

October-December 2005
Volume 2 Issue 4

In this edition:

HMAS Brisbane: Scuttling draws a massive spectator fleet

Getting to know you: Hume Campbell

Law and you: Crew training now mandatory

Profile: Safety culture pilots underway

Spotlighting derelict and abandoned ships

Learning from marine incidents

Latest marine safety news

Seascope

Maritime Safety Queensland

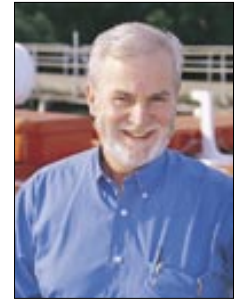


Maritime Safety Queensland
GPO Box 2595
Brisbane Queensland 4001

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



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



Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland

Queensland's waterways – they're the vibrant and vital nucleus of our unique marine environment and over time, generations of people have been drawn to them.

Whether it's a jet ski operator in the Whitsundays, a CityCat on the Brisbane River or tourists white water rafting on the Mulgrave River in far north Queensland - it's important to keep our waterways safe and clean today so that they can withstand and survive the scrutiny of future generations.

People can play an important part in ensuring our waterways stay in good shape. Community and industry support is vital too. The State Government also takes a leading role by providing policies and programs to help keep our waterways safe, clean and enjoyable for all users.

The Maritime Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 is a step in the right direction.

For some time, the State Government through Maritime Safety Queensland has been developing changes to primary pieces of legislation.

Information sessions about the changes were held in Brisbane, on the Gold and Sunshine Coast and major regional coastal centres.

Maritime Safety Queensland issued a discussion paper so that boat owners and operators could consider the implications of the changes, including tougher safety and anti-pollution measures.

You will probably know about some of them – pre-emptive action against vessels that aren't seaworthy, salvage and clean-up insurance requirements, stricter liability for owners, and so on.

We're processing this legislation for a very good reason: to further reduce the risk of pollution to our marine environment and save the community a lot of money. These are admirable objectives well worth pursuing; yet they would have little chance of making an impact unless they were understood and accepted by the community, and above all, had the support of the community.

I thank everyone who has taken part in this process, whether by coming along to the information sessions, submitting written comments or simply by talking about it to others in the community.

We need to ensure that we strike the right balance between the needs of the environment, the community and industry. We can do that by working together – as a team - that's the way to come up with the best results.

Boating is undoubtedly one of the most popular pastimes in Queensland. Whether fishing in Hervey Bay, scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef or waterskiing on Somerset Dam, the state's waterways are constantly buzzing with activity and fun.

But boating can easily turn into a tragedy without adopting a safety-first attitude. Six fatalities on Queensland waterways have been recorded this year.

A published report into all boating fatalities in Australia over a six year period found that 84% of those who perished were engaged in recreational activity at the time of the incident.

Considering these figures, and the fact that Queensland's waterways are becoming increasingly congested, it becomes easy to see the benefits of such initiatives as BoatSafe, the new competency-based training and assessment scheme introduced by Maritime Safety Queensland this year. BoatSafe ensures that, right from the start, boaties are not only safety aware, but can operate a boat safely.

But BoatSafe is only the start. No matter how experienced you are, everyone on the water needs to be vigilant in how they prepare for boating trips and their on-water practices.

Knowing what to do in the event of a marine incident is critical. At the very least, one person on board should have some form of basic first aid training. Through a pre-departure briefing, everyone should be familiar with man overboard procedures.

Capsizing or swamping of boats often leads to people in the water. Many people, for various reasons, fall overboard. Once a person is in the water, the chances of a fatality increases by nine times, a figure which would decrease significantly through wearing of life jackets.

It is important to consider the conditions and don lifejackets if the weather turns, or if crossing a coastal bar. Remember, a lifejacket can't save you if you are not wearing it.

Tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Tell family or friends, and if going offshore, contact local volunteer rescue groups on your departure and return.

Don't take unnecessary risks, even if you are a confident, experienced boat handler. The person in the approaching boat may not be.

Photo: Courtesy of HMAS Brisbane Association



HMAS Brisbane's scuttling draws a massive spectator fleet

It proved to be a spectacular day on the water when thousands of boats took to the seas to watch the sinking of the HMAS Brisbane. In what is believed by many to be the largest gathering of boats ever in Queensland, the number of spectator boats was comparable to the start of a Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

From 20 metre cabin-cruisers to sea kayaks, thousands of boats circled the decommissioned war ship as 38 explosive charges sent her to the bottom off the coast off Mooloolaba, about 2.5 nautical miles east of Mudjimba Island.

Now in 28 metres of water, it is anticipated that HMAS Brisbane will become a world-renowned scuba dive site, providing an economic boost to the tourism industry on the Sunshine Coast.

The flotilla of spectator craft began gathering in the early hours of the morning in readiness for the 10 am sinking. Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers were on hand to ensure the orderly movement of all boats. This included the difficult task of establishing and maintaining a one kilometre exclusion zone around the ship. The exclusion zone was necessary to ensure everyone's safety during detonation and sinking as well as for ensuring a good vantage point for all spectators to watch the sinking.

After the sinking, Water Police quickly limited the number of craft re-entering the Mooloolaba River to minimise the chance of collision. Boat ramps in the Mooloolaba River were still in heavy demand eight hours after the sinking.

General Manager John Watkinson said "not one marine incident was reported on the day which is a really amazing feat of vessel management considering the sheer number of boats involved".

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the lead agency for the entire

HMAS Brisbane project, managed the preparation of the ship, the sinking, and will continue to manage all aspects of the artificial reef and its use.

Maritime Safety Queensland provided the EPA's project managers with assistance and nautical advice for the scuttling. A hydrographic survey of the site was conducted by Maritime Safety Queensland prior to the sinking and another will be conducted later this year.

Advice was given by Maritime Safety Queensland on possible scuttling sites, maritime jurisdiction issues, proximity to shipping lanes and navigation aids.

Jim Huggett, Assistant Director of Operation Services at Maritime Safety Queensland, said that considerable preparation was required before the sinking.

"Clearly, building a warship is a complex task, but laying one to rest so that it is a safe and accessible dive site also presents challenges for all involved," Mr Huggett said.

"Importantly the ship needed to rest upright on the bottom. Thankfully, through precision and skill this has been successfully achieved with the Brisbane.

"In order to ensure long-term stability of the dive site, the ship's heading was also critical, with the bow of the ship facing almost due east to provide the least resistance to the predominant sea and weather."



Above: Prior to the scuttling, all of HMAS Brisbane's fuel tanks were filled with water and about 250 tonnes of concrete was poured into the ship's hull. After a demonstration explosion (top), 38 explosive charges in specific locations sent the ship to the bottom in two minutes and 10 seconds.

Below: Hundreds of spectator vessels formed one of the biggest flotilla's ever seen in Queensland.



Open waters, open for business

Hume Campbell still remembers the first time he earned a bob using a boat. In fact it was two bob (the equivalent of 20 cents).

A barge owned by his father's company, Riverside Marine, had capsized on the Bremer River, with the ship's engineer surviving after being cut out from the engine room with a cold chisel.

Hume, a teenager at the time, rowed across the river with a Courier Mail photographer who was covering the accident.

"It suddenly dawned on me that if he wanted to go back he would have to ask me," Hume recalls. "So I said in a cheeky voice, 'I'll take you back for two bob'. He gave me two bob, and it was my first commercial transaction. I realised then that in business, timing was of the essence."

Today, Hume is the Managing Director of Riverside Marine, a Brisbane-based family business, and one of Queensland's largest marine-based companies. Hume is the son of former managing director Kenneth Campbell and the grandson of founding director Norman Campbell who established the company in 1926.

Riverside Marine operates a diverse range of marine vessels and marine-based operations in Queensland, New South Wales

Hume Campbell, Managing Director, Riverside Marine

and Western Australia. From supplying high-grade industrial sand, to operating barges to Palm Island and Magnetic Island, to managing research vessels for the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Riverside's presence in Australia's commercial shipping landscape is prominent.

Under Hume's leadership, Riverside Marine publicly commits itself to a core value of 'safety first', stating in its corporate publications that 'safety comes first, before profit. Responsibility for safety is with management.'

Hume says this is why the company enjoys a strong reputation throughout the marine industry for operating safe vessels and encouraging safe work practices among its crew and staff.

"We treasure and look after our assets; and that's people and physical assets," he said.

"We invest a lot of money back into our equipment in maintenance. Our oldest vessel was built in 1956 and is still operating today. That means we are looking after them.

"Not only do our vessels need to be fit, but our people need to be fit. We achieve safety outcomes through having very professional crew who have agreements with us to supply a safe environment in which they work.

"We spend a lot of time talking about health in our organisation. My wife is a dietician, and she organises in-house lectures on nutrition. And we have just revised a lot of our administrative work stations after we asked the Wesley Rehabilitation Centre to talk to us about postures.

"We fine tune the diesel engines on our tug boats, and we change the oil. Why don't we do the same with our people?"

"Our whole organisation is 'dry'. There is no alcohol or drugs on any of our ships or in any of our offices."

Hume's passage to the top position in Riverside Marine started from the ground floor.

At the age of 15 he was shovelling coal on weekends and holidays and generally "getting in people's way". Eventually he went full-time in several clerical roles in the company – which included the task of cleaning toilets.

He turned his hand to working on several commercial ships around Australia, and then gained work on large ocean-going tug boats and barges in the Port of Vancouver in Canada where he was rescued in a potentially fatal incident during what should have been a routine transfer from the tug to a barge. His life jacket became impaled by a jagged piece of steel on the tug, and he hung helplessly over the freezing harbour waters. It was the dawning of safety awareness for him.

Hume returned to the relatively warmer Australian waters and worked in various marine-based businesses in the port of Brisbane, until in 1969 his father asked him to take the role of Operations Manager at Riverside Marine.

"In those days we used to move coal, we had ferries to Stradbroke Island, sand



"Not only do our vessels need to be fit, but our people need to be fit"



Photo courtesy Magnetic Times

Above: Hume Campbell with wife Rowan, and two daughters Grace and Olivier, pictured with the new Magnetic Island barge, owned by Riverside Marine. Both daughters have 45 tonne tug-boats named after them.

barge to Fraser Island and we did ocean tows up and down the coast – a variety of businesses,” Hume recalls.

He began learning the ropes of management and leadership, and today is quick to pay tribute to the men and women who have worked in Riverside over the years.

Hume was appointed to Queensland’s Marine Board, a position he held for 12 years. During this period, the Marine Board began regular public meetings throughout the state, giving stakeholders in Queensland’s marine sector a chance to meet and express their views directly to the government’s peak advisory body on marine safety matters. Hume is thrilled this initiative is still in place.

Six years ago, Hume was elected to the Industry Advisory Committee to the National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC), and was recently appointed as chairman. From this national perspective, he sees Queensland as the nation’s leader in maritime innovation and management.

“Queensland is the leader in innovation, right across the board in commercial and

recreational sectors,” he said.

“For example, we were the first state to keep accurate records of accidents, incidents, serious injuries and fatalities. So we were out in front understanding where the risk areas are.

“When I meet in the federal arena, representatives from Queensland are more often than not out there with creative, practical suggestions for gaining meaningful marine outcomes. In other words, we don’t concentrate on knee-jerk reactions and we are realists.”

Hume’s main concern for Australia’s maritime industry is an increasing shortfall in the number of trained young people coming into the industry.

Riverside Marine continues to grow, employing people nationwide. It has formed a strategic partnership with Danish marine towage leader SvitzerWijismuller, and now operates up and down two of the largest coastlines in the world – Queensland/NSW and Western Australia.

“Can’t do anything in between,” Hume lamented. “There’s no ocean unfortunately.”



Tribal Warrior promotes maritime careers

People of Aboriginal descent are finding self sufficiency and a career path into maritime industries through the work of the Tribal Warrior Association, a community organisation based in Redfern, Sydney.

The association provides quality training, including practical experience on its two ships, the *Tribal Warrior* and the *Deerrubun*.

Earlier this year Maritime Safety Queensland donated a number of *Small Ships Manuals* and other educational materials to the association, which uses *Tribal Warrior* and the *Deerrubun* for training to achieve a Master Class 5 Commercial Maritime Certificate and other qualifications, including Radar Certificate and Marine Engineer Certificate.

More than 100 years old, the 15.4 metre gaff-rigged ketch *Tribal Warrior* is one of Australia’s oldest working boats. Previously a pearl lugger in the Torres Strait, the ship was adopted by traditional people in Arnhem Land during the 1980s, when it was called *Wutuku*, meaning ‘drifting wood’.

In June 2003, *Tribal Warrior* completed a 648-day circumnavigation of Australia, the first time an all indigenous crew had achieved the feat.

The association’s other ship, *Deerrubun* (the Aboriginal term for the Hawkesbury River), is a refurbished ex-navy torpedo recovery vessel. Besides being used in the association’s maritime training program, it is also used for cultural cruises and charters on Sydney Harbour.



New Notices to Mariners website now live

Maritime Safety Queensland launched a new and improved Notices to Mariners website on 1 September 2005.

Notices to Mariners contains marine safety information which advises of:

- Navigation warnings and hazards (such as aids to navigation which may have been destroyed, missing or unlit).
- New or altered aids to navigation to help with the correction and updating of charts.
- Navigation depths for channels with depth restrictions.
- Other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).

Before you go boating, you should check the Notices to Mariners website for any information you may need to update your boating safety charts.

You can register to receive Notices to Mariners by email by going to the link on the website at www.msq.qld.gov.au/qldntm. You will need to update your favourites or bookmarks if you have used the site in the past.

You can also access Notices to Mariners from the Maritime Safety Queensland homepage www.msq.qld.gov.au from the link in the "MSQ quick links" bar at the bottom of the page.

Maritime Forum focuses on consistent messages

Maritime Safety Queensland Regional Managers from around Queensland gathered in September for the annual Maritime Forum.

Under the theme "Marching to the Same Drum" this year's forum focused on the importance of

Be prepared for cyclones through plans

All boat owners from Bundaberg-north should be aware of how to prepare for a cyclone. These procedures are detailed in each region's cyclone contingency plan.

These plans, managed and distributed by Maritime Safety Queensland, outline the responsibilities of masters and owners of vessels when a cyclone threatens. They are designed

to reduce the risk to life and vessels operating in the area and protect, as far as possible, the local infrastructure and environment.

The plans are available by phoning Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices (see the back page for details).

Cyclone season in Queensland is officially recognised as extending from 1 November to 30



April, and while most cyclones happen in the north of the state, it is not unlikely for a cyclone to track south and affect south-east Queensland.

developing a cohesive organisation and delivering consistent messages to all stakeholders.

Keynote speaker was Captain David Coates, the General Manager of Flight Operations Training at Qantas who delivered an address entitled "Cohesion and consistent messages in a diverse organisation."

The diverse nature of Maritime Safety Queensland itself was on show during "hot spot" sessions and workshops. Marine pilots, cartographers, technicians, pollution response managers, vessel traffic managers and others gave fascinating insights into their day-to-day work.

Three Maritime Achievement Awards were given out during the forum. Recipients for 2005 are:

Frank Bath - in recognition of his contribution in introducing revised pilotage fees for Queensland.

Steve Budd - for ensuring the smooth day-to-day operations of vessel traffic services and communications infrastructure throughout the Queensland coastline.

Compliance Unit (John Kavanagh, Peter Kleinig, Mandy Nixon, Ron Yuen and Barbara Coleman) - for introducing quality systems and procedures to ensure investigations into marine incidents are of the highest standard.

Recipients for 2005 service awards were: 20 years: David Adams, Michael Beeby and John Thomas; 25 years: David

Mainwaring, William Page; 30 years: Doug Kippen, Captain Paul Matthews; 40 years (ancient mariners): John Broadbent, Kevin White.



Above: Queensland Transport Director General, Mr Bruce Wilson (far left) and Maritime Safety Queensland's General Manager, John Watkinson (far right) present Kevin White (left) and John Broadbent with 40 year service awards. Congratulations to all!

Students bite into boating safety

School students from the Torres Strait and far north Queensland had a good insight into boating safety issues during the Croc Festival held on Thursday Island.

In conjunction with colleagues from Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Maritime Safety Queensland officers conducted several workshops at the festival, on topics such as the use of safety equipment, anchoring on the reef in rough conditions, alcohol and boating, and overloading.

"Crocfest" started in Weipa in 1998 and is now held in every state of Australia. Last year 54,000

students from over 400 schools attended eight festivals.

The primary mission of Croc Festival is to foster improvement in the health, education and well-being of indigenous and non-indigenous youth in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Water safety is important for residents of communities in the Torres Strait. Travel by dinghy between the islands for family and cultural events is common, with people sometimes travelling 40 nautical miles in their tinnies. In 2004, Queensland Water Police reported 107 marine incidents in the area, with two resulting in fatalities.

The addition of Maritime Safety Queensland to the festival schedule was initiated by Thursday Island State High School principal Tony Considine. Many students spent their childhood around boats and considered themselves proficient, he said, but accidents still happened. Education and appropriate safety knowledge were a high priority.

Maritime Safety Queensland continues to work closely with marine programs in Queensland's high schools, including Thursday Island State High School, helping students to think seriously about boating safety.

Expect the unexpected

The master of a commercial fishing trawler had set the auto-pilot and the vessel was steaming north at 8.5 knots. The weather was fine and the sea was calm, an ideal night for travelling to a new fishing ground. The two crew were asleep.

The master of the ship was a skipper (Grade 3) with many years of experience.

After fixing the ship's position and ensuring there was no risk of collision, the master went below to check the engine room. No need to wake either of the crew, he thought. They were tired and besides, he would only be away from the helm for a minute.

As he stepped down the engine room ladder he slipped, hitting his head on the hatch, falling into the engine room. He lay there unconscious, as the crew slept, and the ship continued ahead. Just under an hour later the ship smashed into a wharf.

Lessons

- Regardless of the master's competency and experience, marine incidents can happen unexpectedly.
- Entering an engine space while machinery is operating should never occur unless a second person is on watch. In this case the skipper slipped and was knocked unconscious. He could have slipped and fallen into moving parts, and been seriously injured with no help available.
- Always have two crew members maintaining a watch. One person can easily go to sleep or have an accident.
- If a watch alarm had been fitted to this ship and switched on, it would have woken the crew. The master would have been assisted and the collision avoided.

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

Inept navigation

A 10-metre recreational yacht was sailing north at night through the Great Barrier Reef with the owner-master and one crew on board. They intended to fish before heading into Port Douglas.

The master held no marine qualifications. He was a regular coastal sailor but had never navigated reef waters at night.

The yacht was structurally sound and equipped with all required safety equipment.

According to the master, the yacht's only navigational equipment was a paper chart of waters from Cairns to Port Douglas, a hand-held GPS unit and a compass. A depth sounder on board was not working.

The master did not plan his passage well. He did not mark his course on the chart and checked his position only once every 90 minutes while the vessel was underway. He didn't know too much about latitude and longitude, and knew nothing about the datum of his chart or the datum referenced by his GSP unit.

When the weather deteriorated with strong winds and rough seas, the master decided to head west towards the coast. The yacht ran aground on a reef and was holed. The master used his mobile phone to raise the alarm and activated the vessel's EPIRB. The two people on board were rescued but the yacht was totally destroyed.

Besides losing his yacht, the owner was also convicted under Section 38MC the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 (Cwlth) and fined \$2000 plus court costs.

Lessons

- When navigating unfamiliar waters near coral reefs and other threats to safe navigation, good masters plot their ship's position regularly on appropriate charts. In this instance, the master had no 'situational awareness', and it is doubtful whether he could even plot his ship's position on his chart.
- Good masters always reference their paper charts and GPS units with the same geodetic datum. Common data used around Australia are World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) and Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94). In this instance, even if the master had plotted a course on his chart using positions derived from his GPS unit, his lack of knowledge about positions and datum could have resulted in position errors of hundreds of metres.
- Rule 5 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (the Colregs) requires masters to always maintain a proper look-out by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions to make a full appraisal of the situation and assess the risk of collision. One position check every 90 minutes in waters dotted with coral reefs is negligent and unsafe.



Safety training for crew soon mandatory

Who makes crucial decisions if the captain of a commercial or fishing ship is seriously injured or knocked unconscious?

Can all crew members, whether a deckhand on a trawler or a member of hospitality staff, react appropriately when an incident on a boat demands quick thinking and a working knowledge of marine safety issues?

Questions like this highlight the importance of marine safety training for everyone who works consistently on board a boat. Informed action saves lives.

With many commercial boating and fishing operations experiencing rapid turnover of staff, a systematic approach to staff training is vital. Through mandatory crew safety training coming into effect in 2006, the Queensland Government is ensuring marine-specific occupational health and safety knowledge and skills are passed on in a timely manner to those most likely to need it.

The *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004* requires owners and masters of all commercial or fishing ships to ensure all crew who have been employed cumulatively for more than six months have completed a course titled 'Occupational Health and Safety at Sea,'

'Elements of Shipboard Safety', or the equivalent.

Masters or owners of the ships are also required to conduct an approved safety induction course for all new crew and those employed for less than six months. Details of the required content of safety induction courses is available from Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices.

The regulation applies to any person employed or engaged in any capacity on board for any length of time.

For example, both a research scientist working on a fishing boat and a photographer employed on a tourist day boat are considered to be crew. On the other hand, a freelance photographer working for himself on a day boat is considered a passenger and only requires the safety briefing given to other passengers.

Tropical North Queensland TAFE in Cairns is just one training institute in the state that conducts an accredited program of occupational health and safety at sea.

Bill Sugars, who has taught at the institute's Maritime Academy for over 10 years, said the institute had a regular intake of around 180 students undertaking

maritime safety courses each year, but is scheduling extra courses to cater for the anticipated increased demand.

The Safety at Sea course is a mix of theory and 'prac', with compulsory attendance at all sessions, but minimal written assessment.

"This makes it a fun course with ample opportunity to gain first-hand practical knowledge and experience," he said.

"Feedback from students is very positive. They enjoy the experience of actually fighting a fire and launching a life-raft at sea in a real-life situation."

Mr Sugars referred to a recent feedback form from a student who had worked on board a boat for five years which read: "Thanks. I have finally found out how to use the fire and survival equipment I have seen on the boat."

Maritime Safety Queensland has recently informed all owners and operators of commercial and fishing vessels that it has extended the transition period for this crew safety training regulation to 30 August 2006.

After September 1, 2006 no further extension will be granted, and penalties will apply for a breach. When they do not comply, both the owner or master and the crew commit an offence.

Operators in the fishing industry should ensure their crews, including those whose cumulative time adds up to six months, complete the training during seasonal closures this year. Leaving the training until 2006 may leave crew with fewer options for accessing the training at a convenient time and place.

For more information contact Maritime Safety Queensland (07) 3120 7340.

Left: Students from Tropical North TAFE in Cairns on board the college's training vessel MV Jenny Lind (above left). Practical experience is a major part of the Occupational Health and Safety at Sea program.



Many yachties now need to be licensed

The power of your boat's motor now determines whether or not you need a recreational marine driver licence.

As of 1 September, anyone operating a recreational vessel, including yachts, with a motor of greater power than 4.5 kW (over 6 hp), requires a licence.

Previously a recreational marine driver licence was not required for yachts with motors over 6 hp as in most instances the vessel would not exceed 10 knots, and yachts do not have a planing hull. The requirements to exceed 10 knots and to have a planing hull have been removed to leave only one: the power of the motor.

This is a significant change to the law and will affect most yachts, both monohull and catamarans. The law change might affect other recreational boat owners and operators as well.

Anyone who operates ships above the mentioned power range will now need to complete a BoatSafe course with a registered training provider. Considering the number of yachts that cruise up and down the Queensland coastline, often through the complexities of the Great Barrier Reef and in open waters, the change represents a commonsense approach to improving education, ensuring marine safety and reducing marine incidents.



Among the competencies learnt in a BoatSafe course is navigation and dealing with 'situational awareness'. A safety report in Learning from Marine Incidents (page 7) illustrates why these skills are required for Queensland waters, regardless of the speed, size or hull-type of a ship.

Heavy fine for polluting Mackay marina

Maritime Safety Queensland's determination to protect the state's waterways from oil pollution was highlighted with a decision in a Mackay court hearing in May.

The owner of a 14-metre steel trawler berthed at Mackay Marina was fined \$4000 and ordered to pay over \$1500 in expenses and costs, when the magistrate found him responsible for a spill of seven litres of diesel fuel and hydraulic fluid. The master of the ship was fined \$1000 plus costs.

Despite being the smallest amount of oil pollution ever prosecuted under Queensland's marine pollution laws, the magistrate accepted that because the spill occurred near waters zoned as marine parks and aquatic nursery areas, it was significant and potentially damaging.



The incident occurred in July 2003 when the crew were working on the ship's hydraulic system. The master passed a bucket out of the engine room, placing it on the deck. The bucket tipped over, spilling its contents of diesel fuel and hydraulic fluid into the marina.

The crew used the engine to try to disperse the spill, and washed the remaining oil from the deck with detergent. The ship's operational manual did not provide any detailed instruction on the handling and removal of waste oil from the ship.

Following investigation into the incident, a complaint was made against the master and owner respectively for an offence against Section 26 of the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995.

Left: Oil was spilled off this trawler.

Outdated commercial licence alert

Holders of commercial marine licences should check to make sure their licences are up to date - some people with commercial licences are discovering their licences are invalid.

Ten years ago the Queensland Government introduced the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act and Regulation, which had implications for holders of commercial licences. All licences issued under the Uniform Shipping Laws between 1988 and 1994, including those for trading, fishing and engineering certificates became invalid at the end of 1996.

So did all certificates issued in the days before the Uniform Shipping Laws.

Despite a mailout and public statements at the time, it appears some commercial licences were not converted in accordance with the requirements of that 1995 legislation and therefore those licences are not valid – and haven't been since the end of 1996.

Anyone caught in this situation faces the prospect of a substantial fine for the unlicensed operation of a ship.

The problem came to light when some people had produced commercial licences in order to get the newly-introduced licence for jet skis. Others were found to be invalid among applicants to become an accredited BoatSafe trainer.

A current commercial licence is an optional criterion for anyone sitting a test for the new jet ski licence until the end of this year. From 1 January 2006 holders of recreational marine driver licences or commercial licences will need to first complete a BoatSafe personal watercraft course before being eligible for a PWC licence.

BoatSafe became mandatory in July this year for anyone sitting for a recreational marine driver licence. Anyone applying to become an accredited BoatSafe trainer must hold a current commercial marine licence.



Spotlighting derelict and abandoned ships

Later this year, the Queensland government will introduce a Bill into Parliament that will provide Maritime Safety Queensland with improved powers to manage derelict and abandoned vessels.

The Bill, known as the Maritime Legislation Amendment Bill (MLAB) proposes other changes to the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* and the *Maritime Safety Queensland Act 2002*.

Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager, John Watkinson, says that continuing growth and significant changes to the recreational and commercial maritime community and industry has highlighted the need for change.

“Several incidents involving derelict and abandoned vessels over recent years have jeopardised public safety and the environment,” he said.

“We found some problems with our legislation that would not allow us to act as decisively as we would have liked to address these problems.”

The main intent of MLAB is to provide Maritime Safety Queensland with greater powers to proactively manage derelict and abandoned vessels. This is achieved through addressing several sections of maritime legislation, including those about the registration and ownership of vessels and the powers of harbour masters to give direction to vessels.

The problems with current legislation were highlighted when the *MV Karma* grounded near Agnes Water in late 2003. Once the threat to marine safety and marine pollution was removed, the powers of Maritime Safety Queensland to act were limited.

“Being able to take action against

vessels like this one early on will help us prevent incidents like the grounding, said Captain Watkinson.

“It is essential that we can act proactively to stop unseaworthy vessels putting to sea, and then presenting the risks that the *Karma* did.”

As a result of incidents like this, Maritime Safety Queensland reviewed the legislation and developed MLAB with the intention of creating clearer definitions of responsibility for all users and stakeholders of Queensland waterways. Consultation has been a vital part of this process.

The MLAB consultation paper, released in July this year, gave the maritime industry, boating community and other interested parties more than a month to provide comment on the proposed changes. This consultation period closed on 26 August 2005.

After consideration of public comment, the final legislation will be prepared for introduction into Parliament later this year. The new legislation is scheduled to commence in early 2006.

Further proof of the need for legislative change is supported by an audit of abandoned and derelict ships in or on Queensland’s waterways (for example, those shown on this page). An informal audit of derelict vessels conducted by harbour masters showed that at least 90 vessels are currently abandoned, wrecked or derelict across Queensland.

“A conservative estimate is that

it would cost the Queensland government more than six million dollars to remove these vessels from Queensland waters,” Captain Watkinson said.

“In many cases the vessels are either unregistered, or registered inappropriately – for example, ex-commercial vessels registered as recreational vessels,” he said.

“The ownership of many of these vessels is unclear, which means we cannot identify a person willing to take responsibility for the vessel or its cleanup.”

Under the proposed changes to maritime legislation, notification will be given to remove an abandoned or derelict vessel within a specified time. If the owner does not come forward, Maritime Safety Queensland will be empowered to take action to condemn and then remove or destroy the vessel.

More information on the proposed changes under MLAB is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.



Safety culture pilots underway

Two industry-run pilot programs initiated and supported by Maritime Safety Queensland are promoting a culture of safety within the state's commercial maritime industry.

Safety culture programs in Airlie Beach and Brisbane are generating increased discussion and awareness of safety issues among participating marine industry groups and operators.

The open forum-style of the programs that encourages the exchange of information and ideas is also improving co-operation between state government and the industry.

Participants in both programs are keen to lift marine safety standards and awareness by holding up as exemplars those who pursue excellence.

A safety culture gives all marine operators, crew, and the travelling public greater peace of mind knowing vessels are well maintained, crew well-trained and competent. Ongoing review, evaluation and improvement of safety performance maintains these high standards.

The program followed a survey in 2004 by Maritime Safety Queensland to gauge attitudes in the industry towards maritime safety. Of those who responded, 13.6% practised the optimal level of on-the-job safety, known as 'generative'.

The pilot program under the Brisbane Marine Safety Committee, chaired by Richard Matterson, started in July this year. Marine operators meet once a month.

Mr Matterson says they find the program an ideal environment for joint problem-solving, reducing the need to 're-invent the wheel' and saving time and money.

Sub-committees will report on issues identified as critical in developing a culture of safety among marine operators in the Brisbane region.

"More members are always welcome," Mr Matterson said.

"These programs are giving the industry an opportunity to be a leader.

"It's better for people on the ground with the experience and knowledge of operating day-to-day on the water to set the pace, rather than waiting for government to tell us what to do.

"It's about taking the initiative rather than reacting."

Crew training is a priority for the committee. Traditionally, trainees spend a lot of time off the job and in classrooms, often straining resources for smaller operators. The modern approach involves training and assessment on the job, minimising costs and disruptions for operations.

Discussions with training providers and relevant stakeholders will continue.

The Airlie Beach Safety Culture Steering Committee was launched in December 2004, and has enjoyed a strong level of participation by the tourism sector of the industry.

Committee secretary Deb Lewis said it had identified 12 priorities, a key one being a campaign aimed at local marine operators with specific safety-related messages for crew, operators and training providers.

"I am hearing a lot of talk about safety in the local industry now, with people talking about risk management, the importance of safety, and having a 'generative' approach to safety," she said.

"There's a lot more discussion and liaison among fellow operators, the industry and government. Safety awareness underpins everything we as a committee do with regard to providing safe operations, so you have safe vessels, safe crews and safe tourists."



Richard Matterson

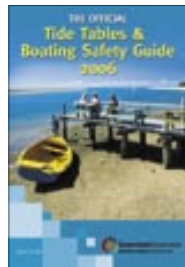


Deb Lewis

For more information on the Brisbane and Airlie Beach Safety Culture Steering Committees ring Richard Matterson (Brisbane) on 07 3893 3777 or Deb Lewis (Airlie Beach) on 0439 480 601.

New tide tables guide out now

No boatie should be without the Official Tide Tables and Boating Safety Guide, and the 2006 edition is now available.



The boating guide section is packed with valuable information including details on boat ramps and landings; boating safety tips; smooth and partially smooth water limits; buoys, beacons and marks; weather information; and what to do in an emergency.

The tidal prediction section covers tides for Queensland ports as well as instructions for calculating tides at many other locations.

The guide is available for \$7.50 from Australia Post, some newsagents, marine chandlery stores, tackle shops, specialty bookshops, Queensland Transport customer service centres, Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices and by mail (the order form is on the Maritime Safety Queensland website).

Teaming up for radio monitoring

Building on similar successful partnerships already established in south-east Queensland, Maritime Safety Queensland and the Cairns flotilla of the Australian Volunteer Coastguard (AVCG) have combined to provide a 24-hour listening watch of the coastal radio distress system in far north Queensland.

The same arrangements have been in place in southeast Queensland and the Townsville area since the hand over of coastal marine radio from Telstra to Maritime Safety Queensland in July 2002.

From the recreational boaties' point of view, this represents no change other than

having the knowledge that between the Cairns Volunteer Coast Guard and Maritime safety Queensland's vessel traffic centre trained personnel are contactable on an emergency frequency 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Staff from Maritime Safety Queensland's Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) monitor VHF channels 16 and 67 during night-time hours, and representatives from the Australian Volunteer Coastguard take over monitoring during the day. Responsibility for responding to emergency calls is shared on the same basis.

During the hours the AVCG are on duty, radio checks and weather information is available for all craft on VHF channels.

All monitoring is through high-powered radio equipment, which is part of Maritime Safety Queensland's radio network spanning the entire Queensland coast.

New education boat features at the Brisbane International Boat Show

The marketing and education unit of Maritime Safety Queensland took possession of a new safety education vessel in July – a 6.75m Haines Hunter - and immediately put it to use at the Brisbane International Boat Show.

The boat, named G. P. Heath after Brisbane's first Portmaster, will be used for on-water education activities and to promote safe boating to the recreational boat user.

The boat is supplied under a sponsorship arrangement with Haines Hunter and is

powered by a 200 hp 4 stroke outboard motor also sponsored by Yamaha Australia.

The boat has already featured in a photo shoot with Haines Hunter and was the focal point at Maritime Safety Queensland's display at the recent Brisbane International boat show. The boat displayed where safety gear should be stowed to ensure it is always accessible in an emergency, which is often not the case when boating accidents happen.

The "G.P. Heath" is registered commercially and is fitted with positive buoyancy as a safety feature.



Above: Entertainers Mark and Rudi of PopEyes in front of Maritime Safety Queensland new education boat, G. P. Heath, at the Brisbane International Boat Show.

Upcoming events - 2005

OCTOBER

6 Gold Coast M.A.S.T. (Marine and Aquatic Skills and Training) Day

NOVEMBER

6-7 Whitsunday (Mackay/Airlie Beach) Industry Forum (Marine Board)
7 St Mary's College M.A.S.T. Day, Hervey Bay
14 Mackay State High School M.A.S.T. Day

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 - 4194 9600

Bundaberg _____ 07 - 4131 8500

Gladstone _____ 07 - 4973 1200

Port Alma _____ 07 - 4934 6929

Mackay _____ 07 - 4944 3700

Whitsundays _____ 07 - 4946 2200

Townsville _____ 07 - 4726 3400

Cairns _____ 07 - 4052 7400

Weipa _____ 07 - 4069 7165

Karumba _____ 07 - 4745 9281

Thursday Island _____ 07 - 4069 1351

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.