

REPORT No: 98 1742 VESSEL NAME: KAYAK

KEY EVENTS

- 1.1 On 8 February 1998 at 1500 hours NZDT, six kayakers entered the Kawarau river, near a section known as the Roaring Meg.
- 1.2 Mr Matthew John Daly paddled up to a section 30 metres from the point of entry as was occasionally his habit, presumably to warm up and prepare himself for the venture down stream.
- 1.3 He found himself in a difficult piece of water where the currents were pulling him towards a rock face. He was seen by a fellow kayaker trying to attempt to fend himself clear of the rock face, but capsized shortly afterwards.
- 1.4 The kayak turned over very quickly and rose up to the surface along with the paddle, within a short space of time, but without Mr Daly.
- 1.5 Mr Peter Henry Joyce, who witnessed the event, thinks he called out to his fellow kayakers and then attempted to paddle up to the area to search for his friend. On the previous day, he had been in that very section of the river and capsized himself, but had come to the surface and therefore expected his friend to do so, too. He attempted twice to get to the area.
- 1.6 The two other kayakers left their kayaks to search from the river bank. Mr Joyce then also left his kayak and ventured up the opposite bank to try and sight Mr Daly.
- 1.7 Mr Daly re-emerged 30 metres downstream after a period of 1½ to 2 minutes. A fellow kayaker who is a Doctor working in an emergency hospital, was able to grab him by his lifejacket mid river and realised that he had stopped breathing.
- 1.8 Together, with another of the kayakers steadying his kayak, the Doctor administered artificial respiration for 10 to 12 breaths, but they entered a rapid and struggled to get to the river bank before entering another rapid. The Doctor capsized in the first section of rapids, having thrown his paddle away while administering the artificial respiration. He then swam ashore and raised the alarm for emergency services.
- 1.9 Mr Daly went down the river, through the rapids with a fellow kayaker attempting to hold onto him. The deceased submerged several times and

was eventually pulled from the river where CPR was administered by two of the kayakers. The Doctor arrived on foot shortly afterwards and took over the first aid procedures.

- 1.10** Emergency personnel arrived quickly and continued without success to revive Mr Daly. Dr Milne Simpson from the Medical Centre in Queenstown, who was with the emergency services, confirmed the death of Mr Daly at 1640 hours on 8 February 1998.

KEY CONDITIONS

- 2.1 Mr Daly lived in Dunedin and was 25 years old.
- 2.2 Mr Daly was an experienced kayaker with some 12 years experience and had, on numerous occasions, kayaked on this very section of the river. He had a reputation for not taking risks and was being safety conscious.
- 2.3 Mr Daly was wearing a kayaking helmet, a lifejacket with 8kg buoyancy and his kayak was of sound construction.
- 2.4 The river was at a normal level for the time of year and is classed as a Grade three kayaking standard. Grade one being the least dangerous and Grade six being the most dangerous. According to the National Inland Water and Air Research, the river flow was at or close to 315 cumecs, which is not unusual for this time of year.
- 2.5 Mr Daly's lifejacket was unzipped and the quick release belt undone, but the lower strap of the lifejacket was still fastened. The deceased may well have tried to release his jacket to allow him to swim down to escape from an eddie or release himself from a snag. NB - This bottom strap, when under tension, requires two hands to undo.
- 2.6 The pathologists report stated death due to drowning.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

N.B. These are not listed in order of importance.

- 3.1 The inherent danger of such an activity.
- 3.2 The lifejacket may have snagged on debris in the water. Although there is no direct evidence of this.
- 3.3 The kayak capsized in an area where strong eddies were evident.

CAUSE

Human Factor

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply with regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs & Alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Overloading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to obtain ship's position or course | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Physiological |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improper watchkeeping or lookout | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Handling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Misconduct/Negligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Error of judgement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other . . . |

Environmental Factor

- Adverse weather Debris Ice Navigation hazard
 Adverse current Submerged object Lightning Other . . .

Technical Factor

- Structural failure Wear & tear Steering failure
 Mechanical failure Improper welding Inadequate firefighting/lifesaving
 Electrical failure Inadequate maintenance Insufficient fuel
 Corrosion Inadequate stability Other . . .

4.1 Water currents held the deceased submerged and rapids hindered subsequent attempts to revive him.

OPINIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Send the report to the most appropriate representative of kayak groups with a warning that even kayakers who are experienced and well equipped may still not escape the constant threat which the sport poses.

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