportsafety.vic.gov.au](mailto:karin.limon@transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

DD MMM YYYY

**Ref:** [REDACTED]

Contact name

Organisation name

Postage address line 1

**SUBURB STATE POST CODE (IN BOLD CAPS)**

Dear

### **CANOE AND KAYAK SAFETY**

As you would be aware, canoeing and kayaking are fast-growing recreational activities in Victoria and Australia wide. Unfortunately, they also represent a growing proportion of boating statistics. In the 2010-2012 period there were six fatalities on Victorian waters related to the use of canoes and kayaks.

While canoe and kayak safety is a regulatory concern, their sales also represent an opportunity to market the safety equipment and skills training which would go a long way to enhancing the paddler's safety in the activities pursued after purchase. Given most incidents have been associated with relatively new paddlers, Transport Safety Victoria is seeking your partnership to assist in imparting important safety messages, particularly to those embarking on paddling activities for the first time.

Transport Safety Victoria would like to offer your senior kayak retail staff the opportunity to participate in a kayak skills training course designed to enhance awareness of the safety equipment and skills required to paddle safely. The aim of this program would be to provide your team with the knowledge to better inform your customers.

In addition, we would like to provide our expert paddle safety trainers to deliver a paddle safety presentation at your venues to your customers.

These courses are ready to commence immediately.

To take advantage of the above offers please contact our paddle safety program manager,  
[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

**PAUL CORKILL**

Manager, Waterway User Safety

PO Box 2797, Melbourne Vic 3001 [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

Bus and Rail T. (03) 9655 8949 | F. (03) 9655 8929 | E. [information@ptsv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information@ptsv.vic.gov.au)  
Maritime T. 1800 223 022 | F. (03) 9655 6611 | E. [marinesafety@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:marinesafety@transport.vic.gov.au)

TRANSPORT  
SAFETY  
VICTORIA



# Sea Safety

An introduction to sit on top  
kayaking safety  
for enclosed waterways



## Our Aim:

- To promote kayak safety and awareness to your customers
- To present an overview of basic safety requirements for kayaks and unpowered craft
- To help you understand sea conditions, basic navigation and weather interpretation in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port

# Contents

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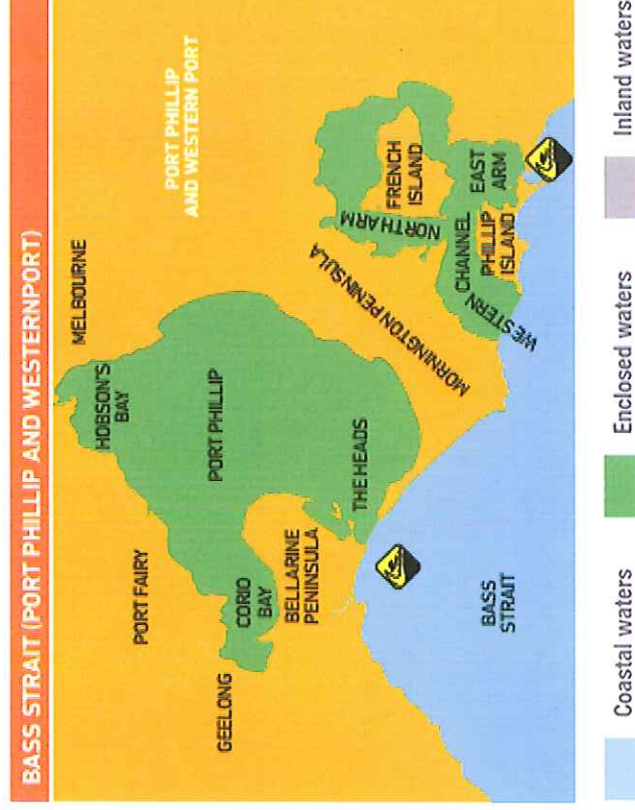
- **Weather, Sea Conditions & other water users**
- **Clothing & Footwear**
- **Minimum Safety Equipment & Kayak outfitting**
- **Basic Skills – Strokes & Rescues**
- **Next Steps**



# Definitions

- **Enclosed water ways**
  - Port Phillip Bay, Westernport, Shallow Inlet, Gippsland Lakes & other inlets & areas of declared port waters
- **Inland waters** - rivers (inside the seaward entrance), creeks, canals, lakes, reservoirs and any similar waters except those within port areas
- **Coastal (open) Waters**  
eg Bass Strait

Transport Safety Victoria –  
Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook



## Weather – Know when Not to Go!

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- Winds – onshore / offshore, strength and direction
- Where do I get the right information?
- How do I interpret it?
  - Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)
  - Local knowledge

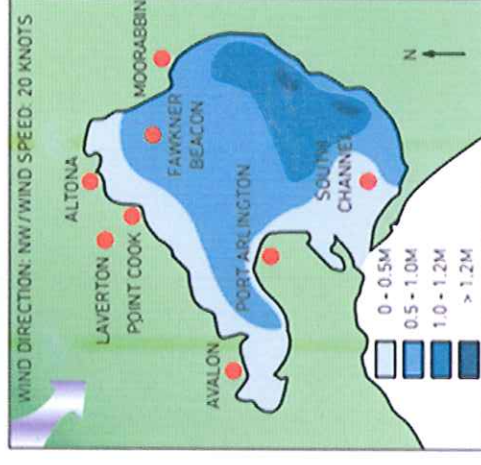
*It's better to be on land, wishing you were on the water, than on the water wishing you were on land!*

# Winds

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- Onshore / offshore winds
  - Do not paddle in offshore winds!
  - Paddling in the Lee (*Lee is your best friend!*)
- Strength and direction
  - Is the wind forecast to increase or decrease?  
Change direction?
  - For every 5 knots increase in head wind your speed will reduce by 20% (more on a SoT!)
  - Knots vs Km/h - conversion
  - Wave height (& what is fetch?)

EXAMPLE OF WAVE HEIGHTS  
ON PORT PHILLIP



Transport Safety Victoria –  
Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook

***Strong wind warnings – be off the water if the  
forecast is over 22 knots***



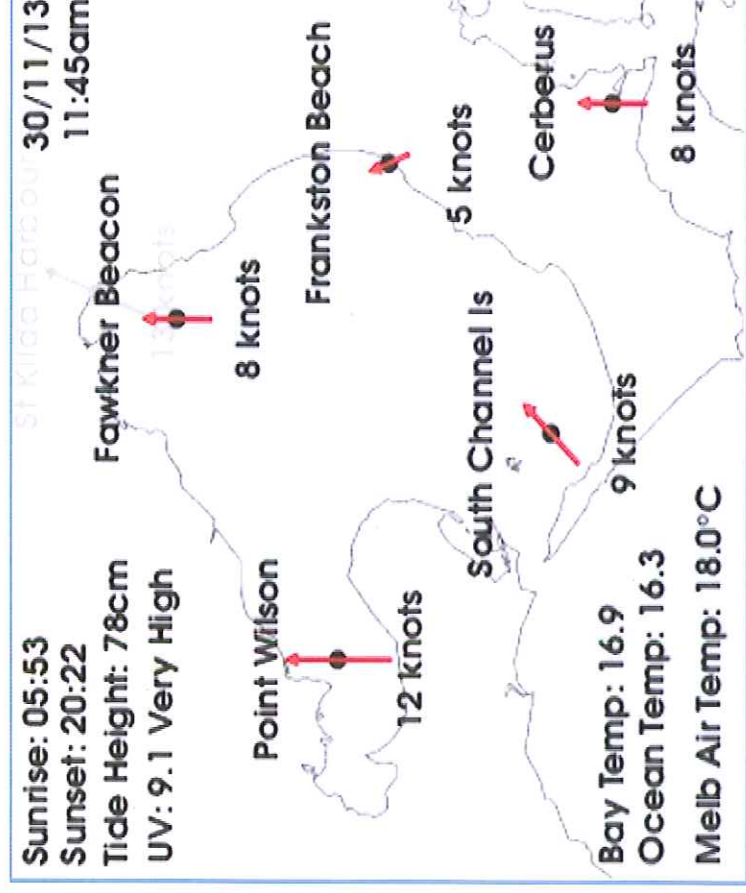
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[www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)



# Where do I get the right information?

- BOM
  - 128 km Melbourne Radar
  - Local areas marine forecast (Port Phillip Bay, Westernport)
  - Marine Forecast chart
- Willy Weather
- Baywinds
- via browser, apps, radio



## Clothing choice

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- No Cotton!
- **Protection from sun, wind & cold, be quick drying & stay warm when wet!**
  - Long sleeves & pants (quick drying)
  - Polypro or fleece
  - Overpants
  - Cag / spray jacket
  - Footwear
  - Headware & neck protection
  - Wetsuits
  - Gloves
- Can you swim in this gear?
- You are dressing for immersion, not prolonged time in the water! Have a back up plan in case you capsizes.

# Minimum Kayaking Equipment in Enclosed Waters

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- PFD type 1, 2 or 3 – we recommend Type 2 for its high visibility colors. It must be a good fit!
- Bilge pump (electronic or hand pump)
- Bailing Sponge
- If paddling at night - 360° visible white light (eg. light on a stick)



# Recommended Safety Equipment

- Communications - Phone / VHF radio
- Whistle
- PLB (Personal locator beacon)
- Paddle leash
- Paddle float



## *LET SOMEONE KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!*

- Don't leave home without it!
- Make sure it's waterproof
- Is there phone reception? Not in the centre of the Bay!
- Essential phone numbers:
  - **000** and/or **112**
  - Coast Guard in your area
  - Water police (for non-life threatening situations) 1800 135 729
  - Weather service
- Very High Frequency (VHF) Marine Radio – licensing requirements





## Safe Kayak Setup

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- Your kayak should be equipped with:
  - grab handles - toggles are preferred
  - reflective perimeter lines (points of contact)
  - hatches secured to kayak & sealed
  - reflective tape on kayak & paddle
  - personal identification (name & phone number)

*Make sure you contact police if your kayak is abandoned / blown out to sea.*

## Spare Clothing & First Aid

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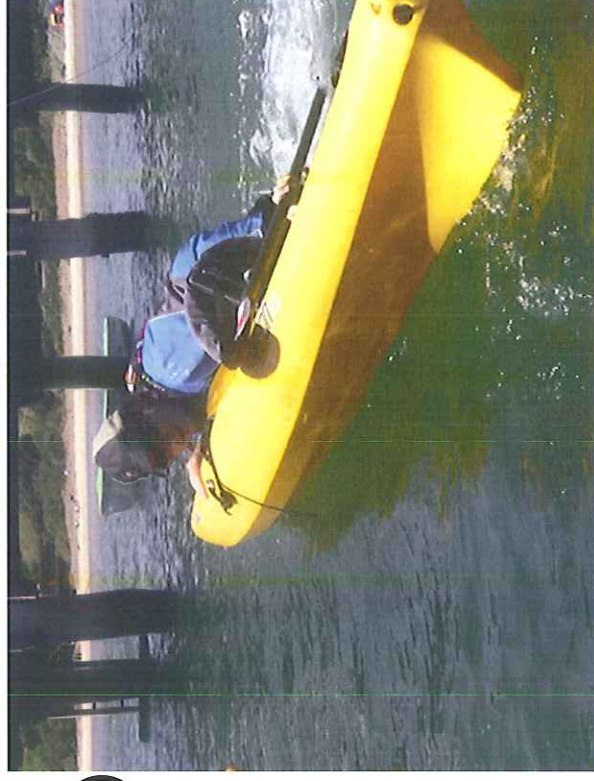
- Carry food & water, first aid kit & repair kit adequate for the journey
- Keep spare set of warm clothing and first aid kit in waterproof bags or boxes



# Basic Skills – Strokes & Rescues

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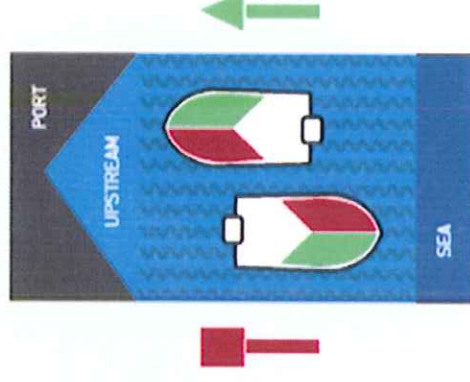
- Forward Paddling  
Sweep strokes & Stern rudder for turning  
Back paddling / stopping  
Draw stroke (moving sideways)  
Low support
- Rafting up / pod up
- Self-rescue & paddle float rescue – always stay in contact with your kayak if you capsize – it is easier to see a kayak in the water than a person!



# Landmarks & Navigation

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- Know where you are and where you have come from - look behind!
- Landmarks
  - Port Phillip Bay
  - Westernport
- Navigation markers and aids in the bays
  - Take care in channels – be aware of other boats (keep to the right)
  - Cross channels at right angles



## Next Steps

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- Undertake a kayak course with an Australian Canoeing qualified instructor
- Join a club
- Never paddle alone and understand you partner's abilities and limitations
- Stay within your limits, take the time to learn the skills



# What have we achieved?

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- Knowledge and understanding of kayaking in the marine environment:
  - Weather & sea conditions
  - Clothing & equipment
  - Communications
  - Safety & skills



*Stay safe on the water and enjoy!*