

2 August 2023

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Judge John Cain  
State Coroner  
C/- Kate Sanderson  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Judge Cain,

**RE: Coronial Investigation into the death of Trevor McKie - COR 2020 004384**

I refer to the above Coronial Investigation into the death of Trevor McKie at Bull Point in August 2020 and the findings delivered by your Honour on 2 May 2023.

The recommendations in your Honour's findings directed at Safe Transport Victoria (ST Vic) include:

**Recommendation 1:** *ST Vic consider reviewing the current information and safety material provided to mariners to ensure that it includes:*

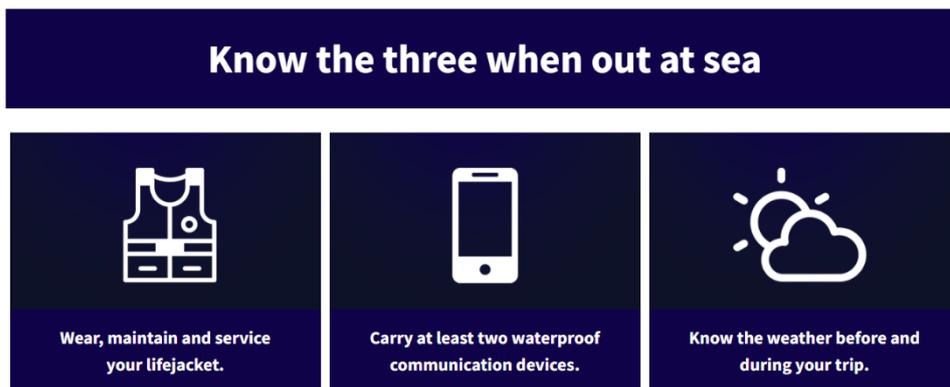
- *Information about the requirement to conduct an annual service and tests of an inflatable lifejacket to ensure that it is functional. The material should include a step-by-step guide as to how to conduct a check and service of the lifejacket if to be done by the owner, or in the alternative information about third-party contractors who provide do this service.*
- *Information for mariners about the importance of checking and being up to date with the weather forecasts before they leave the shore and whilst on the water. This should include information about where to find the most up to date weather information and the availability of weather mobile applications (including the Boating Vic mobile application) that are available to mariners to check changing weather conditions while they are on the water.*
- *Information directed to mariners to contact triple zero in the event of an emergency and what information should be communicated to the triple zero call tacker including location information, which may be the position expressed by reference to the current latitude and longitude.*

**Recommendation 2:** *ST Vic consider providing this information with the annual renewal of the registration of a vessel to ensure that boat owners read and understand this information. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of developing an online test to be completed prior to renewal of registration.*

ST Vic is committed to upholding the highest standards of safety for mariners and boaters in Victoria. We constantly strive to enhance our regulatory activities, engaging in continuous improvement efforts to ensure the well-being of the community. As part of this commitment, we collaborate closely with behavioural scientists, regulators from other jurisdictions, industry experts, other relevant agencies, and seek input through community consultations. This collaborative approach allows us to continue to identify and incorporate robust and effective risk mitigation measures.

We have thoroughly reviewed the recommendations provided by your Honour. We value your considered insights and will incorporate any relevant findings into our ongoing continuous improvement initiatives. The recommendations align with actions that are already underway at ST Vic, as a result of our improvement efforts and horizon scanning. These actions include:

- ST Vic delivering the 'Know the Three' campaign in the summer of 22/23. This was a simplification of the 'Prepare to Survive: Know the Five' from previous years. Messaging from 'Know the Three' continues to be a core part of our regular communications delivered weekly and future programs of work will continue to focus on these three elements.



- The primary messages in this campaign align with the recent coronial recommendations. Lifejacket wear and maintenance has been identified as a key message in the national space with the Australia & New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group highlighting this as a primary national safety message for boaters. The servicing requirements vary between different manufacturers and Standards Australia has recently revised the AS4758 to make servicing every three years mandatory alongside documented annual self-inspections by owners.
- ST Vic delivered 'FloatSafe - Lifejacket Self-Inspection Clinics' through the summer of 20/21. These clinics focussed on the required servicing of inflatable lifejackets and included the supply of consumables and information sheets for a range of manufacturers.
- ST Vic has continued to invest in the Boating Vic App and website to help boaters make informed decisions around conditions at various launching facilities – one of these being weather. This app aims to inform boaters while they are in the trip preparation phase, with weather information for the next five days.
- ST Vic's safety advice on carrying waterproof communication devices is adapted to suit a variety of water activities. This can be a mobile phone on a Standup Paddleboard, or a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) on other vessels. This provides accurate location data to rescue coordinators.
- ST Vic has recently been including the Emergency Plus App in safety presentations as an added method of identifying latitude /longitude details to share with rescue agencies. This is on top of existing material promoting the use of Triple Zero over calling friends/ family to initiate a third-party rescue.

- Regarding emergencies, we understand the challenge of providing clear location information. We agree that providing additional information to the triple zero call taker including location information would be beneficial and will implement this recommendation and include it on our website and boating apps. We will work with the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) and other first responders to advise on and further develop a best practice model for reporting emergencies, including efficient location communication.
- We are currently collaborating with behavioural scientists to target higher-risk operators more effectively. ST Vic is also exploring the development of further tools to ensure boaters can access safety information at all times, including when out of mobile range. As part of this, ST Vic is developing a new web-based app for boaters so they can access all Victorian marine safety information on their mobile wherever they're located.
- ST Vic has previously provided a printed insert containing safety information to be sent out with renewals of vessel registrations. This insert reaches all registered owners in a 12-month period. Currently ST Vic is reviewing the efficacy of the VicRoads renewal insert and how it falls within our range of print, digital and face-to-face communication methods.

In addition, ST Vic is considering ways to broaden the scope of the training and assessment process to improve the applicant's knowledge of safe vessel operations. This aligns with the purpose of the Marine Licensing scheme. The purpose of the registration scheme is to identify the person responsible for a vessel, regulate for safety and ensure vessels meet prescribed safety standards. There is no testing of the individual associated with the vessel registration process.

We acknowledge that addressing safety issues is an on-going commitment and assure you that ST Vic will continue to monitor the important public safety issues associated with recreational boating and ensure that our regulatory processes align with current best practice.

I would like to thank your Honour for the careful consideration given to the matters relevant to this Coronial investigation.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Banks

Executive Director - Safety Strategy and Regulation

Safe Transport Victoria