

15 December 2011

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Dear Mr West

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE MATTER OF THE FINDING INTO DEATH
WITHOUT INQUEST OF KIM SOON YEO (COURT REF: 408/2010)**

I refer to your letter dated 8 September 2011 seeking Tourism Victoria's response to the Coroner's finding into the Death without Inquest of Kim Soon Yeo.

Overall, in terms of health and safety for visitors, Tourism Victoria notes that Victoria has a very good reputation. However, injuries, illnesses or fatalities impact on enjoyment of the visitor experience and make dramatic media stories that have the potential to damage Victoria's reputation as a safe travel destination.

Tourism Victoria acknowledges that it has a responsibility, in conjunction with other agencies and the tourism industry, to raise domestic and international visitor awareness of key health and safety risks. Over the past eight years Tourism Victoria has undertaken a suite of activities to address this responsibility. These activities include:

- Membership of the former National Visitor Safety Program (NSVP) working group¹ and supporting its various activities to improve the reach and retention of safety information for international visitors. This included the development of the National Visitor Safety Handbook which aimed to provide the tourism industry and the media with a glossary of tourism safety messages.
- Sponsoring the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner to conduct research into Tourist Risk Perception, Preparedness and Response in Victoria.
- Annually undertaking a suite of activities to educate visitors about bushfire safety risks in partnership with the fire agency services.
- Supporting the on-going production and distribution of the Travel Safely in Australia publication.

Tourism Victoria therefore welcomes the opportunity to consider the important issues raised by Coroner Klestadt and provides the following response for each of the Coroner's recommendations pertinent to Tourism Victoria, as required under section 72 (2) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)*.

¹ The National Visitor Safety Program was developed as a result of a decision by State/Territory Tourism Ministers in 2001 to improve the safety of international visitors during their stay in Australia and acted an advisory group to the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism (ASCOT) until 2009. The responsibility for these matters now rests with the National Resilience Working Group.

1. Tourism Victoria should distribute the publication *Travel Safely in Australia* airside at Melbourne Airport for the purpose of providing international visitors with safety information. Australian Pacific Airports PTY Limited and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service should facilitate Tourism Victoria's distribution of safety information at this site.

Tourism Victoria accepts the Coroner's recommendation and, with the support of the Australian Pacific Airports PTY Limited, will ensure the on-going and prominent display of the *Travel Safely in Australia* publication airside at Melbourne Airport by 30 January 2012. In addition, the publication will be displayed in a prominent position at the Melbourne Travellers Desk in the international arrivals area at the Airport.

Tourism Victoria will also ensure that the publication is displayed at the Melbourne Visitor Centre, as part of the dedicated Visitor Safety display, and will encourage the distribution of the publication through the State's accredited visitor information centre network.

2. Tourism Victoria should develop a comprehensive safety strategy for international visitors to Victoria, involving other relevant State Government agencies and the tourism sector. The strategy should focus on international visitor safety from an "all-hazards" approach, including that of road safety. The strategy should provide for a regular review of the incidence and nature of injuries to international visitors to assist in the development and targeting of further initiatives.

Tourism Victoria accepts the Coroner's recommendation and will develop a comprehensive safety strategy for international visitors to Victoria by 30 June 2012 (in conjunction with other relevant State Government agencies and the tourism sector). The strategy will focus on international visitor safety from an "all-hazards" approach, including that of road safety.

Tourism Victoria notes the absence of an effective and on-going national or State system for collecting data on international visitor death and injuries and the limitations of the available data. This matter will be considered in the development of the strategy.

In addition, Tourism Victoria, in partnership with the fire services agencies and the Transport Accident Commission, is preparing a State map (designed as a tear-off map pad) which will feature key bushfire and road safety messages. It is expected that the map will be in distribution via the State's accredited visitor information centres by 30 January 2012.

3. Tourism Victoria should monitor the recent proposal in South Australia to provide safety information and visual safety messaging in all rental vehicles and to consider whether a similar initiative in Victoria would be appropriate.

Tourism Victoria accepts the Coroner's recommendation and has investigated the South Australian Tourism Commission's (SATC) initiative to better educate international visitors of their obligations to observe Australian road rules and in particular, drive on the left hand side of the road. This includes:

- The production of a yellow sticker ("Drive on Left in Australia") for affixing to each (rental) car's front windscreen in a prominent position.
- The production of a small sticker for affixing to rear vision mirror or in a similar position in relation to a car's driving position.

- The distribution of the Travel Safely in Australia publication through car rental outlets.

Tourism Victoria also notes the challenges faced by the SATC and the Office of Road Safety in engaging car rental firms on this important initiative. Tourism Victoria will consider this initiative in the development of the Safety Strategy for International Visitors, building on its existing working relationship with the key car rental firms, established through its bushfire safety activities.

4. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship should consider ways to promote the distribution of the publication Travel Safely in Australia to international visitors prior to their entry into Australia.

Tourism Victoria is supportive of this recommendation and is liaising with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on this matter.

5. Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria should ensure that safety information, such as the publication Travel Safely in Australia should be readily available in prominent links throughout their official tourism websites.

Tourism Victoria accepts the Coroner's recommendation in part and will implement by undertaking an immediate review of existing safety content on the English and foreign language versions of its consumer website, informed by the *National Visitor Safety Handbook* and the *Travel Safely in Australia* publications. Tourism Victoria will make changes to the content based on this review. It will also work with Tourism Australia to ensure consistency of message across the respective websites. However, Tourism Victoria does not support the uploading of the Travel Safely in Australia publication as a PDF document as the nature of its design and layout is not suitable for downloading from the internet.

Finally, Tourism Victoria will recommend to the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism (ASCOT) the reconvening of the National Visitor Safety Program working group to ensure visitor safety remains a priority for all jurisdictions.

Mr John Dalton, Director Strategy and Policy (Tel: 9653 9719) is responsible for ensuring the Coroner's recommendations are implemented.

Yours sincerely,



LEIGH HARRY

Chief Executive