



Friday, 19 February 2021

William Doolan
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
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Dear Mr Doolan,

Investigation into the death of Xu Zhou, Court Reference 2018 000089

Please find below Life Saving Victoria's response to the recommendation directed to our organisation outlined in Coroner Caitlyn English's Finding without inquest into the death of Xu Zhou. We extend our deepest sympathies to Mr Zhou's family.

Life Saving Victoria's mission is to prevent aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities, and the vision that all Victorians will learn water safety, swimming and resuscitation, and be provided with safe aquatic environments and venues.

Recommendation 1:

Life Saving Victoria updates its public awareness messaging to include abalone fishing and promote this messaging through targeted education social media channels, and other relevant websites.

Response:

The Coroner's recommendation is currently being implemented.

Fishing safety is one of the key safety elements included in our current education programs to Victorians including those individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We are currently updating our public awareness messaging to include abalone fishing safety, including:

- The addition of abalone safety messaging to other fishing messaging, as part of general water safety information provided by LSV's CALD Department. This will be conveyed in classroom/community education sessions for members of Victoria's CALD community. Over 22,000 CALD community members receive this information annually.
- Development of a CALD Virtual Reality Google Expedition with two of the scenes focusing on safe fishing (one on abalone fishing). The Victorian Fishing Authority has been consulted on this project.
- Abalone fishing safety messaging has also been included in the Victorian Government's Play it Safe by the Water public safety campaign. This includes messaging via social media channels and across various partner websites.

As a non-profit organisation Life Saving Victoria relies on funding for our programs and therefore applied for a grant through the Victorian Fishing Authority's Recreational Fishing Large Grants Program in 2020, to expand the reach of fishing safety messages to include both abalone and rock fishing safety, which was unfortunately unsuccessful in receiving funding.

The proposed project aimed to support a state-wide grassroots campaign to educate the recreational fishing community on how to enjoy and participate in abalone fishing while observing appropriate safety measures to avoid injury or loss of life. The aim was to build on previous campaigns through inclusion of grassroots community-based ambassadors and development of marketing collateral to be distributed through social media channels, as well as community events and fishing forums. We will re-apply for funding through the Large Grants Program again this year, as well as continue to seek and apply for funding through other sources to promote abalone and other fishing safety messaging.

Recommendation 2:

Life Saving Victoria work with recreational fishing organisations and agencies that promote recreational fishing to include safe practices for abalone fishing.

Response:

The Coroner's recommendation is currently being implemented.

Life Saving Victoria continues to work with recreational fishing organisations and agencies such as the Victorian Fishing Authority, and VR Fish to include safe practices for abalone fishing. Most recently we have worked with the Victorian Fishing Authority to provide location information to ensure targeted abalone and rock fishing safety messaging is provided to fishers.

Life Saving Victoria is committed to the prevention of aquatic related death and injury and will continue to work collaboratively with the coroner, the Victorian Government and other related recreational fishing organisations to continue to educate and increase education among Victorians and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community regarding the dangers of abalone fishing to reduce risk and prevent deaths of a similar nature occurring.

If you or any of your team have any questions in relation to the above, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Bernadette Matthews, General Manager – Health Promotion and Communications by phone 03 9676 6976 or email bernadette.matthews@lsv.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Nigel Taylor, ESM
Chief Executive Officer
Life Saving Victoria