



## Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

GPO Box 4509  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001 Australia  
Telephone: +61 3 9651 9999

CSEC-2-24-25680

Deputy State Coroner Paresa Antoniadis Spanos  
Coroner's Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VICTORIA 3006

Dear Ms Wylie

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF MUNIF MOHAMMED - COR 2023 003167**

Thank you for your letter of 12 December 2024 enclosing a copy of Coroner Spanos' Finding following the inquest held into the death of Munif Mohammed. I note also the correspondence from James Whyman, Coroner's Solicitor, of 16 April 2025 to my department, advising that Coroner Spanos accepted that the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) would be providing a response to recommendations 1 and 2 that were originally directed to Safe Transport Victoria (ST Vic), in addition to recommendation 3.

The recommendations in Coroner Spanos' findings are:

**Recommendation 1:** *I recommend that Safe Transport Victoria explores potential models for a recreational vessel seaworthy inspection and certificate regime to assess the already legislated prescribed conditions under regulation 27 of the Marine Safety Regulations 2023 (Vic) as a means of ensuring the seaworthiness of vessels at points of registration, transfer of ownership, and after any modification of the vessel.*

**Recommendation 2:** *I recommend that Safe Transport Victoria considers the introduction of practical training and assessment as part of the Victorian marine licencing regime analogous to regimes already in existence in other Australian States.*

**Recommendation 3:** *I recommend the Minister for Outdoor Recreation of the DJSIR amend the Marine Safety Regulations 2023 (Vic) to mandate boarding ladders or other similar means of reboarding a vessel from the water in vessels with a freeboard greater than 0.3 metres, irrespective of the size of the vessel.*

As outlined in the correspondence with the Court, the three recommendations traverse the responsibilities of ST Vic as the regulator, as well as DJSIR and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) as the relevant policy administrators. While DJSIR is now the responsible department for overseeing legislation relating to recreational boating, ST Vic remains the Victorian maritime safety regulator, with oversight of, amongst other things, the safety, compliance, accreditation and registration for recreational vessels. To assist the Court, following consultation with ST Vic and DTP, DJSIR agreed to respond to all three recommendations. This response therefore draws on the work and experience of ST Vic and DTP.

DJSIR and ST Vic are dedicated to maintaining the highest practical safety standards for recreational boaters across Victoria. Regulatory settings and practices are reviewed as required with the aim of protecting the well-being and safety of the community.

DJSIR has carefully considered Coroner Spanos' recommendations. The matters raised in the recommendations align with thorough analysis conducted by ST Vic and DTP as outlined below.

In relation to **Recommendation 1**, in 2022 DTP prepared a [Regulatory Impact Statement](#) (RIS) to address the incoming Marine Safety Regulations 2023. Options relating to vessel standards and safety, including seaworthiness inspections of vessels are assessed on pages 81 to 83, and then again in the options analysis beginning on page 103 of the RIS.

Broadly, it was concluded that while requiring vessels to be built to a mandated standard and/or imposing a seaworthiness standard for vessels and inspecting against this standard, particularly upon transfer of ownership, were likely to result in better safety outcomes, the cost to government (e.g., training of persons; maintaining effectiveness of audit and enforcement activity) and the cost to community (e.g., higher cost of vessels as the costs of complying with the standards by industry may be passed onto consumers; time and inspection costs) meant that neither of those options was preferred. Rather, the preferred option was to maintain existing 'fit for purpose' vessel requirements, which provides a greater balancing of safety, cost to government and cost to community considerations.

Given this recent analysis into alternative models for a recreational vessel seaworthy inspection and certificate regime, DJSIR respectfully considers that the RIS assessment remains current and DJSIR does not intend at this stage to amend the 'fit for purpose' vessel requirements in the Marine Safety Regulations 2023.

In relation to **Recommendation 2**, DTP consultation in relation to this issue has occurred in recent years (including as part of making the Marine Safety Regulations 2023) and revealed moderate support for implementing practical training and assessment for marine licences.

It was concluded that the resources required, and the costs and time involved from a government and community perspective, would be significant and that the safety benefit associated with practical training and assessment would potentially be lower than expected. The RIS linked above addresses this on pages 77 to 78, and then again in the options analysis beginning on page 98. The analysis includes comparing fatality and serious injury data across jurisdictions with different licensing requirements. This analysis is presented in Appendix A of the RIS. It was concluded that there is limited evidence to suggest that a practical component to obtaining a marine licence will result in improved safety outcomes.

Rather, DTP's preferred option was to retain a knowledge test as it rated well on safety while minimising costs to government and the community relative to implementing practical training and assessment.

Given this recent analysis, DJSIR respectfully considers that the RIS assessment remains current and does not currently intend to amend the relevant licencing requirements contained within the Marine Safety Regulations 2023.

In relation to **Recommendation 3**, ST Vic advises that boarding ladders or similar reboarding equipment have been considered previously and a campaign was developed and implemented to educate the public on reboarding a vessel using a boarding ladder.

In 2018, Maritime Safety Victoria (MSV) (now ST Vic) reinforced its commitment to reducing recreational boating incidents and fatalities through a combination of education, promotion, awareness, compliance monitoring and enforcement. Leveraging incident and hospitalisation data, social research, and the expertise of education, compliance, and operational staff, MSV launched the Prepare to Survive: Know the Five safety campaign. This campaign included practising reboarding a vessel.

Additionally, the above mentioned RIS also noted boarding ladders are equipment that may be used to mitigate the consequences of marine incidents on recreational vessels. While the RIS considered that there continues to be a need to require safety equipment on recreational vessels, it did not recommend including boarding ladders or similar equipment as mandatory within the Marine Safety Regulations 2023.

Notwithstanding the above, ST Vic has continued to promote the importance of fitting vessels with a ladder or carrying a portable ladder to help with reboarding a person in the water, including in its [Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook 2023](#) and in its [person overboard guidance](#).

Given this recent consideration of recreational vessel safety equipment, DJSIR respectfully considers that the RIS assessment remains current and does not currently intend to implement this recommendation.

DJSIR acknowledges that monitoring and addressing safety issues is an on-going commitment. In cooperation with ST Vic and other relevant stakeholders, DJSIR will continue to monitor the critical public safety concerns associated with recreational boating and ensure that regulatory processes align with current best practices.

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

Yours sincerely



**Matt Carrick**  
Secretary  
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

Date: 19/05/2025