

CORRECTED VERSION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Marine Rescue Services in Victoria

Melbourne — 24 March 2014

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Life Saving Victoria

Mr Nigel Taylor, Chief Executive Officer

Mr Greg Scott, Manager, Lifesaving Operations

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Ronalds) — Welcome and thank you very much for coming to the public hearing for the Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban/Interface Services Committee inquiry into marine rescue services in Victoria. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Comments you make outside the hearing are not afforded such privilege. I ask both of you to state your name and residential address and if you are representing an organisation, the name of that organisation.

Mr TAYLOR — My name is Nigel Taylor. I live at [REDACTED], and I am the CEO of Life Saving Victoria.

Mr SCOTT — My name is Greg Scott, from Life Saving Victoria, and I live at [REDACTED]

The ACTING CHAIR — I want to make you both aware that your evidence will be recorded and transcribed and will become public information in due course. I hand over to you to make a verbal submission.

Overheads shown.

Mr TAYLOR — I should start by saying that I will probably stay at the higher level of some of the principles we are talking about today, and if we need some detail from a more operational perspective, Greg will provide that. Firstly, just in terms of Life Saving Victoria, the mission for Life Saving Victoria is really about the potential of drowning – fatal and non-fatal – and to make sure that across the whole of the state, not just coastal — a lot of people tend to get us confused with just doing all coastal work — we provide services, education and programming to support that. It is also a key part of Life Saving Victoria's work to make sure we have an aquatic environment that is as safe as possible. It is not just about the prevention of drowning.

We thought we would just step through a number of areas in regard to the emergency services role of Life Saving Victoria. We provide professional and volunteer beach patrolling services at 68 locations across the state. That really picks up from Mallacoota in the east through to Portland in the west. We have a number of emergency evacuation centres which are really the lifesaving facilities that have been constructed along the coast and bay, and we provide support services, the police being the key controlling agency. We provide support services for all forms of rescue that they might seek assistance with.

We have a coastal communication network that we are now working on integrating into the broader emergency services sector. We have some seven offshore rescue boat services. We have two helicopters, one on a 12-months-a-year basis and one on a 4-months-a-year basis. Obviously during the summer is when we run that second one.

The ACTING CHAIR — Where is the second one based?

Mr TAYLOR — We have one at Thirteenth Beach and one at Moorabbin. In a normal year we would undertake, in terms of our professional and volunteer services, about 800 rescues and a considerable amount — some 85 000 — of preventive actions across the coastline.

This is potentially a bit too detailed, but it just gives you an idea of where all the services are located at the moment. In the top area there you have obviously got a large proliferation around Port Phillip Bay, certainly on the east side of Port Phillip Bay, and we extend further out with quite a number of clubs in the inner south-west region and, as I said before, out as far as Mallacoota and Portland. It tends to be in those outreaches where we have the RIB-style services as well. They will do a coastal or beach protection service, but they will also do some offshore work as well.

The ACTING CHAIR — And you do not have one of them at Lakes?

Mr TAYLOR — No, there is an existing service at Lakes.

The ACTING CHAIR — Why is VMR marked on that?

Mr TAYLOR — VMR is marked on that because for about three years they have actually been affiliated with Life Saving Victoria, so they have come into the operation of LSV. It would be fair to say it is a loose affiliation, but it is something we are both growing into. Following behind that now is the Southern Peninsula Rescue Service as well.

The ACTING CHAIR — That was going to be my next question.

Mr TAYLOR — That is where all the services are at the moment. Helicopters, in a summer sense, will do a full patrol going as far as Apollo Bay on some days, or turning at Lorne, and picking up Phillip Island as they turn to the east.

The ACTING CHAIR — Which one is the part-time one?

Mr TAYLOR — The part-time one is stationed at Barwon Heads.

Numerically we have 257 inflatable rescue boats — or rubber duckies, as most people would probably know them. We have the 17 rescue watercraft, and we might talk a little bit later about a new service that we looked at introducing this year with those rescue watercraft. We have eight offshore rescue boats, or RIBs, and we have already mentioned that we have the two helicopters.

In our response that you have received we have made 18 recommendations. It is probably fair to say that we did a lot of work back in 2002 with the Ernst & Young report, and we would endorse that report. It probably needs to be updated, but it is still fairly current in today's environment. The recommendations fit under those five categories: fitness for purpose, the structure in which the services might operate in the future, governance, training and funding.

In terms of fitness for purpose, the first point there is always one of the complexities. I have been around long enough to go back to a report that was done prior to the 2002 Ernst & Young report, and it is always an issue of whether we really know what we have and what is out there. Some services come and go. They are mostly voluntary services. When they are resourced, they are there. If they run out of resources, whether that be funding or human resources, that tends to be the end of the service.

The ACTING CHAIR — What have you found to be the main issues, funding or human resources?

Mr TAYLOR — If it is big boats — and I should identify that we tend to do the RIB; we do not go beyond that — once someone gets into the bigger boats, if they have not got the opportunity to renew that boat every 10 or 15 years, it is a funding issue. There needs to be an audit of all the marine search and rescue vessels and then an audit of the providers as well. There is an interesting concept that you could along the Victorian coastline: a skills gap of services. There would be gaps, but can you then support that gap? There may well be a good reason why there is a gap in the service where there is not going to be a real long-term solution for that particular gap. It all needs to be looked at from that perspective. Having done all that, we really need a strategic resources plan which is addressed on a regular basis in the sense of whether we are keeping it up to date.

I will move now to look at the structure of the services. Two or three years ago New South Wales took a very bold step and brought all the services together under one banner. That is certainly a model via which they could be delivered. In the past there has been the volunteer marine rescue organisation that has met on a regular basis, but it eventually fell over owing to a lack of resourcing and administration as much as anything else. There probably needs to be a sense of how these services come together. The New South Wales model, as I said, is all under one. We are suggesting that it might be easier to have them under the three key agencies, so that could be the Coast Guard, the SES in terms of inland craft and Life Saving Victoria due to the fact that we have got a lot of craft out there as well.

Mr EIDEH — That is what is happening in New South Wales, is it not?

Mr TAYLOR — New South Wales is under one. Queensland is under three.

In a governance sense, what has really changed since the Ernst & Young time is that we are actually now at a point where we are implementing Emergency Management Victoria. We have had some interesting discussions in recent days with Transport Safety Victoria. They very much see themselves as a regulator, and they want to operate without conflict with any other work so that they are free to be the regulator they need to be. This inquiry has really forced us to think this one through a bit more, and we have been looking at it from the perspective that you would have the regulator, being TSV, and then potentially what you may well do is take what was left from the old Marine Safety Victoria.

Marine Safety Victoria provided a whole series of other services. Those services may have eventually gone across to Emergency Management Victoria, because the concept of introducing Emergency Management Victoria was to try to bring all emergency responses together. The inclination will always be to think about it from a terrestrial perspective, but we may not think about it from a marine perspective. It does allow that opportunity. If that were to be the case, what you may be able to do is have the regulator and the emergency controller— that being the Water Police — and then bring everybody together with the marine search and rescue committees meeting regularly under Emergency Management Victoria. That is a possibility as to how that might work.

Life Saving Victoria in its role in the emergency services sector probably delivers a little bit differently. You have got me on my high horse here. All other agencies are statutory authorities, and Life Saving Victoria is not and does not want to be one. It brings its part of the emergency service to the table in an entirely different manner. It has a whole series of industry-based working groups that provide input in terms of the way to address particular situations and addressing the needs and wants of certain parts of the industry. We have a bottom-up decision-making approach. We bring that back to the Department of Justice or EMV in terms of what we think the industry in that particular area or in regard to that particular issue has as a view, and that is what we think is the input from the broader industry.

It is a little bit different; it is not command and control. It is quite different in the sense of the way it is developed. It is at an interesting phase now, and with Life Saving Victoria being recognised in EMV there is that recognition of that system as well. We understand how you do need to work with organisations in the broader community and bring them together, but in many cases they are not going to want to meet on a monthly basis or anything like that. If there is a hot or pressing issue, they will be there and you will be able to get them to meet, no problem at all. If there is no longer a hot and pressing issue, they will not want to meet, and they will just want to do their own thing.

We have an understanding of how that works. It is still in its formative stages, but we think it is actually a very powerful tool. Then potentially the marine search and rescue state committee really would probably then become chair under EMV, so it has got a direct link to EMV from that perspective.

Training is a tricky one, and I know for years this has been the problem. There is the issue of whether everybody almost needs to have a coxswain certificate and all the requisites that go with that?

The ACTING CHAIR — Your view?

Mr TAYLOR — Maybe not. What you do is that you just constrain the number of people who can get involved, because it is difficult for people just in terms of the number of hours, to get the coxswain certificate.

The ACTING CHAIR — What would you do about coxswains?

Mr TAYLOR — You would develop training specific to what you want, from that perspective.

The ACTING CHAIR — So would you have, for example, a rescue ticket of some sort or a search certificate of some sort for a rescue operator that is trained?

Mr TAYLOR — Correct.

Mr EIDEH — Interim training?

Mr TAYLOR — Interim training, absolutely, and then constant training afterwards, so you do not get your qualification and then just sit back. You review it every 12 months.

The ACTING CHAIR — You have to be consistent with it.

Mr TAYLOR — Because the skills that you require for this sort of work, you cannot have got them 12 months ago and then just left them on the shelf.

The ACTING CHAIR — Jump in the boat.

Mr TAYLOR — You have got to keep them going. The other part in training is that you have got a lot of people who mean well and just want to help. What training do you want them to do? Those are the questions we dealt with, going back. There will be some who are able to make the time and commitment. They have got the craft, they will be there and they will be able to train regularly, and so forth. Then you have got others who really — and this is probably where they need to understand where they would sit in a callout basis — sit at the last line, if you like. If we have got nothing else, then this is kind of where you are at, and that starts to kick in where you have got those gaps.

It may well be that where you have got a gap, you do the best you can do, and I think in the Ernst & Young report we had A, B, C, D qualifications. There would be some organisations, probably Coast Guard and Life Saving Victoria, that would want to be at an A level, but there would be others who would say, 'There was a really serious incident here three years ago; I want to know that next time I could help' and that sort of thing, so they are at that level. They need to be recognised, but at the same time there is a grading at which — and to help our water police — they do their call-outs, from that perspective as well.

Then within all that we are doing a lot of work now in terms of online training to make it easier. If I am down the coast 200 kilometres from Port Campbell, for example, I can still do my online training from that perspective, and then for the practical side it may well be that I come back to Port Campbell and work with them to do the practical component.

We have also got a view that there is always the concern that, we quote the example, if a 747 went down in Port Phillip Bay and everybody was required to be there, if they had all trained together, they probably would be a well-coordinated unit. Often the response or the question is, 'Why didn't all the radios work together, or in harmony'.

The ACTING CHAIR — Funnily enough, you are going to get that question. Let us pre-empt it. What is the answer? I believe you guys use different radios from some others.

Mr TAYLOR — Yes, and I will let Greg clarify those situations because I will very quickly get out of my area of expertise. But I think there are two things. If you actually encourage the groups to train together, then when they all turn up on the day, they know everybody else's name, they are familiar with each other, they have realised it is not a matter of someone being on an entirely different planet and they are actually all very similar.

The ACTING CHAIR — Does it happen at all?

Mr TAYLOR — A little.

Mr SCOTT — At a local level.

The ACTING CHAIR — Who do you train with, for example, Greg, where you are?

Mr SCOTT — At a local level. At the club level they might go and train with the local Coast Guard flotilla or whatever. They might have a day with the local police or ambulance where they get together and look ahead over the summer.

Mr TAYLOR — At Woodside, for example, the East Gippsland people are really very good at getting themselves trained.

The ACTING CHAIR — Gippslanders are like that.

Mr TAYLOR — Yes, and probably country people generally are much better at that.

Mr SCOTT — I was just going to say that there are also some training exercises that are put together at a regional level annually — not in all regions — but they work really well. I know we do one on the Bellarine Peninsula, they do one down around Woodside as well, and there is one down in the far west. It would be good to see those happening everywhere.

The ACTING CHAIR — And you obviously have an affiliation with VMR. Do you do a lot with them or is it really still early days?

Mr SCOTT — It is still early days. We do not do it a lot. It is more just through supporting them — through access to insurance and things like that.

Mr TAYLOR — In this summer, when their boat went down for unscheduled maintenance, we took one of our RIBs out of the mouth of the Yarra River and that went down there. You can do it all from those perspectives, and so everybody needs to be trained around each particular craft.

My thought on the training is that there will always be a little bit of sensitivity about each agency having its turf, but the RIB thing is really interesting because everybody tends to have RIBs. No-one owns them, which is really good, and so if you could bring together training in and around RIBs, it might be special operations group, it might be search and rescue, it might be water police, it might be Coast Guard, SES do a bit of that work, Melbourne Fire Brigade obviously do some work in that area and we obviously do, so you have got a common craft, if you like, which you could use as the launch pad for doing a lot of those initial training exercises.

The ACTING CHAIR — Are there patterns for this in other parts of the world or other parts of Australia?

Mr TAYLOR — Not really, but the same problem applies.

The ACTING CHAIR — Everywhere.

Mr TAYLOR — In most other places.

The ACTING CHAIR — Why do you think it does not happen?

Mr TAYLOR — Since I have been sitting at the top table with the CEOs of the other state authorities it has been interesting; that has probably been for about seven years now, and over that time you can actually see it starting to happen in Victoria now.

The ACTING CHAIR — So it is a relationship issue?

Mr TAYLOR — Yes, I think so. It is a relationship issue. We are looking at something else at the moment. We need to develop a service centre/training centre around where we are, around the Port Melbourne area. Melbourne Fire Brigade obviously have to do some work on what they are going to do in terms of their response in fighting fires from the water. They have got a Docklands response which might finish up being more South Wharf, so they have got an interest in that particular area. We have got TSV sitting across the river. We have got water police and search and rescue in Williamstown.

Everybody is in an area that is relatively similar. There might be some possibility that you could actually start to have a training centre evolve in and around the mouth of the Yarra, which is more just opportune because of the fact that everybody is operating in that particular area. The helicopter people, for example, that we use — we lease our two helicopters — are saying that they would not mind getting involved in

terms of establishing something down around the head of the Yarra as well. All those things are not necessarily a new cost. They could actually be delivered because everybody is looking at them within existing budgets at the moment as well. It is an interesting thought.

Existing funding programs tend to be a little bit haphazard in terms of vessel replacement. When boating licences first came in, there were quite a number of new craft pushed out along the coastline of Victoria. Whether there is in fact any funding to do a replacement of those craft, I suspect not at the moment. That is an issue. Any funding should be aligned to that plan we were talking about before — a strategic resources plan. We need to make sure that, although it is always difficult because we have got squeaky wheels and all those sorts of things, there is a reasonable rationale in terms of the state response that your funding is going into the right spots.

We have talked about replacements. I made a point before about the original volunteer marine rescue group, which was really just a whole lot of volunteers giving up more volunteer time to bring together an overarching body. If there was a layer of administrative support for that sort of group, they would have survived much longer. I think that is it.

The ACTING CHAIR — Do you want to start with some questions?

Mr EIDEH — I want to ask about the communication and monitoring process used by Life Saving Victoria. Does that interact with the Victorian water police and other marine rescue organisations?

Mr TAYLOR — Yes, it does.

Mr SCOTT — On operational communications, quite some years ago, due to the nature of where we work, a lot of the existing radio networks did not provide any coverage. We got radio network shadowing, so when people were actually down on the beaches they could not get a radio signal. We also had difficulty accessing funding for ongoing costs. It was much easier to get funding for capital or to actually put something in place. The only way we could achieve what we needed to was to build something with a low running cost that we owned, rather than pay an access cost. With the network we are on at the moment we interact with water police by them actually having our radios in their equipment, so they use our terminals. But we are currently going through the change due to the 400 megahertz spectrum being taken away.

The ACTING CHAIR — Disappearing.

Mr SCOTT — Disappearing. Our technology operates in that space, so we will no longer be able to use what we have. The government has funded a replacement managed network for us and we are currently going through the process of scoping the requirements of that.

The ACTING CHAIR — So that interacts directly with police at this stage? That is the same system, is it not? That is my understanding. Is that correct, or am I incorrect on that?

Mr SCOTT — The actual system?

The ACTING CHAIR — The frequency?

Mr SCOTT — It is one of our business requirements for the new network that we be interoperable with water police and police air wing.

Mr EIDEH — Can you tell us about Life Saving Victoria's risk and signage assessment service? Do you believe there is scope for government to promote this service?

Mr SCOTT — Is that the signage?

Mr EIDEH — Yes.

Mr TAYLOR — Absolutely. It is an opt-in at the moment. That signage has been developed in Victoria. It has become the national standard, and it has now subsequently become the international

standard. We have been working on that one for quite a while. It really came out of the fact that we actually do a lot of work in swimming pools and facilities, so we go in there and do an OHS-like audit. We took those skills and started to apply them. If you recall the drownings that occurred at Gunnamatta probably now about 14 or 15 years ago, that was a very direct response of the family saying, 'We didn't see a sign that there was no patrol there'. That all kind of moved on from then. Now we have got a standard about coastal signage, inland waterway signage and of course pool signage, so help with getting that across the state would be good. The good thing is that now signage is standardised. If you go to Queensland on a holiday, you see the same signage now. From our perspective, we can run whole education programs around that.

Mr SCOTT — As an extension to that, there is the ESTA program around location markers being incorporated into those signs. We do have difficulties at times getting good information about where something is occurring, particularly in more remote areas where you cannot give something such as an intersecting street, or the people do not know where they are. It would be good to see that rolled out more broadly also.

The ACTING CHAIR — Where do you see yourselves fitting in in terms of — I am trying not to call it competing. How do you see that working?

Mr TAYLOR — In terms of the services — —

The ACTING CHAIR — That you provide, yes. There has got to be overlap in some areas.

Mr TAYLOR — We have a pretty clear rule that — this is a really technical term — we do not do big boats. We go as far as RIBs, and that is as far as LSV is looking to go from that perspective. That at least provides one sort of parameter, so that if the Coast Guard is up here doing the bigger boats, then LSV is at the next level down in terms of a lot of its work in those sorts of areas.

The ACTING CHAIR — You are always offshore, though. How would you look at it — offshore within 2 miles? Is that what you look at?

Mr SCOTT — Around 2 miles for the small inflatables, and then it is up to about 5 miles for the RIBs.

The ACTING CHAIR — In terms of your rescues, what sort of area is that? What is the reality of the situation?

Mr SCOTT — Of how far we — —

The ACTING CHAIR — Of the sorts of rescues you routinely undertake.

Mr SCOTT — The majority will be just people off beaches. A large portion would be swimmers, but again, if you look at what the definition of a boater is, then that is also going to capture people like the stand-up paddle boarders and the kite surfers and the kayakers, who we are seeing more and more of getting into difficulty. The cost of that sort of equipment is coming down, but then as the cost comes down and people replace it you see that they are getting cheaper stuff on eBay and the like. People can access that sort of equipment really cheaply and with no knowledge of it.

The ACTING CHAIR — Are you finding people are being irresponsible with some of that equipment?

Mr SCOTT — Yes. People make bad decisions, go out when they clearly have not looked at the weather, where they do not know what they are doing and they have not given consideration to their fitness or their skill level. We definitely see that.

The ACTING CHAIR — And no PFDs?

Mr SCOTT — And no life jackets at times, yes.

The ACTING CHAIR — How do you think that can be addressed?

Mr SCOTT — It is a challenging one. A part of it also goes back to the signs and around education. There needs to be strong education — use of equipment, understanding what people actually need to be aware of when they pick up the equipment and take it out, how they do raise the alarm should they get into difficulty and what they can do to try and stop themselves getting into difficulty in the first place. We have taken a bit of a direction with our rip current awareness over summer that people need to plan their day and be aware. Often the people who do get into difficulty are the ones who out of the blue just go, ‘Let’s go to the beach’, or, ‘Let’s go fishing’, and it becomes a sudden decision rather than something that is thought out. The education then also extends back onto the signage as well. The signs are there, but people also need to understand what they need and give them consideration.

The ACTING CHAIR — In terms of education for these sorts of things, do you feel that TSV is doing a good job in that regard?

Mr SCOTT — When the boating safety facilities program first came out — and it was in the early days of my time at Life Saving Victoria — my understanding is that there was some money that was going into education programs around that. I do not know how much activity still takes place in that area, but I do not think I see as much of it as I used to. I would say that all the agencies that were involved in marine rescue had a project officer, a support officer, at Marine Safety Victoria, who would keep in regular touch and sort of kept their finger on the pulse of what was happening out there, providing us with feedback as well. Since those positions were taken away the engagement has dropped right off also.

The ACTING CHAIR — How much of an issue are PWCs in your work?

Mr SCOTT — Because to members of the public we are seen as the authority on the beach, if there is a problem with a PWC, they are going to go to our lifesavers. Previously the support for problem PWCs has not been as strong as it has in the summer just gone. We run our own comm. centre and everything we do is under the water police as the control agency, so should a club have an issue with a problem PWC they will report it to our comm. centre, which will then log it with the water police, and they will have someone attend.

The ACTING CHAIR — How quickly generally? Has it been a good response?

Mr SCOTT — I would have to actually have a look. I would say with certainty it has been much better this year than in the past.

The ACTING CHAIR — Is it still a significant issue though?

Mr SCOTT — The PWCs are still an issue. The response is not so much of an issue. They are attending now when we have an issue. Previously I do not think they were seen as being as high a priority for police as they were for us.

The ACTING CHAIR — What is the danger for them? What is the danger you are seeing?

Mr SCOTT — With a PWC?

The ACTING CHAIR — Yes.

Mr SCOTT — They are basically a 500-kilogram machine that you can sit on and you can go 100 or 110 kilometres an hour. Stopping can be difficult. If you get something in your eye when you are going 100 kilometres an hour, it is going to take you quite a bit of time to stop. I do not think people appreciate the consequences of how quickly they go, and if they hit something, what it is going to do. Having been on the aircraft at times over summer, what you see people doing on PWCs and the number of them that you see out there is pretty unbelievable.

The ACTING CHAIR — Have you had many rescues in regard to PWCs?

Mr SCOTT — I would have to check. I could not say definitely. Not a lot of rescues — breakdowns, yes, but not of a lot of rescues.

The ACTING CHAIR — Have they caused other accidents? I think we are supposed to call them incidents.

Mr SCOTT — We have had injuries resulting from PWC accidents, yes.

The ACTING CHAIR — Do you see them as a major issue?

Mr SCOTT — For the area we are working in, the rip currents are our biggest issue — people getting stuck in those or people heading to beaches that are unpatrolled locations and — —

The ACTING CHAIR — Rips are your no. 1 issue?

Mr SCOTT — Rips are our no. 1 issue, but we cannot get rid of rip currents.

The ACTING CHAIR — No, it is kind of hard that one.

Mr SCOTT — We can try but — —

The ACTING CHAIR — It is not going to happen.

Mr SCOTT — No.

The ACTING CHAIR — The second one is swimming at unpatrolled beaches?

Mr SCOTT — The rip currents and the unpatrolled beaches are one and the same. No. 2 would probably be the small craft users — people who are not familiar with the equipment getting a kayak or a kite board or something.

The ACTING CHAIR — Not necessarily powered.

Mr SCOTT — Yes, correct. ‘Powered by a manual device’ is what they refer to it as — something along those lines. Then PWCs, especially on Port Phillip Bay and down around the Barwon Heads area as well.

The ACTING CHAIR — Is education the issue with them still? Is it an education issue in terms of powered and non-powered?

Mr SCOTT — You can reduce access to or you can educate people and you can enforce. Enforcement is improving, and it needs to continue to improve. You can look at reducing the access to by considering minimum ages and minimum licensing.

The ACTING CHAIR — Do you think the current licensing arrangements are reasonable?

Mr SCOTT — What of the current licensing — —

The ACTING CHAIR — Between 12 and 16 you can have a licence for a PWC restricted, technically, and post that in terms of unrestricted. Do you think that is reasonable: a 12-year-old restricted to 10 knots, theoretically?

Mr SCOTT — Theoretically, I do not think that a 12-year-old should be riding around on such high-powered machines, no.

The ACTING CHAIR — Nigel, would you care to comment?

Mr TAYLOR — Yes, absolutely. As you would be aware, there is a lot of public angst, and some of that may be undeserved. That is a possibility. But they are a serious piece of machinery these days. Taking

out the 12 to 16 restriction — surely. In the last five years the power has increased, and they are talking now about going up another level — not only going up another level in power but dropping down in price as well.

Mr SCOTT — These new ones that have hit the market are made out of more of a plastic material, and they are about a half or a third of the price, so you can get something much cheaper than you used to get.

The ACTING CHAIR — Significantly cheaper.

Mr SCOTT — It may even be a quarter of the price. Much cheaper craft are coming onto the market these days.

Mr TAYLOR — My understanding was the numbers increased by 10 per cent this year alone.

The ACTING CHAIR — We have had evidence of that.

Mr TAYLOR — They are probably the only growth area in boating at the moment in terms of numbers.

The ACTING CHAIR — Are you finding other small craft issues? We have talked about jet skis. Do other boats not particularly cause you an issue? Sorry, we mentioned the unpowered as well, but there is nothing — —

Mr SCOTT — We do have small fishing boats that get into difficulty: capsize, get swamped or break down.

The ACTING CHAIR — You handle that as well?

Mr SCOTT — Yes, if we have something that is appropriate to respond to it or at least get the people off it, then we will.

The ACTING CHAIR — Did I ask you about the licensing for coxswains? I think we did deal with that, didn't we? Sorry, there are a lot of people before the inquiry.

Mr TAYLOR — I understand. A number of hours.

The ACTING CHAIR — That is an issue. Is there anything else you would like to present to us?

Mr TAYLOR — That is what is in the submission and the presentation, so we are happy with that.

The ACTING CHAIR — Thank you both very much for coming. In the next fortnight you will receive a transcript of what you have said today. Please have a look at that. Correct any typing or grammatical errors, but do not change anything to do with the content of it. Thank you both very much.

Mr TAYLOR — Thanks for the opportunity.

Mr SCOTT — Thank you.

Witnesses withdrew.