



Getting to know you

The Great Brisbane Duck Race

On Friday 29 August 2008, the annual Great Brisbane Duck Race was held on the Brisbane River adjacent to the upstream pontoon at South Bank Parklands. The race is organised by the Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation with the support of Maritime Safety Queensland, Channel 7 and Waterways Construction. All proceeds go towards cancer research.

Money is raised through the sale of tickets for numbered rubber ducks; this year 18,000 ducks were dropped into the river to race with the tide down a 100 metre course. To improve their chances of winning, many people got together with friends, family or work colleagues and sponsored a team of ducks.

The sponsored ducks were treated to a pre-race pep talk from Olympic Gold Medalist Jessica Schipper and Queensland Bulls players, who shared their best tips on how not to get out for a duck. As well as attracting a huge crowd, the race was televised live on Channel 7's popular Sunrise Show, with roving reporter Monique keeping the cheering crowd updated on the ducks' progress.



Olympic Gold Medalist Jessica Schipper and Queensland Bulls players with Maritime Safety Queensland officers



The person with the ticket number matching the first duck to cross the finish line, won a brand new Mitsubishi Colt. This year, the winner was a war veteran from Mooloolah Valley who had just celebrated his 90th birthday. Over \$65,000 was raised for the Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation, a wonderful community effort.

Maritime Safety Queensland's Brisbane region has supported this event for a number of years through the provision of equipment and staff to contain and remove the rubber ducks from the water. A significant amount of planning went into this year's event with logistics meetings being held between Maritime Safety Queensland and organisers to address any safety concerns. Marine and workplace safety were at the top of the list, and risk assessments and safety work plans were produced in support of the event.

Equipment supplied included the Marco oil recovery vessel QG Tusk, oil pollution containment boom and two workboats, together with several team members to operate the equipment.

The QG Tusk is owned by Maritime Safety Queensland and available for use by other states under the National Plan. The National Plan is a cooperative arrangement involving the States, the Northern Territory, and the petroleum, chemical and shipping industries, which aims to maximise Australia's marine pollution response capability.

In addition to equipment that is purchased and maintained with National Plan funds, the oil industry maintains approximately \$10m worth of equipment at the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre in Geelong. Maritime Safety Queensland has purchased substantial response equipment, held in Tier 2 stockpiles at Brisbane, Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Thursday Island.

The vessel used in the exercise is one of three modified Marco skimmers, known as the Q 28s, operated by Maritime Safety Queensland. While these vessels are similar to the HA 28 design, they are the product of a complete redesign of the original concept.



18,000 rubber ducks were swept towards the recovery vessel to be collected by safety officers

Because of the need to raise and lower the skimmer module, the hull of the Q 28 is based on an improved version of the pickle-fork design. The Q 28s are powered by a single 150hp Volvo diesel stem-drive engine, and are lighter, faster and more fuel-efficient than their predecessors with a top speed of approximately 19 knots.

A redesign of the deck layout has resulted in an increase in deck space that can be used for transporting extra personnel and equipment during a response operation. The vessels have onboard storage for approximately 3,000 litres of recovered oil.

The deployment of the equipment provided a training opportunity for the regional staff in support of their readiness for marine pollution incidents. During an oil spill many people may be affected, and response organisations have a responsibility to respond in a timely and efficient manner to mitigate any adverse effects on the environment.

Maritime Safety Queensland officers undergo training over a 5-day course to achieve a Marine Oil Spill Responder: Level 4 certificate. When a spill occurs, the health and safety of the public and the responders are the most critical considerations.

They are trained in oil recovery systems, oil transfer operations, dispersant operations and offshore containment systems. Contingency planning, identifying hazards and occupational health and safety are also covered in their training course. Every three years, officers are required to undergo a refresher course to keep up-to-date with any changes or new developments.

The role of Maritime Safety Queensland officers at the Great Brisbane Duck Race was to coordinate the release and collection of the ducks and to ensure that the ducks were contained in the boom. Ducks were tipped out of a dumpster into the river and the confines of the boom which lays out the course.

Tide and wind moved the ducks along the course, herding them towards the skimmer. This is exactly what happens during an oil spill. The fence-style boom floats upright, forming a barrier. The boom is some 500mm in depth and is similar to an iceberg in that only part of it is visible above the waterline. This means that oil (or ducks) can't escape either under or over the boom. As the ducks moved towards the recovery vessel they went into a chute where a Maritime Officer, with a large scoop, coaxed them onto a conveyor.

In a real-life situation involving an oil spill, there is usually debris in the water with the oil, so the scoop is necessary to collect the debris before the oil is passed through a wringer and into a containment tank.

The Great Brisbane Duck Race was a great opportunity for Maritime Safety Queensland officers to demonstrate their training, and together with the Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation they are looking forward to next year where the target is 30,000 ducks!

The law and you

Boating fatalities study

The National Marine Safety Committee released the *Boating Fatalities in Australia 1999-2004 Report*, a national analysis of fatal injury due to boating in Australia, at its Marine Safety Conference 2008 held in Adelaide in May.

The study, written by Associate Professor Dr Peter O'Connor using information from Australian Bureau of Statistics data and coroners' files, shows that 241 people died in 196 boating incidents between 1999-2004, and a further 33 people were injured but survived.

Committee Chief Executive Officer Maurene Horder confirmed that the data would inform decisions on marine safety policy and education programs in order to reduce injuries and fatalities on Australian waters.

'Boating fatalities present a tremendous loss and strain on families and a huge cost to the community. Between 1992 and 2004, boating fatalities cost the Australian community \$60 million per year and we estimate that by this year the total cost will exceed \$1.5 billion.'

Ms Horder explained that, combined with information from the earlier *National Assessment of Boating Fatalities in Australia 1992-1998 Report*, the National Marine Safety Committee now has comprehensive data on boating fatalities over the past 12 years.

Most of the incidents occurred in favourable environmental conditions, 77% in calm to moderate seas. Incidents included vessels capsizing, people falling overboard and swamping of the vessel.

When all contributing factors were considered, the top five were error of judgement, alcohol, failure to keep a proper look-out, hazardous wind and/or sea conditions, and failure to wear a personal flotation device.

Ms Horder said that the results of this survey would also be considered by the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group to determine the topic for the 2008-2009 summer boating education campaign.

The National Marine Safety Committee aims to achieve nationally uniform marine safety practices and is made up of the Chief Executive Officers of Australia's marine safety agencies. For further details, or to download a copy of the report, visit www.nmsc.gov.au.

Source: *The National Marine Safety Committee*

The dangers of towing

On a warm winter weekend, a family decided to take their ski boat to the local lake for a day on the water. The family also took an inflatable tube to tow behind the boat. Being a warm weekend, the waterway was busy.

The owner of the boat put his wife and daughter on the tube and began to tow them at high speed around the lake, making sharp turns causing the tube to swing wide and jump the wake of the boat. His son sat in the boat and acted as observer.

The owner drove the boat at high speed close to the shore and some swimmers. He then noticed another boat coming towards him and altered course hard to port, causing the tube to again swing wide. The tube and passengers collided with a swimmer in the water, resulting in the swimmer sustaining head injuries. The swimmer was recovered from the water by onlookers and taken to hospital for treatment.

Lessons to be learnt from this marine incident:

- Choose a suitable location to conduct thrill ride activities.
- A ship travelling at more than six knots must remain at least 30 metres from a person in the water.

- A personal water craft travelling at more than six knots must remain at least 60 metres from a person in the water.
- Be aware that at any time a tow is conducted by a ship, consideration must be given to the steering characteristics of the ship and the tow. The longer the tow line, the wider the arc of the turn.
- A sharp turn will cause the towed object to accelerate through the turn of the arc.



Small fishing vessel operators to have a new licence

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association will phase out the issue of Small Vessel Operator Certificates in favour of a new Restricted Coxswain licence to be issued by Maritime Safety Queensland.

A Small Vessel Operator Certificate will no longer be recognised as an authority to operate either a recreational vessel or a fishing vessel under 10 metres after 1 August, 2009.

After that date anyone found operating a vessel on a Small Vessel Operator Certificate will be considered to be unlicensed and penalties may apply.

Operators of fishing vessels under 10 metres must hold a minimum of a Restricted Coxswain licence after 1 August 2009.

From 1 August 2008 to 1 August 2009, holders of a Small Vessel Operator Certificate can change to a Restricted Coxswain licence at no cost and without the need to undergo further training or examination.

From 1 August 2009 to 1 August 2010 vessel operators will be charged the normal application fee for a Restricted Coxswain licence (currently \$67.65 and subject to change), but still will not be required to undergo further training or examination.

From 1 August 2010, vessel operators will need to make a new application for a Restricted Coxswain licence and meet all the requirements for that licence.

The current training programs for Small Vessel Operator Certificates will continue to be part of prerequisite requirements by Maritime Safety Queensland for the issue of new Restricted Coxswain licence.

