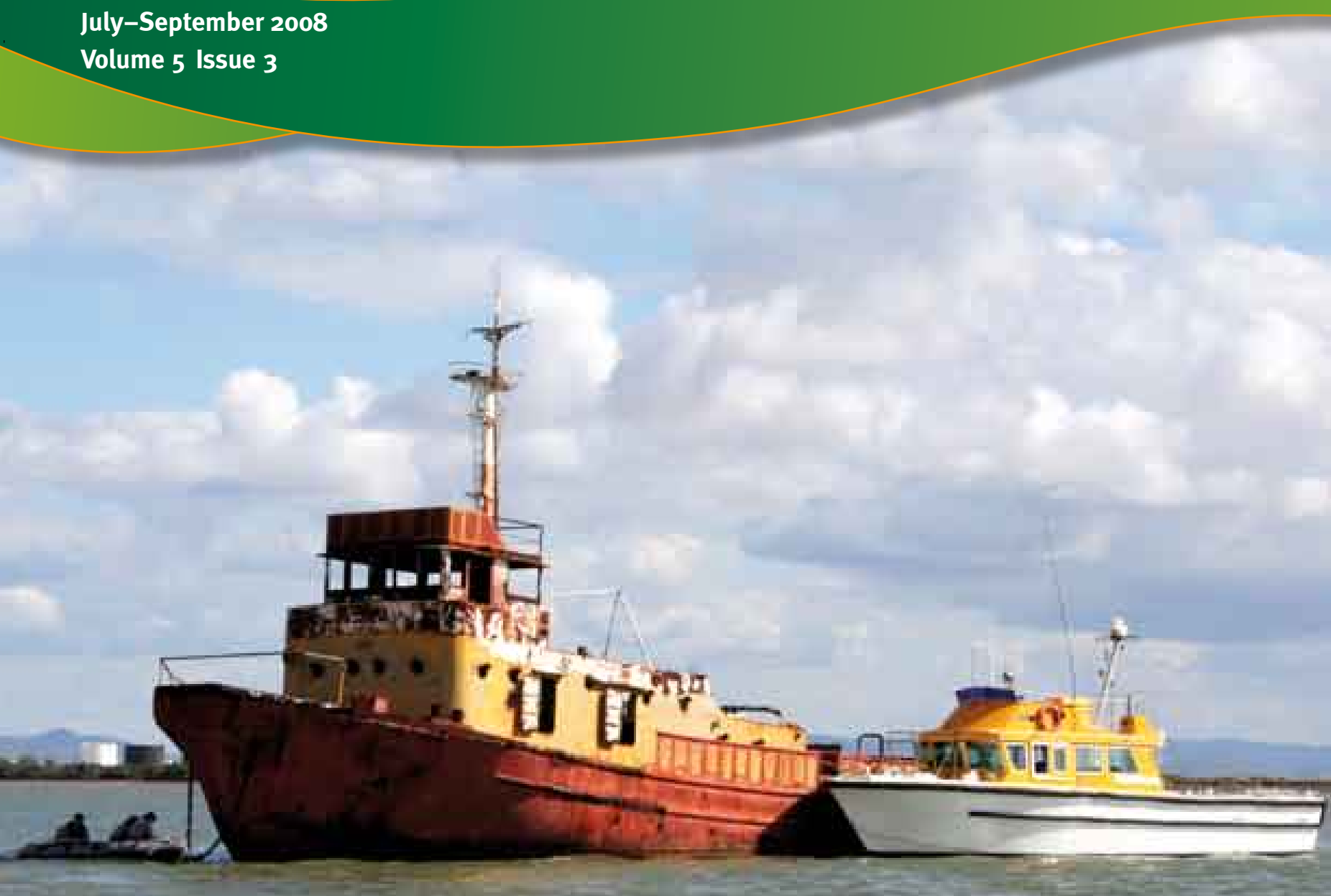


Seascope

Maritime Safety Queensland

July–September 2008
Volume 5 Issue 3



**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**

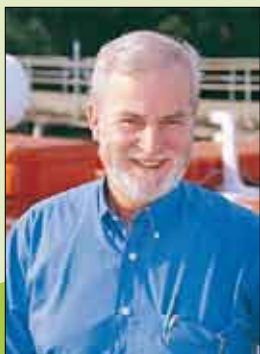
In this edition:

- Sunferries passenger transfer
- Getting to know you: Horizon Shores Marina
- The sinking of the *Ascension*
- Switch to 406MHz EPIRB by 1 November
- Industry / MSQ partnership for trawler safety



Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland

From the helm



Captain John Watkinson, General Manager, Maritime Safety Queensland

The photo on the front cover marks the end of another derelict vessel from Queensland's waterways. This has been an increasing problem for Maritime Safety Queensland as vessels left to rot on moorings have the potential to sink and cause serious pollution and a hazard to navigation.

The recently introduced legislation requiring vessels over 15 metres to carry marine insurance should alleviate future costs to the taxpayer, moving the responsibility of salvage and pollution clean up costs to the owner.

I must commend Cathy Beadley in securing the necessary approvals to have this particular vessel sunk at sea. Coordinating a number of organisations all requiring rigorous environmental standards is a challenge and requires patience and commitment.

In the previous edition of *Seascope*, I mentioned that Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) will no longer be monitored after 1 February 2009. Recently introduced legislation will now require boat owners to replace their 121.5MHz beacon and carry a 406MHz beacon by 1 November 2008.

Concerns about a lack of supply of the new 406MHz beacon as a potential 130,000 beacon owners throughout Australia attempt to purchase a new beacon in January 2009 has prompted Maritime Safety Queensland to introduce mandatory

carriage of the new 406MHz beacon prior to the scheduled 1 February 2009 date. The three months timeframe leading up to the actual closure of the 121.5MHz monitoring will reduce demand for stock and hopefully encourage boat owners to make the change sooner.

Recent tragedies on Sydney Harbour and Port Phillip Bay continue to remind us that the skipper must remain vigilant at all times and in all aspects of skippering a boat. The skipper's responsibility goes beyond just navigating the boat but also applies to the safety of the boat's operation which includes refuelling and precautions associated with that process. As we have seen, collisions can have devastating consequences and navigating a boat at night requires the skipper's full attention. Remember, you're the skipper, you're responsible.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a national review of maritime jurisdiction issues that is presently underway and being led by the Commonwealth. This review is looking at ways in which to introduce a single maritime legislation regime for all commercial vessels operating in Australia. Needless to say the implications for industry and governments alike of any such proposal could be considerable. Maritime Safety Queensland will be working closely with the Commonwealth and other states to ensure Queensland's marine industry is well represented throughout the review process.

Safe boating
Captain John Watkinson
General Manager

Marine safety survey

In 2003 Maritime Safety Queensland conducted a marine safety survey of the commercial marine industry. It is time to conduct the survey again to:

- ▶ assess the effectiveness of marine safety strategies implemented in response to the 2003 survey
- ▶ identify current safety issues that are important to owners, operators and crew of commercial and fishing ships
- ▶ gather information to assist with planning and the development of marine safety strategies into the future.

The 2008 marine safety survey is an opportunity for you to provide feedback on marine safety issues.

Your participation will also ensure the views of your industry sector, whether it is commercial passenger, trading, fishing, charter, hire and drive or training, are represented.

As a thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, you have the opportunity to win a prize pack. Two prize packs will be given away. They contain:

- safety gear grab bags
- distress flares
- small ships manuals
- polo shirts
- sports bags.

This survey is being conducted by an independent company. All responses are treated in the strictest confidence. Maritime Safety Queensland will not have access to information that personally identifies you or your response. The survey should take 10 – 15 minutes to complete.

If you do not receive a survey in the mail, please feel free to undertake the survey on line via the following link:
<http://216.235.248.162/survey/206848/173e/>

We thank you in advance for your participation and valuable contribution to marine safety in Queensland. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Naomi Maierhofer of People Knowledge Consulting on 0403 190 058 or Maritime Safety Queensland on 07 3120 7359.

Our cover this month:
The *Ascension* accompanied by *QGV Thorpe Chambers* from MSQ Gladstone Region and the *MSA Wallaroo's* tender from the Royal Australian Navy. See story page 10.

Sunferries passenger transfer at sea

Maritime Safety Queensland officers Peter Kirkby and Richard Smith recently monitored and reported on the transfer of passengers at sea from the cruise ship *Sun Princess* in order to identify, assess and assist Sunferries manage its safety obligation to passengers.

The Sunferries vessel *Sun Cat* routinely transfers passengers from the *Sun Princess* to and from Townsville for sight-seeing activities. Peter and Richard accompanied the crew of the *Sun Cat* from Townsville to the *Sun Princess*, approximately 10 kilometres offshore, to observe and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of Sunferries personnel and the safety of the passengers during the transfer.

Passenger transfers at sea are occurring more frequently in Queensland waters due to the increasing visitation of passenger cruise ships to popular areas such as Townsville and Airlie Beach.

The operational monitoring of this activity is increasing for Maritime Safety Queensland. Recommendations arising from this report are to be applied to the marine industry as a whole in developing safe operational practices and procedures for this activity across industry.

Peter and Richard reported that Sunferries managed this operation to a very high standard. The planning and coordination which went into achieving the successful operation was significant in terms of scheduling vessels and crews, managing large numbers of persons onboard and at the busy terminal, and effective communications between ships and the shore.

In this case, ninety per cent of all passengers onboard were aged between 65 and 85 years of age and included a person in a wheelchair and an elderly person with a walking frame.

Movement of passengers is managed by security staff on the cruise ship. All passengers departing and returning to the ship pass through two levels of security similar to that found at airports in Australia.

Additionally, all passengers have an electronic tag which they carry and display. These photo ID tags are swiped through a computer upon leaving and returning to the ship. A passenger manifest can be raised at any time indicating which passengers are on board the cruise ship and which have chosen to visit Townsville.

Recommendations in the report included a paramedic or medical attendant from the cruise ship to accompany each Sunferries vessel, a wider gangway to be more wheelchair friendly and an updated risk management plan.



Sunferries vessel *Reef Cat* alongside *Sun Princess* taking on passengers for a voyage to Townsville.



Pontoons and gangway on *Sun Princess*.



Passengers boarding the *Sun Cat*.

All crew were qualified and experienced in their relevant fields. Without exception they were thorough in their tasks and displayed a professional attitude while always being pleasant and helpful to their guests.

Peter and Richard concluded that the operation, involving all levels of management within Sunferries, was very well executed with minimal risk to passengers or crew observed on the monitoring trip.



Sanctuary Cove Boat Show

Maritime Safety Queensland continued its unbroken record of attendance by exhibiting at the milestone 20th annual Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show from 22-25 May this year. Maritime Safety Queensland is one of the few organisations to have exhibited at every show since its inception as a relatively small regional event, through its development into the single most significant boat show of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region. A total of 450 exhibitors participated in this year's very successful show.

International exhibitors, manufacturers and buyers were drawn from Europe, Asia and the USA to the Sanctuary Cove marina which featured on-water displays of 400 boats which, when placed end to end, stretched over 5.2 kilometres.

Staff from MSQ Gold Coast region and Brisbane promoted MSQ's tag-line 'You're the skipper – you're responsible' and provided answers to a range of questions posed by some of the 50,000 plus show patrons. High on the list of queries was the conversion of EPIRBs from the old analogue to a digital 406MHz system. Legislation relating to ship-borne pollution and insurance requirements for vessels over 15 metres were also hot topics, given the focus of the show was on the larger boat segment of the market.

Staff also used the show to gather in over 700 completed surveys relating to boat owner knowledge and opinions.

Maritime Safety Queensland's prominent exposure at events like the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show reinforces the department's commitment to its vision of 'Safer, Cleaner Seas' and demonstrates our commitment to providing quality information and advice to skippers, promoting safe boating for all.

Horizon Shores marina expansion

Boat ownership in Queensland is growing rapidly and sales of non-trailerable vessels are increasing. By providing much needed moorings for vessels which would otherwise require buoy moorings, the expansion of Horizon Shores will help boaties comply with legislation and ultimately help reduce congestion in our waterways.

Progress on the \$500 million expansion is now into its second year and work is expected to continue for a further five years.

In the first year of re-development old berths were removed and 132 brand new berths were installed within the North Haven area of the marina. Replacement of a further 104 berths is 75% complete in the East Haven section.

The new berths have been specifically designed for boats used in Moreton Bay and South east Queensland. Meridien Marinas has concentrated on multi hull berths and extra wide monos for people who like extra room when mooring. The new berths are ideally suited to houseboat style craft and powercats.

When complete, Horizon Shores will boast 1,350 wet berths – more than double the original facilities.



Extra wide marina berths designed for larger craft.



Meridien is completing substantial civil works on site. A new deeper channel into the marina has recently been opened and the marina has been taken to a depth of four metres below low tide to provide trouble-free access for boats.

The completed Horizon Shores will become one of Australia's largest marinas with a 1,000 dry boat stacker. It will include a marina village with waterfront cafes and restaurants, a yacht club, retail outlets, a day spa, child minding facilities as well as a marina emporium showcasing 10,000m² of all things boating. This will become a permanent marine market surrounding the world class marina situated in the heart of Queensland's fastest growing region.

Horizon Shores also boasts a major industrial precinct cleverly planned to sit away from commercial and public spaces. Stage 2 of this section is well underway and is already attracting boat manufacturers and other businesses that have foreseen the potential of the Horizon Shores development and the size of boats that will be moored.

One of the big attractions for the many marine industry businesses who have taken space in the new sheds is abundant water, thanks to leading edge technology and environmental practices. Already, capacity exists to recycle up to 1.5 megalitres of rain water through an enormous network of underground tanks.

The newly concreted Horizon Shores shipyard will provide tenants with an independent water supply through a unique recycling system. The closed stormwater system, water treatment plant and massive underground potable water storage system are among the marina's features.

Maritime Safety Queensland recognises the important part marinas play in providing fuelling ports and sewage transfer stations for vessels. Maritime Safety Queensland supports the Cleaner Marina program which rigorously inspects marina operations to avoid pollution occurrences or environmental damage.

Meridien Marinas' General Manager Michael Rose said the popularity of the environmentally friendly industrial space is proof of the importance of good planning.



The Horizon Shores marina development site.

The Horizon Shores industrial space has also attracted the attention of fibreglass boat manufacturers expressing a desire to move to a purpose built precinct with travel lift access. With the Environment Protection Authority becoming more vigilant about where certain industries are operated, many are planning a move from their current premises to ensure they operate to the very best environmental standards.

Prices for marina berths throughout Queensland are on the rise as demand increases. For example, the cost of Meridien Marinas Horizon Shores berths has risen 33 per cent in the past 18 months.

With strong demand, there is no doubt Queensland will continue to experience significant marina development like that of Horizon Shores. The proposed Shute Harbour, Abel Point and the Port of Airlie marina developments for example, will offer an additional 1700 berths for recreational and cruising boats.

What does this mean for Maritime Safety Queensland?

Firstly, marina berths help get vessels off the 'street'. There are currently 531 existing buoy moorings on the Gold Coast with little room for expansion without creating further congestion in many of the more confined and sheltered waterways. Demand is high for buoy moorings and there are substantial waiting lists. Already there are 530 entries on the Gold Coast Region's buoy mooring waiting list with the average wait being approximately 2-6 years for a mooring, depending on the area.

In addition, marina developments like Horizon Shores offer dry berth storage allowing boat owners a place to leave their vessel in a secure compound without having to worry about trailering to and from the boat ramp or storing the boat at home. The boat can be launched within the marina, helping to relieve congestion at public boat ramps.

Sewage legislation and responsibilities have been at the forefront over the past few years with

increased requirements for moored vessels to comply with discharge legislation. All Gold Coast and southern Moreton Bay waters north to Peel Island are prohibited discharge areas which means vessels that are required to store waste in holding tanks on board can discharge only by using sewage pump out facilities mainly located at marinas.

Marina developments are essential for industry growth, especially for the larger end of the market. If potential boat owners fear they will not be able to moor the boat they want to buy, sales could be affected. In turn, boat owners also need to be confident they can secure a mooring in other locations if they decide to cruise. From a safety perspective it is vital that cruising boats have sheltered and secure marinas available along the coast as safe havens in the event of adverse weather or to enable repairs to be made.

Marinas play a vital role in the boating landscape, offering essential services which are needed, not only to enhance the industry, but also to ensure boat owners can meet their responsibilities.

The law and you

6

Gold Coast speed limit review

Maritime Safety Queensland conducted an extensive review of speed zones throughout the Gold Coast region to improve boating safety and environmental impacts as traffic on the water continues to increase in this region.

Information was gathered from over 250 submissions provided by a wide cross-section of the boating community and general public.

Representatives from Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Queensland Water Police and Marine Queensland, the Gold Coast Marine Safe Committee and the Gold Coast City Council reviewed the submissions and made recommendations for changes.

As a result of this consultative process some existing speed zones will increase in radius and new speed zones will be established in other sensitive areas. These changes will take place from 1 July 2008. New or extended speed zones include Steiglitz/Cabbage Tree Point, McKenzies Channel, Jacobs Well, Tiplers Passage, Coomera River, Wasp Creek, Labrador Channel, The Broadwater (near Southport), Nerang River, Tiger Mullet Channel and Wavebreak Island.

Adjustment to existing legislation will necessitate the introduction of 'no-wash' zones from 1 January 2009. 'No-wash' zones will be established in areas where the wash from boats has been identified as a cause of safety or environmental risks, such as canals, creeks, lakes, boat harbours, marinas and popular anchorages. These zones will require owners to monitor their speed and the amount of wash their vessel is producing.

Other proposals including new 25 knot zones in some river areas for vessels under 8 metres in length are planned for introduction in January 2009.

Comprehensive information relating to the proposed changes including detailed locality maps can be found on the Maritime Safety Queensland website www.msq.qld.gov.au.

For further information phone Maritime Safety Queensland on the Gold Coast (07) 5539 7300.



Left: Owners of vessels over 4.5 metres have received this information flyer in the mail.

406MHz EPIRB from 1 November 2008

As from 1 November 2008 all vessels (recreational and commercial) must be equipped with a 406MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) if operating beyond smooth and partially smooth waters and greater than 2 nautical miles from land. To comply with the amended regulation, the EPIRB must be registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. If fitted with a hydrostatic release unit, the EPIRB must be activated before the EPIRB reaches a depth of 4 metres. Simply having a 406MHz EPIRB on board will not necessarily ensure compliance.

The changeover date will prepare boat owners for shutdown of the old 121.5MHz EPIRB signal which will not be detected by satellite after 1 February 2009.

Other states and territories are also amending their legislation in advance of the turn-off date.

To comply with the new legislation you must:

- carry a 406MHz EPIRB from 1 November 2008 if you operate beyond smooth or partially smooth waters or more than two nautical miles from land in Queensland (fines will apply)
- ensure that your EPIRB complies with the Australian / New Zealand standard 4280.1:2003
- ensure your new 406MHz beacon is registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – registration is free
- advise AMSA of any change to ownership and vessel details.

Demand for digital 406MHz EPIRBs will increase as the November 1 deadline approaches so don't leave it until the last minute to upgrade.



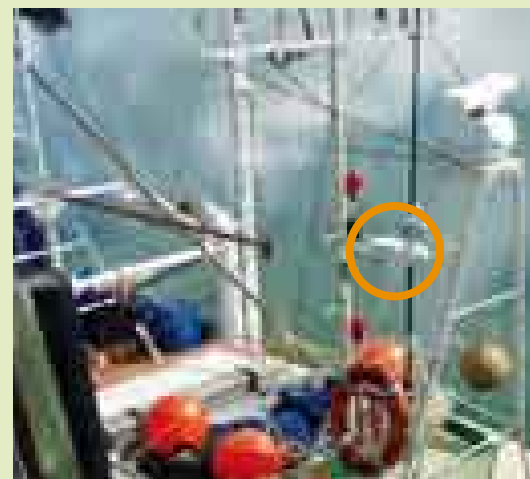
'Float free' EPIRB

One of the problems with locating surviving crew from a sunken vessel is that an EPIRB is not always activated. EPIRBs kept inside the wheelhouse through fear of theft will not provide any assistance whatsoever if they cannot be activated quickly in an emergency.

Mr Bill Henebery, Independent Trawler Association and Mr Michael Wood, Queensland Seafood Industry Association have enlisted the support of MSQ to help communicate messages about the benefits of installing a 'float free' EPIRB to facilitate quicker emergency response times.

'With the high risk nature of fishing operations, installation of a 'float-free' 406MHz EPIRB is a sensible move and recognises the importance of crew safety. The cost is small considering the lives it could save', said Mr Henebery.

Due to the difficulty of mounting a 'float-free' EPIRB on a trawler so that it is reliable and will operate satisfactorily under the most extreme circumstances, industry and MSQ will be showcasing a 'float-free' EPIRB on volunteer



'Float free' EPIRB mounted on trawler mast.

trawlers in each region across the State. These operators have undertaken to encourage discussion about appropriate mounting sites on a trawler as well as inspections of the equipment.

The fear of theft should be reduced because a 406MHz EPIRB can be enclosed in a capsule and must be registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority before it is activated.

Progress through industry/MSQ partnership

Hats off to the crew of a prawn trawler – their's is a high risk occupation where the possibility of injury, swimming with sharks, or worse still, being trapped in an upturned sinking trawler is very real – and it is most likely to happen during the hours of darkness.

Nets that prawn trawlers pull along the seabed can easily snag on rocks or debris causing the trawler to roll – in some cases the pressures are so extreme that without appropriate safety guards the trawler is at risk of taking on water, or capsizing. In the worst case this can occur within a few seconds leaving crew vulnerable to injury or death.

Maritime Safety Queensland staff work closely with the fishing industry to develop long term solutions that increase the odds of crew returning home safely. Projects including the trial of personal life saving equipment in 'real-time' conditions, increased industry awareness programs at regional centres and focusing attention on improving safety systems have been carefully guided by fishing industry experts. Prevention as always is the key to reducing marine incidents and MSQ is involved in providing industry with workable solutions. Two recent initiatives include developing and trialling an escape strap system to help crew swim free from an upturned trawler, the other is a proposal to develop and trial a quick release system for hydraulic winches. Addressing faults in the availability and deployment of safety equipment is also a key industry responsibility and MSQ/industry is showcasing modern EPIRBs that are better suited to trawler operations.

Quick release mechanism

Arguably every trawler that rolled over following a hook-up could have been saved if it had a system of quick release. At well over \$10,000 a set, the high cost of replacing trawl equipment means that operators want an opportunity to recover their gear. But there is not a set of equipment out there that is worth more than the life of any crew member. MSQ has prepared information stickers on what to do in the event of a hook-up to be affixed in prominent positions on a trawler following advice from industry experts. The stickers are aimed at promoting discussion between the skipper and crew about each of their responsibilities in the event of a hook-up. However, as a rollover can occur within seconds of a hook-up, a fail safe system is still needed to prevent the trawler rolling over – one that will allow the crew to recover gear safely and in good time.



The escape strap system.

Trawler hook-up response

Steps 1-4: maximum 20 seconds to respond.

- 1 Reduce power
- 2 All crew on deck & close hatches
- 3 Alert other vessels in the area
- 4 Lifesaving equipment in float free position
- 5 Move trawl cables to the side of the vessel
- 6 Be ready to cut the trawl wires
- 7 Move to high side of the vessel
- 8 If the vessel rolls – no matter where you are – hold on to an outer edge until it stops

Do not start winching until steps 1-4 are complete.

Trawler person overboard response

Steps 1-4: maximum 20 seconds to respond.

- 1 Reduce power
- 2 Immediately throw a lifebuoy and light overboard
- 3 Note the time and vessel's location
- 4 Alert all crew – response time is critical
- 5 Release or retrieve trawl wires to get closer to the person
- 6 Notify other vessels in the area
- 7 If you lose sight of the person, immediately release an EPIRB, then lodge an emergency call

"A few seconds of practice could save you a split second"

Response information stickers.

Over the coming season Maritime Safety Queensland is drawing together a range of ideas used by different operators and consulting with industry experts to develop preferred quick release systems. One Townsville operator who uses quick release systems on his nets said, 'I've been hooked-up dozens of times but in 40 years of trawling I've only lost two sets of gear'. There is no reason why the entire commercial fishing fleet cannot match or exceed this record.

Another concept that has just been referred to Maritime Safety Queensland is a quick release valve for hydraulic winches. The design draftsman that came up with the idea is keen to further develop the concept with the assistance of industry. MSQ is happy to support further development of the valve and will ensure interested parties are referred to the designer.

Escape strap system

Picture yourself in a front-loading washing machine with water gushing in at every angle and debris such as a fridge, gas bottle, computer and any other equipment in a wheelhouse that is not tied down and at the same time holding your breath and trying to find a way out in pitch darkness. Welcome to the very real situation of a trawler rollover. In these circumstances the panic and loss of perspective would reduce the odds of the average person getting out alive. If the person managed to find a pocket of air they will still have problems with disorientation and darkness – and may panic even more given they know the dire situation which they now face – Which way is out? How fast am I sinking? Will I have enough air to reach the surface?

The Escape Strap is a concept aimed at providing one last opportunity to get crew out safely when all other preventative measures have failed. The strap is fitted inside the roof of a vessel so it can be used as a hand anchor in rough conditions and leads to each exit. When the vessel rolls over, battery operated lighting in the strap is automatically illuminated via at least three methods (hydrostatic release, engine failure or pitch/roll trigger). The strap also has directional collars so that crew can 'feel' their way out if they can't see. Because of its simplicity the strap has received positive support from industry and trawler operators are needed to develop low cost systems and run sea trials. Maritime Safety Queensland has provided funding to assist with development.



Learning from marine incidents

Idyllic to disaster in moments

In March 2008, the owner of a 15.7 metre aluminium motor cruiser built in 2007, took his family on a cruise along the Queensland coast.

As the vessel was underway in two metre seas, the computer screens on the bridge went blank and power dropped out to the ship. The owner attempted to throttle back the electronic controls and found they were not working. He used the emergency engine stop system to bring the ship to a standstill, then went to investigate the cause of the problem.

He lifted the engine hatch and found that the engine room was full of smoke. He sealed the engine room and mustered the family on deck and fitted them with personal flotation devices. He then activated the EPIRB on board for assistance.

The owner attempted to fight the fire but was driven back by the smoke and decided to abandon ship. He went to the cabin roof to launch the dinghy secured there but found that there was no power to the davit. He managed to release the dinghy manually and it landed upside down in the water.

His wife and two children jumped from the bow into the water but the 8-year-old boy caught his leg on the railing during the jump, fracturing his femur.

The dinghy was righted but could not be bailed out in the heavy seas and remained semi-submerged. The family waited for help in the dinghy for approximately an hour before they spotted a ship. They set off a flare and the vessel came to the family's assistance.

A rescue helicopter and the Coast Guard arrived. The mother and the two children were transported by helicopter to hospital where the boy's broken femur was operated on.

An air search was conducted but could find no trace of the \$1.2 million ship.

Lessons

1. It is essential that owners and masters ensure their vessels are safe before undertaking any type of voyage. Regular checks should be conducted on lengthy voyages to ensure the machinery is functioning correctly and that equipment is secure.
2. The vessel lacked a fixed fire extinguishing system and a functional fire alarm for the engine room. A fire in the engine room of a large ship can prove difficult to extinguish by manual means and may take some time to identify. A fire alarm is invaluable for early detection of a fire and a fixed fire extinguishing system may have proven more effective than the use of a small fire extinguisher.
3. Be aware that re-opening fire-affected spaces will risk worsening an existing fire or reigniting an extinguished fire when fresh oxygen is re-introduced. Where possible such spaces should be left to cool before opening.
4. The vessel should have had a quick release davit enabled for the dinghy, allowing for a quick and safe departure from the ship.
5. Regardless of a master's competency and experience, or age of the ship, unexpected events happen at sea. The master of any ship should consider the risks of the voyage and prepare a contingency plan as necessary.



Pollution prevention initiative for Urangan Boat Harbour

Congratulations are in order to Steve Krebs, Maritime Safety Queensland Maritime Operations Officer, for his initiative in dealing with a pollution problem in Urangan Boat Harbour.

In March Steve noticed increased small pollution incidents, apparently caused by automatic bilge pumps and pumping out of sewage holding tanks at night. Steve approached the local Boat Harbour Controller and Marine Safety Officer with a letter drop strategy to reduce the pollution occurrences.

Three marina operators who were also a frustrated about the pollution actively supported the initiative.

To alert the boat owners to the problem the officers produced and delivered an information flyer, oil absorbent pads and a Maritime Safety Queensland marine pollution pamphlet to every ship in the harbour.

Bob Lowe, Manager Marine Safety Gladstone Region is pleased with the result: there has not been a pollution event reported since the letter drop.



The new cabin positioned higher for increased visibility and safety.

Fairymead Cable Ferry safety issues

Bundaberg Maritime Safety Queensland Officer Darryl Dorrn raised a concern about the potentially dangerous operation of the Bundaberg Sugar cable ferry which crosses the Burnett River.

For more than 40 years Bundaberg Sugar has operated the ferry which carried raw sugar up until 1986 to the port and cut cane to the Fairymead mill for crushing.

The Fairymead ferry carries trucks with three 6 tonne transparent wire mesh cane bins across the Burnett river. The bins when empty allowed the master to keep a lookout for other vessels while crossing the river. The danger was that the bins obscured the master's vision when they were full.

At the preseason safety meeting with the ferry masters, it was reported that because of the masters' limited visibility there were an increasing number of near misses with other waterway users around the ferry crossing.

At Darryl's advice to Bundaberg Sugar prior to the 2007 sugar season, extra care was taken by the masters of the ferry but there were still 14 close quarters situations throughout the season.

Local media endeavoured to make the public aware of the danger of the cable ferry.

As a result of Darryl's concern and the experience of the masters during the 2007 season the owner modified the ferry by raising the bridge so the master now has 360 degree visibility in all states of loading.

Maritime Safety Queensland has erected signs at the four boat ramps on the Burnett River to increase awareness of boaties in the vicinity of the cable ferry.



Cane bins obscured vision from the original cabin position.

Calling for volunteers to improve boating safety

The National Marine Safety Committee is calling on 4000 boaters from around the country to volunteer for its National Boating Usage Study that aims to measure the amount of risk faced by boaters when out on the water by determining how the amount of time spent boating is linked to incidents.

NMSC CEO Ms Maurene Horder explained that the NMSC is piloting a new study method that asks volunteers to complete a simple boating diary each time they go out on the water between September 2008 and May 2010.

National Boating Usage Study volunteers will be asked to fill in details such as the number of hours spent on the water, the purpose of the trip, the number of people on board, and whether the boat was involved in an incident.

Study results will be used by the NMSC and marine agencies to develop policies to tackle boating safety issues. All information collected is confidential and personal details will not be identified or released.

To ensure that the study represents Australian boating, NMSC is inviting owners of all types of recreational craft including runabouts, ski/wake boats, cuddy, half or full cabin cruisers, sailing boats, jet skis and personal watercraft to be part of the study.

Volunteers can win great boating and fishing prizes, receive special product discounts and receive \$100 off Club Marine insurance.

What's involved?

1. A one-off anonymous survey that asks general questions about your boating behaviour.
2. A Boating Diary, which you will be asked to briefly fill in each time you go boating from September 2008 – May 2010.

If you would like a registration form please call the NMSC (02) 9247 2124 or go to www.nmsc.gov.au to register online.



The final big day out for derelict vessel *Ascension*

Above: Derelict vessel *Ascension* at her Casuarina Creek (near Port Alma) mooring February – May 2008.
Above right: *MSA Wallaroo* towing *Ascension* on her final departure to sea from Port Alma.

After eight years at a Fitzroy River (Rockhampton) mooring the derelict vessel *Ascension* was impatient to leave and broke adrift during the February 2008 floods. Gladstone Region Marine Operations crews secured the vessel and moved her to a safer mooring in Casuarina Creek near Port Alma. On 1 May, the *Ascension* left for her 'very last big day out' bound for a 'date' with the Australian Defence Force (ADF). At 0845 hours on 3 May 2008 as part of a military targeting exercise organised jointly by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) the *Ascension* was bombed and sunk.

Jim Huggett, Director Maritime Services Branch said 'managing derelict vessels makes considerable demands on MSQ resources in compliance, maritime services and marine operations in the regions. Using the *Ascension* for military training meant a socially useful purpose was found for the derelict tug which also saved Queensland taxpayers from funding a further \$500,000 for ship-breakers.'

In July 2007, Cathy Beadley, Senior Policy Adviser Maritime Services Branch was nominated to drive a project to dispose of the *Ascension*. The Air Force was keen to use the old tug as a target for training their bomber aircrew. The Navy, by providing a tug to tow the derelict vessel to a disposal site, was able to give ship's crew a rare opportunity to undertake a long sea tow as opposed to their usual visiting nuclear warship support / minesweeping role. Cathy combined her 19 years MSQ experience with marine environmental pollution and her 25 years as a Naval Reserves Lieutenant Commander to good effect by forging strong working relationships with units of the Air Force, Navy and the Commonwealth Department of Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

Cathy expressed her thanks particularly to the following people for their professional contribution:

RAAF – Squadron Leader Howard Robertson of 82WG RAAF *Amberley*;

RAN – Lieutenant Commander Darren Rushworth,

Warrant Office Alan Hart OIC (Officer in Charge) of the Navy tug *MSA* (Mine Sweeper Auxiliary) *Wallaroo* and her crew, and Chief Petty Officer Andrew Hayward;

DEWHA – Martin Paull, Assistant Director Ports and Marine Section, John Polglaze ship disposal consultant;

MSQ – Peter Cumming Acting Manager Compliance, Captain Mike Lutze Regional Harbour Master Gladstone, Bob Lowe Manager Marine Safety Bundaberg, Dennis Offord Pilot Launch Coxswain Gladstone Region and Captain Norm Fraser Manager Operations Gladstone for his photographs.

Jim Huggett who is also a Naval Reserves Commander said 'Cathy had to organise the complex permit approval process under the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* which involved securing consultation support from 11 diverse organisations and meeting the rigorous environmental requirements set by the DEWHA as well as coordinating work with MSQ regions, Air Force and Navy.'



Since 1981 only six permits are known to have been granted for Queensland waters and the Australian Defence Force have sunk only nine vessels within Australian territorial waters. It took five months to get the *Ascension's* permit and by comparison it took three years to secure the permit for the former *HMAS Brisbane*.

MSQ provided compliance unit legal support, Gladstone Region marine operations services such as removing pollutants from the *Ascension*, marine surveyor expertise and support for *MSA Wallaroo*. This included *QGV Thorpe Chambers* removing the *Ascension* from upstream Casuarina Creek downstream to Port Alma waters where *MSA Wallaroo* secured the vessel for her final sea tow.

MSA Wallaroo towed the *Ascension* to a disposal site 50 nautical miles off the Sunshine Coast within a military exercise area which was identified as environmentally benign as it was 2100 metres depth, 20 nautical miles distant from a sea mount, shipwreck, and submarine cable, away from commercial shipping lanes, recreational boating activity, native title sea country claims and outside the whale and bird migration patterns.

Two RAAF Amberley based bombers sank the vessel using laser guided bombs. Squadron



MSA Wallaroo and tender at Port Alma.

Leader Howard Robertson said 'sinking the *Ascension* provided invaluable training and other air crew envied their live firing opportunity.'

Maritime Safety Queensland hosted a debrief with RAAF, RAN and MSQ personnel on 9 May 2008 to identify lessons learnt as a basis for future opportunities to work with the ADF to remove derelict vessels.

Jim Huggett said 'the long sorry saga of the *Ascension* highlights the need for vessel owners to responsibly manage their vessels and if they did not take this obligation seriously MSQ would make every effort to ensure compliance with safety and prevention of ship sourced marine pollution.'



QGV Thorpe Chambers leading *MSA Wallaroo* with *Ascension* under tow.



SQN LDR Howard Robertson RAAFR – RAAF Project Leader, Jim Huggett, Director, Maritime Services MSQ & CMDR RANR, FLG OFF Paul Moyland RAAF, Cathy Beadley, Senior Adviser, Maritime Services MSQ & LCDR RANR – MSQ Project Leader, FLG OFF Daniel Mills RAAF, SQN LDR Craig Whiting RAAF, Captain Mike Lutze Regional Harbour Master Gladstone MSQ, WO Alan Hart RAN, OIC *MSA Wallaroo*, LCDR Darren Rushworth RAN, PO Paul Gruber RAN *MSA Wallaroo*.

BTAQ conference 2008

The BoatSafe Training Association of Queensland (BTAQ) held its annual conference at Southport Yacht Club on the Gold Coast on 3–4 June. Fifty BoatSafe Training providers travelled from all over Queensland to attend.

The BTAQ was formed by a group of recreational boat licence trainers and assessors who share a common interest in delivering quality training and assessment for the mutual benefit of all users of Queensland's waterways.

BoatSafe is a competency-based training and assessment scheme modelled on national guidelines for the safe operation of recreational boats. The scheme is designed to increase the rigor of training and assessment processes that lead to a recreational marine driver licence and personal watercraft licence. BoatSafe aims to improve the safety awareness, attitudes and competence of current and future generations of recreational boat and personal watercraft operators.

The conference attracted key note speakers who discussed topics including enforcement, compliance, marine insurance, marine search and rescue, legal requirements, and issues that will influence the future direction of BoatSafe training and assessment.

Tony Nelson from the Gold Coast Water Police cited the introduction of BoatSafe as a positive influence on improved safety behaviour of recreational boaties on Gold Coast waterways.

Gary McKirdy (Maritime Safety Queensland) presented an overview of changes to Maritime Safety Queensland's publication *Beacon to Beacon*. The BTAQ were very encouraged by the changes and Maritime Safety Queensland's commitment to the continuous improvement of the publication.

The conference concluded with Ken Wiltshire (Maritime Safety Queensland), who conducted a workshop for trainers, to ensure all were aware of the BoatSafe requirements for delivery.

The members and committee of the BTAQ sincerely thank the management and staff of Maritime Safety Queensland for their support for the inaugural conference.



Training vessels, VMR, Coast Guards and Water Police which formed a flotilla of twelve vessels from the Southport Yacht Club to the Gold Coast Seaway.

News in brief

Updated publications

A new edition of Maritime Safety Queensland's publication *Tide Tables* will be available in November. A new edition of *Beacon to Beacon* directory will be available for purchase in late August. A completely updated and new look edition of *Guide to Recreational Boating and Fishing in Queensland* should be available in September. This key publication, essential for anyone who uses our waterways, will incorporate expanded safety information and feature a more user-friendly format. And the good news...it's free!



QSHIPS looking ship shape

Shipping agents using Queensland ports will soon be able to book vessel arrivals and departures online using a new \$5 million computer system to be introduced by Maritime Safety Queensland.

The Queensland Shipping Information and Planning System (QSHIPS) will revolutionise the cumbersome system of fax and phone calls presently in use, streamlining the way for an estimated 14,000 shipping movements across the state's ports every year.

Queensland shipping agents and port service providers were consulted in the development of the system. Previously agents would liaise individually with pilots, tug boats, and other port service providers by telephone and fax to coordinate the services necessary for a vessel's arrival.

The new system will provide online lodgement of bookings to Maritime Safety Queensland with electronic notification and confirmation to service providers.

With an anticipated surge in shipping movements over the next decade this booking system will further improve the efficiency of ship movements to and from Queensland ports.

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Maritime Achievement Awards

Awards recipients at the Brisbane presentation.

Each year the Maritime Achievement Award is made to staff of Maritime Safety Queensland to thank and recognise individuals or groups who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in any area. Maritime Safety Queensland staff can be nominated for the Maritime Achievement Award if their efforts warrant recognition under any of these criteria: Safety, Environment, Innovation, Relationships, Customers or Staff.

The awards this year were presented to:

Safety category – Ken Wiltshire from the Safety Standards Branch for his contribution in developing and promoting a safety culture in the commercial maritime sector through his exceptional hard work, dedication to duty and devotion to delivering policies and programs that support the maritime industry and the Government's maritime safety objectives.

Innovation category – Dick Greenwood from the Townsville region for developing and implementing a risk-based approach to monitoring vessels, initiating on-water fire response exercises to test the emergency capacity of commercial vessels, and establishing and maintaining strong, personable relationships in boating safety education.

Safety, Relationships and Customers categories – Philip McDonald from the Mackay region for helping to engender trust and confidence in Government and industry partnerships, promoting the marine safety culture pilot vessel project in the Whitsunday area and for the creation of the initial crew induction work book and the vessel induction checklist to assist the maritime industry to achieve its regulatory requirements in a consistent and measurable way.

A special award was presented to Captain Mike Lutze as representative of Gladstone Maritime region in recognition of a successful marine spill response operation associated with a fuel oil spill from the bulk coal carrier *Global Peace* into the waters of Gladstone Harbour in January 2006.

Long Service Awards were also presented to recognise those who have committed to working with MSQ for a significant period of time (20, 25 and 30 years service).

Upcoming events – 2008

AUGUST

- 17 Seafood Festival – Urangan Boat Harbour, Hervey Bay
- 27 – 31 Brisbane Boat Show

Regions:

Southport	07 5539 7300
Brisbane	07 3860 3500
Mooloolaba	07 5477 8425
Hervey Bay	07 4194 9600
Bundaberg	07 4131 8500
Gladstone	07 4973 1200
Port Alma	07 4934 6929

Mackay	07 4944 3700
Whitsundays	07 4946 2200
Townsville	07 4726 3400
Cairns	07 4052 7400
Weipa	07 4069 7165
Karumba	07 4745 9281
Thursday Island	07 4069 1351