

Marine incidents



Marine incidents in Queensland
2008

Moving Queensland forward



Marine incidents annual report

Queensland boaties improved their safety performance overall in 2008, according to Maritime Safety Queensland's recently released annual report of marine incidents.

The 2008 Marine incidents report found that both the total number of reported marine incidents and the number of fatal and serious injury incidents had decreased since the previous year.

'The improvement in marine safety performance during 2008 was especially pleasing given the corresponding growth in vessel registrations and increased boating activity during the year', said Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager, Captain John Watkinson.

'In Queensland about one in every 15 people aged 15 years and older owns a boat. It is remarkable that around one in every five people in that same age group holds some form of marine licence,' he said.

Although there was an increase of 8500 registered recreational vessels in Queensland in 2008, there was zero growth in the number of commercial vessel registrations.

One of the fastest growing sectors of the boating market is jet skis or personal water craft (PWC) which increased in number by 13 per cent from 2007. Not surprisingly, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of incidents in this sector, with South-East Queensland recording a 38 per cent increase in the number in 2008 of reported incidents involving a PWC.

Overall there were 757 marine incidents reported in 2008 – an average of about two incidents per day – slightly less (-1 per cent) than that for 2007.

Sadly, there were nine deaths resulting from marine incidents recorded in 2008; two-thirds of these involved a capsizing or person overboard incident.

Capsizing and person overboard incidents are significant because, statistically, they are more likely to result in serious injury or death. Six people died as a result of these incidents in 2008. A further four people required hospitalisation.

While the number of marine incident deaths last year was well down on the 15 recorded in 2007, Captain Watkinson warned that there was no room for complacency by the boating public in their attitudes toward safety.

Already in the first-half of 2009, Queensland has recorded 14 marine incident related deaths, with capsizing and person overboard incidents featuring in nine (64 per cent) of these.

'Maritime Safety Queensland is continuing to promote safe practices on our waterways, but at the end of the day, boat operators and their passengers have to understand that they are responsible for their actions and if they do the wrong thing there can be a terrible price to pay', said Captain Watkinson.

Masters or owners of vessels, both recreational and commercial, have an obligation to report a marine incident involving their vessel to a Shipping Inspector at Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Water Police or Queensland Boating and Fisheries within 48 hours of the incident occurring.

The 2008 Marine Incidents report is available online at Maritime Safety Queensland's web site at www.msq.qld.gov.au.

406 MHz EPIRB update report

According to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), most Australian states now have adequate supplies of 406 MHz beacons available. Non-GPS EPIRBs range from approximately \$469 to \$729. GPS equipped EPIRBs range from approximately \$769 to \$1500. Although they are more expensive, GPS beacons are recommended because of their ability to provide greater accuracy in pinpointing location.

Problems are occurring when old 121.5 MHz EPIRBs are disposed of incorrectly. The satellite system no longer receives alerts from 121.5 MHz but some high-flying aircraft are capable of detecting activated analogue beacons. Signals that are detected in this way can cause rescue authorities to spend considerable time and resources trying to locate the distress signal. The chart below shows the number of hoax, deliberate or accidental activations within Australia in the past year. Still a large number (possibly up to 45 000) of 121.5 MHz beacons remain active in Australia and could potentially trigger expensive, unnecessary searches.

A proof of registration sticker was introduced in July 2008. Registration

stickers identify the owner and the vessel and provide distress beacon owners and marine inspectors with proof of current registration. The sticker must be affixed to the beacon. A fine may result if a current sticker is not evident in a safety equipment inspection.

A registration sticker remains current for two years from the date of issue. Four weeks prior to the expiry date AMSA will send notification that registration details should be reviewed. A new sticker can be ordered at this time.

Why register a distress beacon?

The database managed by AMSA is the second largest in the world and is increasing at about 8000 entries per month, but approximately 20–30 per cent of 406MHz EPIRBs remain unregistered.

A registered 406 MHz beacon will allow AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre to access the registration database to find contact details, details of registered vessels, aircraft or vehicles, and details of up to three nominated emergency contacts who may be able to provide more

information if a beacon is activated and contact cannot be made.

Registration is free. 406 MHz distress beacons can be registered online via www.amsa.gov.au/beacons. This is the preferred method of registration to minimise errors as registration is immediate and a confirmation statement can be printed. In addition to online access, registration forms and changes to details can also be provided to AMSA by fax, email or post.



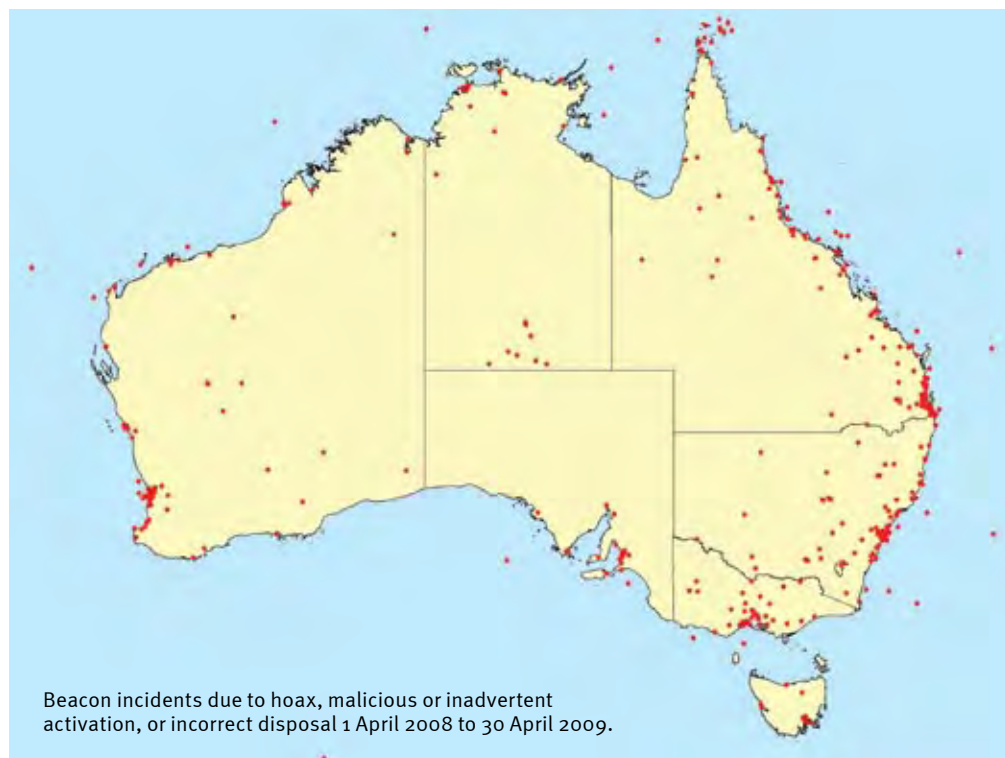
Proof of registration sticker.

Correct EPIRB disposal

Distress beacons need to be disposed of responsibly in case they accidentally activate and trigger a false alarm. Unwanted beacons can be left in marked bins at Battery World stores around Australia. This is a free service, however a small charge may be made for bulk lots.

Alternatively, the documentation that comes with distress beacons often contains information about how to disarm the beacon safely. If in doubt, check with the manufacturer or local agent or call the beacon advice line on 1800 406 406.

NOTE: Do not dispose of your beacon in general waste as it will end up in landfill and could be activated inadvertently.



Beacon incidents due to hoax, malicious or inadvertent activation, or incorrect disposal 1 April 2008 to 30 April 2009.



Getting to know you

Moments in maritime history

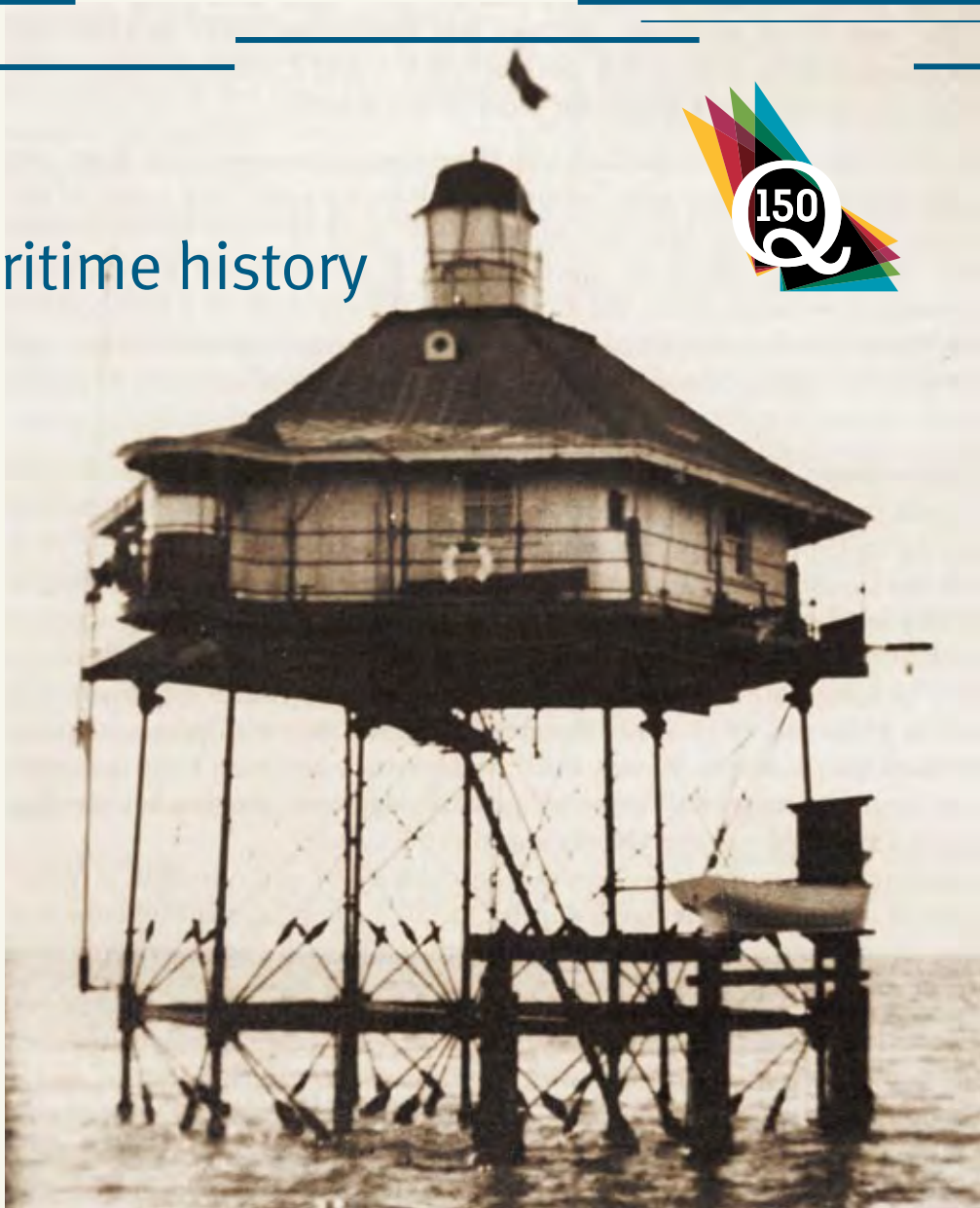
Navigation aids

Some of the early navigation aids were manned. Throughout Queensland, lightkeepers and their families lived on site, accommodated in structures built adjacent to, or as part of, the lighthouse.

The Pile Lighthouse was a pile structure built over the water and was usually manned by three men living 'on board'. The old Pile Light, originally built in 1883, was replaced by the new Pile Light in 1912 marking the new entrance channel to the Brisbane River called the New Bar Cutting. The structure was completely demolished in October 1949 by a tanker entering the bar cutting, requiring a temporary station to be established at Bishop Island.

In 1950 the department successfully converted to automatic lights, like the one pictured opposite. This gas powered 'omni-directional' marine signal lantern is one of many that was used to mark shipping channels in Queensland ports from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. It is manufactured from a combination of copper, bronze, gun metal and brass.

Today, we use modern technology such as solar power for navigation aids.



Pile light, 1913. This structure had accommodation for three people.

Queensland's worst oil disaster

In 1970, while carrying a cargo of heavy crude oil on a routine voyage from Dumai, North Sumatra to Brisbane, the *Oceanic Grandeur* touched on a submerged obstruction in Torres Strait. The hull was ripped open and about 250 000 gallons of oil was subsequently discharged into the sea. The obstruction was later found to be a pinnacle of rock that the ship would have cleared had the load been lighter or had the ship been travelling at a slower speed.

Following this serious incident, further charting of the Torres Strait was undertaken, and the National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil was formulated. This national framework was most recently implemented in the response to the *Pacific Adventurer* oil spill in 2009.



The *Oceanic Grandeur* in 1970.