

**Jan-Mar 2005
Volume 2 Issue 1**

In this edition:

- Profiling: Boat SMART from the Start: Christmas Safety Campaign*
- Getting to know: Greg Nickerson: Boating retailer and advocate*
- Know your General Safety Obligation*
- Owners fined for Great Barrier Reef grounding*
- Bar crossing campaign launched*
- New regime near for jet skis*
- Learning from marine incidents*
- Latest marine safety news*

Seascope

Maritime Safety Queensland



Maritime Safety Queensland
GPO Box 2595
Brisbane Queensland 4001

Internet: www.msq.qld.gov.au
Email: seascope@msq.qld.gov.au

From the helm



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

With the summer holiday season well underway, it's time to take another look at boating safety and what it takes to be a Smart Skipper. With the increasing popularity of our waterways as a recreational activity, boating safety awareness remains a constant challenge.

Enforcement agencies will be making sure boat operators are licensed and their vessels comply with the law in areas such as registration, safety equipment and sewage disposal management.

This year boat owners are being reminded that to be a Smart Skipper, you need to watch your speed, wash and alcohol consumption. Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers are working with a zero-tolerance policy on each of these three aspects of boating.

In the end, the best way to enjoy yourself on the water is to obey the rules and respect the rights of other users of our waterways. You can't beat consideration and courtesy for others on the water as a way to ensure we have a safe and enjoyable holiday period.

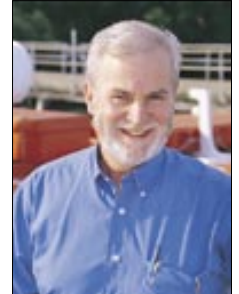
For example, it's very Boat SMART to watch out for the expiry date of **S**afety equipment; watch the fuel as a **M**aintenance technique, be responsible with **A**lcohol; remember your **R**esponsibility to watch speed and wash; and watch the **T**ime to return home. This is part of your general safety obligation as an owner or skipper.

Our coastal waters are literally swarming with pleasure craft at this time of year, placing pressure on boat-launching facilities and increasing the risk of potential conflict with other water-based activities. Be patient with the inevitably increased waiting times at boat ramps, and when you're getting under way, look out for people in the water nearby.

The state government has undertaken an extensive review into the operation of jet skis on Queensland waterways. Following consultation with jet ski owners, suppliers, local councils and community groups, a management plan has been developed that significantly reduces the potential for conflict.

I hope you're enjoying summer on the water, and I look forward to more boating initiatives throughout the coming year.

Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland



As we enter a new year, it is interesting to reflect on the achievements of Maritime Safety Queensland in 2004. Many of the initiatives introduced represent milestones for the marine community with the agency committed to continuing a close relationship with the industry.

The introduction of the new marine safety regulations brings about significant change and improved safety outcomes for recreational boaters. The new recreational marine driver licence being introduced under the BoatSafe scheme leads the way in Australia with a competency-based approach to recreational boat owners obtaining their licence. While visible safety outcomes are yet to be realised, the introduction of BoatSafe will pave the way for a safer future for the boating community.

Maritime Safety Queensland supports, and is an active participant in, projects being driven by the National Marine Safety Committee. Maritime Safety Queensland has worked with other marine safety regulators in the development of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels in contributing to the design of provisions for Vessel Construction, Vessel Operations and Electrical Components.

2005 offers another round of challenges for Maritime Safety Queensland. We will see the introduction of new requirements for jet skis in an effort to ensure the operation of these craft is not only safe but acceptable to other users of the waterways and those who live nearby. Vessel Traffic Services have commenced in the port of Cairns, enhancing safety and the port's ability to handle increased shipping movements.

The establishment of a generative safety culture within the commercial industry continues to be a high priority for the agency following the results of an industry survey in 2003/04. A pilot program has been established in the Whitsundays to work with the Charter Boat Industry Association to progress the development of a safety culture within the commercial sector of the local industry — a safety culture that will continue for generations to come.

On behalf of everyone at Maritime Safety Queensland, I wish you safe boating and a successful 2005.



HOLIDAY SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Educating **SMART** holidaymakers

Each Christmas/New Year period, Queensland's waterways become major traffic zones, with water craft and swimmers alike vying to extract maximum fun within a few short weeks. Through its annual Christmas Campaign, Maritime Safety Queensland is working hard to ensure that nobody's holiday experience is spoiled by a marine incident.

This season's campaign entitled, "Boatsmart from the Start - Be a Smart Skipper" was launched by Premier of Queensland and Minister of Trade, Hon. Peter Beattie, and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Paul Lucas at Bribie Island on 5 December.

The campaign is designed to encourage safer boating behaviour and reduce the number of boating incidents that occur through a series of 'watch' messages.

Using the complementary approaches of education and enforcement, the campaign was coordinated by Maritime Safety Queensland in conjunction with Queensland Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.

Maritime Safety Queensland's General Manager, Captain John Watkinson, paid tribute to the role of the two compliance partner agencies in this year's and previous Christmas Campaigns, as well as their continuing monitoring of boating activities state-wide.

"These agencies, through their regional bases, deploy highly experienced officers in a range of water craft and land based patrols to the busiest areas of our waterways," he said. "Their unique local knowledge allows them to target traditional 'hot spots' to ensure the highest compliance with this year's safety campaign, and will ensure Queensland boaties are indeed 'watching' this summer."

The education campaign included distribution of printed material, radio segments, editorial in magazines and newspapers, and safety packs being handed out on the water and at boat ramps.

Over the Christmas/New Year period many of those who did not heed these educational messages on speed were greeted by enforcement officers using laser speed

detection devices. Zero tolerance to speeding resulted in many infringement notices being issued in 'hot spots' such as the Gold Coast Broadwater, Brisbane River and other high-density areas in the south-east. Water Police also conducted numerous random breath tests (*see below*).

As the number of recreational boat registrations continues to increase, the holiday campaign is becoming a critical component in building the State's culture of marine safety. The effectiveness of the 2003-2004 Christmas campaign was verified with almost 50 per cent of boaties surveyed recalling the "Boat Smart from the Start" campaign slogan. It is hoped that recall of this year's key messages will be similar.



Drink boating = Bloody idiot +

Many boat owners believe, incorrectly, that drink-driving on the water is safer than drink-driving on the road. However, a boat operator or passenger with a blood alcohol concentration greater than 0.1 per cent is 10 times more likely to be involved in an accident on the water.

Alcohol affects judgement, vision, balance and co-ordination, a deadly combination when operating any type of vehicle or equipment. Conditions specific to boating, such as motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray, can accelerate the onset of fatigue and therefore the effects of alcohol. A person's co-ordination, judgement and reaction time can decline faster while operating or travelling in a boat, than would occur with land transport.

Alcohol is even more dangerous for boat operators who are less experienced and less confident driving on the water than driving on the road. Most recreational boat owners don't operate their vessel every day, as they would their motor vehicle, with most

only averaging 110 hours on the water per year.

Besides drastically impairing the ability to make decisions and affecting physical performance, excessive alcohol consumption can affect a boat operator or passenger in the following ways:

- vision is reduced, including decreased peripheral vision, reduced depth perception, decreased night vision, poor focus and difficulty in distinguishing colours (particularly red and green);
- inner ear disturbances can make it impossible for a person who falls into the water to distinguish up from down; and
- alcohol creates a physical sensation of warmth which might prevent a person in cold water from getting out before hypothermia sets in.

Many other factors including prescription medication and fatigue can affect an individual's response to alcohol.

Getting to know you



When he's not selling boats or lobbying on behalf of boaties, he is with family and friends *in* a boat. It could be said that **Greg Nickerson** lives and breathes boats.

As Managing Director of Northside Marine, Greg Nickerson is in daily contact with members of Queensland's growing recreational boating community, and in the past, he has chaired peak boating associations at a state and national levels.

Greg's father Keith, who is regarded as a pioneer within the Queensland boating industry, started Northside Marine by selling sailing boat accessories in a small shop in Deagon. He introduced trailerable boats to Northside Marine in 1966. Greg started working at Northside in 1973, and building on his father's legacy, has led its transformation into a "boating and fishing mega-store". Greg's wife Tricia, who has a Bachelor of Business, is the company's accountant. Today, Northside Marine employs over 40 people and occupies 1.5 hectares at Boondall.

Greg started in boating as a seven-year-old sailing sabots in Cabbage Tree Creek, a short distance from Northside Marine's front gate. It was natural that Greg graduated to sailing larger vessels, culminating in a Sydney-to-Hobart race in 1992 as part of the crew of Hot Prospect. Today, Greg points to society's increased need for speed as a prime contributor to a reduced interest in sailing.

"Since the late 1960s power boats have taken over the boating market Australia-wide, and sailing has changed," he said.

"If you went searching around Brisbane looking to buy a new trailer sailer, you wouldn't see one. You'd need to buy second-hand. Besides a few Hobie off-beach catamarans, there is not a lot of new sailing craft sold now."

"For most people, work is taking more of our time. If we want to go somewhere, we want to get there quickly. Therefore power boats are growing in popularity. I'm not saying that sailing is dead – we sell a lot of equipment to sailors – but it's definitely not as strong as 20 years ago."

Greg said that the vast majority of recreational boaties are avid lovers of the great outdoors and are safety conscious, but he sees the need for continued campaigning in areas of safety and environmental issues.

"Many boaties decide they don't want their children playing computer games all weekend. They want to introduce their children to water skiing or tubing – doing something different together, particularly when your children are young teenagers. They think it's cool if Dad can still water-ski or wake-board," he said.

"So in many cases, your most valuable assets are on board – your family – and you are going to do everything necessary to protect their safety.

"We are in close contact with our customers and the number of incidents we see is minimal – maybe a bent prop once or twice a month. But we never see smashed hulls or fractured limbs. I don't know if I'm just in a lucky area, but I see recreational boating as a fairly safe pastime.

"However, we definitely need to keep telling people about safety issues – how to use flares, PFDs and EPIRBs – all excellent stuff!"

Greg said the biggest change in the boating retail sector, and

"... in many cases, your most valuable assets are on board – your family"

something that has contributed to increased safety levels, is the emergence of 'package deals', effectively making boating much easier for novices and old hands alike.

"The boat, trailer and everything needed is packaged ready to go. Customers don't have to ask which engine goes with which boat and what type of equipment they need. All retailers have become professional in this area, whereas 20 years ago it was much different," he said.

"All boats we sell have all the safety equipment they need. For example, if you buy a middle-of-the-road fishing boat you get all the safety equipment you need to operate in partially-smooth waters. You'll also get general equipment such as spare fuses, mooring lines and toilet chemicals. You will find most retailers are doing this."

Greg views the EPIRB and Global Positioning System (GPS) as the greatest innovations in boating safety over the past 30 years and said they will further improve as technology develops.

As well as running a business, Greg continues as a strong advocate for recreational boaties, serving as a past President of the Queensland Boating Industry Association for several years and also as the president of the Australian Boating Industry Association. Currently he is a member of the Brisbane Boat Show Committee which runs the annual Brisbane Boat Show and the Tinnie and Tackle Show.

With such involvement and history in boating Greg is well qualified to comment on changes to one of Queensland's favourite pastimes, in particular its progress in south-east Queensland.

"No doubt the amount of people emigrating to south-east Queensland from interstate and overseas is increasing the demand for all boats. They are moving here for the lifestyle and want the equipment to enjoy it. There seems to be a proliferation of people investing large amounts of money into larger boats," he said, noting he doesn't deal in that market, but rather small to mid-sized boats.

"Until recently, Moreton Bay and Moreton Island have been the best kept secrets in Australian boating. People come here from other states or countries and say, 'wow, this place is terrific!' To a degree it is still a secret, but more and more people are realising what a lovely piece of waterway it is."

Greg outlined his perfect day on the water: "That would be waking up on the boat behind the wrecks at Tangalooma (Moreton Island). I caught a few fish the night before and begin the day eating a fish breakfast with family and friends. We tune into the radio which reports that weather conditions will be favourable for the next few days, so we decide to extend our stay. A snorkle around the wrecks, a climb up the sand hills and then watching the sunset over Brisbane and the thought of having to do it all over again tomorrow."



Home to roost!



A Maritime Operations team has erected a new port lateral buoy at Reeders Point, at the southern tip of Moreton Bay, to ensure nesting ospreys are not disturbed.

The industrious osprey constructed an elaborate nest – the only trouble being that it obstructs the solar panels on the existing 150mm beacon, rendering it inoperable at night.

The day-marks have been removed from the previous beacon, and once the osprey chicks have left the nest, the Maritime Operations team will remove the light, but will leave the beacon structure for ospreys to use as a nesting platform in the future. The change has been posted on Notices to Mariners.

Emergency response redesign

CANBERRA: The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is preparing to redesign its emergency response operations centre to improve the way critical incident data can be captured and exchanged with other search and rescue agencies. Last year it began seeking a contractor to conduct a detailed operational assessment and ergonomic review of AMSA's Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Canberra. The chosen contractor will have the capacity to manage construction of a new emergency response centre, although actual construction might be separately tendered later.

Council continues to represent boaties

The Queensland Small Craft Council (QSCC) continues as a vibrant representative lobby group 40 years after its formation.

The QSCC was formed in the late 1960s as a lobby group for recreational boat owners. One of its early issues was opposition to the withdrawal of the road tax rebate that was then available for fuel used in boats. The campaign was unsuccessful, but over the years, the council has remained true to its charter "to represent the interests of boating clubs and small craft owners and its constituents to Government and industry and to promote safety and good seamanship".

The council's list of member organisations shows a wide range of interests: boating clubs, rescue organisations and government departments.

QSCC chair Ed Boast said the Council met monthly and all subjects of interest to recreational boating were open for discussion, from broad policy issues to quite specific 'bread-and-butter' topics.

"Because representatives of the boating community and frontline government policy and enforcement officers meet regularly it often means matters of safety, signage and policy can be recognised and satisfactorily resolved before problems arise," he said.

Typical issues of safety raised at QSCC meetings included requests to:

- introduce speed limits in places where boaties on-water experience might make them aware of potential accident scenarios;
- install "No Wash" signs around anchorages where wash can cause damage to moored vessels or foreshore erosion;
- change or install aids to navigation to suit the needs of small craft;
- consider recommendations for dredging priorities.

As well as attending monthly council meetings, some delegates carry specific portfolio responsibilities and attend other committees such as Healthy Waterways, Marine Communication and the Marine Sewage Reference Group as a representative of the QSCC. For more information on the QSCC email Ed Boast at info@aribs.com.au.

Karumba now a registered home port

The far-northern Queensland port of Karumba has become a registered home port for vessels. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's chief executive Clive Davidson approved Karumba's new status following requests by Intercontinental Ship Management Pty Ltd. Under the Commonwealth Government's Shipping Registration Act 1981, registered vessels must have their home port clearly marked for legal and other purposes. The Port of Karumba is located at the mouth of the Norman River in the south eastern corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria. It has been a key port servicing remote Gulf communities since the late 1800s.

"This decision will allow local boat owners to identify and promote Karumba as a port around Australia," Mr Davidson said. Port status would not make Karumba a port for customs and immigration clearance for vessels entering and leaving Australia.

Dive industry pleased with safety efforts

BRISBANE: Queensland's diving industry has welcomed a state government move to tighten safety regulations for people who dive for a living. Queensland's Industrial Relations Minister Tom Barton released an industry discussion paper, prompted by the death of at least five occupational divers in the past five years. Marine Board member Col McKenzie from Dive Queensland says occupational diving safety should have been brought into line with the recreational dive industry years ago.

Risk-based inspection system successful

The number of ships detained by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority increased last year as a result of AMSA's world leading risk-based inspection system for identifying substandard foreign flag vessels visiting Australian ports. AMSA inspected 2827 foreign flag ships last year and detained 190 vessels until major safety problems were fixed. AMSA's 2003 Port State Control report shows the detention rate climbed to 6.7 per cent in 2003, compared to 5.8 per cent in 2002 and 4.4 per cent in 2001 indicating greater efficiency in singling-out substandard ships.

AMSA's chief executive Clive Davidson said while the detention rate had increased, there had been a general improvement in overall vessel standards as shown by the lower number of deficiencies per ship inspection. In 2003, 2.4 deficiencies were identified per ship compared to 2.7 in 2002 and 3 in 2001.

"The higher detention rate continues to reflect AMSA's risk management strategy introduced in 2001 to target inspection resources at high risk ships," he said. "These have a greater probability of being below standard and are more likely to be detained until major defects are remedied."

Know your general safety obligation

Every person who fulfils some role within the state's maritime industry or who travels on Queensland's waterways should be familiar with the concept of General Safety Obligation.

This provision allows the court to look at the performance, or non-performance, of everyone who contributes in some way to unsafe marine practices



The General Safety Obligation (GSO) places the onus on the operator/owner to ensure they operate their vessel safely.

The GSO is the fundamental principle underlying all of Queensland's maritime safety system and is instrumental in providing a legal framework that protects the safety of individuals using Queensland waterways. It regulates Queensland's maritime industry in a way that allows for continued growth and innovation, an important ingredient for Australia's premier boating state.

The GSO achieves its objectives by imposing obligations to ensure seaworthiness and other aspects of marine safety on the following people in the maritime industry:

- ship designers
- ship builders
- marine surveyors
- ship owners (including operators)
- ship masters and crew
- marine pilots

Transport Minister Paul Lucas said that the prosecution of owners of *Anaconda III* (see story on page 7), the first case of its type for Maritime Safety Queensland, showed the state government was serious about safety on Queensland's waterways.

"Vessel owners and operators must pay attention to their general safety obligation, and everyone who uses our waterways is obliged by law to familiarise themselves with Queensland's maritime safety acts, legislation and standards," Mr Lucas said.

"The Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 states that a person involved with a ship's operation - and that includes the owner, master, pilot and crew members - must not cause the ship to be operated unsafely.

"This provision allows the court to look at the performance, or non-performance, of everyone who contributes in some way to unsafe marine practices that have led to an incident or a breach.

"There are harsh penalties for flouting the state's laws that were brought into force to protect all users of our waterways and the court has shown it is prepared to impose deterrent fines that will reinforce boating safety awareness.

"Ship owners and operators are obliged by law to uphold that safety regime."

Besides the case of the *Anaconda III*, a fictitious example can also illustrate the General Safety Obligation in action:

The owner of a new five-metre runabout takes two of his friends through the Seaway for a test drive offshore. On this day he neglects to carry an anchor on board.

The wind and current are quite strong and when the engine suddenly stalls and refuses to restart, the boat is swept rapidly on to a sandbar and capsized. One of the passengers drowns in attempting to reach land.

The requirement to carry an anchor is not in Queensland maritime safety legislation. It is, however, included in the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Standards which act only as a guide, and is subservient to legislation.

For example, in the normal course of events, Water Police would not breach a boat owner for failing to carry an anchor. However, in this circumstance, it could be found that the owner had failed to meet his General Safety

Obligation to operate a vessel safely as outlined in section 43 of the Act: "a person involved with a ship's operation (including the owner, master, pilot and crew members) must not cause the ship to be operated unsafely."

In other words, if you take a boat out without an anchor you are operating that vessel unsafely, and in the event of an incident, will suffer the consequences.

On the other hand, the owner might seek to prove in court that he did not require an anchor, as outlined in the standard, to operate the boat safely. If he could prove he possessed some other means of stopping his broken-down boat from drifting onto a sandbar, then he might escape conviction.

Without the GSO as an underpinning principle, the application of the law would need to be more 'prescriptive', that is, legislation would need to be formed to accommodate the anchoring requirement of every type and size of ship in every type of water and conditions. Not to mention the type and length of rope required for the anchor.

But because the GSO is 'performance based', the responsibility for carrying an appropriate anchor to ensure safe operation of the boat is placed on the person whom a court finds is most responsible, in this case, the owner.

This example is not intended to be a definitive summary of the application of the GSO. The GSO is part of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 which is available through the legislation link on Maritime Safety Queensland's website. Sections 3 and 30 outline the Act's objectives and the established system and Sections 40-44 outline the General Safety Obligations themselves. A brief overview of the GSO is available under the "safety" link.



Prosecution sets new safety precedent

Maritime Safety Queensland has set a legal precedent with the successful prosecution of a Whitsunday charter yacht owner under the General Safety Obligation.

The yacht's owner was fined \$3000 in the Proserpine Magistrates Court after pleading guilty to a charge under the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 which found he caused his vessel to be operated unsafely.

The court was told the prosecution originated in an incident in September 2002 when a diver from the yacht, a 30-metre long charter yacht based at Airlie Beach, was injured when he was run over by a tender.

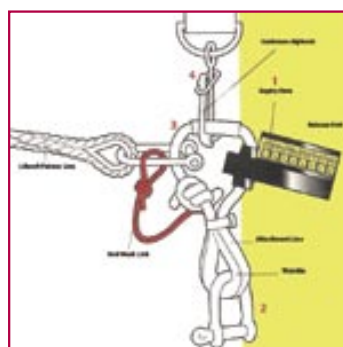
Maritime Safety Queensland had earlier advised the owner of the agency's recommendation that when tenders were operating near divers and snorkellers, propeller guards should be fitted to the tenders' outboard engines and mother ships should carry documented procedures for the

operations of tenders near divers and snorkellers.

In May last year a tender to the yacht ran over a snorkel diver at Bait Reef off the Whitsunday coast, causing serious lacerations. The agency served a summons on the owner because the propeller on the tender's outboard did not have a guard, nor were there any written procedures for the operation of the tender. The crewman of the tender was issued with a Marine Infringement Notice because he did not hold a Recreational Marine Driver Licence.

Acting Magistrate Ron Muirhead described the offence as serious and said "had propeller guards been fitted, the snorkeller would not have been injured". Noting the owner's early plea and the fact he had no prior conviction, Mr Muirhead fined him \$3000 with \$250 in costs and \$65.20 in court costs, in default two months' jail. The conviction was recorded.

The offence carries a maximum fine of \$37,500.



their failure to operate correctly in an emergency, particularly in rough conditions.

For more information on HRUs contact your local Marine Operations Base located around the State (see back page for details). *Note: The above diagram is for illustration purposes only.*

Hydrostatic release units require checking

Hydrostatic release units (HRUs) are installed with life-rafts and some Emergency Radio Position Indicating Beacons (EPIRBs). In the event of being submerged to a certain depth, the hydrostatic release unit activates, freeing the safety device from the vessel.

Recent monitoring by Maritime Safety Queensland has revealed many HRUs are not being correctly installed on commercial ships. Some ships had only recently been scrutinised by accredited surveyors without this problem being identified.

HRUs should be installed according to manufacturer's instructions. Incorrect installation of HRUs could lead to

Readers' Questions ANSWERED

Under the heading "Deckhand induction" on page six of last month's Seascope you name a training course "Occupational Health and Safety at Sea". I am of the understanding that this course had a name change some time back and is now known as "Elements of Shipboard Safety". Can you confirm this?

**Captain Raymond Pincott,
Maritime Study Centre, South Townsville.**

Seascope: The course was originally titled Elements of Shipboard Safety (ESS) and senior first aid was a separate component. When the Australian Boating Federation was introduced, the ESS course was retitled Occupational Health and Safety at Sea and senior first aid was incorporated into the course.

A combination of more recent changes in the form of the introduction of the Transport Distribution Training Packages, profiling of these packages (competency units) under the Transport Distribution Maritime profiles for commercial licensing and imminent changes under the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) have seen the course title revert to Elements of Shipboard Safety.

I own a tinnie and am always fishing on the river at night. Most nights I'm out the moonlight is quite bright so I can see where I am going and the position of other boats. Am I required by law to carry any lights on my boat, and if so, what type of lights?

MT, Maroochydore.

Seascope: Just because you can see others doesn't mean they can see you. All power boats are required to display a red and green sidelight and an all round white light at night. The all round white light can be separated as a forward and stern light but must be seen from all quarters.

Boats less than seven metres in length and with a maximum speed not exceeding seven knots, can exhibit an all round white light, but if practical, separate or combined sidelights.

Unlike the roads, placing a light illuminating the water directly in front of the boat will deprive you and other boat operators of night vision. Therefore spotlights should only be used to identify specific objects, but this should only be done when operating at very low speed.

Contacting Seascope: If you would like to write to the editor, please either email us at: seascope@msq.qld.gov.au with "Dear Editor" in the subject line, or post your letter to: The Editor, Seascope, GPO Box 2595, Brisbane Q 4001.



Owners fined for Barrier Reef grounding

The grounding of a ship in far north Queensland in mid-2002 that prompted a full-scale response by Maritime Safety Queensland has had its sequel in court, with the owner of the 73,000-tonne bulk carrier *Doric Chariot* fined \$100,000.

News quickly circulated in Maritime Safety Queensland that the *Doric Chariot* Corporation and the ship's second mate had pleaded guilty in the Cairns Magistrates Court in November 2004 to one charge each of damage. The second mate was fined \$10,000.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority asserted the coal-laden vessel bound for India from Hay Point in Central Queensland had damaged part of the marine park when it went aground on Piper Island reef 330 nautical miles north of Cairns on 29 July 2002.

Simple mention of the name *Doric Chariot* was enough for Maritime Safety Queensland officers involved in the incident to recall with some satisfaction how well the agency had highlighted its preparedness on that occasion.

General Manager Captain John Watkinson said almost as soon as the 225-metre long bulk carrier went aground, a well-honed operation was activated to refloat it and prevent any potential pollution.

"A command centre was established in Brisbane and personnel mobilised for a Queensland Transport-led multi-agency incident response centre in Cairns," Captain Watkinson said.

"The response was so quick, we were able to augment equipment at Cairns with other gear trucked in from Townsville by late the same day.

Pollution response group receives praise

"A lot of operational and logistical planning is required for an incident such as this, especially when it occurs in a remote location, and these procedures were under way a short time after we were advised the ship had run aground.

"A full complement of about 60 people was assembled, working in a co-ordinated structure of teams which went to work to make sure we prevented any marine pollution and that we had the safest possible circumstances for the eventual refloat.

"There was no pollution from the grounding nor any during the response."

Under the so-called National Plan (full title – *National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances*), signatory states and agencies are equipped to respond to any threat to the marine environment, and can immediately implement well-practised procedures.

When major incidents occur off the Queensland coast, Maritime Safety Queensland steps in as the lead agency on behalf of the federal government.

The *Doric Chariot* Incident Controller, Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) Captain Alan Boath, said by agreement with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, equipment was stored at ports and other strategic locations.

"Risks involving shipping have been assessed at various places throughout Queensland, and resources placed accordingly," Captain Boath said.

"Because Queensland has such a long coastline of more than 7000 kilometres with remote communities especially in the north, this state is probably the best equipped and prepared to respond.

"All of the precautionary oil spill response gear for that operation was sourced at Cairns and Townsville, including 1300 metres of boom, pumps, recovery vessels and oil containers."

A barge was loaded in Cairns with the equipment and personnel to travel to the site of the grounding in readiness for the refloat.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau reported in September 2003 the incident occurred because the marine pilot was fatigued and communications on the bridge were deficient.

Because port tugs had to come from as far afield as Brisbane to form the salvage fleet, the grounding added further weight to the debate regarding the effectiveness of Australia's Maritime Salvage and Emergency towage.

The *Doric Chariot* was refloated 10 days later on 6 August 2002.

Charges against the marine pilot and the ship's master were dropped early in 2004.

November is becoming synonymous with ship groundings: apart from the *Doric Chariot* court hearing, 14 November was the fourth anniversary of the refloating of the Malaysian container ship *Bunga Teratai Satu* off Sudbury Reef just outside Cairns, and also the first anniversary of the grounding of the former hopper barge *Karma* near Agnes Water in central Queensland.



Learning from marine incidents

Fishing dory goes missing

A commercial live-fish fishing vessel with four dories (5.3 metre alloy dinghies powered by single outboard engines) worked at an offshore reef near Cairns. The weather conditions were fine with a 15-to-20 knot south-east wind causing a choppy surface.

At the end of the day, one of the four dories did not return to the mother-ship. Visual searches from the mother-ship and other dories failed to locate the missing boat. The skipper called the State Emergency Service but in the short time before nightfall, an aerial search from a helicopter could not find the missing dory either.

The next morning, the skipper of the mother-ship visually located the missing dory, which was subsequently recovered, the dory man being none the worse for his experience. He stated he had run out of fuel, due to his technique of alternately idling and revving the outboard engine to attract fish. He also had no safety gear aboard, as his usual dory was being serviced, so, when he had transferred his gear to the new dory, he had failed to transfer the safety gear, which included flares.

The lessons

- Always check the vessel's safety gear is on board prior to departing from the mother vessel or port.
- Always ensure adequate fuel reserves are available for the return journey. The skipper of the mother vessel (and owner of all dories) usually insisted the dories carry a 10 litre fuel tank as the reserve "get home" supply. However, in this instance, the dory man failed to transfer the reserve to the substitute dory.
- The skipper of the mother vessel also urged his dory men to use the "buddy" system, where dories fished in pairs, with the first returning to the mother vessel checking whether the "buddy" was okay to return under their own power. This system was abandoned in this instance.
- Relatively inexpensive hand-held VHF radios, if carried by the dories, could have prevented this incident.

Check out more safety reports at msq.qld.gov.au

Fatal clash on the reef

Around midnight a Queensland fishing vessel was trawling off the John Brewer Reef area near Townsville.

The vessel, licensed to operate as a commercial fishing ship within 200 nautical miles from the coast, was the most westerly of a group of trawlers out that night. This evening a master and one deckhand were on board, both very experienced seamen.

After the first trawl for the night the second started in a slight swell and with a 20-25 knot wind.

About two hours later the deckhand noticed a large ship on the radar at about four to six nautical miles. He went to wake up the master to prepare for winch-up, and when back on deck noticed the green sidelight and white masthead light of a large ship much closer than he expected. By the time the deckhand had run back to warn the master that a collision was imminent, the trawler's nets had been fouled by the freighter and the trawler was dragged under the water stern first. The deckhand abandoned ship but the master was lost with his ship.

The master of the freighter was aware of the fishing vessels at all times but did not consider a collision risk to be present. When a collision did become imminent, the freighter took action to avoid the trawler but failed to sound signals of warning or course alteration. The freighter did not at any time make contact by radio with the fishing vessels.

The lessons:

- Good masters always consider the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (the Colregs). Regardless of experience and low traffic density, a collision is always possible. Here, both ships failed to act positively to avoid the collision, despite being aware of each other and in contravention of the Colregs.
- Where vessels are restricted in ability to manoeuvre, such as when trawling, additional vigilance is required.
- Colreg Rule 5 states every vessel is to maintain a proper lookout at all times by sight and hearing by all available means. This case highlights that the lookout must act appropriately on what they see, rather than note the observation and carry on regardless.
- Colreg Rule 7(c) says 'assumptions shall not be made on the basis of scanty information, especially radar information'. Particularly, the master of the freighter had little to support his view there was no collision risk.
- Use of all available resources may have reduced the severity of this incident, such as whistle signals under Rule 34 or Rule 36, light signals under Rule 34 or radio warnings as appropriate ie VHF Channel 16.



Beware when crossing bars

Crossing a bar can be dangerous and unpredictable, even for an experienced boatie.

In time for Christmas/New Year holidays, Maritime Safety Queensland announced a bar crossing educational campaign, targeting non-local boat users in south-east Queensland where 10 of the State's most treacherous bars can be found.

Queensland Water Police have reported that non-local boat users – those with limited or no local knowledge of the workings of the bar they cross – are most likely to be involved in a bar crossing incident.

Incidents can result in capsizing, sinking, and in some cases injury or drowning. Often, rescuers are also put at risk.

Besides lack of experience, other major factors that increase the risk of a bar crossing incident include a failure to check tides and weather conditions, poor trip planning, for example, trying to cross a bar at low tide, and attempting a cross with an inappropriate vessel.

Through the campaign, Maritime Safety Queensland intends to warn as many boaties as possible of the risks associated with bar crossing and encourage people to gain the necessary local knowledge before attempting to cross a bar.

Because gaining practical experience is such an important aspect of crossing bars safely, pointing boat owners towards appropriate training providers is a major part of the campaign.

A brochure, *Bar Crossings can be*

Dangerous, produced by Maritime Safety Queensland and Club Marine Boat Insurance, will be distributed throughout the State's south-east and is available free of charge on request.

The brochure features a check list for preparing for a bar crossing and basic instructions for going out and coming back through a bar.



Copies of the Bar Crossing brochure are available at ship chandleries, bait and tackle shops, Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres and Marine Safety Queensland offices throughout the state.

Ship reporting system upgraded for Reef and Strait

Federal and state maritime authorities have begun operating an upgraded ship reporting system that enhances safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment in the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait.

From 1 December 2004 the joint federal-state ship reporting system, known as REEFREP, requires ships moving through the area to provide primary automated position reports by satellite.

The upgraded system is part of the strategy to improve ship safety and pollution prevention in the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait. Awareness of the situation of shipping transiting the area is expected to increase significantly.

For the last 12 months, the new ship-reporting arrangements have been trialled,

with about 70% of ships transiting the region participating voluntarily. Coastal pilots, shipmasters and shipping companies have strongly supported the trial.

As well as lodging automatic position reports, ships are also required to lodge pre-entry reports two hours before actually entering the region, and submit a route plan when entering the region.

Information about ship identity, position, speed and course coming from complementary monitoring technologies such as Inmarsat-C and VHF radio, as well as radar and the Automatic Identification System, feeds into a sophisticated traffic information database in the upgraded system.

Ships can be provided with information about vessel traffic and other maritime safety

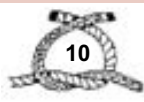
information such as any navigational hazards.

REEFREP operates from the ReefCentre facility at Hay Point near Mackay and is jointly managed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and its state counterpart, Maritime Safety Queensland.

ReefCentre will become known as ReefVTS.

The International Maritime Organization has endorsed this latest upgrade, which will transform Reefcentre into Australia's first Coastal Vessel Traffic Service facility – hence its change of name to ReefVTS.

There are about 7000 ship movements through the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait each year and around 30,000 smaller vessels including coastal traders, tourist craft, fishing vessels and pleasure boats are also active within the region.



Recreational boating



New regime near for jet skis

The state government has approved a management plan to reduce the number of complaints about the way jet skis are used – including the introduction of a new licence for jet ski operators.

Following an extensive review of jet ski operations, Transport Minister Paul Lucas will amend the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act so the government can better regulate the use of jet skis for reasons such as amenity and noise, as well as safety.

Announcing the move after a meeting of Community Cabinet at Caboolture in early December, Mr Lucas said complaints and problems relating to the operation of jet skis and effective enforcement of relevant existing legislation had been escalating.

“Following consultation with jet ski owners and suppliers, local governments

and community groups in a comprehensive review of the problem, the state government has developed a management plan that should reduce the potential for conflict significantly,” he said.

“The plan is now available for public comment until the end of February.”

New measures in the plan include:

- a new class of licence specifically for jet ski operators;
- capacity to create exclusion or restricted-use zones;
- extended minimum distances from other users in the water;
- increased education and enforcement activities; and
- a scheme for easier identification of registration.

The jet ski operator licence would cost \$32.05, the same as the one-off fee for a Recreational Marine Driver Licence.

State Cabinet approved the release

of the proposed management plan after considering the findings of a review commissioned in November last year.

The main issues that surfaced in responses to the subsequent discussion paper were noise, the impact on the environment, behaviour near people in the water, the appropriateness of jet skis being used in certain areas, and enforcement of existing regulations.

Not all of those aspects are to do with safety but amendments to the legislation will enable these other factors to be considered in the scope of effective management of jet ski operations.

Apart from the views of stakeholders, the review studied the requirements in other states, the extent of legislative change that would be required, and the cost of implementing the new arrangements.

For a copy of the plan visit Maritime Safety Queensland’s website.



LEFT: Getting the word out about the State’s new jet ski management plan - Queensland’s Minister for Transport and Main Roads Hon. Paul Lucas (centre) with MSQ representatives John Kavanagh (left) and Mark Alen (right) pictured at Bribie Island.

The Gladstone Operations Team has won the annual Maritime Achievement Award.

Maritime Safety Queensland chief executive Bruce Wilson and general manager Captain John Watkinson presented the award to team members at a maritime forum in Brisbane.

This award recognises the innovative construction and erection of a 12 metre high aluminium lattice tower to replace an old timber structure on Balaclava Island near Port Alma in Central Queensland.

Port Alma is located at the mouth of the Fitzroy River in central Queensland and services about 56 ships a year delivering, among other cargos, explosives for the central Queensland coal fields and exporting locally produced salt.

In recent times the approaches to Port Alma, has presented difficult navigation for ocean-going ships because they can only enter safely within the narrow, muddy channels between Sea Hill and the port.

To mark these channels, two sets of leading

Gladstone team wins Achievement Award

lights were constructed many years ago from large sections of timber on a low lying mudflat inhabited by mangroves, the occasional crocodiles, and clouds of sandflies.

A replacement was required when one of the towers deteriorated. Because of the remote location, a helicopter was employed to put the new aluminium tower into position. Because of the unstable nature of the ground, special foundations including screw anchors were prepared.

The team assembled the tower in Gladstone in two sections, to a weight the helicopter could lift and then transported it to Port Alma wharf by truck where it was bolted together.

The old timber tower was pulled over in preparation for the new one, and a modified Squirrel helicopter picked up the tower and flew



it to the new site where it was landed onto the 16 securing bolts set into the foundations.

By 10am on the day, guy wires were in place, the new lights and solar panels were fastened, and shipping continued as normal in and out of the port.

ABOVE: Graeme Palmer from the Gladstone Boatshed receives the award from Captain Mike Lutze, Gladstone’s Regional Harbour Master.



Marine Board reappointed

The state government has reappointed all members of the Marine Board of Queensland. The Marine Board provides information and advice about maritime safety to the Minister for Transport.

Transport Minister Paul Lucas said the state government valued the board's input and its six members had expressed an interest in continuing in the role.

"The Board's existing composition provides a diversity of skills and experience, and maintains its reputation for balanced regional and industry representation from both the commercial and recreational perspectives," Mr Lucas said.

"It is an essential link between the state government, waterway users and the wider community, and its professional assistance to the government agency Maritime Safety Queensland has been exemplary."

The Board chair is Mike Bartlett, who has more than 40 years' experience in the transport industry in the public and private sectors, including 12 years as a policy adviser to federal and state governments.

Other members are tourism operator Tony Briggs, insurance broker Maria Dwyer, shipbuilding executive Liz Hay, diving expert Col McKenzie and union secretary Mick Carr.

Mr Lucas said the state government had established the Marine Board in 1996 under the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act to provide information and advice that improved industry safety and efficiency.

The board also advises the government about the referral of marine incidents to a Board of Inquiry.

Notices to Mariners now 'direct'

Maritime Safety Queensland has taken Notice to Mariners further into the electronic age. Marine operators can now register to receive Notices to Mariners directly via email.

Maritime Safety Queensland also operates a website with Notices to Mariners. Boat owners and operators travelling in Queensland waters rely on the site's constantly updated information to confirm the accuracy of their navigation charts.

Information such as a change to navigation warnings or depth of channels is posted on the website as quickly as possible.

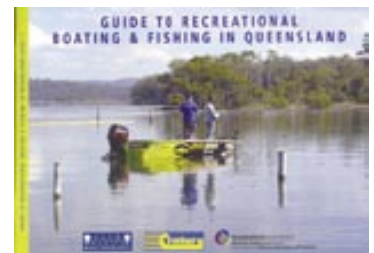
By registering to receive Notices to Mariners via email, marine operators ensure they will be informed of changes whenever on-line.

Notices to Mariners cover all coastal waters and major rivers throughout the State and provides information essential to the safe navigation of vessels, such as:

- changes to navigation warnings such as destroyed missing or unlit aids;
- changes to navigation systems such as new or altered navigation aids for chart correction;
- navigation depths for channels with depth restrictions;
- works which might affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports, for example, dredging and construction.

To register to receive Notices to Mariners go to the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

90,000 handbooks distributed



In just a few months since its publication, more than 90,000 copies of the *Guide to Recreational Boating and Fishing* have been distributed throughout the State.

The publication, printed in partnership between Maritime Safety Queensland and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, is officially the most popular read amongst boaties in Queensland.

The latest issue includes up-to-date information about new marine safety legislation introduced late last year and new fishing size and possession limits.

It's available from ship chandleries, bait and tackle shops, Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres and Maritime Safety Queensland offices throughout the State.

Upcoming events - 2005

FEBRUARY

10-11 Gold Coast Industry Forum (Marine Board)

APRIL

7-8 Gladstone Industry Forum (Marine Board)
22-25 Brisbane Tinnie and Tackle Show, RNA Showgrounds

MAY

20-23 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show

JUNE

9-10 June Cairns Industry Forum (Marine Board)
11-12 Ocean Whitsunday Boat and Leisure Show

AUGUST

18-19 Hervey Bay Industry Forum (Marine Board)
31 - Sept 5 Brisbane Boat Show

OCTOBER

6-7 Whitsunday (Mackay/Airlie Beach) Industry Forum (Marine Board)

**Contacting
Maritime Safety
Queensland**

**Office of the
General Manager** _____ 07 - 3120 7462

Regions:

Southport _____ 07 - 5539 7300
Brisbane _____ 07 - 3860 3500
Mooloolaba _____ 07 - 5477 8425
Hervey Bay _____ 07 - 4128 9555
Bundaberg _____ 07 - 4131 5608

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

To contact the editorial team of Seascope either email us at: seascope@msq.qld.gov.au with 'Dear Editor' in the subject line, or post your letter to: The Editor, *Seascope*, GPO Box 2595, Brisbane Q 4001.

