

Inquest into the death of Eric Davis Finlayson

Eric Finlayson died on 9 October 2012 on the beach at Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef, offshore from Cairns. Mr Finlayson was part of a snorkelling tour. He died due to drowning against a background of pre-existing medical conditions.

Coroner Kevin Priestly delivered his findings of inquest on 27 November 2017.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

The department named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Recommendation 2

In light of the commitment of Voyager at inquest over 12 months ago to conduct a review with an independent expert, I recommend Workplace Health and Safety Queensland conduct an audit of snorkelling activities conducted by Voyager and report to the Coroners Court on its progress with any independent expert review as well as implementation of recommendations from the Coxon report.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is in progress.

Responsible agency: Department of Education (Office of Industrial Relations).

On 15 August 2018 the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations responded:

The Coxon report is appendix 2 to the coroner's findings. Mr Christopher Coxon is a former senior advisor and dive inspector with Work Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ).

Both vessels operated by the company were subject to an on board audit in September 2017 by WHSQ's Dive Unit. These audits focussed on the provision of snorkelling and diving activities and were conducted whilst the vessels were providing these activities. WHSQ's Dive Unit has continued to assist Voyager with a review and amendments of the company's written procedures for each vessel which operate different day trips.