

Terms of Reference for the Marine Search and Rescue Reform Implementation Board

1. On 11 February 2016, the Government Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Marine Rescue Services in Victoria was tabled in Parliament.
2. The Government Response outlines reforms in the areas of:
 - a. governance
 - b. standards, accreditation and audit
 - c. training
 - d. funding
 - e. communications.
3. As part of the new governance arrangements, the government has established a Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR) Reform Implementation Board as the strategic decision-making body that will drive and oversee the MSAR reform program.

Responsibilities

4. The responsibilities of the MSAR Reform Implementation Board are to:
 - a. oversee the development and implementation of an MSAR Reform Implementation Plan that includes:
 - developing a state MSAR strategy based on a risk assessment informed by local knowledge
 - understanding the current and required MSAR capability
 - developing common MSAR standards and training and exercising programs
 - establishing a common accreditation process
 - developing common communication protocols
 - identifying any necessary changes to statutory and policy frameworks to ensure that volunteer MSAR organisations have the authority to undertake the MSAR activities they perform and have the necessary protections from liability when doing so
 - b. determine the funding implications of the proposed reforms
 - c. explore mechanisms for more adequate and reliable funding for the MSAR sector and processes for procuring and allocating resources based on risk
 - d. explore opportunities for building and strengthening a sustainable MSAR capability for the state, including through supporting the recruitment and retention of volunteers

- e. oversee any other measures that will give effect to the reform of the state's MSAR arrangements as envisaged by the Government Response.

Scope

5. The scope of the Board's work is primarily "blue water"¹ marine search and rescue. Where appropriate and relevant, arrangements adopted as part of the reform program may be extended to all MSAR environments, including white water and smaller inland waterways.
6. In accordance with the Inter-Governmental Agreement on National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements, Victoria Police is currently and will remain the MSAR control agency.
7. Proposed reforms will take into account the importance of each volunteer organisation retaining its identity, independence and connection to its community.

Composition

8. The MSAR Reform Implementation Board will comprise:
 - Emergency Management Commissioner (Chair)
 - Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
 - Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)
 - Transport Safety Victoria
 - Victoria Police
 - Head of the MSAR Office, supported by an elected/nominated representative of the volunteer MSAR organisations, acting in an advisory capacity².

¹ The Inquiry Report uses the definition of "blue water" as distinct from "white water". It defines "blue water" as including offshore, inshore and enclosed waters, as well as larger areas of inland water. "Offshore waters" are all open water more than two nautical miles seaward from the coastline. "Inshore waters" are any open stretch of water extending laterally along the coast up to and including two nautical miles offshore. It also includes bar entrances and tidal waters identified in each state as "partially smooth". "Enclosed waters" are any navigable tidal water such as a harbour, coastal bay, estuary, tidal creek or tidal river, excluding tidal waters identified in each state as partially "smooth". "White water" is defined as the surf, i.e. the area within which lifesaving vessels typically operate.

² The Independent Volunteer Representatives will be elected at the Working Group Meeting. The Coast Guard Volunteer will be nominated by Victorian Coast Guard. The Coast Guard Volunteer Representative will be elected in even years (2018, 2020, 2022 etc.) and the Independent Volunteer Representative will be elected in odd years (2017, 2019, 2021 etc.).

Meetings

9. The Board will meet at least quarterly and more often if required.

Decision-making

10. The Board will endeavour to make decisions by consensus.

11. Where consensus cannot be achieved, decisions will be by majority with the Chair holding the casting vote.

Secretariat

12. EMV will provide secretariat support to the Board.

Governance

13. The Board will report to the Emergency Management Commissioner.

14. The Board will be guided by the advice of the MSAR Working Group.

15. The Board will provide updates to the State Capability and Response Committee as required.

Term

16. The Board will remain in place until the MSAR Reform Implementation Plan has been implemented and the Emergency Management Commissioner determines that oversight of further MSAR sector initiatives can be undertaken by the State Capability and Response Sub-Committee.