



The new cabin positioned higher for increased visibility and safety.

## Fairymead Cable Ferry safety issues

**B**undaberg 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

**T**he 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](http://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.

## Contacting Maritime Safety Queensland

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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