

Chief Executive of Parks Victoria's response to Coroner's recommendations

Court Reference 0142/08 – Inquest into the death of Dale Graham Russ

Coroner's Recommendation:

1. Whilst I recognise that signage can only go so far in protecting people by highlighting dangers, and that its usefulness is limited by people's preparedness to heed the messages it conveys, the continued absence of signage at the end of Brooks Jetty poses a danger to public safety. I recommend that Parks Victoria considers further upgrades to the signage by additional signs at eye level at the furthest end of Brooks Jetty.

Chief Executive of Parks Victoria's response

The Coroner's recommendation has been part – implemented.

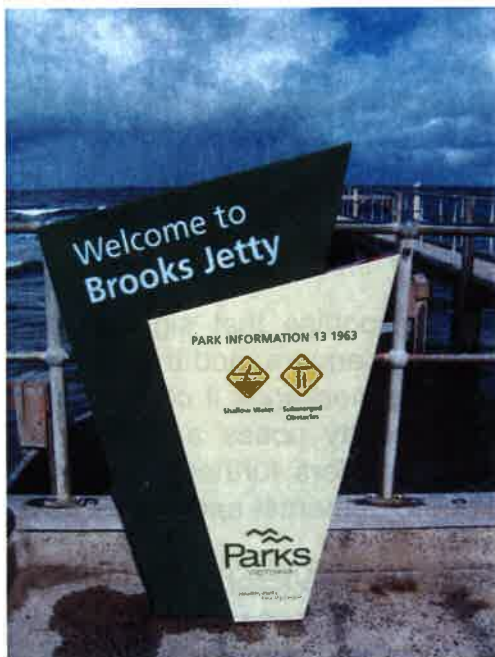
Installation of signage, additional in both number and messaging to that which was in place at the time of the incident, was completed on 24 February 2010 prior to both the Coronial Hearing and receipt of the Coroner's finding. See photos below.

As of 24 February 2010 there were 15 signs installed at various locations on Brooks Jetty, including at the furthest end.

Signage was not placed at eye level at the furthest end of Brooks Jetty. Parks Victoria has undertaken a comprehensive audit of its pier and jetty signage and is completing an upgrade of all pier and jetty signage in Port Phillip and Western Port. Based on extensive experience of warning signage where it has been placed at eye level on piers and jetties it:

- v) provides a higher level 'platform' from which visitors can jump leading to increased risk to individuals and damage to the sign;
- vi) provides a sub-standard point of attachment for vessels leading to damage to the sign;
- vii) is very difficult to attach to a jetty such that its integrity can be maintained; and
- viii) is readily accessible to graffiti and vandalism

Brooks Jetty Signage



Entrance Sign - 09/03/2010



Hot Spot Capping Plates - 25/02/2010



Entrance Capping Plates - 25/02/2010

Coroner's Recommendation:

2. I also recommend that Parks Victoria considers the usefulness of a public education program to highlight the dangers posed by shallow water and submerged objects, particularly when jumping and diving from jetties, such campaign to be targeted both as to when it should take place and to those most at risk, which on the basis of the evidence before me is children and young adults.

Chief Executive of Parks Victoria's response

The Coroner's recommendation is under consideration.

Parks Victoria is just one of a number of authorities in Victoria with responsibilities for over-water structures and water safety. The Government's overall Water Safety Program 'Play it Safe by the Water' and the 'Look Before you Leap' message aims to increase participants' awareness of water safety issues, and develop their water safety skills.

Parks Victoria participates in the 'Heads of Water Safety' Committee convened by the Department of Justice. The Committee has input into the Government's 'Play it Safe by the Water' Program and Parks Victoria will encourage expansion of the campaign messaging to specifically highlight the dangers posed by shallow water and submerged objects, particularly when jumping and diving from jetties and targeting children and young adults. The 'Look Before You Leap' messaging out of the Department of Justice is supported by Parks Victoria as it addresses public awareness around people jumping/diving from piers and jetties.

Each year in November/December Parks Victoria initiates, through a series of media releases, an awareness campaign on the dangers of jumping and diving from piers and jetties.

Parks Victoria has also been in discussion with *Independence Victoria* on ways of increasing awareness in schools, through *Independence Victoria's* existing program "RACV SpinChat", of the consequences of jumping from piers and jetties, specifically to target late teenage years. Parks Victoria will propose, through the Government's Water Safety Program, that Victorian water safety authorities partner to profile the dangers to the higher risk teenage years.



Mark Stone
Chief Executive
Parks Victoria

14 / 9 / 10