

# Seascape

Maritime Safety Queensland

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Volume 6 Issue 1

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

In this edition:

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- Getting to know you: Paralympian Chris Scott
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**Queensland Government**  
**Maritime Safety Queensland**

## From the helm



**Captain John Watkinson,**  
**General Manager,**  
**Maritime Safety**  
**Queensland**

Christmas holidays are now over for another year and we are in the middle of the summer boating season. This means more boats on the water and more people to look out for.

As we head into 2009, the challenges for Maritime Safety Queensland are, as always, keeping our boaties safe and our waters clean.

During these tough economic times, people often tend to skimp on what they see as 'luxury items'. This can sometimes include boating gear such as safety equipment. Some boaties are trying to economise by not replacing expired flares or not having the outboard motor serviced as often as recommended. Others are making do with worn life jackets or putting off buying that new EPIRB.

Maritime Safety Queensland is aware of this alarming trend, and cannot stress strongly enough that skimping on items such as these is jeopardising safety and risking lives. How much is a life worth? If you can't afford to keep your gear up-to-date and functioning, don't go out on the water. Carrying the right safety equipment could mean the difference between life and death in the event of a marine incident.

Courtesy on the water is another Maritime Safety Queensland priority and was the theme for the Christmas 2008 campaign. Courtesy is just as important on the water as it is on the road. Being courteous is not just good manners – it can be the difference between a safe trip and a serious injury to a fellow boatie.

Be a courteous skipper. Don't go speeding past anchored boats creating excessive wash – this can result in a person being thrown down or knocked overboard. Observe speed limits just as you would on dry land.

Pay attention at all times. A distracted skipper is a dangerous skipper, and puts everyone on the boat at risk. Observing a few simple rules can make boating the pleasant experience it is supposed to be.

To assist boat owners and fishers, the 2008 edition of *Guide to Recreational Boating & Fishing in Queensland* is now available, ready for the new boating year. Boaties will find this edition has been streamlined to make it more user-friendly, and some new sections have been added including Marine Pollution and How to Avoid Marine Incidents.

The new section on Marine Pollution emphasises the damage that discarded objects such as plastic bags and cans can do to marine animals and sea birds. Don't throw anything overboard – bring your garbage to shore and dispose of it properly.

Over 600 marine incidents are reported annually. With this in mind, the section on How to Avoid Marine Incidents has some rules and advice that can assist boaties to have a safe and happy day on the water. Maritime Safety Queensland is confident that this edition of *Guide to Recreational Boating & Fishing in Queensland* is the best yet.

Other publications available include *Beacon to Beacon*, *Queensland Tide Tables*, *The Small Ships Manual* and *BoatSafe Workbook*. There is also a range of free publications with all the rules and regulations for safe boating.

In addition, the Maritime Safety Queensland website [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au) covers a range of boat-related topics such as tides, licensing, navigation lights, safety equipment and life jackets.

Safe boating

**Captain John Watkinson**  
General Manager

## Courtesy on the water

Summer holidays in Queensland mean warm weather, blue skies and water activities. Being out on the water should be a fun day for boaties, and following the boaties' courtesy code can make it even better. Watching your speed and wash, keeping a proper lookout and carrying the correct safety equipment are all part of being a courteous boatie.

When your boat is anchored for a spot of fishing or just to enjoy the scenery, you should be able to relax without worrying about excessive wash from other boats. Wash can create serious safety hazards, especially in marinas and anchorages where there is an expectation of calm conditions.

Speed limits are in place to minimise the wash created by boats. Therefore it is essential as a boat owner or skipper to maintain a speed that creates minimal wash. When you are coming into a marina or where other boats are moored, it is part of the courtesy code to give them the same consideration. People on board their vessels may be knocked down or possibly knocked overboard as a result of unexpected wash.

Carrying the right safety equipment could mean the difference between life and death in the event of a marine incident. When you are on the water anything can happen. The weather can change quickly and accidents can happen when you least expect them.

The General Safety Obligation requires all boat owners and operators to make sure the boat is safe, appropriately equipped and crewed, and operated in a safe manner. When deciding what to take on board, remember your obligation – if you fail to carry a piece of equipment that could have helped to prevent an accident, you could be prosecuted.

As skipper, it is your responsibility to look after those you have on board. Give them the best chance of survival and teach them where safety equipment is kept and how to use it.

Boating is fun but a distracted skipper can turn a day out on the water into a disaster. 60% of marine incidents occur because of human actions such as inattention, unsafe operation or navigation error, and failure to keep a proper lookout. Watch out for other boaties – boats, jet skis, sea kayaks, outrigger canoes and sailboarders all share the same waterways.

Remember, as skipper, you have the most important job to do. You're in charge of the safety of your boat and everyone on board. Lead by example, wear your life jacket and practise being a courteous skipper.

Our cover this month:  
Chris Scott competing at the Beijing Paralympics.  
See story page 4.

## Cyclone Awareness Week

Like most of north and far north Queensland, the city of Cairns is prone to tropical cyclones, usually between November and May. Notable cyclones that have affected the Cairns region have included Cyclone Larry in 2006, Cyclone Abigail in 2001 and Cyclone Steve in 2000. Cyclone Larry is considered to be the worst cyclone to hit the coast of Queensland since 1931.

Tropical cyclones can cause major damage over a significantly large area and have affected Australians since the earliest days of settlement. They develop over the warm oceans to Australia's north and can produce destructive winds, torrential rains, storm tides and phenomenal seas, dangerous both for vessels out at sea and those moored in harbours.

To provide the public with information on staying safe during the cyclone season, a Cyclone Awareness Week is held every year in Cairns. Organised by Emergency Management Queensland, this event is particularly important to Maritime Safety Queensland because of the many ports in the Cairns region.

A regular participant in Cyclone Awareness Week, Maritime Safety Queensland focused on the boating public, offering Cyclone Contingency Plans, a Cyclone Survival Guide, information on the new 406MHz Emergency Positioning Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), general boating safety tips and a key-ring to keep boat keys afloat.

Potentially, the most destructive phenomenon associated with tropical cyclones that make landfall is the storm surge. This is a raised dome of water about 60 to 80 kilometres across and typically about 2 to 5 metres higher than the normal tide level. If the surge occurs at the same time as a high tide then the area inundated can be quite extensive, particularly along low-lying coastlines, causing serious erosion of foreshores, swamping houses and severely battering boats.

Many boats come to grief during a cyclone, mainly due to incorrect or insufficient moorings. Due to the devastating nature of a cyclone, it is imperative that the boating public is made aware of the dangers of not securing a vessel adequately. The result can be a boat smashed against rocks or the shore and completely destroyed.

The Cairns office of Maritime Safety Queensland plays a major role in keeping the public informed, providing Cyclone Contingency Plans for Cairns, Cooktown, Innisfail, Mourilyan, Thursday Island, Cape Flattery, Half Moon Bay, Karumba, Port Douglas and Weipa.

Cyclone Awareness Week is a valuable community engagement exercise, and from a Maritime Safety Queensland point of view, is an excellent platform for promoting safety education in our tropical waters.

For additional information on cyclones visit [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au). Information on contingency plans can be found on [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).



MSQ display – The Esplanade, Cairns.

## 2008 in review

Maritime Safety Queensland had a busy and productive 2008, promoting safety messages, and informing recreational and commercial operators of legislative changes that affect them on the water.

By far, the most talked about issue at community events and boat shows was the upcoming switch to digital EPIRB. For over two years Maritime Safety Queensland has been promoting the 'Switch to 406' campaign in readiness for the shut down of the 121.5 MHz analogue frequency. Legislation was introduced in 2008 to mandate the carrying of a digital 406MHz EPIRB in designated waters in Queensland.

The overarching theme 'You're the skipper – You're responsible' was popular with boat owners across Queensland. Boaties remarked that the tag line says it all. It is a simple message that sums up the many aspects of being a good boat owner.

Maritime Safety Queensland also continued providing training for staff in pollution prevention and incident management. The importance of this type of training, and its relevance in real-life incidents, was proven to the whole of Australia in July 2007, when Maritime Safety Queensland took a major role in pollution prevention at the refloating of the *Pasha Bulker* when she was forced ashore by cyclonic winds and grounded on a Newcastle beach.

Of interest to the boat building sector, involving a partnership with Lloyd's Register and the NMSC, was training for Accredited Designers, Builders and Surveyors to assist them to understand and apply changes to the USL Code, including the new National Standards for Fast Craft, Engineering, and Fire Safety.

Fishing and commercial operators benefited by Maritime Safety Queensland's involvement in several events in support of regional fishing fleets.

Commercial operators took an opportunity while visiting the Maritime Safety Queensland displays to grab a free copy of the *Commercial and Fishing Ships Operational Handbook*. The handbook was reintroduced in 2008 in response to requests from commercial boat owners who wanted a simple but comprehensive reference guide for their crews and new skippers.

For a copy of this handbook or any other Maritime Safety Queensland publication contact your local regional office or visit [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

# Paralympian Chris Scott



Source: Serena Corporate Photography

Australia finished fifth in the medal tally with Queensland bringing home 19 medals including four gold, seven silver and eight bronze.

In addition to his Beijing medals, Chris has three gold medals from Athens, a gold and bronze from Sydney and gold and silver from Atlanta.

He has participated in six Paralympics – Seoul 1988 (CP football seven-a-side and athletics), Barcelona 1992 (athletics), Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 (cycling).

‘I medalled in the last four Paralympics in cycling – and that’s something I would never have dreamed possible,’ said Chris.

He has won World Championship gold to go with his Paralympics gold, and in fact won three gold medals at the World Championships in Germany in 2002.

He was Australian Senior Male Paralympics Athlete of the Year in 2002, Sporting Wheeliee of the Year in 2002 and 2005, Australian Male Disabled Cyclist of the Year from 2002 to 2005, and 1997 Queensland Cyclist of the Year.

At the 2002 Australian Track Nationals, he won a gold medal and set a world record in the 3000m pursuit and won the same event at the 2007 National Track Titles.

Chris has also been awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his sporting achievements.

The veteran performer, who announced his retirement in the Chinese capital, described being the state’s highest Paralympic achiever as pretty awesome, and not bad for his swansong.

It is also no mean feat for a competitor who contested his first two Paralympics at Seoul in 1988 and Barcelona in 1992 in track and field before a broken ankle prompted a switch to cycling. Chris said it was the broken ankle that sparked his interest in cycling.

‘I did cycling during my rehabilitation period and it turned out that I liked it more than running and I felt I was more competitive. Cycling felt natural, as if it was the sport I was supposed to be doing from the start but it just took me 24 years to work it out,’ Chris said.

It’s not every Government department that can boast having a local and national hero as an employee, but Maritime Safety Queensland proudly claims Paralympics cyclist Chris Scott as its most famous staff member.

At the Beijing Paralympics in September last year, Chris was Queensland’s most successful competitor. He won medals in the CP4 men’s individual pursuit (gold), individual time trial (silver) and 1km time trial (bronze), reaching speeds up to 57km/h.

At a staff afternoon tea to welcome Chris home, General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland Captain John Watkinson presented him with another gold medal, this one from his peers. In response, Chris presented Maritime Safety Queensland and Queensland Transport with two framed Australian Paralympic tracksuit jackets.

Chris was also the star of a welcome home celebration parade through the Queen Street Mall in Brisbane. The 30 Queensland athletes from Australia’s Paralympic Team were honoured by Premier Anna Bligh and Acting Lord Mayor Cr Graham Quirk at a reception where they were handed the keys to the city.





Source: Serena Corporate Photography

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Chris, who was born with cerebral palsy, said instead of finding his disability a hindrance in life, he preferred to think of it as an advantage. He said it has always been a positive for him.

‘I like to say my disability has been more of an ability, because it has enabled me to achieve a lot of things I never would have if I hadn’t had it,’ he said.

Chris was born in Gympie and now lives in Brisbane. Nicknamed ‘Gecko’ by his team mates, he is respected for his discipline and dedication. When Chris was away competing, his colleagues and friends at Maritime Safety Queensland followed his races closely, and a daily email update was sent around to staff with news on his race results and medal presentations.

Chris considered retiring after the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games but first wanted to win a gold medal at the 2002 World Championships, the only prize that had eluded him.

After winning not one gold medal but three at the Championships, and with Athens looming, Chris still felt strong and was a firm medal chance.

In Athens, Chris took gold in both the three kilometre individual pursuit and the time trial road race. He led his team through to the finals of the team sprint but gave his place to Peter Hormann, who came second to Chris the day before.

‘It wasn’t a huge decision to give my place in the final to Peter. He deserved his chance on the podium and I already had my gold medal. It’s what you do in a team. I actually got a gold medal when they won so in the end everyone’s efforts were acknowledged.’

The highlight in Athens for Chris though, was being named male captain of the Australian Paralympic Team. ‘That alone beat all the gold medals,’ he said.

So what does it take to reach the excellence required to compete at this level?

Chris detailed his schedule when he is in full training mode. This is in addition to his ‘day job’ at Maritime Safety Queensland.

‘On weekends I complete an 80 to 90 kilometre ride on Saturday and then on Sunday a 90 to 100 kilometre ride.

‘Then on Monday I do a light ride in the morning of about 30 kilometres and then weights for about an hour and a half in the afternoon.

‘Tuesday morning I do an hour on the ergo at home with specific strength efforts and sometimes I ride to and from work which is a good 30 kilometres.

‘Wednesday I go for a 30 kilometre ride in the morning and then weights in the afternoon.

‘Thursday is a 20 kilometre ride in the morning and then a track session in the afternoon and on Friday, I do a 30 kilometre ride in the morning and weights in the afternoon.’

Does he ever get time off during training?

‘Every three weeks I have an ‘easy’ week with one day off the bike.’

So what is Chris going to do with all his spare time now that all those hours of training are over?

‘I got married earlier this year and I’m sure my wife has plenty of things planned to keep me busy,’ he joked.

## Buying a new or used boat

Thoughts of lazy days spent fishing or cruising the waterways shouldn't distract you from considering a few important issues when buying a new or used boat.

Novice boaters will have noticed there are many different designs and styles of boat available so it's worth getting the advice of an industry specialist, like a marine dealer, or even an experienced friend to help find the right boat.

It is important to buy a boat that will handle the conditions in which you plan to operate. For example, don't buy a small dinghy if you intend navigating in partially smooth or open waters.

All new boats require an Australian Builders Plate (ABP) to be fitted by the manufacturer, similar to a VIN plate fitted to cars. This plate contains information including the maximum number of passengers or overall weight rating, the maximum horsepower the hull is designed for and its buoyancy rating.

If you have a second hand boat, you will need a capacity label affixed within one metre of the steering position unless an ABP is attached.

When a registered boat is sold, it is the responsibility of the new owner to lodge an application for transfer of the registration within 14 days.

Level buoyancy is a great design feature to look for, as it ensures the boat will float level in smooth conditions even if it is swamped which will allow you to bail out the water or stay with the boat till rescue. The alternative could mean clinging to the bow of an upturned hull until help arrives.

If you plan to use the boat at night, ensure it has correct navigation lights. For small craft, the standard navigation lights are a starboard (green) and a port (red) light and an all-round white light. The sidelights must be fitted so they are parallel with the centre line of the boat, not aligned with the curve of the bow. The all-round white light must be a metre above the main deck of the boat so that it can be seen from all directions.

A second hand boat should already be registered. Check that the registration numbers are a minimum of 200 millimetres in height and in a contrasting colour to the hull so they are legible from 30 metres. The registration label must be displayed on the exterior on the port side.

Your boat might be fitted with an under floor fuel tank. If so, it is recommended that a water trap fuel filter be fitted, even if portable tanks are used.

Remember, as skipper, you are responsible for everyone on board. For all the information you need for safe and enjoyable boating, go to the Maritime Safety Queensland website at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

## Are your navigation lights fitted correctly?

All boats must show lights if operating at night or in restricted visibility. Even a boat not travelling between dusk and dawn may still need to show lights, for example during a heavy rain shower or when at anchor.

Navigation lights must be installed in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. They should be mounted so as to minimise damage by contact with other objects under normal operating conditions, and prevent the lights from shining into the operator's eyes.

There are points to note with specific types of lights. An all-round white light shows over a nominal arc of the horizon of 360°. The light fitting must be located at least one metre above the sidelights, and should, as far as practicable, be on the centre-line of the boat.

It should not be obscured by masts or other structures by more than 6° of arc. If that's not possible, or the light shines into the operator's eyes, a masthead light in combination with a stern light is an alternative.

Boats over 12 metres in length are required to have a white masthead light mounted at least 2.5 metres above the gunwale and shining forward over an arc of the horizon of 225°, so that it can be seen from ahead of the boat to just aft of the beam on either side of the vessel. It must be located at least one metre above the sidelights and should, as far as practicable, be on the centre-line of the boat.

A stern light is located near the stern to show a white light over an arc of the horizon of 135° behind the boat. On an outboard craft, it may be necessary to mount the stern light on a mast, or to one side of the boat, to avoid the motor obscuring the light.

Most boats need a port (red) and a starboard (green) side light, each showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 112.5°. If the design of the boat allows, a combination port and starboard light unit can be mounted on the centre-line of the boat, in place of two individual side lights.

Individual side lights come in two styles, those mounted on a horizontal surface such as a deck and those mounted on a vertical surface such as the topsides or the side of the cabin.



Correct installation – side lights.



Incorrect installation – side lights.

Horizontally mounted side lights generally come with a marked reference line which must be kept parallel to the centre-line of the boat when fitting the light.

Vertically mounted side lights must be fitted with the back of the light parallel to the centre-line of the vessel so that the light will be visible in the correct sector and the lights don't cross over.

This means that when lights are mounted on a vertical or near vertical surface that is not parallel to the centre-line or not vertical, a wedge or similar must be provided to achieve the correct alignment in both planes.

Care must be taken not to mount lights on a horizontal surface if they are designed for a vertical surface and vice-versa, because they will shine in the wrong direction.

Boaters should take note of the following important points.

- It is difficult to judge distances at night.
- Not all navigation hazards will have lights indicating their position.
- Background lighting from the shore can cause confusion.
- Slow down and keep a good lookout.

For further information on navigation lights go to the Maritime Safety Queensland website at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).



# Navigating with GPS

When Captain Cook sailed the open seas he didn't have the luxury of a Global Positioning System. All he had were charts, a sextant and a spyglass.

And yet the sea captains of his day had fewer maritime collisions than we have today despite all our modern navigational tools.

How did 18th century sea captains sail safely around the world using just those minimal navigational aids? The answer is the number one rule of safe boating – always keep a proper lookout! Captain Cook always had a lookout perched in the crow's nest scanning the sea for hazards.

Today's boaties should learn from Captain Cook. Yes, the technology driving GPS is remarkable, but it should be regarded as an aid to navigation rather than a complete navigation tool. Don't rely on GPS alone to get home safely.

As well as charts, local knowledge and a visual watch, boaties need to keep their documentation up-to-date. Boaties can access Notices to Mariners on Maritime Safety Queensland's website for updates and changes.

When a boatie puts all his eggs in one basket, navigational speaking, the outcome can be disastrous. Recently, a boatie turned on his new GPS unit and electronic chart display which lit up in the darkness. Land masses, reefs, channels and the boat's position were tracked in real time. What could be simpler?

The boatie and his three passengers throttled toward home from a favourite fishing spot. Close to midnight the master selected a waypoint near the boat ramp and engaged the 'Go To' feature on his electronic chart display.

The 5.5 metre 135hp fibreglass half-cabin continued at around 20 knots in total darkness while the master 'mucked around' with his new accessory. Minutes later the boat collided with rocks. One passenger suffered broken ribs and internal injuries and was taken by helicopter to hospital. The boat was destroyed.

The master in this incident relied solely on his GPS, ignoring other safe navigation methods such as keeping a watch. Several similar incidents in the past few years could have been avoided if owners of GPS and electronic navigation displays had used more caution.

A Global Positioning System has a 95 per cent accuracy level. The other 5 per cent of the time, it could be out by hundreds of metres. Accuracy can be further reduced by adverse atmospheric conditions, electrical interference, or obstacles

such as buildings, mountains or trees. Satellites themselves can also transmit errors.

To improve the accuracy and integrity of GPS, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has established 16 Differential (DGPS) broadcasting stations along the Australian coast which broadcast in the 285-325 kHz frequency range to provide GPS accuracy generally better than 10 metres (95 per cent of the time).

Details of the available stations and their coverage are given in the annual Notices to Mariners ([www.hydro.gov.au](http://www.hydro.gov.au)). Other differential correction services are commercially available for use around Queensland waters.

Maps created using GPS technology are based on a reference frame or datum. Most countries have their own datum designed to best fit the shape of the earth in their location, which is updated to account for continental drift and other variations.

Australia also has its own national datum of GDA94. For navigation and everyday use, GDA94 can be considered to be the same accuracy as WGS84. Most Australian maps developed before 2000 use AGD (the Australian Geodetic Datum). This datum was superseded by GDA.

There is, roughly, a 200 metre difference between these two datums. To avoid a possible 200 metre discrepancy, which could mean the difference between clearing a hazard or hitting rocks or a reef, you must make sure that your GPS receiver and the maps/charts you are using have the same datum. For consistency, and to minimise the potential for errors, you should use GDA.

When plotting GPS latitude and longitude onto a paper chart which uses different datum, corrections should be made according to relevant chart notes. Many GPS receivers have the capacity to perform these corrections automatically.

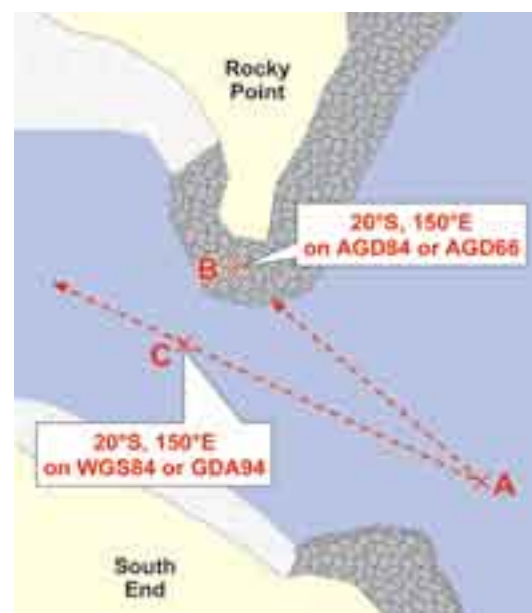
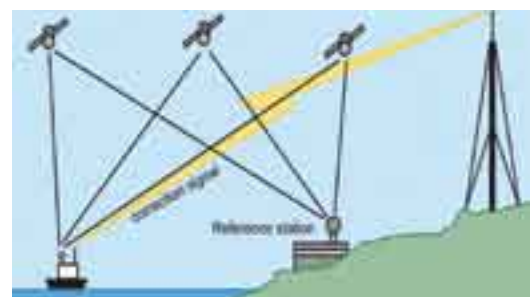
Boaties need to be aware of whether this feature on their GPS is active otherwise they may apply a correction which has already been applied by the receiver.

In years to come GPS units will become standard navigation equipment on recreational boats but they are no substitute for sound navigational practices.

Boaties should understand the strengths and weaknesses of the technology. There are some important points to remember when using a GPS.

- Always keep a proper lookout.
- Don't lose the situational awareness of the vessel's movement and course through the water.
- Don't zoom in to the largest available accurate chart scale.
- Switch the unit on well before departure and check the accuracy of the position information prior to starting the voyage.
- Always make sure your charts are current.

Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the Australian Coast Guard offer courses in navigation and the use of GPS units.





# Release of Boat-share Policy

Over the last few years there has been a significant growth in the number of boat-share schemes on the market. A boat-share scheme is any arrangement involving the shared use of a ship for recreational or commercial use.

Shared ownership significantly reduces the cost, but not the responsibility and skill required to navigate large, powerful boats through increasingly crowded waterways. The shared nature of the ships means that the usage rates are usually higher than for privately owned ships.

In response to safety concerns arising from the popularity of boat-share schemes, Maritime Safety Queensland has released the Boat-share Policy.

'In the interest of marine safety, a clear and equitable boat-share policy was needed to ensure that boat-share scheme ships are operated safely,' said Captain John Watkinson, General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland.

While similar in nature to bareboat or hire-and-drive operations, boat-share schemes have, to date, escaped the more stringent safety requirements applied to these market segments because the ships were in many instances incorrectly registered as recreational ships.

On the other hand, Queensland's bareboat and hire-and-drive industries are subject to commercial registration and operating requirements.

Historically, this is due to the high level of usage and the relative inexperience of many of the customers of bareboat and hire-and-drive operations.

'Commercial vessels which provide a service to the public need to adhere to a higher standard of safety so the safety of those on board is not jeopardised,' said Captain Watkinson.

The Boat-share Policy represents approved Government policy, and comes into effect on 1 January 2009. The policy identifies how the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* and *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004* apply to boat-share schemes.

As a result, many formerly registered recreational boat-share ships will be required to register as a commercial ship and comply with commercial standards.

The policy will ensure that boat-share ships are operated safely, registered correctly and have the appropriate safety and miscellaneous equipment.

In addition, the policy requires operators to be appropriately licensed and to follow the required emergency procedures and navigational safety provisions.

A number of exemptions from commercial registration requirements are provided under the policy as part of the transitional arrangements to facilitate the transition to commercial regulation.

- Exemptions may be granted in respect to registration requirements, safety equipment and licensing requirements provided certain conditions are met.
- The necessary documentation for the granting of the exemptions is to be submitted with the application for commercial registration which details what supporting documentation is required. The application for commercial registration must be lodged at a regional Maritime Safety Queensland office.
- In determining whether or not an exemption will be granted, the merits of each operation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The policy is intended to provide the necessary safety outcomes for the operation of boat-share scheme ships while encouraging continued growth in boating and efficiency for the industry.

The Boat-share Policy paper can be downloaded from [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au) or by contacting a local Maritime Safety Queensland office.

## Courtesy – what does it mean to you?

As part of the 2008-09 summer boating safety campaign, Maritime Safety Queensland asked what 'Courtesy on the water' means to you as a boatie. You said:

'I like people to slow down when they are travelling past me when at anchor. I also slow down when travelling past people either at anchor or near boat ramps' – **Aroona.**

'All boaties should respect the water and collect any rubbish that goes past them while anchored' – **Queensland.**

'As a fisherman's grandson, boating courtesy is the old forgotten English term for slowing down as you pass another vessel and giving a wave and a smile' – **Wurtulla Qld.**

'Boating courtesy begins at the boat ramp. Be prepared before you get on the ramp, wait your turn, and enjoy the day' – **Brisbane.**

'Move over as far as possible in tight channels, observe speed limits and make your intentions clear before changing directions' – **Mango Hill.**

'Involves slowing down for anchored vessels who may be fishing or just anchored. Also just a short wave to acknowledge the skipper doing the right thing' – **Brisbane.**

'Being patient at boat ramps; assisting other boaties who may need assistance; respecting all water users; adhere to speed limits and boating rules; protecting the environment' – **Ipswich.**

'Showing courtesy is slowing down in narrow waterways and giving way to slower vessels whilst observing the speed limit and being fully observant of the rules' – **Thorneside.**

'When out on Queensland waters I always follow what my father taught us. Give junior sailors a wide berth, take care near the surf, or end up the object of someone else's mirth' – **Queensland.**

'Go slow for smaller craft so our wash will not swamp them' – **Queensland.**

'When boating last weekend a group of young blokes gave me cushions to sit on for the hard metal seats in my tinny' – **Queensland.**

'Be aware; keep a proper lookout; give way; get there safe – not first' – **Southport.**

'Slowing down or keeping clear of people fishing while travelling is a common courtesy' – **Greenslopes.**





## Competency-based training shows the way to an industry safety culture

Maritime Safety Queensland is developing and establishing 'safety culture' as the accepted benchmark for safety and risk management performance within commercial vessel operations.

The challenge is to look beyond traditional approaches to marine safety administration to improve its capacity to support safety culture development. It's all about changing behaviours.

The magnitude of this operation can be appreciated when cultural change is combined with the diversity, geographical distribution and sheer size of Queensland's commercial marine industry. So how is Maritime Safety Queensland approaching this cultural change?

It has actively engaged with commercial and fishing vessel owners and operators and the marine training sector to draw on their wealth of knowledge and experience, and enlist their support to drive essential change.

This cooperative approach has already been mutually beneficial. Outcomes of the fishing ship safety equipment trials will be used to inform decisions relating to the wearing of personal flotation devices by commercial fishers at sea.

At the Commercial Marine Industry Forum in October 2008, the risk management theme confirmed that vessel owners and operators appreciate the importance of risk assessment and management but look to Maritime Safety Queensland and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to develop more user-friendly guidance material.

This led to a commitment from Maritime Safety Queensland to coordinate a series of interactive workshops with industry and risk management professionals to provide owners and operators with hands-on experience in the application of current methods.

Another important influence on safety culture is crew training and development. Maritime Safety Queensland has been working with the commercial marine training sector over the past 12 months to progress workplace centred competency-based training and assessment (CBT&A).

It is a national initiative with Queensland leading the transition to marine training and assessment under the National Maritime Training Packages.

A comprehensive capability development seminar for key personnel was held in October 2008 to ensure staff are equipped to work with approved training organisations over the next eight months to implement CBT&A.

Competency-based training will see students completing task books in the workplace to complete the practical application of essential skills and knowledge required for a commercial marine licence.

The change increases reliance on practical experience at sea, and translates to a significant shift away from the traditional delivery methods where the bulk of a trainee's learning and development occurred in the classroom.

## Gone in 60 seconds

Three mates decided to go on an overnight fishing trip to a spot off the Queensland coast where they had fished previously, often with good results. Before leaving they thoroughly checked the boat, a nine-year-old 5.6 metre aluminium vessel. With safety in mind, the owner replaced one of the batteries, anchor and rope.

The usual practice at the fishing spot was to anchor and lay over the bommy. It usually took about five attempts to get the boat in the right position. After the first try, an attempt was made to recover the anchor and reposition the boat. While the boat was going astern, the anchor broke free and the stern created a large wash that swamped the deck.

The water continued to rise rapidly and one of the crew used his mobile phone to contact emergency services and give the position of the boat. The other crew member activated the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).

They all donned life jackets and the boat sank under them. The owner found himself trapped under the canopy and lost the EPIRB in his struggle to free himself of the boat. They also lost the flares which went down with the boat.

A search and rescue operation was undertaken involving three helicopters and two fixed-wing aircraft along with the Volunteer Coast Guard. After 13 hours in the water the three mates were recovered and spent three days in hospital recovering from hypothermia and jelly fish stings.

This could have turned out quite differently for these three fishermen. They were very lucky to emerge from this experience with only minor injuries. There are lessons to be learnt from this incident.

- When retrieving the anchor, make sure you are positioned directly over the anchor so it can be pulled up vertically.
- Make sure the boat has positive flotation and that pumps onboard have the capacity to clear excess water from the hull.
- It is very important that safety equipment is in a position where it is easily accessible in an emergency.
- Put on personal flotation devices early in an emergency as a vessel can sink at a rapid rate.



# Remote operations – Maritime Safety Queensland

Next time you access the Internet to quickly download some information, spare a thought for our remote ports. Cast your mind back to a time where a computer was a stand-alone unit, with no access to a network with G-drive or a selection of printers to choose from.

Remember when your mobile phone only got reception if you stood on a hill and faced west, and the Internet was accessed by dial-up modem where downloading an email took 15 minutes or locked up your system and shut it down?

This may seem like the dark ages now, but in remote locations in far north Queensland, these are everyday occurrences.

Maritime Safety Queensland's Remote Area Managers, Bevis Hayward and Frank Thomson are responsible for our remote ports and surrounding waters. They manage the ports effectively and professionally, and have become quite resourceful in the process.

Thursday Island (Port Kennedy) in the Torres Strait is renowned for being a busy port, both on a community level and in a shipping sense. Frank Thomson resides on Thursday Island and is heavily involved in the operational side of the *Torres Strait Marine Safety Program*.

Maritime Safety Queensland initiated the program in July 2006 to save lives and reduce the number of lost seafarers in the Torres Strait region. Boats are the main means of transport between islands, and voyages of more than 80 nautical miles in all kinds of weather are not unusual.

Lives were saved in Torres Strait recently as a result of an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) supplied under the program. On 5 October 2008, a dinghy with five people on board flipped while a turtle was being pulled into the boat. The incident happened approximately 11 nautical miles north/north-west of Thursday Island.

The occupants activated an EPIRB and a helicopter search was launched by Thursday Island Water Police. Three people were winched to safety and two others were picked up by a passing private vessel. All were rescued in good health.

As part of the *Torres Strait Marine Safety Program*, consultation with local councils confirmed the cost of and access to safety equipment and training were priority issues, and that the higher cost of the EPIRBs may be financially out of reach for some community members.

To address this issue, Maritime Safety Queensland and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority are working together to develop and implement an initiative to improve access to safety equipment in the region by offering the EPIRB to eligible communities at a reduced price.

The current 121.5 MHz EPIRB will become ineffective from February 2009. From this date, internationally administered satellites will cease using the 121.5 MHz frequency and will only relay the 406 MHz frequency.

The 406 MHz EPIRB is a more advanced beacon and when activated will relay a signal that is received immediately and will pinpoint the beacon's position to within 5 kilometres accuracy, a vast improvement over the previous EPIRB.

Results from the *Torres Strait Marine Safety Program* indicate that the time spent searching for lost seafarers has reduced significantly since the widespread distribution of the new EPIRBs, increasing survival rate and decreasing the cost of recovery.

Maritime Safety Queensland is continuing to improve the program and its outcomes, aiming to provide the Torres Strait community with a strong safety culture.



Weipa is home to Rio Tinto Mining Company and as a result, the port supports a healthy volume of shipping. In addition, Weipa is well known for its fishing competitions and general enthusiasm of the local people for boating and fishing activities.

Recently, Marine Operations Officer Mike Beeby was involved in an emergency response trial in the region. The response exercise was designed and coordinated by Regional Harbour Master Captain Alan Boath and Manager (Regional Operations) Harry McLean from the Cairns Region. In supporting roles were Marine Safety Officers Don Cowie and Graeme Walker, Marine Operations Officer Andre Bats, and Acting Manager (Technical Services) Steve Budd.

The aim of the exercise was to put the Marine Emergency Response Vehicle (MERV) and the newly purchased, purpose-built response trailer into action to test their capabilities and to provide a platform for the testing of satellite

communications gear required in these remote locations.

The trailer became home to five men over a period of five days with the role of chef being taken on by Don Cowie. Don commented that the facilities were both adequate for the task and comfortable. The 10-hour drive from Cairns proved to be handled well by the MERV, trailer and the support vehicle, even in the rough terrain experienced along the way.

The operation was a great success, providing managers with the opportunity to identify logistical issues in relation to an emergency response and to implement accommodation and catering procedures required in the event of a remote area oil spill.

Karumba Port is generally based around the mining and fishing industries, with a large zinc loading facility within port limits, and a base for the Northern Prawn Trawl Fishery.

During winter, however, Karumba's population explodes by up to 100,000 people, all with 'tinnie' in tow. Accommodation facilities that are normally at 30 per cent capacity are filled to 'bursting at the seams' level, and caravan parks are crowded with vans of all shapes and sizes.

People converge on Karumba every winter chasing the same thing – fish! The recreational boatie becomes a regular in the port and surrounding estuaries, and managing the influx of so many keen anglers entering an unforgiving and unfamiliar tidal zone, can be an arduous task.

Bevis Hayward, as Remote Area Manager, oversees this annual event. He is passionate about sending out the safety message to all marine users. Bevis is also a member of several volunteer community groups, attending meetings on a regular basis, and ensuring that the face of Maritime Safety Queensland is prominent.



Response trailer – all the comforts of home!



The boat ramp car park at Karumba Port feels the weight of the tourist season.

## A dollar saved – a life lost?

When it comes to choosing a life jacket, Maritime Safety Queensland is warning boat owners that there are no bargains when it comes to safety.

Recently some life jackets sold in outlets outside the marine industry have not complied with the Australian Standard.

After preparing a boat for summer with so many unexpected boat or trailer maintenance costs it's easy to understand that owners who need to replace life jackets are keen for a bargain. But boat owners need to be careful when buying life jackets.

People believe that if a life jacket is for sale on a shelf that it means it is okay for use in Queensland however this is not always the case.

We mostly find problems with people buying life jackets from suppliers who aren't specialist marine suppliers.

People need to be sure they know what to look for, or get expert advice when buying. After all, a poor quality sub-standard life jacket could make the difference between making it home or not.

Always look for a trademark compliance stamp or a statement printed on the jacket, expressing the standard to which the life jacket complies. For a PFD type 1 look for AS1512, for a PFD type 2 it's AS1499 and for a PFD type 3 it's AS2260.

Each type of life jacket has particular design features that determine how they operate and where they can be used.

Boat owners who are unsure of which type of life jacket they require should consult a specialist marine retailer, the free MSQ publication *Guide to Recreational boating and fishing in Queensland*, or check the safety tab on the MSQ website [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

The website contains extensive information on life jackets and the entire range of safety equipment required in Queensland. Remember 'You're the skipper, you're responsible'.

## Contacting Maritime Safety Queensland

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## Cooperation between agencies

In August this year, Peter Finn from Maritime Safety Queensland's Marine Environment Protection Unit travelled to New Zealand at the request of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to participate in acceptance testing of new oil spill response equipment.

Specialised tanks designed for storing recovered oil during pollution response operations are being purchased by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority as part of an important upgrade of Australia's oil spill response capacity. They will be available for use throughout Australia during significant oil pollution incidents.

Peter, whose role with Maritime Safety Queensland includes managing the maintenance of similar equipment throughout Queensland and training operators in its use, is recognised as an expert in his field. He is also a member of Australia's national oil spill response team and has been involved in most of the major incidents in Australian waters during the last 10 years.

In New Zealand, Peter worked closely with peers from Maritime New Zealand and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to ensure



Testing of 20,000 litre capacity temporary storage bags in Auckland Harbour.

the products being supplied by an Auckland-based manufacturer met all operational requirements.

Peter's involvement in the project was part of Maritime Safety Queensland's ongoing commitment to Australia's National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and Other Noxious and Hazardous Substances, better known as the National Plan.

This important project was supported by Queensland Transport and involved state, federal and international agencies, reinforcing the fact that the cooperative spirit is alive and well.

One of the many advantages of the National Plan is the close cooperation between agencies that has evolved over many years of mutual support.

## New publications

The 2008 edition of *Guide to Recreational Boating & Fishing in Queensland* is now available, ready for the new year. Boaties will find this edition has been streamlined to make it more user-friendly, and some new sections have been added including Marine Pollution and How to Avoid Marine Incidents. This key publication is essential for anyone who uses our waterways.

## Upcoming events 2009

### MARCH

20-22 Brisbane Tinnie & Tackle Show, RNA Showgrounds

### MAY

21-24 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, Sanctuary Cove

### 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