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Seascape

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Minister for Transport
and Main Roads



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This time of year is by far the busiest time in the maritime calendar, particularly here in Queensland as thousands of people enjoy themselves in and around our waterways.

And it's important that safety is not overlooked while everyone's having fun – whether they're in a kayak on the Brisbane River, a catamaran in the Whitsundays, on a jet ski or water-skiing.

For some years our maritime safety regulators have pushed the message that education is the key to safety awareness. Their aim: to push it to the point where safety becomes second nature to people.

It's still the preferred approach, but marine accidents continue to occur. An analysis of marine accidents shows that most tragedies strike when the sun is shining and the seas are calm. In other words, people make mistakes.

Where it becomes evident from repeated mistakes that we need to shift our focus, the State Government will not hesitate to legislate in order to save lives.

During 2005 we introduced a jet ski management plan. As part of the plan, anyone operating a jet ski must have a licence. It takes effect from the beginning of 2006 and has been deliberately designed to lift safety standards. You might have also noticed a visible police presence on our waterways. Water police and boating safety officers have been out and about on the look-out for people disobeying the rules and behaving badly. I don't apologise for taking a tough stance – this is about saving lives.

The State Government's vigorous maritime agenda in 2005 included two legislative packages that give Maritime Safety Queensland stronger powers to ensure anyone who is involved with a vessel meets their safety responsibilities. The policy applies whether a vessel is used for recreational purposes or commercial enterprise.

New powers have also been included in, or proposed for, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act and the Maritime Safety Queensland Act.

We're covering a broad safety frontline. In many ways, Maritime Safety Queensland has made an important contribution to national boating safety programs with initiatives such as BoatSafe training for licences. We're also about to embark on a regulatory review to make sure national standards are being met.

We will continue to drive a maritime agenda that makes the experience safe and enjoyable for all, and I look forward to keeping you informed of the government's maritime safety activities in 2006.

New Year's resolutions ... they happen every year. The strength of a resolution is judged, of course, by the action that comes after.

During 2005, Maritime Safety Queensland launched several major campaigns and initiatives that were the direct result of not just reflection and resolution, but careful analysis of the state's constantly changing marine and boating 'landscape', public consultation, assessment of the regulatory framework and the role of Maritime Safety Queensland itself.

As a result, 2005 was an outstanding year of action as Maritime Safety Queensland responded to the findings of these deliberations.

BoatSafe, the bigger and better licensing scheme for recreational boat users came into effect mid-year. This scheme ensures that before they hit the water, recreational boaters will not only know more about boating, but be better skilled in handling their boats.

To assist new boaters, and perhaps those looking to update their knowledge, the BoatSafe Workbook, one of the most comprehensive guides to recreational boating ever assembled in Australia, was produced to complement the new training regime.

BoatSafe now extends to jet skis. As part of an overhaul of laws governing the use of jet skis, all new applicants for a jet ski licence need to complete a BoatSafe Personal Water Craft (PWC) course with an accredited training provider. As with other recreational vessels, to be successful, the applicant must show he or she not only knows the rules, but must demonstrate he or she can safely operate a jet ski. This is a common sense approach for these high-speed craft.

And our annual Christmas Campaign, this year titled "Boat Smart from the Start – Go Easy on the Drink" continues to reach holidaymakers during the this popular boating period with key messages about the dangers of mixing alcohol and boating.

Some significant initiatives for the commercial shipping operators began in 2005. Two industry-led 'safety culture programs' started, one in Airlie Beach and the other in Brisbane. These open forum-style programs give participants an opportunity to exchange information and ideas for the purpose of lifting marine safety standards and awareness in their region.

Crew training has been a keen focus of these programs, and also of regulation change. In August this year all crew employed cumulatively for more than six months will be required to complete a course titled 'Occupational Health and Safety at Sea', 'Elements of Shipboard Safety', or the equivalent. It is the ship's master or owner's responsibility to ensure that this takes place.

Looking ahead, 2006 promises to be an equally challenging year and the staff from Maritime Safety Queensland and I look forward to working with the maritime industry and boating community to meet these challenges.

Connect with industry forums in 2006

Industry forums held in regional centres around the state, give members of the maritime community an opportunity to raise issues of concern and to make a real difference in their region. In 2005 there were six industry forums held from Cairns in the north to the Gold Coast in the south. The same number are planned for this year.

The open public meetings are attended by members of the Marine Board of Queensland and representatives from Maritime Safety Queensland. Since the first forum in 1999, the structure and content of the gatherings have been tailored to make sure they relate closely to the interests of the communities in which they are held.

Issues raised range from those of state-wide significance such as maritime training through to local-level concerns such as the locality of moorings.

Marine Board Chairman, Mike Bartlett, said the industry forums provide a valuable interface between industry, the Marine Board and government.

"The forums keep industry informed about what is happening within Maritime Safety Queensland, and it keeps Maritime Safety Queensland exposed to the local operators," Mr Bartlett said.

"It means issues are raised earlier than they would be otherwise, and forums help put a public face on Maritime Safety Queensland. Forums combine education, information and the ability to fix things.

Mr Bartlett said that the interaction with the public made possible by the forums helped to keep the Marine Board well informed.

"We are an advisory board, and we are all out of different parts of the industry, but the only way we can advise is if we keep in touch with the industry," he said.

Where previously the forums followed a simple question-and-answer format which resulted in very long meetings, they now feature a multi-faceted approach.

Questions are still fielded, but the forums now include short presentations from Maritime Safety Queensland or industry representatives, covering topics of current significance. To cater for enquiries of a more individual nature, private meetings with Marine Board members can be arranged. As a result of these changes, the forums have become more productive, and a lot shorter.

The forums also provide an opportunity for local operators to meet, discuss and resolve local issues between each other. Mr Bartlett gave the example of an issue involving the lack of mooring space for small craft in one region. After discussion at an industry forum a low-cost solution was suggested and approved.

The Marine Board is made up of six members who represent a cross-section of the maritime industry. Appointed by the Minister for Transport, they offer advice to government from an industry perspective on maritime safety legislation proposals and the development of state and national standards. They also advocate for a strong and viable maritime industry and at times take part in boards of inquiry into marine incidents.



Holiday campaign promotes Christmas cheer in moderation

The compound effects of the sun, wind and waves on anyone consuming alcohol while they're boating is the focus of Maritime Safety Queensland's and the Queensland Police Service's annual Christmas holiday campaign.

The Minister for Transport, the Hon. Paul Lucas, launched a statewide campaign called 'Boat Smart – Go Easy on the Drink' on 3 December, 2005 on the Gold Coast.

The campaign's objective is to reduce the significant number of marine incidents directly or indirectly caused by alcohol consumption, and mirrors a national campaign developed by the Australian and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG).

The most common type of incident occurs when people under the influence of alcohol are seriously injured when they fall overboard, or drown. Research has shown that alcohol significantly reduces the time for survival when a person is in the water.

Breath-testing is not always possible at the scene of marine incidents, but it is suspected many collisions, groundings and injuries involving boats can be attributed to excessive alcohol consumption.

A boat operator or passenger with a blood-alcohol concentration greater than 0.1 per cent is 10 times more likely to be involved in an accident on the water.

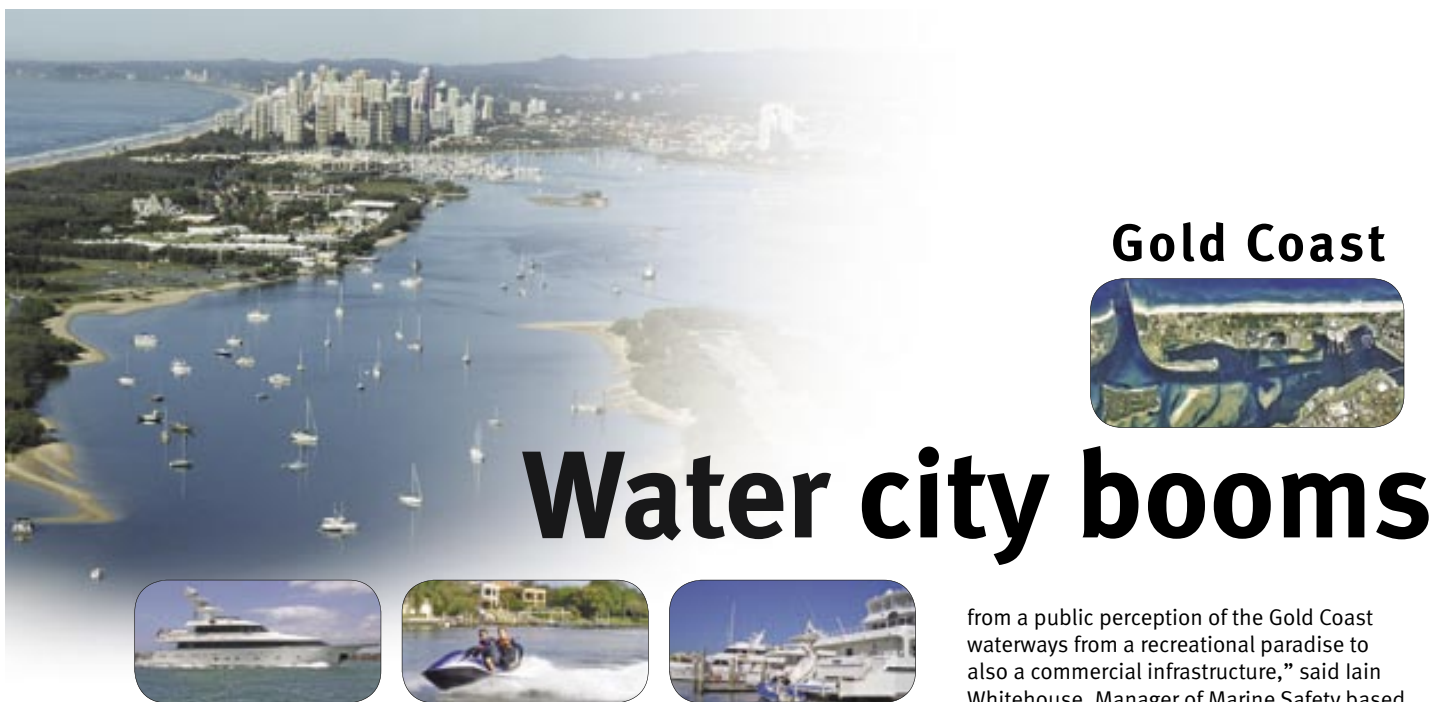
The educational part of the campaign includes giving out brochures, esky stickers and key-rings with the "Go Easy on the Drink" moniker, together with radio and print advertising.

Like their counterparts on land, Queensland Water Police will be out on the water in force over the holiday period conducting random breath tests. The law is the same as for drink-drivers on the road – fail, and you could lose your licence.

The main difference between the land and water is that even boats without motors need to have a sober skipper. Whether it is a row boat, tender, sailing boat, PWC or powerboat, the .05 limit applies.

Officer in Charge of the Brisbane Water Police, Senior Sergeant Edi Mian said that; "A suitably licensed person needs to be in a fit state to take control of the vessel in any situation that presents itself. So unless the boat is at a safe and secure registered mooring the .05 limit applies."

For details about upcoming Marine Industry Forums phone Chris Morgan on 3120 7464. Dates up to June 2006 are shown on page 12 under "Upcoming events"



Gold Coast



Water city booms

from a public perception of the Gold Coast waterways from a recreational paradise to also a commercial infrastructure,” said Iain Whitehouse, Manager of Marine Safety based on the Gold Coast.

“The objective of recreational boating is to get out there and enjoy yourself – whether to just ‘sloth’ along or to go around and around towing a skier or a tube. Some want to windsurf, others want to kitesurf. On the other hand, most people who are operating commercial ventures are trying to get from Point A to Point B as quickly as possible.

“There can be a conflict of purpose in such a small area. The challenge is to educate the growing masses of recreational masters, that yes, it is enjoyable and pleasant to go boating, but they have to accept the responsibilities that are associated with driving a boat.”

Among Maritime Safety Queensland’s many areas of responsibility on the Gold Coast is the monitoring of commercial marine activities, managing and maintaining the system of over 500 beacons and buoys, and overseeing the operations of the Gold Coast Seaway tower, operated by members of volunteer rescue groups.

Maritime Safety Queensland is assisted in monitoring recreational boating activity by its enforcement partners, the Queensland Water Police and Department of Fisheries and Primary Industries (QB&FP).

Senior Sergeant Barry Day of the Gold Coast Water Police said that the maze of narrow waterways such as canals, many adjoining residential property, requires a highly targeted approach to enforcement.

“We are very much driven by the collating of intelligence coming from recording of marine

Two generations ago, the Gold Coast was little more than a picturesque collection of lagoons and mangrove swamps, with rivers and creeks meandering their way out to the sea. Today, very little meanders on the waterways of the Gold Coast. Compared to most other stretches of water around Australia, every day is like ‘rush hour’ on the Gold Coast.

Arguably Australia’s tourist capital, the Gold Coast is a bustling water-centric city. Many people live on the Gold Coast because of its beaches, waterways and ideal climate, and even more visit each year for the same reasons.

The waterways of the Gold Coast stretch from the Queensland/New South Wales border to the Logan River. Protection from the elements and natural and man-made surrounds stimulate boating activity of increasing volume and diversity.

From sea kayaks to super yachts to sea planes, watercraft of all shapes, sizes and power traverse the Gold Coast waterways on any given day.

In the 60’s the Nerang River became the developers’ dream, and the first canal developments appeared offering water access to all the major waterways. Canal development has never looked back with extensive canal and lake systems connecting with Tallebudgera Creek and north to Paradise Point.

Combine waterfront living with a boat at the back door and the increase in trailer boats

and there are now over 25,000 craft registered in and around the Gold Coast and 900 locally-based commercial vessels.

With over 250 kilometres of canals boasting thousands of private jetties, thousands of marina berths and 50 boat ramp lanes throughout the Coast, owners of trailerable and untrailerable boats have direct access to the ocean through one of four coastal bars and to the many sheltered anchorages and waterways of the Broadwater.

The number of boats continues to increase steadily each year. So has their size, and in many cases, the speed they travel.

Throw in a growing number of unregistrable water toys – windsurfers, kite-surfers, kayaks, canoes – and you have a crowded water wonderland where speed and wash of larger boats can, and often do, cause problems.

Sheer numbers and contrasting purposes of water use is a constant test for Maritime Safety Queensland and its enforcement partners, the Queensland Water Police and Boating and Fisheries Patrol Officers.

“A challenge for us is to foster a transition



There's money in the water!

When gazing at the Gold Coast waterways, some see fun and relaxation. Others see profit.

Historically, the Gold Coast has attracted both cashed-up and cash-deprived entrepreneurs, many of whom are fixated with the water. All types of marine-based business, events and water toys are the norm. The Gold Coast is Queensland's tinsel town of marine activity.

"I reckon we've seen most businesses that could possibly be done on the waterways started at least twice in the past six years," said Manager of Maritime Safety on the Gold Coast, Iain Whitehouse.

"People are always coming up to the front counter saying, 'I've got this wonderful idea and need commercial registration'," he said.

Iain said that 'coffee tinnies' were a popular venture – people installing coffee-making equipment on an aluminum boat

and selling boat-to-boat on the Broadwater. "I think we've got our third lot of 'coffee tinnies' out there now," he said.

More interesting commercial ventures over the years include an 'Aquaduck' amphibious vehicle which carries tourists from land into the waters of the Seaway and back again. The vehicle requires road and water registration.

Sea planes and helicopters operate out of the Seaway. The sea plane lands in the same stretch of water used by houseboats and jet skis.

In all cases, the on-water activities of these businesses are regulated by Maritime Safety Queensland to ensure safe vessels and their operation.

The Gold Coast also attracts a vast array

of aquatic-based events. Everything from Formula One boat-racing to long-distance swimming events; filming of scenes for movies such as Peter Pan or Flipper, to filming of commercials for Nike.

On most weekends there is an event somewhere on Gold Coast waterways, often affecting the movement of boats. Special placement of navigation buoys and markers is often required. Placement and removal is performed by Maritime Safety Officers.

If new water toys such as kitesurfing come to Australia, often it's the Gold Coast where they are seen first.

And marine-based real estate, namely marina berths, is in high demand and continually rising in price, particularly since the slow down of canal development.



complaints, the recording of crime and trends of boating, Senior Sergeant Day said.

"As a team (with enforcement partners) we spend our time efficiently to get the highest productivity possible to reduce performance indicators such as marine incidents and the number of complaints from the community. We need to focus our resources so that we are in places where the offences are going to be committed. As a result, we issued 1200 marine infringement notices in the first 10 months of 2005."

Senior Sergeant Day said that the water police not only have the responsibility of monitoring recreational boating activity, but also water-based crime, for example, intercepting thieves who attempt unlawful entry into homes from canals.

Dangerous criminal activity aside, the waterways of the Gold Coast also have their share of natural dangers. All four coastal bars encourage a lot of offshore fishing and other boating activity, but can be treacherous and should only be crossed when the boat operator possesses local knowledge and conditions are suitable.

The most famous of these bars is the former Southport Bar, now known as the Gold Coast Seaway. Construction in the 1980s, costing

"Despite being over-represented in terms of boating numbers and activity, the Gold Coast currently reports low numbers of marine incidents compared to other regions in the state"

\$50 million, included the retaining of the bar through two rock groynes, forming a deepwater entrance which has improved safety for all craft.

A sand by-passing system which stops sand building-up in the Seaway costs \$750,000 per year to operate. Other dredging projects that provide safe boating access throughout the area have cost in excess of \$8 million since 1997.

There are also plenty of shifting sandbars throughout the Broadwater and river systems, and Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard are kept busy responding to boats run aground or with flat batteries, and at times, more serious incidents.

However, despite being over-represented in terms of boating numbers and activity, the Gold Coast currently reports low numbers of marine incidents compared to other regions in the state. But with boat registration numbers in the region tipped to continue

climbing, and even the possibility of a cruise ship terminal being built on the north tip of the Spit, careful management and planning is required to ensure order is maintained without taking the fun out of boating.

The Gold Coast Waterways Management Plan, released in 2000, outlines rules concerning waterskiing, freestyling (such as on jet skis), anchoring, mooring and living aboard boats.

For example, the plan outlines that anchoring and mooring north of the Gold Coast Seaways is restricted to a maximum of seven consecutive days in any 60-day period at any location, and freestyling is prohibited in all canals.

It is predicted that as the boating population of the Gold Coast region increases, speed management and restrictions applying to overnighting of larger vessels will need to be revisited.



Gold Coast Marine Precinct Marine-based industry converges

Just over seven years ago, the Gold Coast Marine Precinct was a dream. Today the reality of Australia's greatest concentration of marine-related industry is stark and inspiring. There are even peak hours on the roads leading in and out of the complex.

Take a stroll around the rows of waterside warehouses and you'll quickly see the full gamut of marine craft and equipment – from a tinny to a superyacht to a 30-year-old trawler being restored to her former glory. Many craft are housed in the myriad of sheds and factory sites or on hard stands; others are berthed in one of two marinas.

Boat building, refits, component manufacturing and a wide range of service industries – everything connected with boating is available or can be sourced within the 90 hectares of the 250 hectares of precinct land developed so far.

The rate of growth within the precinct since its beginnings in 1999 has surprised everyone, including representatives of industry and local and state government authorities who combined to plan and build the precinct.

Today, after an estimated \$175 million of private sector investment, 65 marine-based businesses employing over 2800 people populate the 90 hectare site located at Coomera.

World-renown companies such as The Riveria International Group, Mustang Cruisers and Sunrunner Cruises have set up manufacturing facilities. The list of nationally recognised companies is equally impressive. Only a shortage of skilled tradesmen and professionals has slowed the growth, fuelled

by national and international demand.

The Queensland government continues to fund a dredging program on the Coomera River to ensure the precinct is safely accessible to the many large vessels that come and go from the precinct.

The Gold Coast City Marina and Shipyard, the brainchild of Gold Coast identity Jeff Leigh-Smith is one of the two marinas in the precinct and accommodates 55 of the marine-based businesses within its 15 hectares. A 150-tonne ship lift-out facility at the marina means that superyachts can have refits, maintenance or pre-delivery work completed by various companies at the marina. Yachts from as far away as Port Lauderdale (USA) and Monaco have visited.

According to Dean Leigh-Smith, Executive Manager of the Gold Coast City Marina, the growth of the precinct is the result of careful planning and momentum created by having so many marine-based businesses working side-by-side.

"History has shown that marinas and shipyards have always been built out by residential encroachment," Dean said. "There is no residential land within this precinct, and there won't be from here to eternity – so this has given industry a chance to grow.

"It's a one-stop shop, working on the supermarket theory for boats. In the past, if you wanted to re-fit your boat, you may have



Above: Gold Coast City Marina boasts two purpose-built ship-lifts - a 40 and 150-tonne - both capable of lifting vessels with a beam of up to 10 metres.

asked several tradespeople to your house or wherever your boat was moored. Now, you can bring the boat here, and five or six or 10 different tradespeople from different businesses can work in sync together. All this can be planned so there is no wasted time or materials."

With over 3500 boats visiting or being moored at the marina each year, Dean said that the monitoring of safety and pollution within the marina is a key to its long-term sustainability.

"We are firm believers in keeping the waterways the way they are. We need to keep our waterways clean and green for our children's children."

The availability of sandblasting facilities and services at the marina, and the strict EPA-approved standards implemented in the process, contribute to protecting waterways, as does an ongoing commitment to promoting marine safety through the marina's publications and management of ship movements within the marina. Water sampling is consistently undertaken in and around the marina, checking for high readings of pollutants.

"We firmly believe that every family should have the opportunity to get on the water – whether in a canoe, a tinny with 10 hp motor, right next to the guy with the \$200 million superyacht," Mr Leigh-Smith said.

Other well-established marine industry precincts are located around Queensland, including in Brisbane, Mackay/Whitsundays and Cairns. State Development estimated that in total 7400 Queenslanders are employed in marine-related industries which contribute \$1.4 billion to the state's economy.



It's not a lifesaver unless you're wearing one

Used correctly, lifejackets save lives. More formally known as personal flotation devices (PFDs), lifejackets are the silent and often unheralded lifesavers on board vessels.

Their history can be traced back to blocks of wood or cork used by Norwegian seaman. Captain Ward of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute in the UK is credited for creating the first 'modern' PFD in 1854 when he assembled a cork vest to be worn by lifeboat crews for both weather protection and buoyancy.

Today's PFDs are sophisticated, purpose-built safety apparel. No amount of technology and development, however, alters the fact that lifejackets cannot save lives unless they are worn. Knowing when and where to make the decision to don life jackets is not governed by law, rather it depends on the preparation, and initiative of the boat's master.

It is estimated that 90% of deaths in boating result from drowning, and of these deaths, 80% of victims were not wearing a PFD. Contrast two marine incidents in Queensland's recent history that highlight the importance of wearing a PFD.

Last year, a family of five including three children, were rescued after almost three hours in the water in Torres Straits. Their five-metre fibreglass vessel sunk after a failed bailing attempt, but the father who was a professional fisherman, had ensured there were enough PFDs on board, including smaller sized for the children.

Because they had set out at night in unpredictable conditions, the father put PFDs on all three children from the start. The other lifejackets were easily accessible. Except for one of the children suffering mild hypothermia, all occupants were healthy when rescued.



The other incident occurred on one of Queensland's coastal bars. The 69-year-old master, who was a non-swimmer and not wearing a lifejacket drowned after the boat capsized. His 60-year-old female passenger survived. She was wearing a lifejacket.

The contrast between these events is clear. The type, number and condition of lifejackets on a boat are a requirement of law - that's only the start. It's how, when and where PFDs are used, all of which are presently at the operator's discretion, which can save lives — and there are well-identified situations in which lifejackets should be worn.

Each trip in a boat is different. Weather and water conditions need to be considered, as do the number of people on board, their experience on boats and their swimming ability.

Dark storm clouds on the horizon, a substantial increase in wind-speed, or crossing a piece of rough water such as a bar, are risk factors that need to be considered. And there is always the unexpected. For example, many people have drowned on calm fine days on inland waterways.

Many people consider compliant PFDs too bulky and uncomfortable to wear all the time. Lightweight, less obtrusive PFDs, including inflatable jackets which are approved under the Australian Standards are now on the market and can be worn with comfort and mobility.

Maritime Safety Queensland will be undertaking a review of lifejacket wearing requirements in early 2006. The review will look at the compulsory wearing of lifejackets in high-risk situations, and at all times for children under 12 years.

'Teak surfing' dangerous

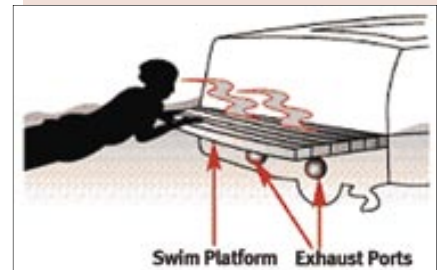
An emerging fad called "teak surfing" is highly dangerous.

Teak surfing, also known as platform dragging, involves an individual holding onto the swim platform of a boat as it accelerates, and then letting go to surf the wake. It is often performed without a life-jacket.

The danger of being struck by a fast-moving propeller is obvious, but the more sinister danger comes from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless, tasteless and highly toxic gas and is emitted from a boat's engine or generator exhaust outlets. As a result, even on a moving boat, carbon monoxide can accumulate anywhere in or around a boat, including around or under swim platforms, often made of teak (hence the term "teak surfing").

Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to dizziness, headaches, and sometimes unconsciousness. For a swimmer being pulled at high speed behind a boat without a life-jacket, this can be fatal.



Pre-departure PFD (life jacket) check-list

- Are there enough PFDs for everyone on board, and are they the correct size? Consider children.
- Are the PFDs the correct type for the waters you intend to travel through, for example, smooth, partially-smooth or open waters (see the Maritime Safety Queensland website or the Queensland Boating Safety Handbook).
- Do you intend to cross a coastal bar? If so, it is recommended that everyone on board don a lifejacket before the crossing.
- Are the PFDs in good repair? Check straps and buckles are working properly.

Damaged PFDs should be replaced.

- Does everyone on board know where the PFDs are stored and how to put them on? It may be necessary to demonstrate how to don a PFD, or before setting out, ask anyone who has never worn a PFD to practice.
- It is highly recommended that children under 12 or persons with limited swimming ability wear a lifejacket at all times.
- Are the PFDs easily accessible? Ensure they are not stored under lock-and-key or somewhere difficult to reach in an emergency.



Australian Builder's Plate soon here

From July 1 2006, all new recreational craft manufactured or imported into Australia will by law be required to show an Australian Builder's Plate (ABP).

National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) CEO Maurene Horder explained that the main aim of the ABP is to provide information to boat users on a boat's capability and capacity to encourage safer boating.

Ms Horder said that the introduction of the ABP will necessitate boat builders applying minimum safety standards to key elements in the design of recreational boats. She said an estimated 31,000 recreational boats registered each year will be impacted by the ABP.

"For the consumer, the ABP will make it easier for them to choose the boat that best suits their requirements – from the number of people they want the boat to carry to the horsepower that they need," Ms Horder explained.

The ABP, which applies to all new recreational boats including those imported into Australia, will make it easier for the buying public to compare new boats.

Two types of ABP have been developed – one for boats under six metres which includes a buoyancy statement, and one for boats six metres or more, which does not include a buoyancy statement.

From July 1 2006, new boats less than six metres must have either basic or level buoyancy, as inadequate buoyancy will no longer be acceptable.

- Basic buoyancy means the boat will float in some form if swamped in calm waters. This means the boat will remain afloat for occupants to hold on to the upturned hull.
- Level buoyancy means the boat will continue to float in an upright position if swamped in calm water. This may allow occupants to remain in the boat and bail the vessel to remove the water.

For more information on the Australian Builders Plate for recreational boats to the the NMSC website at www.nmsc.gov.au.



Marinas annihilated by Katrina



"Annihilated" was the word used to describe marinas along the Gulf Coast of the USA which were hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Though trivial compared to the destruction suffered by so many people in so many cities the picture (*above*) represents some of the damage caused by the storm's wrath.

It is a timely reminder for all boaties along Australia's northern coastlines to be vigilant and prepared for summer's cyclone season. Cyclone contingency plans are available from most Maritime Safety Queensland offices, and may assist you to plot a course of action in the event of a threatening cyclone.

New home for historic ferry

Officers from Maritime Safety Queensland's Cairns base assisted with the removal of the former Sydney ferry North Head to a private property near Trinity Inlet where it was settled into a specially-prepared bund pit.

The former Manly ferry, built in 1913 as Barrenjoey, appeared in Cairns in 2000. The owners intended to transform the vessel into a floating restaurant and conference facility at the Port Douglas Marina. These plans were eventually abandoned, and

the vessel lay rotting at Redbank Creek.

Maritime Safety Queensland moved it to the marine operations base wharf and began a long program of pumping around the clock to keep the vessel afloat. They also repaired structural damage to reinforce the hull's integrity. Despite their work the ship's condition deteriorated, so to avert environmental damage, avenues to remove the vessel from the wharf were investigated.

Proposals to sell the vessel for



scrap or as an artificial reef were among ideas considered however proved too costly.

After the North Head was advertised for sale on the internet in 2004, telephones at Cairns

Maritime Safety Queensland office ran hot with queries, some interested buyers offering to sell their homes to own a piece of maritime history.

This advertising eventually led local couple, George and Lisa Fay, to come forward with a novel proposal and in October 2005, the ferry was steered into a specially prepared pit on their property. The pit was filled-in and the couple plan to restore the vessel.

Engine bites skipper

One morning an early-rising skipper prepared for the coming day's schedule aboard a 17-metre timber monohull charter fishing vessel. The crew were still in bed.

The vessel was anchored in the leeward side of an outcrop on the Great Barrier Reef, approximately 90 nautical miles from the mainland, sheltered from 20-25 knot south-easterly winds.

The skipper commenced his routine of engine room checks prior to the start of another day's fishing. Suddenly, the vessel rolled violently causing the skipper to fall. He instinctively attempted to brace himself by extending his hand to stop his fall and, in doing so, placed his hand into the moving parts of the engine.

Two fingers were severed. An emergency call was made and a medivac rescue helicopter met the vessel. The skipper was airlifted to a hospital on the mainland to receive medical assistance for his injuries.

Lessons

- Owners of vessels must ensure that all moving parts of machinery are appropriately protected by guards to prevent contact with the engine.
- Crew members must be mindful of the dangers associated when working in the engine room of a vessel.
- Vessels must have adequate radio and telephone facilities in case of an emergency.
- All crew members must be appropriately trained in first aid. When a ship is at sea, the crew must be able to respond to any medical emergency as help is always some time away.

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

Bar crossing beaches boat

At 6.30am in the morning the waters of the Mooloolah River were quiet and serene. The boat was launched and the boys were off to sea for some hot fishing action in the bay.

The 4.8m fibreglass runabout powered by a 70hp outboard, made its way to the entrance of the Mooloolah River. The skipper had checked the weather forecast the night before and felt comfortable taking on a bar he had crossed several times previously.

Without pausing to assess that day's bar conditions, the skipper kept going. When about 100 metres into open water, a three-metre wave menaced the boat from the starboard side. The boat rolled to port causing the men, fishing equipment and eskies to be thrown out into the water.

When the men surfaced they saw that their boat had capsized. They clung to hull and were eventually rescued by another boat and taken back to shore. The incident was reported to the Coastguard.

Eventually, the boat beached on Mooloolaba Beach in a damaged and upturned state.

The lessons

- Crossing coastal bars is serious business and one of the most dangerous activities in boating; a Recreational Marine Drivers Licence does not instantly provide the boating skills necessary for difficult operations such as crossing a hazardous bar.
- Crossings of bars can be extremely hazardous, especially for the inexperienced. Good masters always take into account their personal experience and limitations, in addition to meeting regulatory requirements.
- You have to have a seaworthy boat with safety equipment readily accessible. It is preferable to have lifejackets on, because there is no time to put them on in a moment of crisis, and often, they will sink with the boat or be caught underneath an upturned boat.
- Have an understanding of how waves break and study where they are breaking before crossing, look for lulls and select a line of least wave activity.
- If you are not sure if you can get out and back in safely – don't go.
- Be aware, prepared and experienced – learn from a friend with experience before you try it solo – it could save your life.

The law and you

Airlie Beach initiative uncovers safety shortcomings

A seven-day initiative by Maritime Safety Queensland and its enforcement partners at Airlie Beach during October 2005 caught many local commercial operators unawares, as was intended.

Marine infringement notices and shipping inspector directions were issued.

The compliance initiative focused on large commercial passenger vessels operating out of Abel Point Marina and Shute Harbour, and was honed by using data collected from previous monitoring and passenger complaints.

The exercise proceeded on two fronts. Firstly, a number of government vessels intercepted ships at sea during normal operations. Secondly, a land-based compliance team scrutinised vessels in port.

The crew of the Water Police vessel the *Brett T. Handran* conducted random breath testing of vessel masters and crews, while the crew of the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol vessel *Edgecumbe* and the Maritime Safety Queensland vessel the *Phillip Gibson* inspected ships looking for breaches of Queensland's marine safety legislation.

John Watkinson, General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland said that despite complaints received from some operators whose vessels or operations were found to be non-compliant, he made no apology for the actions of enforcement officers.

"Vessels should not be proceeding to sea unless they are sea worthy, and that means compliant in all respects with the minimum regulatory requirements," Mr Watkinson said.

"The exercise sends a clear message that Maritime Safety Queensland will not tolerate those who fail to discharge their safety obligations.

"We owe this to the public and the good commercial operators who put safety management systems in place that exceed regulatory requirements.

"One thing is for certain – there will be more of these exercises, and their timing and location will not be disclosed. No port in Queensland is immune from this type of activity."

The following outcomes resulted from the Airlie Beach initiative:

- 30 out of 37 vessels identified as 'vessels of interest' were intercepted.
- 12 marine infringement notices were issued.
- The operations of five vessels were disrupted by the issuing of written directions when serious safety concerns were detected. Some were sent back to port.
- 40 ship inspections resulted in a significant number of non conformance detected, including insufficient or unsatisfactory safety equipment, unsafe electrical installations, absence of safety management documentation, crew licence and ship registration issues, and crew who had insufficient knowledge of their role and responsibilities in emergency situations.
- One owner was found to have neglected reporting a marine incident (fire on board).

The compliance initiative was held four years after two large commercial passenger boats the *Pride of Airlie* and the *Sun Paradise* collided in the Whitsunday Passage in calm seas, mild winds and high visibility. A Board of Inquiry investigating the incident described a "culture of complacency" within some sectors of the local commercial marine industry.

"Safety culture" pilot programs in Airlie Beach and Brisbane (refer to the October-December 2005 issue of *Seascope*) were launched as a direct result of the Board's findings. This carrot-and-stick approach is a planned, deliberate commitment by Maritime Safety Queensland, its enforcement partners, and leaders within the commercial marine industry to improve maritime safety outcomes, particularly in areas where commercial imperatives can sometimes erode sound safety practices.

"I would like to emphasise the good work that is being done in the Airlie Beach and Brisbane regions under the 'safety culture' pilot programs," Mr Watkinson said.

"They are the first programs of their kind in Australia and are further evidence of Queensland's leading role in the application of contemporary solutions to improve marine safety management and safety performance in the commercial marine sector."



New capacity labels available

They have been available for voluntary use since 1999, but on September 1 2005 capacity labels became compulsory for all recreational ships in Queensland. Failure to apply the appropriate capacity label to a recreational boat can result in a fine.



To coincide with this requirement, Maritime Safety Queensland released three new capacity labels late last year, and a new information brochure. Former labels still fulfil the requirement.

Three new smaller labels are available: Under six metres (including PWCs), over six metres and for boats with flybridges; and labels for inflatable boats are also available.

Instructions, tables and formulas for calculating your boat's safe capacity are included on the back of the new labels and on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Capacity labels are intended to reduce the risk of overloading of boats, which can easily lead to capsizing and drowning. The safe capacity shown on the labels represents the most number of people that can be carried safely on board. This number should be reduced in bad weather and in poor conditions.

The presence of an Australian Builder's Plate (*see story on page eight*) can negate the requirement to apply a capacity label, only if the plate and its details are clearly visible from each steering position on the boat. Regardless, Maritime Safety Queensland still recommends applying a capacity label to provide a highly visible reminder of your boat's safe capacity.

More information is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website www.msq.qld.gov.au under the 'safety' link.

PWC BoatSafe course now required

To gain a licence to ride a personal water craft, more commonly known as a jet ski, you now need to exhibit your ability to skilfully control these high-powered machines.

From January 1 2006 new applicants for a personal water craft (PWC) licence must successfully complete a BoatSafe PWC course with an approved BoatSafe Training Provider.

As with a BoatSafe course for a recreational marine driver licence, the course includes both class work and time on the water where riders will be asked to show they are competent in a range of handling skills.

To be eligible for a PWC licence a person must first hold a recreational marine driver licence or another recognised marine qualification.

The special licence to operate PWC is part of a state government jet ski management plan introduced in 2005.

The introduction of PWC training, testing and licensing is aimed at increasing the skills

and experience of operators so they are familiar and comfortable with the unique handling characteristics of these craft. It will also ensure that riders are aware of the various laws that apply specifically to their operation. Ultimately, the initiative should reduce the number of marine incidents involving PWC, and reduce conflict between operators, other waterways users and local residents.

Registered BoatSafe training providers are conducting PWC courses around the state. The duration and cost of courses will vary between training providers.

A full list of BoatSafe training providers authorised to conduct PWC courses is on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.



Readers' Questions ANSWERED

The EPIRB I currently have on my boat is a 121.5 MHz. It's still another three years before signals from these distress beacons are not monitored. Signals from the more advanced 406 MHz are being monitored now. Is there any good reason why I should consider changing over to the 406 MHz now rather than wait to 2009?

K.H.

Dear K.H.,

February 1, 2009 is the exact date that the analogue 121.5 MHz distress beacons will no longer be detected by satellite and will cease to operate. There are several reasons why you should consider changing now.

The digital 406 MHz distress beacon is detected in significantly less time and with greater accuracy than the 121.5 MHz.

A signal from a 406 MHz digital beacon can be detected within several minutes compared to the 121.5 MHz analogue beacon which averages 90 minutes for confirmed satellite detection.

As the 121.5 MHz beacon is based on analogue

technology it is unable to transmit information, other than an approximate positioning of a vessel of around 20kms. The 406 MHz beacon is digital technology and is able to transmit the position of a vessel within five kilometres. Those 406 MHz beacons with a built-in Global Positioning System can be pinpointed to within 120 metres.



The digital 406 MHz beacon (*left*) also transmits an identity code which is cross-referenced with the AusSAR (search and rescue) database of registered beacon owners (you submit this information on registering of the EPIRB). The identity code relays details such as

the owner of the vessel, vessel type and contact numbers, so AusSAR can verify the distress signal is genuine. This information will reduce the high number of false alarms saving the already stretched resources of rescue agencies.

At this stage, the 406 MHz EPIRB is more expensive than the 121.5 MHz EPIRB, however since the introduction of the 406 MHz beacon into the market, they have dropped to almost half the original retail cost. They are expected to fall even further.

More information on EPIRBs and distress beacons can be found on the Australian Maritime Safety Authority website www.amsa.gov.au and the Maritime Safety Queensland website www.msq.qld.gov.au.



Fire drill hones response



Everything was real except the fire and the casualties during a full scale fire drill held in the port of Cairns in October.

Representatives from five emergency response agencies took part in the exercise which was initiated and organised by North Queensland commercial shipping operator Seaswift.

The exercise focused on a mock fire aboard the M.V. Trinity Bay, Seaswift's flagship vessel which regularly carries passengers and cargo between Cairns and Cape York. Artificial smoke making equipment, supplied by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, added reality to the event.

One of the primary aims of the exercise was to practice and hone the coordination and communication between the different emergency response agencies and the Trinity



Bay crew. Readiness and effectiveness of emergency equipment was also tested.

In a real event, cooperation between all stakeholders during an emergency can be crucial and life-saving. For example, fire fighters or ambulance officers who board a vessel they have never seen before must rely on the knowledge the crew possess about the layout of the vessel's interior.

There were 13 crew and 35 passengers aboard M.V. Trinity Bay for the exercise. Ten passengers had imaginary smoke inhalation or injury. To create an unexpected scenario, which is often the case in real life emergencies, two people were reported missing late into the exercise, prompting a search of the vessel by officers wearing artificial breathing apparatus.

The mock fire was fought both from the wharf and from a Queensland Fire and Rescue ship.

All participating organisations – the Cairns Port Authority, the Regional Harbour Master and Cairns Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Ambulance and Queensland Police – and, of course, Seaswift, found the exercise beneficial.

2006 boating 'bible' now available

The latest edition of one of Queensland's premier free boating publication, The Guide to Recreational Boating and Fishing, is now available.

This comprehensive guide to general boating safety and fishing information for boaties is produced by Maritime Safety Queensland and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

To maintain the integrity and quality of the free publication, the handbook is updated and printed twice a year to reflect changes to maritime legislation and fisheries laws.

The handbook is available from Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres, Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices and numerous marine chandlery stores.



Upcoming events - 2006

FEBRUARY

- 9-10 Brisbane Industry Forum (Marine Board)
- 28 M.A.S.T. Day – Noosa

APRIL

- 6-7 Innisfail Marine Industry Forum (Marine Board)
- 7-9 Tinnie and Tackle Outdoor Show, RNA Showgrounds

MAY

- 18 Australian Marine Awards, Surfers Paradise
- 18-21 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, Sanctuary Cove
- 20-26 Fraser Island Fishing Competition

JUNE

- 8-9 Townsville Marine Industry Forum (Marine Board)

JULY

- 21-23 Farm Fantastic, Caboolture

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