



**Royal Commission into
Victoria's Mental Health System**

Formal submission cover sheet

Make a formal submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission ask us to consider some important themes relating to Victoria's mental health system. In line with this, please consider the questions below. Your responses, including the insights, views and suggestions you share, will help us to prepare our reports.

This is not the only way you can contribute. You may prefer to provide brief comments [here](#) instead, or as well. The brief comments cover some of the same questions, but they may be more convenient and quicker for you to complete.

For individuals

Written submissions made online or by post, may be published on the Commission's website or referred to in the Commission's reports, at the discretion of the Commission. However that is subject to any request for anonymity or confidentiality that you make. That said, we strongly encourage you to allow your submission to be public - this will help to ensure the Commission's work is transparent and that the community is fully informed.'

Audio and video submissions will not be published on the Commission's website. However, they may be referred to in the Commission's reports, subject to any preferences you have nominated.

For organisations

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Because of the importance of transparency and openness for the Commission's work, organisations will need to show compelling reasons for their submissions to remain confidential.

Should you wish to make a formal submission, please consider the questions below, noting that you do not have to respond to all of the questions, instead you may choose

to respond to only some of them. If you would like to contribute and require assistance to be able to do so, please contact the Royal Commission on 1800 00 11 34.

Your information	
Title	Mr
First name	Matt
Surname	McDonald
Email Address	████████████████████
Preferred Contact Number	██████████
Postcode	████
Preferred method of contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Self-described: <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 – 17 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 24 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25 – 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 – 84 <input type="checkbox"/> 85+ <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Do you identify as a member of any of the following groups? Please select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origins <input type="checkbox"/> People of non-English speaking (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds <input type="checkbox"/> People from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Asexual and Queer community <input type="checkbox"/> People who are experiencing or have experienced family violence or homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> People with disability <input type="checkbox"/> People living in rural or regional communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People who are engaged in preventing, responding to and treating mental illness <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Type of submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organisation Please state which organisation: Sail & Adventure Ltd Please state your position at the organisation: Director Please state whether you have authority from that organisation to make this submission on its behalf: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Group How many people does your submission represent?

Personal information about others	Does your submission include information which would allow another individual who has experienced mental illness to be identified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	If yes, are you authorised to provide that information on their behalf, on the basis set out in the document <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Prior to publication, does the submission require redaction to deidentify individuals, apart from the author, to which the submission refers <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Please indicate which of the following best represents you or the organisation/body you represent. Please select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Person living with mental illness <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement with mental health services in the past five years <input type="checkbox"/> Carer / family member / friend of someone living with mental illness <input type="checkbox"/> Support worker <input type="checkbox"/> Individual service provider <input type="checkbox"/> Individual advocate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service provider organisation; Please specify type of provider: Youth Development <input type="checkbox"/> Peak body or advocacy group <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher, academic, commentator <input type="checkbox"/> Government agency <input type="checkbox"/> Interested member of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Other; Please specify:
Please select the main Terms of Reference topics that are covered in your brief comments. Please select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to Victoria's mental health services <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation of Victoria's mental health services <input type="checkbox"/> Best practice treatment and care models that are safe and person-centred <input type="checkbox"/> Family and carer support needs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide prevention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental illness prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health workforce <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways and interfaces between Victoria's mental health services and other services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure, governance, accountability, funding, commissioning and information-sharing arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Data collection and research strategies to advance and monitor reforms <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities <input type="checkbox"/> People living with mental illness and other co-occurring illnesses, disabilities, multiple or dual disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Rural and regional communities <input type="checkbox"/> People in contact, or at greater risk of contact, with the forensic mental health system and the justice system <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People living with both mental illness and problematic drug and alcohol use

For individuals only

Please identify whether this submission is to be treated as public, anonymous or restricted

While you can request anonymity or confidentiality below, we strongly encourage your formal submission to be public - this will help to ensure the Commission's work is transparent and the community is fully informed

Please tick one box

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	My submission may be published or referred to in any public document prepared by the Royal Commission. There is no need to anonymise this submission.
<input type="checkbox"/> Anonymous	<p>My submission may only be published or referred to in any public document prepared by the Royal Commission if it is anonymised (i.e. all information identifying or which could reasonably be expected to identify the author is redacted).</p> <p>If you do not specify the information which you would like to be removed, reasonable efforts will be made to remove all personal information (such as your name, address and other contact details) and other information which could reasonably be expected to identify you.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Restricted	My submission is confidential. My submission and its contents must not be published or referred to in any public document prepared by the Royal Commission. Please include a short explanation as to why you would like your submission restricted.

Please note:

- This cover sheet is required for all formal submissions, whether in writing or by audio or video file. Written submissions made online or by post, may be published on the Commission's website (at the discretion of the Commission) subject to your nominated preferences.
- Audio and video submissions will not be published on the Commission's website. However, they may be referred to in the Commission's reports subject to any preferences nominated.
- While the Commission will take into account your preference, the Commission may redact any part of any submission for privacy, legal or other reasons.

Your contribution

Should you wish to make a formal submission, please consider the questions below, noting that you do not have to respond to all of the questions, instead you may choose to respond to only some of them.

1. What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian community's understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?

We believe that providing opportunities for young people with and without mental illness to work together to solve problems, learn about each other, develop understanding and build resilience is the best method to achieve lasting outcomes.

We believe that in order to achieve this, young people must be in an environment where they feel safe, useful and engaged. There is much evidence (particularly in the Iceland experience) that community based recreation is a powerful tool in bringing young people together and giving them something to be passionate about.

We believe that Youth Development onboard a tall ship provides all of the necessary elements for a life changing experience. An experience in which young people can learn about themselves and others while engaging in the ancient teamwork of tall Ship Sailing. Through the programs and subsequent reflection and newly formed relationships the stigma of mental health can be reduced.

2. What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent mental illness and to support people to get early treatment and support?

Youth Development through Sail Training has a proven track record in the prevention of mental illness in young people by helping to combat depression, drug use and risk taking, and to enable young people to realise their own potential as a person. These youth development activities achieve such outcomes with young people through building resilience, leadership, teamwork and communication skills, while boosting confidence and enabling them to reach their own goals and ambitions. Youth Development through Sail training also enables young people to develop a skill and a passion for an activity that gets them up in the morning, takes them outdoors and provides a respite from technology and social media.

Better outcomes in the prevention of mental illness in young people could be achieved through (1) the greater availability of youth development programs such as sail training activities and (2) the enhancement of the design and role of sail training activities in the prevention and identification of mental illness. This would include the development of processes and strategies to assist participants in youth development programs to obtain professional support and early treatment. It could also include the involvement in the support of young people already diagnosed with a mental illness.

Such better outcomes could be achieved by the endorsement by the Royal Commission of the benefits of Youth Development Programs through Tall Ship sail training in contributing to the identification and prevention of mental illness. This would include endorsement of the need for greater youth development funding by and/or engagement with the Victorian Government, Government agencies, youth mental health support organisations, philanthropy and the broader community.

More details in support of these points can be found below in Section 11 of this submission.

3. What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?

Youth Development through Sail Training has a proven track record in the prevention of suicide in young people by helping to combat mental illness, depression, drug use and risk taking, and to enable young people to realise their own potential as a person. These youth development activities achieve such outcomes with young people through building resilience, leadership, teamwork and communication skills, while boosting confidence and enabling them to reach their own goals and ambitions. Youth Development through Sail Training also enables young people to develop a skill and a passion for an activity that gets them up in the morning, takes them outdoors and provides a respite from technology and social media. Programs are also designed to identify the warning signs of suicide and depression and provide referral services for young people at risk.

Better outcomes in the prevention of suicide in young people could be achieved through (1) the greater availability of youth development programs such as sail training activities and (2) the enhancement of the design and role of sail training activities in the prevention and identification of suicide and depression. This would include the development of processes and strategies to assist participants in youth development programs to obtain professional support and early treatment. It could also include the involvement in the support of young people already diagnosed with a mental illness.

Such better outcomes could be achieved by the endorsement by the Royal Commission of the benefits of Youth Development Programs through Tall Ship sail training in contributing to the identification and prevention of mental illness and suicide. This would include endorsement of the need for greater youth development funding by and/or engagement with the Victorian Government, Government agencies, youth mental health support organisations, philanthropy and the broader community.

More details in support of these points can be found below in Section 11 of this submission.

4. What makes it hard for people to experience good mental health and what can be done to improve this? This may include how people find, access and experience mental health treatment and support and how services link with each other.

We believe that there is a huge divide between young people who may be experiencing the early signs of depression or mental illness and the support systems currently available. This is due to the natural resistance for young people to identify needing any form of assistance, and subsequently making the effort to reach out and seek those services.

We believe that young people need to be provided with opportunities to become involved with other young people and develop relationships, friendships and a better understanding of themselves in a semi-structured and rewarding environment. Recreation has historically played this role in young people, whether that be sports or groups like the scouts or guides. However, we believe that structured programs run onboard Tall Ships provide the most powerful experiences when it comes to enabling young people to self-reflect and to develop personal and interpersonal skills and resilience.

The programs onboard Tall Ships are designed to identify young people at risk and provide an opportunity for self-awareness and a structured pathway to seeking more formal treatment.

5. What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?

It has been proven that for young people the access and availability of recreation and community participation is a key factor in mental health outcomes.

Young people need to have access to activities and pursuits that give them something to be passionate about, to meet other young people and to feel part of something bigger than themselves.

Tall Ship sailing is one of these opportunities.

6. What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?

No submission.

7. What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?

No submission.

8. What are the opportunities in the Victorian community for people living with mental illness to improve their social and economic participation, and what needs to be done to realise these opportunities?

With specific reference to young people, the transition for young people to adulthood is a stage in life in which mental health issues emerge and suicide is a large factor.

According to the research on Australia's youth and young people, the following are key factors in addressing the current issues:

- Youth need the life skills to 'navigate' their own personal journey:

According to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), being good navigators requires a more conscious approach to personal development so that all young people have the capacity to see how their personal biography has developed and how it may be constructed in the present to maximise their options for the future (Wyn J 2009).

- Learning to sail a large tall ship is a metaphor for life-long learning:

Building skills for life as well as work requires an understanding of how young people themselves can build their lives, in real space and time, starting from where they are standing. It means developing approaches that will equip young people to establish themselves in relationships, communities and in jobs, and to do so with a sense of engagement, control and of belonging.

- Self-esteem and well-being are key factor in the success of young people
- The Australian Temperament Study of Youth found that 'a substantial number of the cohort were experiencing mental health problems or were involved in risk taking' (Wyn, 2009):

The research confirms that alcohol abuse is increasing and that the heaviest drinkers in adolescence remained the heaviest drinkers in young adulthood. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) also notes this association, but draws attention to the fact that young people with mental health problems are more likely than their mentally healthy peers to be disengaged from school and to be unemployed (AIHW, 2007). Both of these contributions provide support for the view that schools have a role in promoting young people's well-being and should play an active part in supporting processes of early intervention

- Programs need to address the gap between school and broader society:

In a speech given by the former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, she highlighted the following: "Every year ... another 45,000 to 50,000 early school leavers who should be on the path to becoming skilled tradespeople, para-professionals and professionals... are ending up drifting through casual jobs, often unable to attract a partner or have a supportive network of friends. Certainly, these young people will not be in a position to buy a home. We know that this work and personal insecurity contributes to homelessness, substance abuse and other tragedies for the individuals involved. Our society is the loser.

The imperative for getting this right is moral and economic. It has been estimated that the failure of young people to make a smooth transition to the world of work is costing our economy some \$1.3 billion per year. And the cost of failure is only going to increase. In the modern economy we simply can't afford to have around one-in-five young people not contributing."

Sail Training is in a unique position to deliver outcomes that work to address these issues and challenges effecting Australia's Youth:

- Sail Training delivers outcomes beyond those achieved in land based programs:

Through the participation in structured Youth Development Voyages, young people learn life skills beyond those that can be delivered in a traditional educational format. This is supported by research by McCulloch (2007) who suggested, "It is that combination of limited space and restricted privacy, the movement of the vessel and the inescapability of the whole experience that makes living at sea so profoundly different from any dry land context" (p. 300).

- Sail training delivers outcomes for young people that improve self – esteem and well being:

Grocott and Hunter (2009) found that "participants experienced increases in the esteem in which they held their feelings of global self-worth, physical appearance, emotional stability and mathematical self-esteem" (p. 455).

Research conducted by Kafka et al. (2012) demonstrated that participants in a sail training voyage had increased levels of self-esteem and decreased levels of risky attitudes, aggression, and racial and gender bias, showing that self-esteem increased positively in this case without an increase in socially unacceptable behaviour post–sail training program.

- Sail training enables young people to engage with each other and learn about being part of a community / team:

According to research conducted by Finkelstein and Goodwin (2005): The data showed that nearly all the respondents (94%) claimed the voyage assisted them to cultivate friendships with people from different backgrounds. They reported they felt more successful in social situations, that they made friends more easily and communicated well with others. (p. 13).

This is also supported by Allison et al. (2007), who stated that "analysis of the changes in trainees' assessments of their own social confidence consistently shows that there is an increase in this measure between the beginning of a voyage and three months later" (p. 30). Allison et al (2007) also comments on the value of the value of the structured, hierarchical and disciplined nature of the operations of a sailing ship. They compared small crews (4-10), likened to family groups with those of large military crews (200-300) within which the trainee has only minor responsibilities and little opportunity for progression of duties. Alma sits in the middle of this spectrum and provides the best of both settings.

The Board of Sail and Adventure Ltd wishes to work with mental health professionals and mental health youth support organisations to identify how youth sail training activities could be used to provide support to young people living with mental illness in order to improve their social and economic participation. This would include the identification of the types of mental illness where participation in youth sail training would be most appropriate.

In order to realise this opportunity, endorsement by the Royal Commission of the benefits of Tall Ship youth sail training in this context would assist in obtaining the necessary funding for the development of such a program from government, philanthropy and the broader community.

Note: The source references of the research quoted above can be found in the References section of the Youth Outcomes Through Sail Training – Alma Doepel April 2018 document that has been uploaded as part of this submission.

9. Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

We believe that there is a huge opportunity for more programs that focus on non-medical based initiatives. Recreational based opportunities can provide for young people who may be experiencing the early signs of depression or mental illness and the support systems currently available far more than a medical program. This is due to the natural resistance for young people to identify needing any form of assistance, and subsequently making the effort to reach out and seek those services.

We believe that young people need to be provided with opportunities to become involved with other young people and develop relationships, friendships and a better understanding of themselves in a semi-structured and rewarding environment. Recreation has historically played this role in young people, whether that be sports or groups like the scouts or guides. However, we believe that structured programs run onboard Tall Ships provide the most powerful experiences when it comes to enabling young people to self-reflect, develop personal and interpersonal skills and resilience.

The programs onboard Tall Ships are designed to identify young people at risk and provide an opportunity for self-awareness and a structured pathway to seeking more formal treatment.

10. What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victoria's mental health system and support improvements to last?

Further research and a review of recreational based systems such as Iceland and other European programs. Many of which involve the use of Tall Ships for the delivery of Youth Development Programs.

11. Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?

History and Experience with Youth Sail Training on Alma Doepel

This submission is made by the Board of Sail and Adventure Ltd, the Not for Profit owner and operator of the Historic Tall Ship 'Alma Doepel'. The Alma Doepel was used for youth sail training throughout the 1980's and 90's. The full restoration of the ship for the purpose of youth sail training is well advanced and planning is underway for the commencement of youth sail training in approximately three years' time.

During past voyages, some 200 'youth at risk' participated in youth sail training voyages (nominated by Victoria Police and Juvenile Justice System). It planned that in the future at least 9 Youth Development Voyages of 9 days duration will be conducted each year. Each voyage will include a minimum of 6 youth from the areas of youth at risk, sponsored youth from disadvantage and youth from a refuge or indigenous background. There is a total of 36 places on each Voyage.

In addition, 20 three-day youth sail training voyages will be conducted each year, each with 36 places.

While we engage directly with a significant number of young people on these voyages, there is extensive additional scalability and reach of our programs. This is based on the fact that each trainee has a close circle of 30 family and school class/youth group. Each second order engagement has 10 contacts. To this is added media coverage and virtual presence with school and other youth groups via social media or more direct Skype interactivity.

The work of the restoration is being undertaken by those who operated the prior youth sail training activities as well as a number of those who participated as trainees on the youth sail training voyages. This same group is involved in the planning of youth sail training programs based on the present needs of young people and best practice education principles.

More details on the history, the restoration and on youth sail training can be found on the Alma Doepel website here: <https://almadoepel.com.au/>.

The nature and positive outcomes of youth sail training on Alma Doepel are summarised in the Alma Doepel Sponsorship Prospectus PDF document that has been uploaded as part of this submission.

The history of youth sail training on Alma Doepel and the personal experiences of trainees are illustrated in this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3lyJYi7As0

Further examples of the youth sail training experience on Alma Doepel are shown in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIbJ3GETZGE&feature=youtu.be>

A number of trainees from Alma Doepel voyages have spoken at fund raising events about the life changing experience on the Alma Doepel and how it has shaped their present successes. We are able to arrange for such former trainees to provide to the Royal Commission details in person about these positive narratives.

Positive Outcomes of Tall Ship Youth Sail Training

Tall Ship sailing activities achieve positive outcomes with young people through building resilience, leadership, teamwork and communication skills, while boosting confidence and enabling them to reach their own goals and ambitions. These outcomes are achieved through:

Teamwork

When 36 young people join together for 9 days and collectively sail a traditional tall ship, teamwork is the first outcome. No task can be done as an individual. The crew must work together to assign roles, delegate and collaborate in order to sail the ship.

Leadership

Through both structured and non-structured learning opportunities, young people explore what leadership is and the skills required to lead and motivate others in a team.

Suicide Prevention and Positive Mental Health

The sail training programs engage young people with each other, themselves and the medium of sailing. It gives them access to support networks, life satisfaction and something to be passionate about. These are all factors which have been proven to reduce the likelihood of suicide and contribute to positive mental health.

Self Awareness

Through the key concepts of challenge by choice, teamwork and reflection, young people explore their own identity and how they cope with stress and work with team-members.

Positive Outcomes of Tall Ship Youth Sail Training Supported by Research

Academic research and program evaluations have supported the positive benefits of Tall Ship youth sail training. For example, a University of Edinburgh study states:

“Young trainees who participate in off-shore sail training programmes show measurable improvements in social confidence and their ability to work with others and the benefits are sustained over time after the voyage experience.”

Source: Allison, P., McCulloch, K., McLaughlin, P., Edwards, V., & Tett, L. (2007). The characteristics and value of the sail training experience. Edinburgh, Scotland: The University of Edinburgh.

Details of academic and other research can be found at pages 5 to 11 of the Youth Outcomes Through Sail Training – Alma Doepel April 2018 document that has been uploaded as part of this submission.

Additionally, we are in the process of developing a youth sail training Program Evaluation Model and Process to be used to evaluate and monitor the outcomes of the programs conducted on the Alma Doepel. This Program Evaluation will include Outcome Objectives and related Inputs, Outputs and appropriate Quantifiable Measures to determine success.

The development of the Program Evaluation Model will draw on the evaluation undertaken by the University of Sydney of the Youth Scheme on the Tall Ship ‘Young Endeavour’ which is operated by the Australian Navy (Susan Goodwin and Penelope Robinson (2016). The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme – Inclusivity and Social Inclusion, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney).

Desired Outcomes from Royal Commission

It is submitted that, with support from the Royal Commission, much benefit could be gained from Tall Ship youth sail training for the Victorian community (1) to better prevent mental illness and to support people to obtain early treatment and support and (2) to better prevent youth suicide and (3) potentially provide opportunities for youth living with mental illness to provide opportunities to improve their social and economic participation. The areas of support sought from the Royal Commission are:

1. Endorsement of the benefits of Tall Ship youth sail training to prevent mental illness and youth suicide and to provide support to those living with mental illness;
2. Recommendations to the Victorian Government and government agencies to provide funding for Tall Ship youth sail training on Alma Doepel. For example:
 - Funding to provide places for at least 6 youth at risk on each voyage;
 - Operating funding to increase the number of Youth Development Voyages from the presently planned 9 such voyages per year;

- Funding for the development of comprehensive youth development and support programs to be undertaken during Youth Development Voyages on Alma Doepel; and,
 - Funding of the restoration of the Alma Doepel to enable the commencement of Youth Development Voyages earlier than presently planned.
3. Encouragement of youth mental health support organisations and other relevant organisations to:
- Support the development and enhancement of comprehensive youth development and support programs to be undertaken during Youth Development Voyages on Alma Doepel;
 - Provide input to development of the Alma Doepel youth sail training Program Evaluation Model as it relates to the prevention of mental illness and youth suicide.
 - Support the consideration of how youth sail training activities could be used to provide support to young people living with mental illness in order to improve their social and economic participation; and,
 - To nominate and provide support to individuals who would benefit from participation in a Youth Development Voyage on Alma Doepel.
4. Encouragement of philanthropy and the general community to contribute funding towards:
- The development and enhancement of comprehensive youth development and support programs to be undertaken during Youth Development Voyages on Alma Doepel;
 - Ship operating costs and/or the provision of scholarships for disadvantaged youth to participate in Youth Development Voyages on Alma Doepel; and,
 - The restoration of the Alma Doepel to enable the commencement of Youth Development Voyages earlier than presently planned.

Further Information and Contacts

Members of the Board of Sail and Adventure Ltd will be pleased to meet with the Royal Commission to expand on any of the matters raised in this submission and to respond to any questions. Such a meeting also would be an opportunity for one or two trainees from past Youth Development Voyages to talk about the life changing experience from their voyage on Alma Doepel and how this has shaped their present successes.

Any communications should be addressed to Matt McDonald as shown in the 'Your Information' section or to Jasper Coghlan, an Alma Doepel Supporter, who has assisted in the preparation of this submission (email: [REDACTED] mobile: [REDACTED]).

Privacy acknowledgement	<p>I understand that the Royal Commission works with the assistance of its advisers and service providers. I agree that personal information about me and provided by me will be handled as described on the Privacy Page.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>