

25 May 2016

Our ref: DOC/16/167071
Your ref: COR 2014 002978

Ms Cheryl Vella
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006



Dear Ms Vella

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF ASHTON PRENTICE VICTOR MEADOWS
FINDING WITHOUT INQUEST – TSV RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS
CASE NUMBER – COR 2014 002978**

On behalf of Transport Safety Victoria's (TSV's) Maritime Safety branch, I write in response to your letter of 12 April 2016 and the Coroner's findings without inquest following the investigation into the death of Ashton Prentice Victor Meadows, and the recommendations below.

1. *That Transport Safety Victoria progress the implementation of Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) (preferably those with GPS capability), amongst recreational boaters in Victoria, to ensure that each vessel has an EPIRB and that, at times of heightened risk, crewmembers wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs), with at least one PFD per boat being fitted with a PLB (preferably one with GPS capability).*
2. *That Transport Safety Victoria considers promoting the use of EPIRBs and PLBs (preferably with GPS capability) within the Victorian recreational boating community, so that devices are carried by all recreational boats, not just vessels operating further than two nautical miles from the shore.*

Response:

TSV supports recommendation 1.

As previously advised in correspondence to the Court on 22 March 2016, TSV believes there is currently a poor understanding among recreational boaters of what constitutes 'heightened risk', which could impact on the implementation of this recommendation – however, we also believe that PFD-wear rates can be improved and TSV intends to address these issues by both education and enforcement.

TSV is producing new educational material for recreational vessel operators focussing on providing practical guidance to recreational boaters about which situations constitute 'heightened risk'. Additionally it has been (and will continue to be) a feature of the summer boating safety officer program providing on-the-spot information at boat ramps.

TSV supports recommendation 2.

TSV is producing new educational material for recreational vessel operators (including a direct mailout to registered recreational boaters and a new joint fisheries/TSV boaters handbook) emphasising the need for boaters to have multiple means of raising the alarm. Our former 'lifejackets save lives' campaign has been changed to 'A life jacket buys you time', and is paired with messages to recreational boaters about a range of options to raise an alarm, including using EPIRBs, PLBs and phones.

TSV will also liaise with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources about the possibility of amending the *Marine Safety Regulations 2012* (Vic) to require EPIRBs in other waterways, for example, coastal inshore and enclosed waters.

If you require any further information, please contact Jane Wright, Policy Adviser, on (03) 9655 1022.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Corcoran', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

PETER CORCORAN
Director, Maritime Safety

Cc: Mr Richard Bolt, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources