

14th November, 2012

Mr Ian Watkins
Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Coroner,

RE: Investigation into the deaths of Umer Habib and Waseem Akram

Thank you for providing the Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) a copy of the finding and recommendation made by the Coroner as follows:

"The Investigating Member from Victoria Police has expressed an opinion that as a minimum, appropriate water safety warning signs should be erected at all major beach car parks and at all designated lookout point around the coastline of Phillip Island. I accept his opinion and make that recommendation. In particular, it would seem that there is a need to provide information to international visitors regarding water safety at dangerous points and popular tourist attractions around the island".

The recommendation has in part been implemented to date, and further works to be undertaken this year, will see the recommendation fully implemented.

Water safety signage

PINP has been working closely with the Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC) in response to your recommendation to undertake an assessment of all water safety signage across Phillip Island. This collaboration between the two predominant land managers was seen as desirable to ensure consistency in our approach to achieve the best outcome for water safety standards on Phillip Island.

For consistency, this assessment has been based on a previous 2002, Aquatic Safety Signage Audit for Phillip Island, undertaken by Surf Life Saving Victoria.

Please find included within this correspondence a detailed map of Phillip Island detailing the following:

- the location of all beach safety signs
- the location of all individual hazard signs
- the location of all emergency beach access numbers
- the location of recommended gaps in signage.

Gaps and enhancements in signage have been identified through this assessment process and further signage is necessary at the Summerland Peninsula, Pyramid Rock, Newhaven, Churchill Island and Rhyll.

PINP and BCSC are continuing to work together to address these gaps in the following way:

- further assessment of the hazards in and around the water across Phillip Island
- purchase and installation of appropriate signs to address all recognised gaps, following the form and guidance of the “*National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Manual*”.

While outside the scope of the recommendation, it has been further identified that the emergency beach access numbers (EBANs) located in Bass Coast Shire and Phillip Island are ageing infrastructure. This has raised the question of whether the EBANs should be updated or replaced by a new Emergency Marker system being implemented by the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA). The Marine Safety Subcommittee of the Local Safety and Events Committee will work with ESTA and other emergency services agencies on the best approach to renewal or replacement.

In direct response to the deaths of Umer Habib and Waseem Akram occurring within the Summerland Peninsula, please also find included within this correspondence a more detailed description of the safety and warning signage that was installed by the Nature Parks in 2009 directly after these incidents.

To further mitigate future risk of this type of incident within the Summerland Peninsula, the Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of Management has implemented a “determination” under its powers within the *Crown land Reserves Act 1978* restricting public access to the cliffs where the incidents occurred.

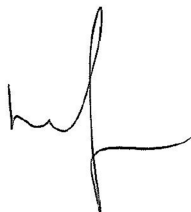
Water safety information to international visitors

In regards to providing information to international visitors, it should be noted that the “*National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Manual*” provides the Australian standards to be followed for safety and hazard signage. These are symbol-based to ensure universal understanding of the warning being conveyed.

PINP and BCSC have also committed to providing a brochure about the importance of water safety, to be distributed on local websites and at tourist destinations and information centres on Phillip Island. It is intended that this will be available in a range of languages, reflecting our knowledge of visitors on Phillip Island.

I trust that the above information addresses your recommendations and please contact me directly if you require any further information on 59512811 or mjackson@penguins.org.au.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Jackson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Jackson
Chief Executive Officer

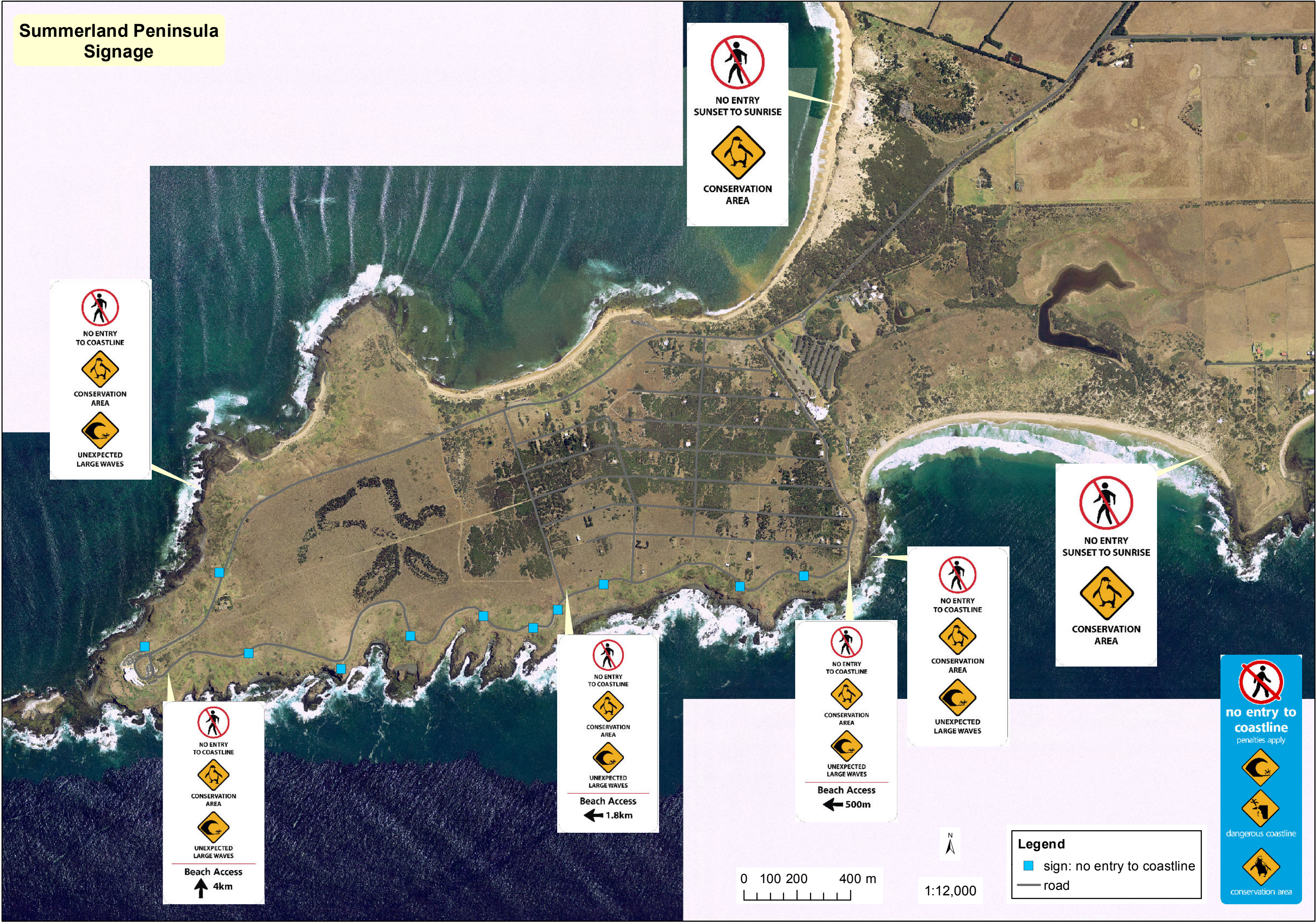


Phillip Island Beach Safety Signage

- beach safety road signs (level 1 signs)
- beach safety carpark signs (level 2 signs)
- beach safety signs at access points (level 3 signs)
- Other Warning Signs (level 4 - beach safety individual hazard signs)
- areas for future signage
- ▲ Emergency Beach Access Numbers EBAN
- Phillip Island Nature Park
- road



Summerland Peninsula Signage




 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA

 UNEXPECTED LARGE WAVES


 NO ENTRY SUNSET TO SUNRISE

 CONSERVATION AREA


 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA


 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA

 UNEXPECTED LARGE WAVES


 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA

 UNEXPECTED LARGE WAVES

 Beach Access
 ← 500m


 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA

 UNEXPECTED LARGE WAVES

 Beach Access
 ← 1.8km


 NO ENTRY TO COASTLINE

 CONSERVATION AREA



 UNEXPECTED LARGE WAVES

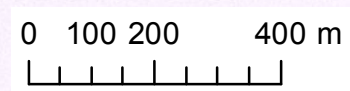
 Beach Access
 ↑ 4km


 no entry to coastline
 penalties apply

 dangerous coastline

 conservation area

Legend
 sign: no entry to coastline
 road



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