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Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland

From the helm



Hon Paul Lucas MP
Member for Lytton
Minister for Transport
and Main Roads

It is timely, as Queensland reaches another milestone recording its 200,000th registered recreational boat, to focus on safety on our waterways.

Boating is booming in Queensland. We're second only to New South Wales and the number of registered boat owners in our state is growing at more than twice the rate of our population – around five per cent a year. One in every 22 people in Queensland is a registered boat owner.

The industry in Queensland employs up to 7000 people with a total industry turnover of around \$1.2 billion a year. These figures reflect the strength of the industry and highlight the need to be aware of safety issues, especially with the busy Easter holiday period before us.

Recreational boats are subject to random safety inspections by either the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol or the Queensland Water Police.

In 2004, more than 43,500 recreational vessels were inspected by officers and they issued nearly 5000 infringement notices. Inspections can include registration, insurance, licensing, safety equipment, on-board sewage management systems and breath-testing for alcohol.

Queensland's special three-member jet ski education and enforcement team will also be out in force over the Easter break to crack down on irresponsible jet ski riders.

Maritime Safety Queensland has an excellent program to make sure owners of recreational vessels stand by their safety obligations, and comply with the relevant safety requirements.

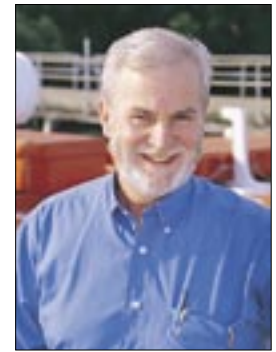
And this year, we've brought in tough new changes to help clean up and protect Queensland's pristine marine and coastal environment.

From 1 April, new regulations compel people to wear life jackets in dangerous situations such as crossing a designated bar in a small open boat, and for children up to 12 years of age to wear a life jacket while underway in a small boat. We want to encourage and promote safety awareness among boaties to the point where it becomes instinctive.

We want to hear from boaties and we'd like the community to have a say on whether these measures are enough. A discussion paper is being developed and is expected to be available for public comment in June.

In the meantime, I wish you happy and safe boating with your friends and family over the Easter holiday season.

Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland



The recent oil spill in the harbour at Gladstone highlights the importance of preparation and training when it comes to a quick and effective response.

Maritime Safety Queensland is committed to providing world class emergency response services for combating ship-sourced marine pollution and allocates over \$1,000,000 to equipment purchases, maintenance and training every year.

Over the past ten years we have been purchasing specialised clean up equipment including skimmers and booms, and maintaining this equipment to retain a constant state of readiness.

Training of our staff is just as important and annual mock exercises are conducted in up to eight Queensland ports as well as nationally to ensure that equipment, communications and skills are practised regularly and tested in a variety of action learning scenarios.

While large spills are hard to miss, they make up only 1-2% of the spills that Maritime Safety Queensland respond to every year.

Maritime Safety Queensland responds to 80-90 reported spills per year, but thankfully spills of the magnitude of Gladstone are rare. Regrettably, some boat operators deliberately discharge oil and chemicals, using Queensland's waterways as a dumping ground of convenience.

Most of the oil and chemical spills in our waterways come from activities such as refuelling, bilge discharges and boat maintenance, which can be easily prevented if operators follow some basic procedures, with a view to protecting our environment. Oil and chemicals can be toxic to marine and human life, so it is in everybody's interest to protect our waterways from pollution. All boat operators need to manage the use and disposal of onboard oil and chemicals correctly.

It is imperative that to reduce pollution onboard your boat you know what oil and chemicals are onboard and know how to handle them to avoid accidental spills.

There are many commonsense ways to safeguard against polluting the water, such as simply checking the fuel tanks capacity and inserting the nozzle into the filler before starting the pump. These might sound simple, but errors such as these make up a large amount of the everyday spills in our waterways.

If you do happen to accidentally discharge oil or chemicals into the water, it is your responsibility to immediately inform the regional harbour master, marina operator or port authority so that they may take appropriate action to clean up the spill. Remember that to discharge oil or pollutants, either deliberately or through negligence, is a serious offence and heavy fines can be applied.

Everyone can help protect the marine environment by reporting pollution incidents to their local regional harbour master's office or port authority.

The work done by all agencies involved in the response to the Gladstone oil spill was outstanding and I want to extend my thanks to everyone involved for their tireless efforts and great results.



No. 200,000

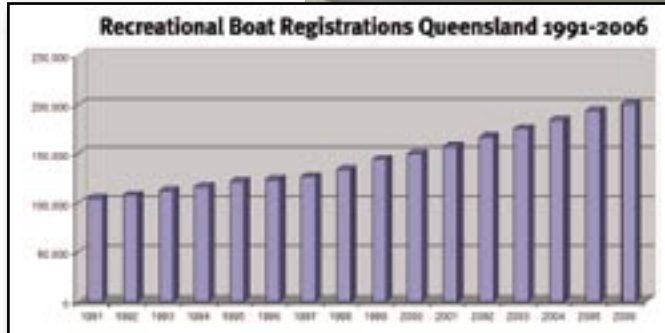
Boat registrations reach new milestone

Queenslanders like to get out on the water – the state now has over 200,000 registered recreational boats.

Queenslanders love boating and this is borne out by the continued rate of growth in registrations. Almost one in every 22 Queenslanders now own a boat, a greater percentage than any other state or territory.

Boat ownership in Queensland has grown at more than twice the rate of population growth, about five percent a year, with manufacturers continuing to report record sales.

The maritime industry in Queensland employs up to 7000 people, about two-thirds of them full-time. The total industry turnover is between \$1.2 billion to \$1.3 billion annually.



Above: Paul Aleckson, wife Alica, and baby Zaira received a certificate as owners of Queensland's 200,000th registered recreational vessel.

On 25 March 2006 the Transport and Main Roads Minister Hon. Paul Lucas officially marked the 200,000 milestone by presenting a certificate to the owner of the boat that took the honour when it was registered last month – a 5.5 metre bowrider named *MV Pookie*.

Owner Paul Aleckson of Redland Bay in Brisbane's southern bayside district, said he

was pleased his vessel would be remembered this way, and he intended to uphold rigorous safety standards.

"Safe boating is enjoyable boating, and that's exactly how I approach it," he said.

Mr Aleckson obtained his boating licence in June 2005 and while he has previous experience with jet skis, this is his first boat.

Beacon named after a boating legend

The memory of a local sailing legend will live on forever in the salty mist of Moreton Bay with the dedication of a beacon near Green Island to be named after Norman J Wright MBE.

Speaking to Mr Wright's widow and members of his old gang from the 18-footers sailing club at a special dedication ceremony at the William Gunn jetty in Manly on February 10th, Transport and Main Roads Minister Paul Lucas retold some of Norm Wright's achievements.

Norm Wright was a legendary boat builder who successfully competed in many Brisbane to Gladstone yacht races, including taking line honours in race record time in 1955 and a "hat-trick" of corrected time wins from 1960 to 1963. He also sailed in two America's Cup campaigns on board the *Gretel* 1962 and *Dame Pattie* in 1967.

Norm Wright is a legend in the boat building industry and in maritime circles, so it was

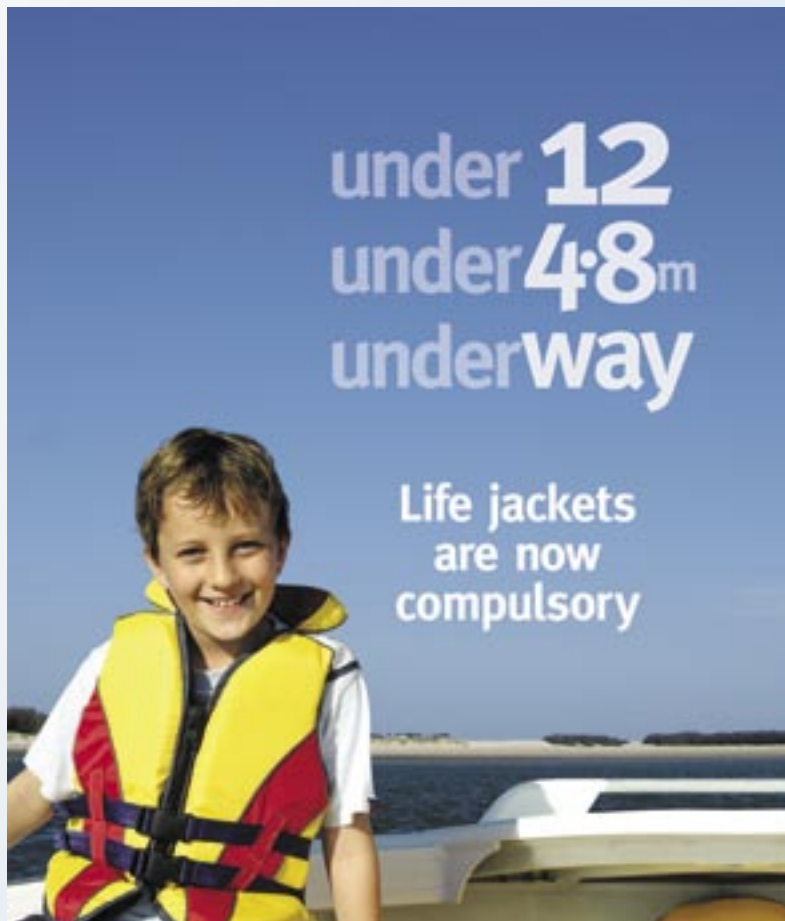
only fitting that Maritime Safety Queensland name a navigational aid in honour of his great achievements.

Retiring from his boating business *Wright Launch Services* in 1969, Mr Wright was made a life member of the Brisbane 18-Footers Sailing Club and the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and in 1978 was awarded an MBE for his services to yachting and boat building and spent his last years cruising the Queensland coastline in his self-built 12-metre motor launch *Rambling Rose*. He died a decade ago.

Naming of navigational aids occurs very rarely, and then only to honour those whose peers believe they are worthy of such recognition. This was one nomination that Maritime Safety Queensland was happy to support.

LEFT: Transport and Main Roads Minister Hon. Paul Lucas (left) presents a commemorative plaque to Mrs Helen Wright and family friend Perry Pryke.





Lifejacket rule changes target high risk situations

Look out for the **statewide campaign**

On 13 March 2006, the Honourable Paul Lucas, MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads, announced the introduction of new compulsory lifejacket wearing requirements for children and in certain high risk situations.

The new regulation for the compulsory wearing of lifejackets in certain situations became law from 1 April 2006. It is now a requirement for all children under the age of 12 in open boats under 4.8m in length while underway, to wear lifejackets. As well, everyone on open boats under 4.8m will be required to wear lifejackets while crossing declared coastal bars.

Until recently the Queensland legislation only required lifejackets to be carried for each person on board, depending on the waters that the boat was operating. Now the legislation provides that not only do you have to carry lifejackets but you have to wear them in certain situations. The new regulation will require the compulsory wearing of lifejackets in the most obvious high risk situations of bar crossings in small open boats and for children in boats.

The new regulations are in response to the changing landscape of boat ownership and marine incidents. A review of marine incidents reveals that coastal bars, with their unpredictability, are heavily represented. In many cases, if a boat overturns on a coastal bar, those on

Definitions

Under 12

Up to 12 years of age, between the ages of 1 – 12, not including 12 years old

Underway

A vessel which is not:

- at anchor
- made fast to the shore
- aground.

A vessel does not have to be moving to be "underway"

Determining your boat's length

Refer to the length specified by the boat manufacturer



Lifejackets for babies under 12 months

Several conditions determine whether children are required to wear life jackets - their age, the length and type of the boat and whether or not the boat is underway.

The laws apply to children between 12 months and 12 years of age. While it is not recommended that children under 12 months travel on boats under 4.8 metres, there are times when it becomes necessary. In this case the child should be held securely by a parent or adult.

PFDs for children can be purchased for children under 10kgs, many with a strap that goes between their legs. This helps stop the jacket from slipping up over their head if they do happen to fall in the water.

It is recommended if you intend to regularly carry an infant on board to take the precaution of purchasing such a PFD, especially if you are not a strong swimmer. Every precaution can help in the event of an incident.



board have no time to retrieve, let alone put on lifejackets.

Boating with young children, particularly if problems arise, such as a change in the weather or irresponsible boating conduct, is also a high risk situation.

The things that owners should consider when selecting their safety equipment is what is the appropriate type of lifejacket needed for the conditions in which they will be operating, that is, is a PFD type 1, 2 or 3 required. Masters should also ensure that the life jackets carried and worn are of an appropriate size for the passengers on board. If a lifejacket does not fit properly, it will be taken to not have been carried or worn at all.

Making sure lifejackets fit properly is particularly important for children who can easily slip out of a too large jacket in the water. Most lifejackets come with a recommended weight range. When selecting an appropriate jacket for your children consider their weight, get them to try the jacket on for comfort and fit, check that the straps are easy to do up and remain securely fastened if pressure is applied. While cheaper types of lifejackets are available

they do not always represent good value for money. Remember don't compromise safety for the sake of a few dollars.

Queensland has reached a boating population of 200,000 registered recreational vessels. Many other smaller boats, such as canoes, do not require registration. Increasingly, children are involved in water activities with all types of craft and their continued protection and safety is of prime importance. The new regulation will help to facilitate this.

Also, there have been a number of recent marine incidents in Queensland resulting in deaths due to drowning. In 2005, there were eight deaths resulting from swampings, capsize or person overboards. Young children are particularly susceptible in situations like these.

A recent incident highlights the risks of unsafe marine activity and improper lifejacket usage. In December 2005, police were forced to rescue a man and his two sons from their swamped 4.2 metre dinghy in Moreton Bay. They were returning to Redcliffe from Moreton Island when weather conditions worsened and they ran out of fuel. While the boys were wearing PFDs, they

were adult-sized and therefore not suitable for their maximum safety. Their father was not wearing his lifejacket at all.

This situation ended up in court as a result of charges being laid. The father was fined and the court commented that it was a serious offence with potentially grave consequences.

The new regulation will help with the avoidance of such safety breaches and will generally improve boating safety for all boat owners and occupants, particularly children.

The new laws will be reviewed later this year and a discussion paper on the compulsory wearing of lifejackets is due for release in July.

For more information about the new regulations log on to Maritime Safety Queensland's website and download the fact sheets and frequently asked questions and answers at www.msq.qld.gov.au.

(Australian Builders' Plate) or recorded on the boat registration. When in doubt it's the overall length of the boat excluding appendages such as bow sprits and duckboards.

Open vessel (open boat)

An open boat is defined as a vessel that doesn't have a permanent rigid deckhouse, cabin, or other enclosed space suitable for a person to occupy.

Coastal bar

A shallow area where siltation (sediment)

is deposited across a river mouth, lake, estuary or harbour entrance.

Designated coastal bars

Eight coastal bars in Queensland where wearing of a lifejacket is now mandatory (see map on right). Other bars may be included at a later date.

* *The Gold Coast Seaway and Mooloolabah Bar may be considered during a review, particularly for times of heightened risk such as at night, whilst travelling alone, and strong wind warnings.*



Readers' Questions ANSWERED

My boat has a builder's plate affixed, do I still need to display a capacity label?

B.J.

Dear B.J.,

The quick and easy way to determine your boat's safe capacity is to take the information from the Australian Builder's Plate or the manufacturer's plate if available.

Capacity labels are not required if your boat has either a manufacturer's plate or an Australian Builder's Plate, but only if these are clearly visible from each steering position on the boat. You should still consider affixing a capacity label if it provides a more visible reminder of your boat's safe capacity.

I just bought a new boat that has a VHF radio on it. I don't plan on going outside two nautical miles range, is this type of radio sufficient and do I need a licence to operate it?

J.S.

Dear J.S.,

Under federal regulations, operators of VHF and MF/HF radios are required to hold an operator's certificate; the normal certificate for recreational operators is the Marine Radio Operators Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP).

Many Coast Guard and VMR stations provide this course or may advise where a local course is available. Operators of 27 MHz equipment are not required to hold a certificate but are strongly encouraged to obtain one for their own and others' safety.

VHF is the preferred radio for short range communications, so would be fine in your case. All large vessels and an increasing number of smaller boats monitor Channel 16. Areas with large boating populations have marine rescue stations monitoring channels 16 and 67 on a 24 hour/7 day basis.

Owner builders get on board with the ABP



In a move to make recreational vessels safer across the board, owner builders will now be required to affix ABPs onto the boats they build from 1 July 2006.

Ministers of the Australian Transport Council endorsed the latest amendments to the ABP Standard late last year, which included owner builders being required to affix an ABP.

National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) CEO Maurene Horder stressed that the ABP was being progressively introduced prior to it becoming mandatory from 1 July 2006.

The ABP applies to most new recreational boats including those imported into Australia and details vital information such as the maximum number of people and load allowed, engine rating and weight and, for boats less than six metres, buoyancy performance.

Recreational boats that are excluded from having an ABP include: amphibious vehicles; canoes, kayaks, or surf skis; pedal powered boats; second hand vessels; rowing shells; sailboards or sail kites; surf row boats; hydrofoils or hovercraft; sailing vessels; submersibles; aquatic toys; personal watercraft; and inflatable boats in certain conditions.

For more information and for a copy of Edition 3 of the ABP Standard, visit NMSC web site at www.nmsc.gov.au and follow the links to the ABP page.

NSCV regulations adopted and integrated

New options are available to meet national standards for the design and construction of commercial vessels and fishing ships.

Under the updated National Standards for Commercial Vessels that took effect on 1 March, a ship designer can now use the prescribed approach or can choose what is known as a performance-based approach.

The prescriptive path is set out in the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety - Designing and Building Commercial Ships and Fishing Ships) Standard of 2006*.

Where a designer chooses the performance-based approach, verification is required that the design meets the standards together with relevant documentation. Verification can involve calculations, testing, risk analysis or expert opinion.

In either case a ship builder must adhere to the design of and specifications for the vessel. If a problem emerges in the design during construction, the builder must consult the designer so they can agree on a satisfactory resolution.

Ship Operating documents now on web

The Commercial and Fishing Ships Operating Documents will soon be available as a free download from the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

These are the manuals and plans the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004 requires all commercial ships registered in Queensland to carry on board and maintain.

Commercial ships exempt from carrying the document are those less than eight metres that make short trips (less than 15 minutes) in smooth waters,



and registrable fishing ships operating in smooth or partially smooth waters.

The owner and master of a ship must ensure the following manuals and plans are on board the ship and available to the ship's crew. They must also make sure the crew are familiar with the content. The documents are:

- operational manual for the ship
- technical manual for the ship
- maintenance and service manual for the ship
- marine occupational health and safety manual for the ship
- safety management plan for the ship for on board emergencies
- manual of procedures for verification of passenger numbers

The manuals on the website will be Word documents to cater for electronic amendments or as a .pdf file. Alternatively the books can still be purchased from Maritime Safety Queensland's regional offices and through the mail (there is also an order form on the website).



Gladstone
oil spill clean-up

SWIFT RESPONSE

Six minutes to midnight on January 24th, the tug boat *Tom Tough* struck the hull of arriving ship *Global Peace*, rupturing a heavy fuel tank in the vessel which subsequently released 25 tonnes of fuel unchecked into Gladstone Harbour.

A potentially disastrous event, Maritime Safety Queensland in conjunction with the Central Queensland Ports Authority, launched a full scale clean-up operation that lasted eight days, to minimise the economic and environmental damage associated with the spill. The major operation is now completed and early forecasts are very positive as is the feedback on the response itself.

The 263m long Korean vessel was about to berth at the RG Tanna coal terminal when it was struck, causing Maritime Safety Queensland to activate the *National plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil*. A spill of this magnitude demanded a significant response effort and the State Control Centre, headed by the General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland, Captain John

Watkinson, was activated immediately. Captain Watkinson leads responses to all incidents in Queensland and oversaw all operations for the harbour spill in Brisbane and Gladstone.

Calling into force a multi-agency team, Captain Watkinson soon had the Gladstone Incident Control Centre, coordinated by Captain Mike Lutze – Regional Harbour Master of Gladstone working towards quickly and effectively recapturing the oil.

On the first day, the response was swift, with equipment, including an oil skimmer dispatched to the scene immediately, a further skimmer dispatched from Brisbane, and a third from Mackay, all by 6am.



Many of the people involved have worked on oil spill responses all over the world and train regularly for these types of incidents

Protecting waterways



PICTURED: The small hole visible on the port hull of the Global Peace (left) resulted in over 25 tonnes of oil being released into Gladstone Harbour. Some of the oil floated west of the dock, but most floated into the main channel.

An eight-metre Marko Oil Recovery Vessel (pictured top left) was one of Maritime Safety Queensland's vessels used in the operation.

The clean-up was a multi-agency and department operation, including officers from Maritime Safety Queensland, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and the Sydney Ports Authority to name just three (men from these agencies pictured right middle).

Dawn provided incident controllers with their first glimpse of the spill. The team boarded helicopters and undertook extensive aerial surveillance to identify and track the oil which had now spread over a large area. Aerial surveillance provided the guidance for the quick development and refining of response plans.

Booms and skimmers had been immediately activated to recover the oil culminating in an outstanding result with approximately two tonnes of oil and debris recovered on the first day.

Members of the National Response Team had arrived in Gladstone from Brisbane, Sydney, Newcastle and Darwin and representatives from the Australian Marine Oil Spill Response Centre to provide valuable expertise and assistance.

Like any crisis, this response was not without its particular challenges. Inclement weather and a wild storm particularly hindered recovery efforts. Weather and tidal conditions had caused the oil to spread over a significant area (20km by 4km) within the harbour of Gladstone. A storm overnight had broken the protective boom across Auckland Creek, causing oil to breach the barrier.

The response effort had to be refocused appropriately. Whilst deteriorating weather had inhibited water operations, the strong winds and wave action were favourable in assisting the break down of the oil.

After a number of aerial overflights, further skimming and recovery of oil; extensive shoreline assessment was conducted with priority given to the Gladstone Marina, Auckland Creek, Calliope River entrance and the inshore area of Clinton Berth.

A major concern for all agencies was the potential effect of the spill on native wildlife to the area. Sightings of oiled wildlife were thankfully limited and an oiled wildlife cleaning station was set up to care for any affected animals that experts captured.

It was fortunate the oil spill was contained within the harbour of Gladstone and, according to a representative from the Gladstone District of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, no impact on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is anticipated.

The team recovered 8000 litres of oil and 61 cubic metres of oily debris over eight days.

“Many of the people involved have worked on oil spill responses all over the world and

train regularly for these types of incidents,” said Captain Mike Lutze, Incident Controller and Regional Harbour Master of Gladstone.

Most of the clean up was completed within eight days, with a minimum disruption to port operations. Some oil remains in mangroves near the Fisherman’s Landing Wharves but experts say that this will break down naturally over time.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries in conjunction with Queensland Health initiated a three phase monitoring program to address concerns about the effects of the spill on the local fishing industry. The first phase, which looked at levels of hydrocarbons in fish, crabs, prawns and seawater taken from Gladstone Harbour soon after the spill occurred, is complete. None of the samples analysed have shown any sign of tainting and all samples have

On the ground in Gladstone

When Senior Maritime Officer Ashley Titmarsh first laid eyes on the oil spill in Gladstone Harbour, he thought ‘what a mess’.

Mr Titmarsh was part of an incident response team of over 60 people that converged on Gladstone Harbour charged with the task of carrying out the *National plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil*.

Within hours of the spill, local task forces swung into action, lowering booms to contain the spill in the harbour with staff on hand to ensure no vessels attempted to enter the creek. The local marco oil recovery vessel *Rapper* moved in, and experts and equipment, including an oil skimmer arrived at the scene.

On his arrival Mr Titmarsh boarded a helicopter to survey the damage first hand. A storm during the night had broken a boom allowing oil to exit the harbour and this breach initially hampered clean up operations, but ultimately assisted by helping the oil disperse.

“I thought to myself, this is going to take a while to clean up – there was just so much oil,” Mr Titmarsh said.

On evaluating the situation, two more oil skimmers were dispatched from Brisbane and Mackay and response teams worked through the morning to contain the oil before the tide

turned and spread the fuel further into other port areas.

The seriousness of the incident meant that the clean up operation would be a multiple agency affair, coordinating expert advice and assistance from departments and agencies such as Parks and Wildlife, Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks, Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Primary Industries to name a few.

Mr Titmarsh was one of 12 officers operating from the Incident Control Centre, coordinating the response, while approximately 51 were hands on, on the ground.

“There were a few things that made this operation difficult.

“Being January, the heat and humidity were high and add to that the head-to-toe protective clothing our guys had to wear and it meant rotating teams regularly to avoid heat stroke,” Mr Titmarsh said.

“The main aim of our cleanup efforts in the mangroves was to clear out as much debris and soiled leaf matter as possible without further impacting the environment ourselves.

“The narrow road access to the mangroves

made it difficult to move machinery and we had to build a walkway down to the affected area to make the location safe.

“Because of the machinery restrictions, all of the removal had to be carried out by rake and shovel – no small task when you consider that we removed 61 cubic metres of debris from that area alone,” he said.

Mr Titmarsh stayed on in Gladstone until the bulk of the clean up was finished, culminating in 8000 litres of oil and 61 cubic metres of oily debris removed from the harbour, and while waiting for the results of independent reviews, has now had time to reflect on the response by all involved.

“The co-ordination of the local response was led by Captain Mike Lutze, the Regional Harbour Master of Gladstone and honestly, he couldn’t have done a better job of it,” Mr Titmarsh said.

“People worked 12 hour days, incredibly long shifts, under arduous conditions and yet the moral was excellent, it was a great example of teamwork ending in a result we can all be proud of”.



been passed fit for sale by Queensland Health.

Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Paul Lucas and Queensland Transport Director General, Bruce Wilson visited the site early in the response effort and praised the professionalism of the people involved in the cleanup and wildlife protection, saying that their dedication and the efficiency with which they reacted to a very difficult task was admirable.

Mr Lucas also thanked the cleanup crews and wildlife officers who came from all over Australia and congratulated them on the wonderful job they did.

The National Plan Management Committee, the body charged with management of oil spill response in Australia, has commissioned an independent analysis into this incident. Lessons learned from the experience will be

passed on to other agencies across Australia with responsibility for oil spill response.

The experience has demonstrated the immense value of Australia’s national oil spill contingency planning arrangements and Maritime Safety Queensland’s commitment to protecting this State’s rich and diverse marine and coastal environments.

MARITIME SAFETY QUEENSLAND'S
MARKETING AND EDUCATION UNIT

Mate, this is what the laws says ...

Maritime Safety Queensland has a statutory obligation to keep the boating communities informed about the laws under which boat owners and operators function and what is expected of them when they're on the water.

The task of the agency's Marketing and Education Unit is to clearly explain legislative initiatives and other maritime safety programs so they can be easily understood by all those who have to comply.

Over the years, the unit has developed hundreds of communication and education campaigns to promote boating safety. This has been done through such avenues as the internet, television, radio, sponsorship, publications, brochures, direct mail, media statements, general editorial copy and special events.

"What method we use depends on the particular audience and how complex the information is," says unit manager Dave Oelrichs.

"For example, everyone needs to know about new lifejacket regulations, so we'll let people know through radio, television and papers. On the other hand, we use the internet to warn backpackers not to go on illegal charters. It depends on the message and where the people would most likely encounter it."

The unit's work is varied. Team members interpret complex legislation, identify trends by analysing marine incident data and compliance

reports, and generally encourage continuous feedback about boating in Queensland.

To evaluate its work, the unit conducts larger mail surveys every two years that are sent to boat owners across the state for up to a six-month period through registration renewal notices. The response rate generally varies between 10% and 15% which is satisfactory for accurate analysis. The results are compared with previous surveys to track changes and this information is then used to develop new campaigns, adjust current projects and phase out others.

Important feedback is also gathered from Maritime Safety Queensland's presence at boat shows such as *Sanctuary Cove*, the *Brisbane International Boat Show* and *Tinnie and Tackle*. The Marketing and Education Unit organises all aspects of displays at these shows, and assists with regional boat shows throughout the state. These shows allow for direct two-way communication between the boating public and the agency.

Some private sponsors have a long partnership with the unit; they include

Century Batteries, Toyota, Haines Hunter, Pains-Wessex and Club Marine. The unit could not provide the level of activity and education materials it does without the support of these sponsors.

The education unit also develops and manages a number of successful saleable publications. These are all relevant to the boating public's needs and contribute to marine safety in Queensland. The *Small Ships Manual* is regarded as the premier training manual for commercial coxswain and Master Class 5 tickets and is used nationally. The

BoatSafe Workbook provides a high standard of theory for recreational boating courses and the Commercial and Fishing Ships documents help industry to meet their documentation requirements. The *Beacon to Beacon Directory* and *Official Tide Tables and Boating Safety Guides* are runaway best sellers.

The education unit works closely with enforcement officers, marine safety officers and marine rescue volunteers, all of whom are at the frontline with waterway users.



Long-term sponsors make impact on boating safety

Maritime Safety Queensland took the opportunity to recognise the important contribution its sponsors make at an annual event, aboard the *QG Moreton* on 23 February.

Sponsors provide vital support for Maritime Safety Queensland's recreational and commercial boating safety programs and therefore an invaluable service to the community according to Director-General of Queensland Transport, Bruce Wilson.

"The sponsor's evening provided me with a valuable opportunity to recognise the contribution of the sponsors and to highlight some of the key safety-related initiatives undertaken within Maritime Safety Queensland in recent times," Mr Wilson said.

Boating safety education is a frontline activity for Maritime Safety Queensland, which regards a broader awareness among boat owners and operators as the key to mitigating danger on waterways and minimising the likelihood of marine incidents. This goal is achieved through a variety of boating safety programs, training, testing, on-water activities and the preparation of publications.

These activities make a large impact on boat owners and operators and would not be possible without the involvement of Maritime Safety Queensland's sponsors who provide support through funding, safety awards, media exposure, publication of safety articles in journals and safety education days to get the safety message out to boaties.

"One of the crucial aspects of how Maritime Safety Queensland goes about its business is its ability to work with solid partners who understand the importance of what the agency has set out to achieve," Mr Wilson said.

Those presented with a Certificate of Appreciation included representatives from Century Batteries, Yamaha, Club Marine, Toyota, Haines Hunter, Pains Wessex and Personal Plates Queensland (PPQ), all of whom have been unwavering supporters of Maritime Safety Queensland for a number of years.

Take care in depleted dams



The state government is appealing to people who go out in boats and other craft on Queensland's inland waterways and impoundments to be extremely cautious.

General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland, Captain John Watkinson said low levels of dams and lakes in central and southern Queensland is making them dangerous for recreational activities on the water.

"Where Maritime Safety Queensland has imposed speed restrictions on freshwater impoundments and erected public notices, it's done so for a very good reason – to save lives," Captain Watkinson said.

In general however, people who use these inland waterways must be super-cautious, whether they're boating, operating personal watercraft, water skiing, sailboarding, tubering or the like.

When water gets down to levels such as this, it exposes craft and people on the water to a host of hidden underwater dangers.

It's not just the possibility of submerged trees or old wire fence lines still attached to posts; you're just as likely in these circumstances to find old farm house structures or tractors coming very close to the surface.

In fact, boating around any infrastructure can become dangerous when water falls to these levels. All vessel operators should make their way cautiously and keep a proper lookout for submerged objects which might present dangers.

Some impoundments are actually completely dry so no-one will be going anywhere on those but it's others that are between about only 3% and 10% capacity that are the safety worry.

Maritime Safety Queensland is particularly concerned about water skiing on weirs after several near misses, including a boat that ran aground at Fairbairn Dam, near Emerald, whilst towing a skier and found they were in ankle deep water.

Officers from one of its enforcement partners, the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, have also reported their concerns about people taking unnecessary risks on popular inland waterways.

Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland in Bundaberg, Rob Lowe said there is empirical evidence from ambulance and hospital records to suggest that there are more marine incidents than get formally reported for investigation, but Maritime Safety Queensland does not have access to these statistics due to freedom of information laws.

"The obligation for the safety of the operation of all vessels in Queensland rests with the owner, master and crew, it is up to them to ensure they act responsibly and remain safe on the water."

Before operating your boat on an impoundment you should traverse the impoundment slowly, checking for depth and for hidden dangers before any high speed activities.

It is not enough to assume things are the same as your last visit as conditions can change from day to day.

By law vessel operators are responsible for reporting marine incidents and to not do so is a fineable offence.

To check Queensland impoundment water levels try Sunwater and Seqwater websites located at: www.sunwater.com.au and www.seqwater.com.au.

'Safe Passage' exercise primes agencies for unexpected visitor

State and federal maritime agencies gathered in Brisbane recently to check their preparedness to deal with a damaged or disabled ship that threatens major pollution of the Great Barrier Reef.

The exercise began with the presentation of a scenario - an aging container ship travelling through the Coral Sea, taking on water quickly. Participants then flexed their critical decision making skills, channels of communication and knowledge in areas of jurisdiction, brainstorming a multi-agency solution to the fictional problem.

The General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland, Captain John Watkinson, said Exercise Safe Passage helped to identify the most efficient and safest response possible and to hone all response-related skills.

"It hardly needs to be said that both the federal and state governments recognise the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef and we work together very closely to make sure the prospect of any harm to this environmentally-sensitive area is minimised.

"Economic factors are important too, of course - quite apart from other activities such as commercial fishing, reef tourism alone is worth about \$4.2 billion a year."

The inner route of the reef is essential for the passage of trading vessels in and out of ports and throughout the entire 350,000 square kilometre Great Barrier Reef Marine Park there are some 17,000 ship movements each year.

Agencies have a national plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil and other noxious substances when an incident occurs, which is enhanced by further recommendations that came out of a review of ship safety and pollution prevention measures for shipping in the reef following the grounding of a container vessel near Cairns in November 2000.

The Safe Passage exercise, however, helped to develop contingencies for a ship that enters Queensland waters unannounced and looking for refuge due to damage or a severe weather condition.

In 2002 the tanker Prestige sank in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Spain after it was turned away from several ports in the area. It eventually broke in two, spilling 77,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil.

"We can't afford to let a disaster like that happen in our waters, so that's what we're training to deal with," Captain Watkinson said.

Last minute rush for PWC Licence

Staff at Queensland Transport's customer service centre in Southport were inundated during the last few days of 2005 processing applications for personal water craft licences. Under legislative amendments that formed part of the state government's jet ski management plan, a mandatory stand-alone licence to operate the machines was introduced at the beginning of this year.

Previously, applicants who already held a recreational marine driver licence could obtain a personal watercraft licence by sitting a written test as part of a phase-in period.

Applications increased 20-fold between July and December 2005, peaking at 3300 a day on December 30.



"Our ticketing system processed approximately 1500 applications in the three days between Christmas and New Year," said Southport Customer Service Centre area manager, Con Di Maura.

From 1 January this year, any prospective rider must successfully complete a BoatSafe personal watercraft course with an approved BoatSafe Training Provider and obtain a PWC licence before taking to Queensland's waterways.

The BoatSafe licensing system assesses an applicant's competency and paces and structures training appropriately.

A second edition of the *Boatsafe Workbook* has just been published containing a section dedicated to the rules and regulation regarding personal watercraft.

It is available from Queensland Transport's customer service centres and Maritime Safety Queensland's offices, but before purchasing, check with your training provider as the workbook might be included in your course materials.

Upcoming events - 2006

APRIL

- 6 Townsville Marine Industry Forum (Marine Board)
- 7-9 Tinnie and Tackle Outdoor Show, RNA Showgrounds

MAY

- 18 Australian Marine Awards, Surfers Paradise
- 18-21 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, Sanctuary Cove

- 20-26 Fraser Island Fishing Competition

JUNE

- 1 Commercial Marine Industry Forum, Brisbane
- 8 Mackay Marine Industry Forum (Marine Board)

AUGUST

- 30-3 Sept Brisbane International Boat Show

OCTOBER

- 27-29 Gold Coast Boat Show

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