

File Ref: 38/01/25
Court Ref: 6016/09



CITY OF
PORT PHILLIP
ABN 21 762 977 945

30 May 2012



Emma Lindsey
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court Victoria
Level 11
222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Lindsey

JIMMY NGUYEN

City of Port Phillip received the Coroners Court finding and recommendation regarding Jimmy Nguyen on 9 March, 2012.

As requested, this letter seeks to respond to the Courts recommendation connected with the death of Jimmy Nguyen on 29 December 2009:

'Appropriate signage at all beaches in the Port Phillip municipality is an important initiative given their popularity and proximity to the Melbourne CBD:

- 1. The Port Phillip Council should consider installing permanent warning signs particularly in the area of South Melbourne Beach and any similar beach in the municipality which may pose risk to swimmers from troughs and rips.'*

The City of Port Phillip will implement the Coroner's recommendation.

The Coroners recommendation is being implemented in the following ways:

1. New and additional policy and procedures

Council engaged Life Saving Victoria (LSV) 17 June, 2009 to undertake a coastal risk assessment and treatment plan for the entire 11km of coastline within the City of Port Phillip. The completed report by LSV was received April, 2010.

The Report was divided into three parts. An extract of the purpose of each report is detailed below:

- Part A- Risk Management Plan (Draft received November 2009, Final Report April 2010).
Overarching Risk Management Planning Principles, as applied to the Port Phillip Council area aquatic risk management project against AS4360 Risk Management Standards.

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- Part B- Register and Treatment Options (Draft January 2010, Final Report April 2010).
Contains the workings of the risk analysis and evaluation phases of the risk assessment. This report contains a series of tables listing action priorities and associated risk treatment options specific to the assessed coastal area.
- Part C- Signage Schedule and Access Plan (Draft for Sandridge Beach only November 2009, Final report for all Port Phillip Beaches April 2010).
Detailed risk treatment plan specific to signage controls within the assessed coastal areas for the City of Port Phillip.

Council also contracted Life Saving Victoria to complete an aquatic risk audit and treatment plan for all Council inland waterways such as the Melbourne Water owned Elwood Canal and Council park ponds.

Council adopted additional procedures in-line with the Life Saving Victoria Coastal Risk Management Plan which was completed April 2010.

Coastal and inland aquatic risks on Council and adjoining State land and waters are now considered as part of Port Phillip Council annual risk management planning procedure and treatment plans.

2. New Infrastructure

During 2009 and 2010 Council worked proactively with Parks Victoria in their installation of new boating and swimming only zones and related warning signage between Sandridge and St Kilda Marina.

Whilst the risk assessment and swim safety signage schedule was being developed by Life Saving Victoria, Council sought their additional advice in December 2009 to confirm generalised warning symbols, wording and design for temporary swim safety signage.

These generalised and temporary 'corflute' swim safety signs were installed in March 2010 along all of Port Phillip Councils beaches including the Port of Melbourne Corporation freehold land at Perc White Reserve, Sandridge Beach. These temporary safety signs were then updated and replaced for the 2010/2011 summer period.

Council has been working to design and install permanent signs with the first stage between Sandridge Beach and Princes Pier. The agencies involved have included Emergency Services Telecommunication's Authority (ESTA), Parks Victoria, EPA, Marine Safety Victoria and several Council internal departments.

After the permanent signs were initially drafted they had to be redesigned with advice of new national standards. The permanent signs will also include Park Victoria boating and swimming only zones, Emergency Service marker coding, EPA water quality and beach report guidance, as well as relevant Council local law regulations.

Council has now been able to finalise the design of the permanent signs with the various organisation approvals. Public quotations for construction and installation are now being sought for the first stage. The LSV swim risk assessment concluded Sandridge Beach to be the highest swim safety risk score within the Port Phillip Council coastline. The other beaches were assessed to be a cascading risk score in location order from Sandridge heading south towards Elwood Beach.

Permanent signage installation will start at the Sandridge Beach end. Staged implementation along Port Phillip beaches towards Elwood will be undertaken over the next 3 years. Consent under the Coastal Management Act is also required by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to allow installation of the safety signage.

Once installed, regular audits of the safety signs condition will be added to Council's existing contracted services. This will ensure the signs are functional with any vandalised signs repaired or replaced.

3. New education and training

In addition to the Coroners recommendation for permanent signage and Council contracting LSV to undertake aquatic risk assessment and treatment plans, the City of Port Phillip has been working with LSV to undertake several water safety education and training initiatives.

The City of Port Phillip has engaged LSV to improve water safety skills in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities within Port Phillip, as well as communities outside Port Phillip's municipality over the past two years.

Over the past two summers 2,809 children, youth and adults were involved in the program through 62 separate activities including beach programs, education sessions and training sessions.

The beach programs were run at Sandridge and Port Melbourne Life Saving Clubs and allowed participants to use surf skis, boogie boards, nipper boards, life jackets, rescue tubes and partake in beach running/equipment relays.

Education sessions incorporated Meet-a-Lifeguard sessions and Resuscitate-a-Mate sessions. These interactive sessions gave CALD people a chance to learn about a lifeguard's role and to develop first aid skills.

In 2010/11, training for Surf Bronze accreditation was provided to six individuals, two of whom have gone on to join Port Melbourne Life Saving Club as qualified patrolling members. A total of 28 CALD Lifesavers/Nippers/Pool Lifeguards completed courses in 2011/12 as a result of LSV's Meet-a-Lifeguard and beach program events. In particular, 8 of these CALD participants studied and/or resided in the City of Port Phillip. The development of these local CALD aquatic role models further facilitates the communication of vital water safety messages back into these communities.

Life Saving Victoria has indicated a commitment to continuing to work with CALD communities in Port Phillip and will develop a new project plan in consultation with Council's Recreation Officers in June, 2012.

The City of Port Phillip expects to provide annual funding towards the various swim safety education programs, subject to annual approval. Discussions will be held between Council's Recreation Officers and Life Saving Victoria to determine ongoing funding and scope of the programs.

4. Community behavioural change

With time, the permanent safety signage and water safety activities are expected to encourage behavioural change with the public locating at safer parts of the beach,

improve understanding and identification of Life Saving Club Services and increase the ability of the community to undertake CPR and basic first aid.

Council will consider additional risk assessments and monitoring with LSV on completion of the permanent signage, education and training programs. This will assist Council to evaluate the success of the behavioural changes and need for additional treatments.

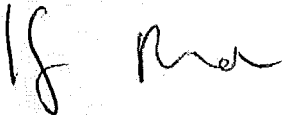
5. Additional comments.

In addition to the coroners recommendation Council considers drowning risk could also be further addressed by increased swimming safety risk assessments across the coastline with facilitation of on-ground changes. Enhanced co-ordinated activity between the Coroner, Life Saving Victoria and Councils to facilitate implementation of remedial actions.

Port Phillip Council will continue to promote its swim safety activities with other councils via the Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) which represents the 10 councils surrounding Port Phillip Bay.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact David Hehir- Foreshore Coordinator on (03) 9209 6635 dhehir@portphillip.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



KAY RUNDLE
Chief Executive Officer