

MINUTES

Meeting details			
Meeting title:	Marine Search and Rescue Project Working Group Meeting: Training and Assessment		
Meeting date:	Wednesday, 5 October 2016	Time:	1830hrs
Location:	Teleconference		

Attendees	Title/Business area
Wes Oswin	Manager, Marine Search and Rescue Office (Chair)
Eileen Murray	President, Southern Peninsula Rescue Squad
Lynda Murray	Southern Peninsula Rescue Squad
Peter McNally	Coast Guard
Sheena Grinblat	Coast Guard
Charlie Savage	Coast Guard
Peter Jessop	Coast Guard
Nick Scerri	Coast Watch Ocean Grove
Ben Penrose	Acting Sergeant, Victoria Water Police
Greg Scott	Manager, Lifesaving Operations, Life Saving Victoria
Stuart Laing	Support, Emergency Management Victoria

Apologies	Title/Business area
Adrian Mnew	Deputy Director, Maritime Safety Victoria, Transport Safety Victoria
Frank Egan	Coast Guard
Andrew Kay	President, Torquay Marine Rescue
David Pitson	Volunteer Marine Rescue - Mornington

AGENDA

Item	Subject	Time	Speaker/Action
1.	Opening/apologies	5 min	Wes Oswin
2.	Office of Marine Search and Rescue <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update on progress	10 min	Wes Oswin
3.	Terms of Reference <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss Terms of Reference	10 min	Discussion
4.	Meeting Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting locations and times	5 min	Discussion
5.	Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop working plan	20 min	Discussion
6.	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary of actions from this meeting	5 min	Wes Oswin
7.	Next scheduled meeting - TBC		

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members and apologies noted.

2. Office of Marine Search and Rescue – Update on progress

Wes Oswin provided a progress update.

Finance and Insurance

This has been a key priority for the MSAR Office to date with tight time lines. A sustainable funding model coupled with a robust insurance scheme is a priority for the MSAR Office to deliver.

MSAR Service Provider Survey

A lot of work has gone into collating and analysing the information provided to the MSAR Office by providers and has been extremely useful in establishing a benchmark to determine a reasonable operating budget going into the future. This budget considers:

- the actual cost to run MSAR units and
- current budget pressures providers are experiencing

The information has been collated into spreadsheets and we will be referring to these within this Project Working Group at future meetings.

AGREED ACTION:

- Once finalised, the MSAR Office will share these spreadsheets to Project Working Group members.

2a) Insurance Options

The MSAR Office is working with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) with a view of developing a centralised insurance scheme for the sector.

The VMIA and MSAR Office have virtually reached an unofficial agreement that they will be able to provide a scheme to the sector, however there are a few issues that need to be explored further, including legal and governance issues, before this moves forward.

It is anticipated that the proposed centralised insurance scheme (managed by the VMIA) will cover assets, professional indemnity and third party insurance.

The MSAR Office is looking into a number of options to fund the insurance of MSAR service providers in order to relieve this financial pressures on MSAR service providers.

Briefs will then be prepared and forwarded to the department and to the Minister seeking approval of the proposed insurance scheme.

- *Question to Wes from Alan Hopkins (Coast Guard) – Have any negotiations taken place regarding personal injury or WorkCover?*

Wes responded that this is certainly something that we would expect to be covered one way or another, but has not been discussed yet. Need to establish if the VMIA scheme will actually make the current emergency responder scheme redundant or if they will run together without overlapping. So effectively, both will co-exist or the VMIA scheme will overtake the other. This issue has been flagged but hasn't been worked out just yet.

AGREED ACTION:

- **The MSAR Office will provide communications to the Project Working Group members in the coming weeks once a proposed agreement with the VMIA has been reached.**

2b) Background information into funding options

The MSAR Office has been collating and analysing the survey data.

The Office has identified that another government department is planning to release a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) that consider the fees associated with recreational boat registration and licensing fees.

The MSAR Office is attempting to get a "placeholder" in the RIS for Marine Search and Rescue. A RIS is a government requirement so if this levy is considered in the future as a means to sustainably fund our sector, we need to follow this process.

Thank you to Adrian Jacobs' area at EMV for their current and ongoing efforts in this space.

2c) Stakeholder consultation

The MSAR Office has been consulting with the Boating Industry Association (BIA), Victorian Recreational Fishing (VRFish), Australian Sailing, the Ocean Racing Club of Australia (to name a few) to ascertain their opinion on the reform, as well as opportunities that might be available to help fund MSAR.

2d) Interim MSAR arrangements

The MSAR Office is almost ready to release the interim arrangements as they are still being finalised, however it was noticed that some of the details contained in the document weren't quite right.

For example, there were some references to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) General Safety Requirements (GSR) standard for Class 2D and 2E vessels. In consultation with Transport Safety Victoria, the MSAR Office is of the opinion that this standard is not appropriate for marine search and rescue in Victoria

Further, the MSAR Office believes that accepting the GSR as a vessel standard for inland and sheltered water MSAR vessels would be a backwards step and potentially compromise safety.

The MSAR Office will propose, through the interim arrangements, that we keep the national standard of commercial vessel requirements for Class 2C, 2D and 2E as the minimum standard for MSAR vessels in Victoria.

The MSAR Office will be putting this recommendation to members of this Project Working Group and the Reform Implementation Board to seek approval for this to be the MSAR standard rather than the GSR.

Interpretation of the AMSA Exemption 24 requirements were also incorrect and this is being updated.

AGREED ACTION:

- **The MSAR Office will endeavour to re-circulate the interim MSAR arrangements to all Project Working Groups next week.**

2e) Risk assessments

In consultation with Victoria Water Police and assistance from MSAR service providers, the MSAR Office has finalised the risk assessments that were tabled at the last Working Group.

Since then, we have been geospatially mapping those risk assessments. We now have marine incident data for the past 10 years which is now overlaid across a map of Victoria.

We have also mapped the various ranges of MSAR service providers along the Victorian coast in terms of severe, moderate and fair conditions. We also have some polygons of what we consider to be the principal recreational activity in those areas.

These maps will be particularly useful when the Risk and Capability Project Group analyses the current capabilities and identifies where our gaps are. This will form a prioritised vessel replacement program and where our assets should be located; both in the bay and along the coast.

Our GIS consultant has almost finalised these maps and should be returned to the MSAR Office later this week.

2f) National Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue Committee meeting

We attended the National Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue Committee meeting in Sydney.

Key points of interest happening on the Committee:

- the Committee has decided to write to the CEO of AMSA to get exemption from not only the proposed levies but all fees and charges associated with the National System for all MSAR service providers
- the Committee is also seeking observer status on the Australian and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG) as the committee believes that the volunteer MSAR service providers can play a larger role in terms of boating safety and education for recreational boaters.

2g) Marine Distress Emergency Monitoring System (MDEMS)

Kordia, in conjunction with TSV, held a consultation session on Sunday 25 September 2016. This was attended by members of Coast Guard, independent units, as well as other stakeholders from the department. The MSAR Office also attended.

Kordia provided an update of the project which is expected to go live mid-December 2016.

Two key projects groups are being formed to address some minor technical issues associated with this project as well as the development of some policies and procedures that need to be put in place to support the system.

This body of work is being coordinated by TSV and assistance will be provided by the MSAR Office and Victoria Water Police.

2h) Boating Safety and Facilities Grant Program

This program has recently opened and the MSAR Office is exploring options for the grant program. The MSAR Office wants to ensure that any supported applications align with the priorities of the reform.

The MSAR Office asks that anyone making an application to liaise with the Office first to discuss the proposal.

2i) Upcoming visits by the MSAR Office

- Coastguard "Blessing of the Fleet" on 9 October 2016 (Minister Merlino and Craig Lapsley also scheduled to attend)
- Coastguard Gippsland Squad meeting on 15 October 2016
- Port Campbell independent unit on 28 October 2016
- Coastguard Queenscliff on 8 November 2016

3. Terms of Reference

Wes confirmed with all members that they received the Terms of Reference document, which is detailed in the Marine Search and Rescue Working Group (Training and Assessment) document overview.

MSAR Office has listed dot points in the document of what we believe to be the key elements of the work to be. The MSAR Office will expand the document out into a more formal type of Terms of Reference.

Wes explains that these Terms of Reference are by no means finalised but are simply the MSAR Offices' best assessment of what needs to be achieved at this stage.

Wes ran through the projected outcomes and key elements of the Terms of Reference with the Group.

Wes believes that another projected outcome should be added to cover the conduct of exercises for the sector.

Wes acknowledged that Training and Assessment is one of the largest pieces of work for the MSAR Office to complete in the Reform.

The MSAR Office is proposing to engage the services of a suitably qualified person that understands the marine training space in Victoria to do a lot of the ground work under the direction of the MSAR Office and this project working group.

4. Meeting Administration

The MSAR Office believes that the following key things need to be completed to kick start this work stream.

- An appropriate consultant be engaged by the MSAR Office to support this work
- Brief the consultant on their work plan and scope
- Consultant would then collate and evaluate current training undertaken by the MSAR units
- Detailed workshop to distil out what the actual training strategy might look like
- Agree and develop the strategy

The MSAR Office recognises that this Project Working Group is particularly large and a number of members are located outside the Melbourne metropolitan area. We can rely on teleconferences for regular progress updates along the way, but for more detailed discussions to review documents or hear presentations, face-to-face meetings will need to occur.

Wes proposed that in 2 to 3 weeks, the group meets face-to-face for a 1 to 2 hour-session on either a weeknight or weekend at a location to develop a working brief for a consultant.

Following that, at a date and time to be set, perhaps convene face-to-face for a day-long workshop to review the work, with monthly teleconference updates in between face-to-face meetings to discuss key milestones.

- Comment from Eileen Murray (SPRS) – believes it's important that the next meeting be face-to-face and agrees with Wes' suggestion of a day-long workshop with teleconferences in between face-to-face meetings.
- Comment from Peter McNally (Coast Guard) – with reference to the projected outcomes of the Group, very early in the piece we are going to have to decide what qualifications are required based on regulations at AMSA in order to work out what the arrangements are being carried out now and fill in the gaps. Coast Guard currently delivers to its members the necessary certifications as set out by AMSA and believe they are in a position to be able to offer assistance to other parties.

Wes recognised Peter's comments and stated that AMSA's Exemption 24 requirements are the minimum standards and it needs to be noted that with this exemption it is no longer the case that formal certificates of competency are mandated once that exemption comes into effect. Currently, it grandfathered existing arrangements, both in terms of vessels and qualifications but by 2018, those exemption requirements will take effect and become the minimum. Wes doesn't believe that Victoria should just accept the minimum.

Wes noted that the Parliamentary Inquiry recognises where the gaps are in our training and assessment regime in Victoria at the moment. So, the key outcome for this working group is to not only look at certificates of competency but we want to look at what's being done the best in Victoria; what training materials are the best in Victoria; and what other training materials or models of delivery method are available to us nationally, or even globally, to make sure that what we implement is the best that we can.

Wes noted that there is a common theme around the country in that MSAR volunteers need flexible training delivery to meet the needs. Being required to complete formal training with an instructor doesn't meet everyone's needs and that consideration will need to be given to the availability of some forms of blended delivery; online and/or on-the-job training.

- Comment from Nick Scerri (Coast Watch Ocean Grove) – agrees with face-to-face meetings and teleconferences in between.
- Comment from Greg Scott (Life Saving Victoria) – regarding Terms of Reference and the June 2017 completion date, is the contractor required to deliver by June 2017?

Wes replied that this is the date that has been mandated by the Reform Implementation Board. Looking at briefing the contractor/consultant in the next 2 to 3 weeks with a view of getting started as soon as possible thereafter.

Greg also commented that it would be good to make sure that the contractor/consultant did their literature review and look at all the information that has been provided to date. The most efficient way would be for them to come prepared having looked at all that and ask questions as we don't want to be starting from scratch again with all the good work that's already been done.

Wes concurred with Greg's comment and the person the MSAR Office has in mind knows the space quite well but a lot of site visits will be required to the various MSAR units and potentially to other states to get a picture of what's currently happening to then be able to come back and provide a very detailed brief to this working group for consideration and to evaluate the best of what's out there and what's effectively going to be the best fit for Victoria.

Greg further commented about the need for flexible training delivery.

Greg offered to host future face-to-face meetings or videoconferencing at LSV facilities at Port Melbourne and appreciated by Wes.

- Comment from Ben Penrose (Victoria Water Police) – happy to fit in with the preferences of the volunteers for future meeting dates and locations.

Ben concurred with Greg's comment about the need for flexible training delivery by saying that he has heard similar responses from the sector. Ben suggests that a workshop around some of the sectors' challenges and requirements would be beneficial to provide to this information to the consultant making them aware of this right from the start.

Wes agreed with Ben's suggestion.

Wes sought the Groups preferences and availability for future meetings, in particular a 2 to 3 hour face-to-face meeting/workshop for the Group to develop a work plan.

Following the responses, Wes agreed to take the planning of the face-to-face meeting/workshop offline to schedule on a Sunday in October between 10:00am and 12:00pm at LSV facilities in Port Melbourne. An email initiation will be sent by Wes to all members of the Group once a date is determined.

Wes hopes to secure the services of the Consultant before the next meeting and will communicated this to the Group as soon as it is finalised.

AGREED ACTIONS:

- **Meeting invitations will be sent out to Project Working Group members by the MSAR Office once a date is determined.**
- **Wes will communicate the announcement of the Consultant once their services are secured.**

5. General Business

- Question to Wes from Sheena Grinblat (Coast Guard) – Are we able to be aware of the Contractor you have in mind?

Wes responded that the MSAR Office hasn't finalised any arrangements with this person yet and that only initial discussions have taken place around the person's willingness to be involved in the project. Wes is hoping to be able to firm up those discussions in the next week with a view of communicating with the Group on the person we have in mind before it's officially signed off.

The MSAR Office welcomes and encouraged Group members to contact him at any time with any questions or concerns.

In closing, Wes advised that he hoped to be able to visit as many of the MSAR service providers around the state as he can in due course.

7. Next meeting

Next meeting to be held on a Sunday in October 2016 in Port Melbourne – exact date and time to be advised.

No	Action to be taken	Assigned to	Due date	Status (as at meeting)
1.	The MSAR Office will endeavour to re-circulate the updated draft interim MSAR arrangements to all Project Working Groups next week.	MSAR Office	14/10/2016	In progress
2.	Meeting invitations will be sent out to Project Working Group members by the MSAR Office once a date is determined.	MSAR Office	14/10/2016	In progress
3.	Wes will circulate a précis and experience of the proposed Consultant once their services are secured.	Wes Oswin	14/10/2016	In progress