

Seascape

Maritime Safety Queensland

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Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland

From the helm



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

The Queensland Government is a strong advocate of maritime safety, and contributes significantly to national initiatives that help to save lives on our waterways and protect the marine environment.

During the past three years, I presided over a comprehensive program of maritime safety initiatives in Queensland and with a new term in office ahead, I am determined that we should maintain this vigour.

The registration of the 200,000th recreational vessel in Queensland earlier this year, and the continuing growth in the number of licences over the half-million mark, highlight the imperative behind our mission: recreational boating is entrenched as a part of this state's coastal lifestyle.

About one in every 20 Queenslanders has a recreational marine driver licence or equivalent; and the on-going increase in boat ownership, at about 5% a year, almost doubles the outstanding rate of Queensland's population growth.

We have a strong responsibility therefore to ensure safety is maximised for all users of our waterways, and I believe we have the correct mix of education, regulation and enforcement to do this.

Recent changes to the laws that Maritime Safety Queensland administers have given the agency better targeted powers, and have toughened up our measures to prevent and combat marine pollution. They include pre-emptive action against vessels that aren't seaworthy, salvage and clean-up insurance requirements, appropriate registration, and more clearly spelled-out liability for owners. One of the great benefits of these amendments is apart from protecting the environment they will also save the community many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

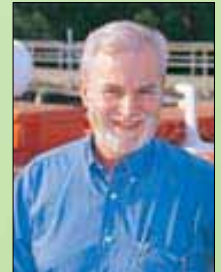
Our jet ski management plan is well embedded, with a specific licence now in place, increased distance-off requirements, acknowledgement of amenity as well as safety, and in the main a positive response to the government's education and enforcement team that patrols recognised hot spots throughout the year.

I'm particularly proud of new laws that make wearing a lifejacket mandatory for children aged up to 12 in small open boats, and for anyone in a small boat that's crossing a designated bar. We're now consulting the community on whether these laws should be extended.

We're building on our extensive legislative program from last year that will further encompass safety standards, marine pollution regulations and other related powers in the available Transport Legislation Amendment Bill.

Above all we'll continue to work in partnership with recreational boaties and operators who share in our vision of providing waterways that are safe and enjoyable for all Queenslanders.

Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland



Queensland is a boater's paradise. People flock from all over Australia to experience our beautiful waterways. We estimate that well over half a million people use our waterways for pleasure every year, making it imperative that Maritime Safety Queensland maintain the highest level of safety for everyone.

To keep up-to-date with the thoughts, knowledge and behaviour of recreational boaters, a comprehensive survey is conducted every two years, sent out through registration renewal letters. To track trends and significant changes in boaters' attitudes, results are then collated and compared against previous surveys.

Results are sometimes predictable, but always interesting.

Of the responses, 83% of boats were less than six metres in length with the 21-30 horsepower motor being the most popular size. People are going boating more often and for longer. Only 10% of boats were used in open waters.

Most interesting from a communication perspective is the shift towards impersonal communication – people preferring to get their boating safety information through non-invasive means like the web, television and publications. Our boaters seem to be more sophisticated and feel they understand new legislation and its effects.

People seem to be more responsible when it comes to safety equipment, with a fantastic near perfect compliance rate for carriage of personal floatation devices. This could be attributed to a perceived greater enforcement presence on the water.

An encouraging 92% of people checked the weather forecast before they went out and most told family or friends of their plans. On the flip side, there is an obvious over-reliance on mobile phones for ship to shore communication.

Overall, the interim report is very encouraging. A final report will be prepared and published later this year and results will be used to shape marketing and education programs in the future.

Thank-you to all who participated, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

On another subject, my congratulations to the organisers of the Brisbane International Boat Show, held between August 30 and September 3 at the Brisbane Convention Centre. The show once again showed the boating public's enthusiasm to keep pace with the latest trends and innovations.

The timing of the boat show represents the start of the new boating season in Queensland, and I encourage all recreational boaties to be mindful of their speed and wash while on the water. With more and more craft on the water, particularly over the Christmas break, marine safety becomes even more important.

New, improved Beacon to Beacon Directory available



Matthew Hayden bats for lifejacket campaign

Australian sporting icon and test cricketer Matthew Hayden is lending his name and time to promote a national lifejacket campaign – because not wearing one almost cost him and his mates their lives.

The story of Matthew’s near miss on the North Passage Bar off Stradbroke Island was featured in the July-September 2005 issue of Seascapes. Matthew, Australian cricket team colleague Andrew Symonds, and another friend were left to swim for almost one hour after their boat was swamped and sank with lifejackets stowed away.

“It all happened so bloody quickly,” the opening batsman said of the accident that happened in 1999. The near-death experience is why Matthew volunteered his time to be the spokesperson for the National Marine Safety Committee’s (NSMC) national campaign with the slogan ‘Wear a lifejacket for openers’.

The campaign was launched at the NSMC’s national conference on the Gold Coast in September in time for the summer boating season. It aims to raise awareness among Australia’s recreational boating community of the importance of wearing lifejackets or PFDs (personal flotation devices).

All state maritime authorities across the country will be participating in the campaign which will feature magazine and radio advertisements.

ABOVE: An example of a magazine advertisement featuring Matthew Hayden which will form part of the national lifejacket campaign.

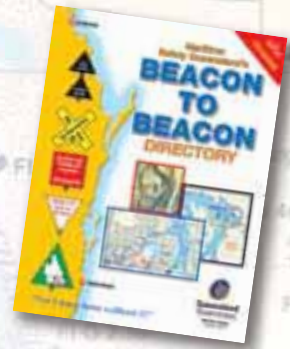
The new, expanded seventh edition of Maritime Safety Queensland’s *Beacon to Beacon Directory* is now available in retail outlets throughout southern Queensland.

Since the first issue 14 years ago, the *Beacon to Beacon Directory* has built a proud reputation as a ‘must have’ item for recreational boaties. This year’s edition introduced several significant changes and additions that make the *Beacon to Beacon Directory* even more user-friendly and informative.

Two changes to the directory will be immediately noticeable: spiral binding allowing complete fold back access to chartlets, and the clear plastic wallet that will assist storage and protect it from the elements.

This year’s edition covers the southern Queensland coastline from Tweed Heads to Gladstone, and the freshwater impoundments which extend west to Charleville, Cunnamulla and Emerald.

The new offshore coastal cruising section is ideal for anyone travelling between Ballina and Gladstone, and additional anchorage



photography now includes the Burnett, Noosa, Brisbane and Tweed River systems.

With coastal chartlets now displaying latitude and longitude, users can continually update their directory by visiting the Maritime Safety Queensland website (msq.qld.gov.au) and subscribing to the Notices to Mariners information site. Information about any changes to navigation aids, navigation depths or any other work which may affect safe navigation, complete with coordinates, is emailed to subscribers and can be plotted directly on to the directory.

Also accompanying to each key map is a listing of gazetted rules and regulations, contact numbers and general information relevant to each section.

And of course, the famous pink line is still featured on every directory chartlet and photograph indicating the correct side of navigation aids a vessel should pass. A dotted pink line indicates a gazetted speed restriction which applies for safety or environmental reasons.

This year sees a price increase from \$29.95 to \$34.95 – the first price increase since the directory’s release in 1992. But boaties will see the value in the improved layout and additional information.

The new look *Beacon to Beacon* will be available from Queensland Transport customer service centres, Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices, Australia Post, boat dealers, chandleries, bait and tackle outlets, newsagents and book sellers.



ABOVE: The Gold Coast Broadwater ... a sample chartlet complete with longitude and latitude.



Getting to know you

Two young boys playing with model boats on the beach isn't unusual. But in the early 1960s other children on the banks of the Noosa River could only look on with envy when Bill Wright and brother Ian played with their father's tank testing models – scaled-down versions of boats to be built at **Norman R. Wright and Sons**, boat builders.



Bill Wright - marine craftsman

Apart from serving an integral part in the building process, the timber model boats, often over a metre long, were also part of the Wright family's holiday essentials. They cut through the water with grace and precision, and today the full-scale boats built at one of Queensland's most renowned and respected boat builders are doing exactly the same. And envious glances are still the norm.

It is almost 25 years since Bill and brother Ian took over the day-to-day running of the iconic Brisbane company, Norman Wright's, as it is known, which was founded by their grandfather Norman Reginald Wright in 1909.

As mentioned in the company's promotional materials, an understanding and respect of the "volatile and sometimes dangerous nature" of the sea, plays a continuing major role in the philosophy of the Wright brothers' boat design and building, and the company's culture.

With a life-time of shipbuilding expertise which began with playing in the workshop sawdust on weekends, Bill still retains a youth-like enthusiasm for the challenge of designing and building boats of excellence.

He is also a keen yachtsman having raced in 20 Brisbane-to-Gladstone yacht races, and when he can find the time, builds and races model radio-controlled yachts, recently returning from the world titles in England.



As part of the fraternity of "traditional boat builders" that esteems timber as the material of choice for hull construction, Bill and his brother have overseen the company's blending of old-world tradition with the latest in industry and computer technology. The result is a boat building company that enjoys a reputation of innovation, quality and professionalism, enhanced by a proud history.

Weekends spent playing in the Norman Wright workshop, then located at Quay Street Bulimba, sailing in Moreton Bay or playing in dinghies, gave Bill a passion for boating from childhood.

Bill and Ian's father, Ronald, was one of the first two naval architects in Queensland, and was widely regarded as one of the best in the country. At 13 years old, Bill began his boat designing career side-by-side with his father at the drafting board, and it was a natural progression when in 1971 Bill began a four-year boat building apprenticeship with Norman Wright's.

Many of Bill's fellow apprentices who at the time worked for the 14 other traditional boat builders around Brisbane, today work at Norman Wright's, now located on the Brisbane River at Bulimba opposite Brett's Wharf.

"There was a very large apprenticeship intake the year I went through, and we became a pretty tight-knit group. Quite a few of these guys work for us now and are the mainstay of our workforce," said Bill. "They teach the young guys, so we are extremely lucky to have them."

During his apprenticeship days Bill "lofted" many boats – drawing boat designs in full-size on the workshop floor in preparation for construction – giving him an intimate, practical knowledge of boat design fundamentals.

The first boat Bill worked on as an apprentice was a traditionally planked 60-foot ferry for the Golden Mile Ferry Service built in the 1970s that serviced a similar route on the Brisbane River as today's CityCats.



When Bill and Ian took over the management of the company in the early 80s they did so with a profound awareness of the legacy left by the previous Wright generations. The first boat built under their management, the 33-metre Elizabeth E 11 remains the biggest built by the company.

“Dad designed it, I lofted it and got involved with the running of the project. It went to Mackay as a charter boat and still runs out of there to this day,” said Bill.

In 1980 Norman Wright’s moved from exclusively building “traditionally-planked” boats to building “triple-skinned cold-moulded boats”. This technique typically uses soft wood like Oregon pine or hoop pine, has two diagonal layers of planking and then a fore-aft layer of planking, bound together with technically-advanced modern glues.

Norman Wright’s uses this technique for the many pilotage and police boats designed and built for the Queensland Government and other governments agencies around the nation.

“As a boat builder it’s the best way of building a boat,” Bill said. “It’s strong and light and creates a beautiful structure.”

Today Bill performs and coordinates much of Norman Wright’s design work, specialising in hull shape, weight estimating and propeller shapes. He said that over a course of almost a century of design, research and testing, the

company has developed a “trade mark hull shape”.

“On the faster boats we always have a rounded bow section and a chine aft – it gives a very soft ride and a very efficient boat,” he said. “The only time we vary the shape is when we build really fast game boats – capable of travelling at over 35 knots – then we build a full chine boat.”

According to Bill there is nothing better than, after months of planning and construction, taking a new boat for its first run.

“I love doing trials on a boat when everything goes right – that’s always a great day on the water, and I come back with a big smile. I suppose it’s a bit of relief,” he said.

“I trialed a pilot boat for Western Australia earlier this year and enjoyed the boat so much you were flat out prising me away. It was one of those boats that went well from day one, as opposed to some boats that can be cantankerous. You fix one problem and there’s another little problem you have to chase until you iron them all out.”

Another of Bill’s great pride and joys is his participation in the Brisbane-to-Gladstone yacht race with several friends.

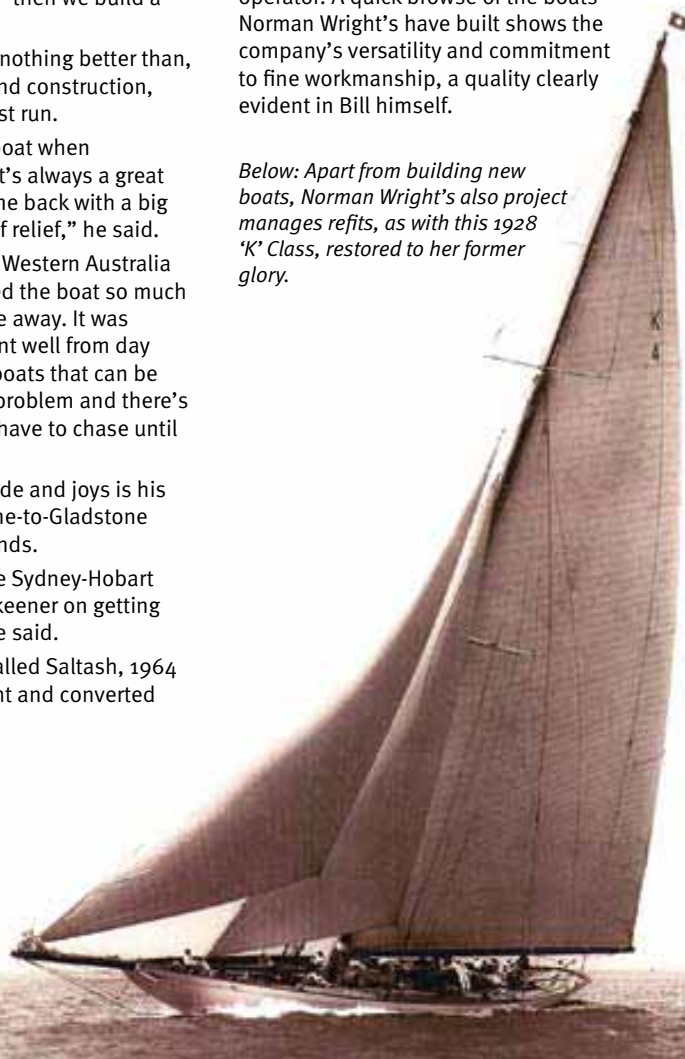
“My brother has done the Sydney-Hobart race a few times, but he’s keener on getting wet and cold than I am,” he said.

“We own a small yacht called Saltash, 1964 plywood double-chine yacht and converted

it from a day sailer to an ocean racer in 1984. It cost us \$3000 but it just seems to go on-and-on even though it isn’t designed for any particular rating, but we’ve won seven races from 20 starts in that boat.”

Whether racing, designing, building or refitting boats, Bill Wright is a whole-hearted operator. A quick browse of the boats Norman Wright’s have built shows the company’s versatility and commitment to fine workmanship, a quality clearly evident in Bill himself.

Below: Apart from building new boats, Norman Wright’s also project manages refits, as with this 1928 ‘K’ Class, restored to her former glory.



Cover photo

Maritime Safety Queensland (then Harbours and Marine) built Sea Hill Lighthouse in 1873. Standing on a small hill on northern Curtis Island, the lighthouse overlooks the approach to Keppel Bay, north of Gladstone.

At the time it was built, this was the shipping route to the Port of

Rockhampton, but has since been replaced by Port Alma at the mouth of the Fitzroy River.

After 133 years of service, the lighthouse is still in sound condition, although the original kerosene light was converted to acetylene long after, which in turn was upgraded to solar power.

Twelve massive hardwood timber vertical frames form the basis of the structure. The cladding of heavy gauge corrugated iron has stood the test of time.

Despite its age, the light performs its simple duty, guiding mariners into the safe anchorage at Sea Hill.

The law and you

Beans means sewage conviction

It was the substitution of a tin of baked beans for the real thing that brought a conviction and a \$3000 fine for the master of a passenger-carrying vessel recently.

The vessel was chartered to carry a group of 16 backpackers through the Whitsundays. When anchored in a bay off Hook Island they were boarded by a Boating and Fisheries Patrol for a random general safety check.

An officer noticed that the plumbing did not look 'right', so checked it by opening a tin of baked beans and flushing the contents through the toilet system. The baked beans duly appeared floating in the water without being macerated, proving the vessel's sewage system did not include a holding tank as required under the state's pollution laws.

Both the master and the owner were charged for failing to install a holding tank to the vessel and for failing to carry an onboard sewage management plan.

The master, who had skippered only two trips on the boat, was charged and fined, while the case against the owner is still pending.

New licence created for marine teachers

A new class of marine licence will allow accredited marine teachers to more readily teach practical on-water skills to their students.

A new restriction to a coxswain's licence for school employees is now available through an agreement with the Marine Teachers Association of Queensland (MTAQ) and Maritime Safety Queensland. This licence will allow teachers who meet a range of conditions to drive boats owned by their school.

Most of the 200 schools in the state that teach marine studies use tinnies, inflatables or similar small boats as part of marine studies courses. As training vessels, these boats must be registered as commercial craft, so under the old scheme marine teachers who held only a recreational marine driver licence (RMDL) or equivalent could not use these boats legally for teaching purposes.

Previously, to gain the Coxswain's licence required to use commercially-registered boats, teachers needed to study an eight-week full-time course or two-year part-time course. Both of these were impractical options for busy teachers and school principals responsible for timetabling, and as a result some schools reluctantly stopped providing marine studies courses.

The new restricted coxswain's licence created specifically for marine studies teachers is now all that is needed.

Under the new scheme, school employees obtain their BoatSafe



licence and complete a course in Occupational Health and Safety (for example, Elements of Shipboard Safety).

The teachers then need to demonstrate to their school principal their ability to implement the new power boating guidelines as set out under Education Queensland's new Policy and Procedures Manual.

"The new licence reflects a more sensible approach to the training of employees in schools and colleges," said Bob Moffatt, patron of the Marine Teachers of Queensland Association and a member of the committee which ratified the agreement with Maritime Safety Queensland.

More details are available on the MTAQ website at www.marineteachers.org.au.

LEFT: Bob Moffatt (far left), patron of the Marine Teachers' Association of Queensland celebrates ratification of the new licence for marine teachers with (from left) Werner Bundshuh, Captain John Watkinson and David Oelrichs of Maritime Safety Queensland.



Driver licences get amphibious

Driver's licences in Queensland are now amphibious – applying to both land and sea. And you will soon be able to verify if you have a recreational marine driver's licence online.

All newly issued, renewed or reissued driver's licences will now indicate whether you hold a recreational marine driver licence (RMDL) or a personal watercraft licence (PWCL).

In addition to this new indicator, these licences will continue to be 'virtual' with on-water enforcement officers having access to a central database to verify licensing information through specially designed water-proof computers.

For those carrying a driver's licence without the new indicator, a link on the Queensland Transport website will soon be available, allowing anyone to verify whether they hold a recreational marine driver licence. For a small charge a licence holder will be able to print confirmation advice as evidence of a licence.



This indicates a person who holds both a RMDL (recreational marine driver licence), and a PWCL (personal watercraft licence).



Crew now need safety training

Owners and masters of commercial or fishing ships are now legally responsible to ensure their crew have received prescribed safety related training, with legislation coming into force on 1 September this year.

With commercial passenger ships making up the lion's share of marine incident statistics over the past several years, and fishing ships also heavily represented, the need for all regular crew to possess safety knowledge is obvious.

The regulation applies to all crew who have worked for more than six months on a ship. The preferred course for crew to complete is "Occupational Health and Safety at Sea", but equivalent and superior courses are also applicable.

For more information see the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Flushing and water restrictions

With Level 3 water restrictions in place (check at publication time), boaties in affected shires should be aware that flushing of boat motors with fresh water to maintain its safe running is still permitted.

However, SEQ Water recommends that the flushing of boat motors using a hose in these areas should be kept to a minimum.

Buckets filled with water from the tap should be used to wash boats and trailers after use, unless a commercial service provider is employed. More information on water restrictions is available at www.waterforever.com.au



The 15-metre question

When is a recreational ship not a recreational ship?

For owners wanting to register a ship 15 metres and over it is now compulsory, as part of the registration process, to have this question answered at a Maritime Safety Queensland regional office.

This additional step comes in response to several recent incidents where owners of ex-commercial boats such as gravel barges (above right) have registered them as recreational to avoid the additional survey and safety equipment requirements that apply to commercial ships.

Ships 15 metres and over can present additional risks to marine safety and the marine environment because of their size and their potential to be operated over greater distances and with more passengers on board.

Owners wanting to register, transfer ownership or change the particulars of recreational boats over 15 metres must first present the details of the ship to a Maritime Safety Queensland regional office before going to a Queensland Transport customer service centre.

This new registration process for larger boats will allow Maritime Safety Queensland to identify those vessels that may present serious risks to the owner, passengers or the environment, and to proactively manage these risks.

In most cases the Maritime Safety Officers will only require information on the make and type of vessel to determine its intended use.

Reader's Question

Q. My lifejackets are old but are still in fairly good condition. The last thing I want is to cop a fine. How do I know whether they comply with current Australian standards?

A. Personal flotation devices (PFDs) that comply with the current Australian Standard (1996) will be marked 'PFD Type 1' (or PFD type 2 or PFD type 3) in characters not less than 6 mm high. Other markings may include the manufacturer's model identification, batch identification, and year of manufacture; intended body mass range; illustrated instructions for donning the PFD and instructions for storage and care.

If your PFD is not labelled with this information it will not comply with the Australian Standard, however certain PFDs manufactured under other standards may still be suitable.

For example, a PFD manufactured to comply with the 1988 edition of the standards, and in good condition including non-faded colours, may comply with the 1996 edition.

A PFD type 1 can also comply with SOLAS, chapter III, regulation 32 or the USL code, section 10, appendix R. A PFD may also comply with those overseas standards mentioned in a recently gazetted Notification of Exemption, available as a "Marine Information Bulletin" on the Maritime Safety Queensland website (under the Publications link then go to Marine Information Bulletins).

If you have recently brought new PFDs that are not correctly labelled these should be returned to the retailer or manufacturer of the product to confirm its compliance.



If you are unsure if your jackets comply with current Queensland requirements, err on the safe side and upgrade your jackets to current requirements. This will give you peace of mind, and ensure an infringement notice will not ruin your next day out on the water.

For example, infringement notices can be written if the PFDs on your boat are:

- PFDs not properly marked by the manufacturer,
- PFDs that comply with overseas standards but not with the 1996 Australian standards (those international standards not mentioned in the mentioned Marine Information Bulletin), and
- PFDs that through wear-and-tear (or colour fading) are no longer safe for operation.



Propeller injuries for flagless diver

An experienced scuba and free diver was enjoying some spear fishing at a shipwreck off the Gold Coast.

He was decked out in good-quality gear including a full-length 'camouflage' wetsuit, designed to break up the diver's silhouette and make him more difficult to see. This is great for hunting fish, but not so good when coming to the surface. Experienced though he was, he did not have a code A flag, commonly known as a 'diver's flag' displayed.

At one point, the diver, having run out of air, decided to head for the surface. Unfortunately, a 4.3 metre runabout boat passed overhead at the same time. The results were disastrous as he was cut many times by the propeller blades and sustained serious injuries.

The diver's friends on a nearby boat came quickly to his aid. Immediate first aid probably saved his life, but he required ongoing surgery and rehabilitation for his injuries.

On this occasion, the driver of the runabout boat was not at fault in any way. The obligation on the master of a boat to keep a proper lookout is not an obligation to see everything. The driver was not speeding and was keeping a proper lookout. Had the diver been displaying the required flag on his boat, the outcome may well have been different.

Lessons



- Collision regulations require that ships involved in diving operations must display the code A flag (pictured above). This flag has a blue and white horizontal band and must be at least one metre high. It must be used at all sites where there is snorkelling and diving activities, particularly around popular boating locations.
- When diving, consider your visibility from the perspective of other water users. You may be difficult to see even in ideal conditions.
- Remember to look up and listen for passing boats when surfacing from a dive.
- Never swim or dive alone. Make sure potential help is close at hand.

A cheap fix may cost you

The owner of a fibreglass runabout was experiencing problems with the fuel supply to his outboard motor. It appears that a kink in the under floor fuel lines was the cause of the problem. Rather than replace the lines, a cheaper alternative was to add an electric fuel pump to the fuel delivery system. A pump was installed on the transom near the battery.

On a pleasant weekend the owner prepared his boat for a weekend outing. He removed the battery from the boat and recharged it, reinstalling it later that day.

Upon arrival at the boat ramp, the boat was placed in the water. When ready to depart the owner turned on the ignition and an explosion occurred throwing him into the water.

The owner survived the explosion but the boat was totally destroyed and a pontoon was damaged.

Lessons

- Ensure that all fuel fittings are secure prior to commencing a voyage.
- Ensure that all electrical connections are secure prior to commencing a voyage.
- Fuel pumps should not be fitted in the vicinity of a battery.
- Batteries should be checked to be secured in the vessel.
- Fuel and electricity make a dangerous combination.

'Kite tube' withdrawn from U.S. market

An extreme water-sports product called the Wego Kite Tube was withdrawn from the U.S. market after two people were killed and at least 29 were reported injured while using the product.

The tube is a three metre wide air mattress with handles, and is towed behind boats at speeds of at least 20 km/h. It could be airborne for several seconds sometimes up to several metres.

In Canada a man died after falling from the tube, and others have received serious injuries such as broken backs, punctured lungs and head injuries.

Authorities said that the shape of the tube made it overly susceptible to wind gusts when airborne, often leading to it spinning out of control.



New technology lights Queensland's waterways

New technology lamps are progressively being installed in and around Queensland ports as part of a plan to upgrade existing lights with more reliable, efficient and cost effective units.

Within the space of a few decades marine navigation lights have moved on from kerosene and acetylene lamps to battery powered incandescent lamps to solar modules powering the new generation of Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights – the type now being installed throughout the state.

LED technology has a number of advantages. These lights deliver superior performance and reliability, are contained in robust ultra violet stabilised virgin polyethylene cases, have reduced maintenance requirements, and shine an intense light which is easily visible by mariners.

An LED is not a lamp, but a solid state light source that emits monochromatic radiation in the infra red, near ultra violet or visible spectrum when a current is passed through it. Unlike an incandescent light, the colour is not the result of a red or green lens filtering a white light source, but is derived from an alloy structure of rare metals such as aluminium, indium, gallium and phosphorus (for red green and yellow), or indium and gallium nitride (for blue, green and white lights).



Above: New lighting technology is now operational on beacons and buoys around Gladstone Harbour.

With LED lights currently manufactured by dozens of manufacturers worldwide, Maritime Safety Queensland has selected lights from a number of suppliers to best suit the needs of each light's position and requirements.

Large, heavy and awkward batteries are giving way to tiny dry cell batteries such as Nickel Metal Hydride (NMH) which require little attention, are cheap to replace and can be easily charged with smaller, cheaper solar panels.

The most recent light replacement project

saw all lateral lights in Gladstone's main shipping channel replaced with Australian manufactured Sealite SLC400 lanterns at a cost of \$117,000. Not only are the lights efficient, but they are also synchronised by reference to orbiting satellites making night navigation for big ships easier and more certain.

The Port of Bundaberg will be the next to benefit from LED technology. Next time you are out on the water at night, keep an eye out for Maritime Safety Queensland's new LED lights.

The new high resolution Doppler radar installed at Mt Staplyton will help the Bureau of Meteorology deliver more accurate weather information to boaties and the general public in the south-east corner of Queensland.

The radar, built midway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast and visible from the M1 highway, is only the second of its type in Australia.

The installation is part of a \$62.2 million project to build six enhanced capability radars which will eventually replace 15 of the Bureau of Meteorology's older radars.

The radar, which rotates 360 degrees every 20 seconds, will provide the bureau



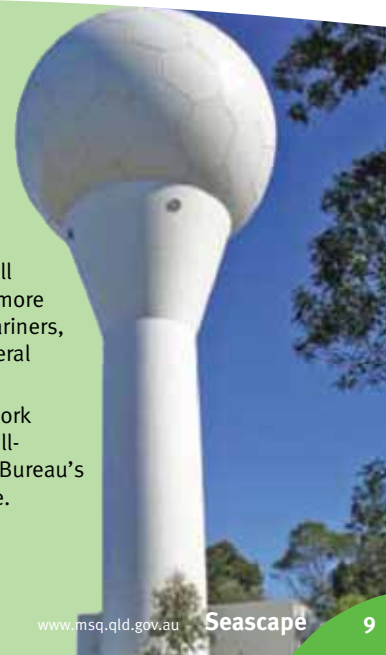
New high tech radar tees off

with coverage along the coast from Tin Can Bay to Evans Head, as well as inland to Stanthorpe, providing increased understanding of weather.

A Bureau spokesman said forecasters will use information from the radar to provide more accurate storm and rainfall forecasts to mariners, aviators, the rural community and the general public.

By connecting the new radar with a network of rain gauges across the south-east, the all-important rainfall images available on the Bureau's

website (pictured above) will become even more accurate.



Industry backs Whitsunday marine safety initiative

Marine Safe **blueprints** a passage to safety awareness

A pioneering safety program driven by marine industry operators and businesses in the Whitsunday region of north Queensland is about to move into new waters.

So successful has been the Marine Safe initiative in cultivating safety awareness on the waters of one of the nation's most popular tourism destinations, the steering group behind its growth intends to promote the industry-wide benefits to adjoining regions.

Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association executive secretary and Marine Safe project officer Deb Lewis, who has been part of the momentum of the safety culture since local operators first "signed up" in 2004, said the program grew out of collaboration between the association and Maritime Safety Queensland.

"The association was addressing regional issues with its own code and self-regulating compliance initiatives; as well, we developed a vessel rating system which was part of the membership, so we were trying to increase the benchmarks of standards and performance on a yearly basis within the industry," she explains.

"We realised that in order to move ahead, we had to develop stronger partnerships with government, Maritime Safety Queensland being one of the lead government agencies involved in regulating the marine industry, so it was natural evolution in the relationship.

"Maritime Safety Queensland came here with the idea of engaging industry in this Marine Safe pilot program and it moved on from there. In December 2004 we convened a

safety culture steering committee that is now the Marine Safe Committee – it began with 16 members and through sub-committees now has 36.

"Tourism operators, boat crew, marine business people, representatives of all three levels of government, marina managers, insurers, and plenty of others are all represented and contributing, primarily through a forum that convenes once every six weeks.

"We've tried to change mindsets so that safety is top-of-mind in everything we do in our operations: safety first and everything else follows on from there.

"Now we're trying to get Mackay and Bowen people involved – trying, really, to roll out what we're doing in the region so that it gets picked up across the state."

Maritime Safety Queensland has funded the pilot project in the region.

Fierce competitors offshore for business in one of Australia's biggest marine tourism regions are united onshore in their resolve to place the reputation of their operations at a peak through risk management and an ever-more entrenched safety culture.

Opting for a grassroots approach, one of the steering group's first actions was to establish a sub-committee for crew, which now encompasses masters, driving instructors and deckhands.

"We decided to develop an industry-wide minimum best practice standard on crew induction, and it became a two-fold thing," Ms Lewis says.

"With the legislative requirement that all crew need to have elements of shipboard safety within six months of employment, we're developing a workbook for new recruits to the industry.

"We're trying to increase not just the level of safety awareness and influence the culture from a training perspective, we're trying to create a cultural change from this being a 'transient' industry to one that can offer a career pathway and an opportunity for long-term employment.

"So this induction program we're developing is a new recruit induction as well as a vessel induction program."

Crew sub-committee chair Gary McCrae, a master and operations manager of one of the Airlie Beach-based fleets, talks of a "real sense of stewardship" – "it's about pride and ownership in the industry, being heard, and being involved," he says.

"From an operator's point of view, it's about better business and a better bottom line, risk-managing their business. That flows on to marketing.

"From a government point of view it's about making their life easier, when industry is working with them and everyone is working to improve standards.



“It’s about creating better standards and knowing what industry wants delivered as part of its training requirements.”

The Crew sub-committee arranges quarterly professional development forums. Its members have input into the Marine Safe program, safety training, food standards, responsibilities around alcohol and so on.

“They’re consulted on all levels,” Mr McCrae said.

“In particular the members enjoy having direct contact with officers from government agencies and the fact they can call them by their first name. We can meet them and ask questions. We see them in the street and talk to them – it’s all building our members’ level of commitment and professionalism.”

Local Maritime Safety Queensland Marine Safety Manager Steve Whalley agrees.

“Good working relationships in this industry help to support and raise marine safety standards across the board,” he said.

“Marine Safe generates a strong and cohesive partnership between our marine industry and government and other non-government, agencies.

“The concept behind Marine Safe builds industry confidence because everyone involved pursues new initiatives and introduces self-regulation of safety standards into their business.

“They tend to want to develop business and operational standards that are over and above the regulated or minimum compliance requirements.

“Marine safety officers recognise this, and encourage all sectors of the industry to follow suit.”

For Deb Lewis the issue was straightforward: give the industry leadership, and work with government.

“We’ve had to do that,” she said.

“We have to get professional. It’s been a quantum leap for the maturing of the industry where a lot of operators started in it for a lifestyle change. This has become a highly regulated business and they either had to work with it or move on.

“Most of them are looking at ways to improve practices. Operators knew 12 months ago there was a cost in improving safety standards but now they’re starting to

It’s about pride and ownership in the industry, being heard, and being involved.

- Gary McCrae,
Crew Sub-Committee Chairman.



Above left: Marine Safe project officer, Deb Lewis. Above right: Members of the crew sub-committee (from back left), Phil Tovey, George Canfield, Andrew Gillies, Deb Lewis, Gary McCrae and Gary Hughes.

see a return on that. You’ve got operators who have always been safe operators, but they’re consciously raising the banner in their own business – it’s not just happening by evolution, they are consciously managing it.

“We now have a regional compliance committee, which is not just marine but across the entire tourism industry in the region, made up of government agencies working together to deal with compliance issues from a regional perspective – it’s been a great initiative.

“They’re saying that if industry is embracing safety culture and doing its best to raise the benchmark, then they as regulators need to move along with industry. It’s a flow-on effect of (the Marine Safe) initiative.”

Everyone at the table in the Marine Safe

steering group and various sub-committee meetings is committed to raising standards.

“You won’t get disputes there,” Ms Lewis says.

“They are united and they’re sharing resources, sharing best practice models. One might have a great risk management plan, another might have a great version of a safety management plan or a training document.

“There is no competition in best practice.

“From a marketing perspective, they see that by raising the standards they are increasing the profile and the standards of the entire region - and that makes it a more attractive destination.

“What we have here hasn’t been done anywhere else in Australia.”



Late news

Recreational boating survey winners

What percentage of boaties regularly check their safety equipment's expiry dates? How does the typical boatie dispose of their on-board garbage?

Answers to these questions plus much more valuable information about Queensland's recreational boating landscape will be revealed from the results of the 2006 Recreational Boating Survey which is now being finalised. Highlights of the final report will feature in the January-March 2007 issue of Seascope.

Surveys were sent to most boat owners whose registration fell during July-August, and the same survey was also available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website until the end of August.

Five Marine Safety prizes were offered to those who filled out the survey and supplied their name and contact details: The prize winners are: **David Barka** (Oakey), **Blair Harrison** (Coorparoo), **Kevin Somerville** (Boondall), **Cameron Moore** (Mackay), and **Trevor Dietz** (Arundel).

Tide guide release date moved

The annual Tide Tables and Boating Safety Guide, published by Maritime Safety Queensland, will be released in November this year.

This is a new publication date from the previous 10 years when the book, one of Queensland's favourite boating publications,

was released in September to coincide with Father's Day. The next publication will include all tide information for 2007.

The guide, selling for \$8.50, will be available from Australia Post, selected newsagents, marine chandlery stores, tackle shops, speciality bookshops, Queensland Transport customer service centres, Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices or through the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Torres Strait initiative introduced



Representatives from the Queensland and federal governments and members of the Torres Strait community have joined forces to improve marine safety in one of Australia's most treacherous marine zones.

The Torres Strait Marine Safety Strategy will bring community and government representatives together for the purpose of reducing the higher than average occurrence of marine incidents in the region.

The strategy will focus on a number of new project areas, including improved training of commercial and recreational skippers,

research into the best type of boat to handle the unique conditions of the area, and introducing marine education in schools.

Torres Strait Islanders rely heavily on boats as their main form of transport between island communities. They travel large distances – anything up to 80 km – in dinghies often no longer than four metres.

Prevailing winds blowing against strong tidal currents often create steep, fuel-depleting seas. Some skippers, when travelling in such conditions, misjudge the amount of fuel required for a trip and run out before reaching their destination. Motor maintenance is often neglected and motors run for many hours without servicing and become unreliable.

Recent fatalities involving a Department of Immigration vessel, leading to the loss of three Badu residents on a trip between Badu and Thursday Island highlighted the need for a strategic program to improve safety within the region.

Even more recently, three Murray Islanders were missing for several weeks after their vessel broke down on a trip between Murray Island and Darnely Island. After five days of aerial and sea surface searches, they were presumed lost, but turned up after three weeks drifting at sea.

Upcoming events - 2006

OCTOBER

27-29 Gold Coast Boat Show, Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

NOVEMBER

A discussion paper seeking public feedback on the compulsory wearing of PFDs in Queensland will be made available. Watch the Maritime Safety Queensland website for details

New Marine Information Bulletins

Marine Information Bulletins cover important information for the maritime industry, and are also available on the MSQ website under 'Publications', or by contacting your local Maritime Safety Queensland office. The latest bulletins include:

- Fuel systems on ships
- Lifejackets and personal flotation devices complying with international standards

Contacting Maritime Safety Queensland

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