

Out of Scope

From: Alegria, Stephen <Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 19 December 2023 4:16 PM
To: Wright, Fiona <Fiona.Wright@act.gov.au>; EPSDDExecutiveOffice <EPSDDExecutiveOffice@act.gov.au>
Cc: Watts, Michaela <Michaela.Watts@act.gov.au>
Subject: Notes on Min visit to Cas Sands

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Hi Fiona,

Apologies for another email! The below is for visibility.

Michaela, Ollie Orgill (Area Manager MRC) and I met Minister Vassarotti and two of her team at Casuarina Sands early this afternoon. We showed Minister some key elements of the recent work to improve swimming safety, including seeing the Emergency phone in situ (very exciting!). Minister was keen to hear about the Comms campaign and I have included this in the Weekly brief.

Discussion points:

Education and awareness is the key- we strive to give people the information they need to make a sensible decision about their behaviour...but we cannot prevent incidents like drownings (or falling off Gibraltar Falls for that matter).

We all agreed that the increasing population of new immigrants was a contributing factors that requires targeted comms.

PCS has done some good work in improving line of sight to the river and augmenting sands, as well as new signage.

There has not been any sort of life saving equipment installed at any of the 14-odd river swimming areas since the 1980s, but as per the response to the Coroner's report we will investigate a trial (in light of the Royal Lifesaving Association's advice and the Local Drowning Prevention Plan).

Noteworthy that at each of the 14 swimming locations there are multiple access points to the river (probably hundreds in total) which makes provision of life saving equipment challenging. Also noteworthy that according to Ollie, each of the recent drownings has occurred at peak visitation where the area was well and truly packed with people...yet they still occurred.

We discussed the emergency phone and the fact that it's a bit of an orphan- PCS checks it and arranges repair through Telstra, but we have no visibility of its use levels or effectiveness. The ultimate solution (mobile coverage) is something that EPSDD can (and is) champion but not necessarily own.

Ollie highlighted the fact that the best of our corporate memory no PCS officer has ever been involved in response to a drowning incident and we generally get no information or feedback about safety incidents on our estate from our ESA colleagues.

Regards

Stephen Alegria | Executive Branch Manager | ACT Parks and Conservation Service

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