

Seascape

Maritime Safety Queensland

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Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland

From the helm



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

Safety for vessels, the people on board, and the environment in which they operate, requires vigilance in all senses of the word.

Through a vigorous and on-going program that involves legislation, regulation and education, the Queensland Government has shown its commitment to protecting the safety of everyone using our waterways – from ships to tinnies.

The state budget in early June continues this dedication to safety for vessel owners and operators, not to mention the marine environment, with a \$17 million package of maritime-related measures that features heightened vigilance.

We're directing funds to communication technology to monitor and manage shipping along our coastline and in ports, as well as support the owners of more than 200,000 registered recreational vessels in Queensland.

Maritime Safety Queensland will use \$850,000 from the budget to install and upgrade automatic identification system base stations that recognise incoming ships in our ports and enable vessel traffic service centres to monitor and advise that traffic of any potential hazardous situation.

This will be boosted by a new vessel traffic management information system, for which \$2.6 million is provided in the budget. The system will electronically track shipping movements in ports.

And another \$1.1 million for further upgrades to the vessel traffic monitoring system, including installation of closed circuit television in Gladstone and Townsville.

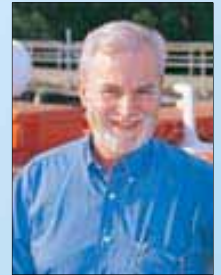
This will ensure up-to-the-minute information around the clock for all port users and their service providers such as tugs, shipping agents and businesses - this should be available by about the middle of next year.

Shipping and recreational boaters can be assured of improved communications and support should they get into trouble, through a \$250,000 payment that will complete a \$1 million upgrade of the VHF marine communications systems. Every responsible boater knows the importance of VHF emergency channels and is reassured by the fact they are monitored 24 hours per day for distress calls.

There are many other maritime initiatives in the budget, from education to pollution response capability and marine pilotage in regional ports, but the emphasis on communication technology is outstanding. Safe vessel movements require appropriate communication tools. In that way communications save lives and protect the marine environment.

The Queensland Government appreciates the importance of maritime safety and will maintain the highest standards in the interests of all users of our waterways.

Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland



Imagine crew members on the Endeavour working the capstan, half wanting to lower the anchor, the other half wanting to raise it. The result will be frustration, no progress and possibly several broken capstan bars. The Endeavour would either be adrift or stuck fast.

To raise a 2000 kg anchor and its chain with a capstan, all crew need to move in the same direction. The



combined effort of everyone makes a task that is impossible for an individual, achievable.

That's also the recipe for progress when it comes to improving training outcomes and safety standards within the marine industry. Industry and government must

work together not just in cooperation but in true collaboration to achieve a culture of safety for the industry.

The response to the Commercial Marine Industry Forum held on 1 June highlighted that the cooperation between the government, the commercial marine industry and training groups is robust, productive and fuelled by a desire for continual improvement.

The forum, planned, prepared and supported by the Brisbane Marine Safety Committee (representing industry) promoted the objective of improving safety standards in the commercial marine industry in the Brisbane region. One hundred representatives from across the maritime spectrum attended.

This was an outstanding response from the local industry and I was impressed by the sense of professionalism and commitment to improvement demonstrated by all of the industry participants at the forum.

Developing and nurturing an enduring culture of safety throughout industry is one of Maritime Safety Queensland's highest priorities, and it is pleasing to see that industry is following suit. The forum brought this into sharp focus for everyone who attended.

Cooperation does not mean parties are in continual agreement on every issue. After all we live in a society that is subject to rules and regulation and at times our inability to influence the nature of these laws can be frustrating. Then there are short-term commercial imperatives to consider, that are sometimes in conflict with long-term safety outcomes.

However, as illustrated by the launch of the competency-based training pilot program for Master Class 5 students (see page 10) at the forum, multiple benefits often spin-off from combined, focussed effort toward a common goal. Cooperation, and collaboration, can turn frustration into win-win situations.

World-leading port digs in for the future

A \$70 million project at Hay Point south of Mackay will ensure it remains one of the world's largest export coal ports.

Premier Peter Beattie earlier this year announced the dredging of the Hay Point departure path and the installation of four major single pile navigation beacons.

More than nine million cubic metres of materials will be removed to create a new 10 kilometre channel, 300 metres wide, to the depth of 14.9 metres LAT.

The project will increase Queensland's export capacity by enabling the largest coal carriers to load to their maximum draft, saving millions of dollars in freight costs.

The Dutch-registered trailing suction hopper dredger *WD Fairway*, at 232 metres long the world's largest vessel of its type, arrived on 8 May to spearhead the project. The vessel has a hopper capacity of 35,500 cubic metres and takes about five hours to fill and 10 to 30 minutes to empty the spoil. It will operate continually until around mid-September.

The dredger carries innovative features that minimise environmental impact from turbid waters generated during the dredging process.

Normal operations of the port will be maintained during the development program, with Hay Point's Port Vessel Tracking System playing a vital role in ensuring the continuing safe operations of the port.

Three port beacons and one starboard beacon will mark the departure path. The fairway beacon carries a tide board, tide gauge, radar beacon, an electronic weather station and a light. Equipment installed on the beacon will give technical officers the ability to change light sequences and monitor battery condition remotely, an important feature considering the exposed position of the beacons.



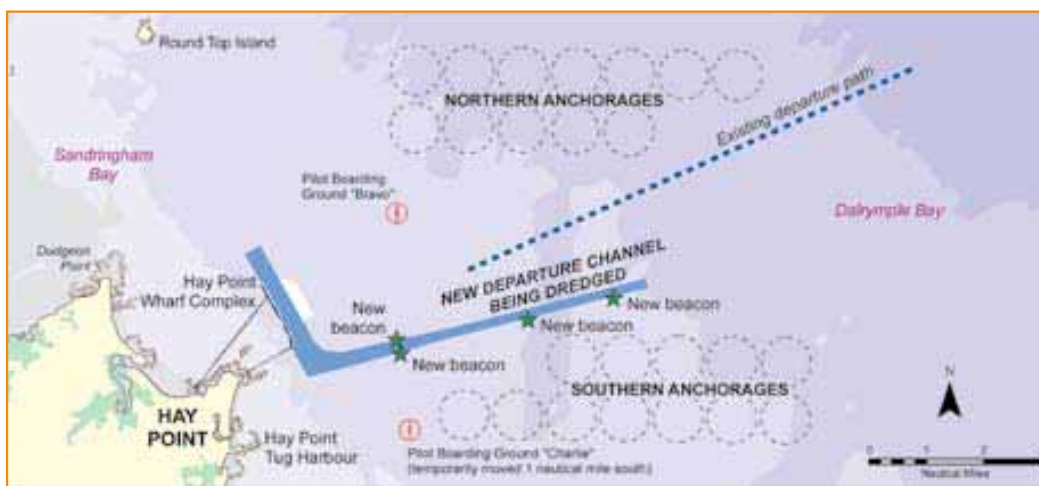
ABOVE: The world's biggest trailing suction hopper dredger, *WD Fairway* (top) arrives at Hay Point. Apart from dredging a deeper channel the project also includes the installation of four new beacons.

The beacons are also fitted with GPS synchronisation which will make pilotage of the departure path easier.

For those who like statistics: the beacon dimensions are two metres in diameter, 20 metres above LAT to light and 15 metres below LAT.

The harbour's safety procedures were tested in late May when a draghead was dislodged from the dredger early one morning and plunged into the apron area between the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal berths and the Hay Point Services berths at the port.

The dredging contractor immediately searched for the draghead and prepared for its retrieval since its position and the way in which it was sitting on the seabed threatened safe depths and therefore shipping movements.



Getting to know you

The Reef speaks

Col McKenzie

It is well known that while coral looks spectacular, it can't talk; but Col McKenzie can. Col McKenzie is a strong voice for the continued well-being of the world's greatest gathering of coral, Queensland's Great Barrier Reef.

With more than 20 years' experience above and below the water in commercial and government roles, Col's maritime experience is as colourful as the coral itself – and the ties he is infamous for wearing.

Colleagues in a number of organisations with which he's involved are familiar with Col's spectacular marine-themed ties and his enthusiasm for such issues as sustainability in marine tourism and better understanding of the impacts of marine safety legislation in the commercial sector.

Many would attest to Col's ability to talk underwater about such issues.

Col is Executive Director of the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operations, the peak body for marine tourism in Queensland, a member of Queensland's Marine Board, and serves on a number of other important marine-related associations, boards and networks.

As a jack-of-all-trades-cum-entrepreneur in the dive industry, Col has a panoramic, top-to-bottom perspective on Queensland's \$5.8 billion marine park tourism industry.

With over 63,000 people employed in tourism based on the Great Barrier Reef, the sector's economic and social importance to the state is vital, but according to Col such treasures need to be handled with care.

"Whatever we do on the Great Barrier Reef has to be sustainable," he said.

We have a great industry, and as long as we can keep the reef healthy and keep our products affordable, it's a fantastic future we are looking at – great for Queensland



ABOVE: Col and Margie McKenzie ... panoramic-like experience in the marine industry.

"My greatest concern is the reef is under so much threat that if we don't manage it wisely I doubt it's going to be there as we know it for my grandkids."

Most of Col's energy is spent lobbying government on behalf of the marine tourism industry.

Through his work as Executive Director of the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operations, he has seen the percentage of the Great Barrier Reef available to the industry decrease from 47 per cent to 33, a fact that plainly illustrates his commitment to the reef's long-term survival, even if it means a level of shorter-term pain.

"We have a great industry, and as long as we can keep the reef healthy and keep our products affordable, it's a fantastic future we are looking at – great for Queensland," he said.

"The challenge is to keep the reef healthy."

His strong views on protecting the reef have often placed him at odds with the fishing industry in debates on overfishing. He points to research from such bodies as the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the Reef Cooperative Research Centre to back his opinions on continuing to restrain fishing on the reef to ensure long-term sustainability.

Another area of keen interest for Col is the safe operations in marine tourism, an area into which he has direct input as a member of Queensland's Marine Board.

"Marine legislation is becoming more and more complex, and the challenge we have as members of the Marine Board is to break it down into plain English," he explains.





Maritime Safety Queensland farewells Captain Diack

“The unfortunate side is that sometimes legislation is written in such a prescriptive way that it can have unfortunate, unforeseen consequences for some operators.

“While we are trying to lift safety standards, we have to make sure that those standards are affordable. There is no point saying that we are going to improve training or safety standards and end up with an industry that is no longer economically viable.

“For me the most influential of the committees I am on is the Marine Board – we really see things being done and we can influence outcomes. The board is a good conduit for the industry to make sure their opinions are heard during the planning of new legislation.”

Col’s association with the ocean and the marine industry began as a teenager, spear-fishing at various spots around south-east Queensland such as Caloundra and Double Island Point. When he left the Australian Army in 1984 after 13 years, he turned his hobby into a second career.

Over the next 22 years he and his wife Margie owned and operated diving and commercial marine businesses.

Starting with a small retail store selling recreational scuba equipment, the McKenzies have since ventured into successfully operating an accommodation hostel on Moreton Island, a travel agency, a dive excursion business with offices in Cairns and Cape Tribulation, and an international scuba education wholesaler and training business based in eight countries, and several other businesses besides.

Today he concentrates on his role in the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operations and as a consultant to various marine businesses and entities.

“I wouldn’t trade my job for anything,” he said.

“I enjoy the political cut-and-thrust and trying to get the best benefits for my industry.

“The unfortunate side is the busier you get the more often you spend in the office doing paperwork and not at sea doing the hands-on. I haven’t even done enough practical sea work over the past five years to keep my Master Class 5 ticket valid.”

An experience with a pod of humpback whales off Moreton Island was the most “hands-on” and greatest marine experience of his life. The meeting occurred as he surfaced from a dive – and he hastens to add, well before such close encounters became illegal.

“For about two and a half hours they just played with us. They were literally lifting us with their fins – these massive creatures,” he said.

“They initiated the contact – it was a fantastic experience.”

After a distinguished career spanning 28 years in the public service, Captain Arthur Diack retired in April as Deputy General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland.

Captain Diack spent 22 years at sea on board British and Australian ships before joining the Queensland public service in 1978.

Working for the former Department of Harbours and Marine and its successors Queensland Transport and Maritime Safety Queensland, his career encompassed port administration, marine pilotage, survey of registered ships, administration of marine safety and pollution legislation, cyclone preparedness and contingency planning, and marine incident investigation.

For 19 years he contributed as chairman and voluntary worker to The Missions to Seafarers in the Port of Brisbane, providing essential “home away from home” support for visiting seafarers, through spiritual and personal support.

The General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland, Captain John Watkinson, said that throughout his career Captain Diack had displayed



ABOVE: Captain Arthur Diack accepts a parting gift from Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager, Captain John Watkinson.

the finest qualities of a senior public service officer.

“He was an example for junior officers to aspire to, and is highly regarded by his peers and members of the maritime community for both his professional and personal qualities,” Captain Watkinson said.

In 2002 Captain Diack received a Queensland Transport Australia Day award for his service to the maritime industry and community.

All the staff of Maritime Safety Queensland wish Arthur and his wife Beverley well in their retirement.



Recreational boating survey underway

Maritime Safety Queensland is currently surveying owners of recreational vessels throughout the state to gain a better understanding of their views and knowledge on maritime safety issues.

Data collected will be used to tailor future education programs and infrastructure planning. All participants will go into the draw to win several marine safety prizes.

Printed surveys will be sent with boat registration renewals for about eight weeks starting in the first week of June. Anyone whose boat’s registration renewal falls outside of this period can still have their say through the same survey available on Maritime Safety Queensland’s website. Go to the home page and follow the link.

The law and you



Agencies hit rogue jet ski activity

In March-April this year, Maritime Safety Queensland cracked down on illegal recreational boating activity and “anti-social” behaviour by jet ski riders at the southern end of the Gold Coast.

A compliance team from the agency was joined in the six-week operation by officers from the Queensland Water Police and the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.

Jet ski compliance unit member, Mark Alen, said the joint marine safety initiative culminated in 18 infringement notices being issued over a three-day operation at Tallebudgera and Currumbin Creeks.

“The operation was focussed predominately on jet ski compliance at Currumbin Creek but it ended up that quite a few small boat operators also got caught for speeding and other offences,” Mr Alen said.

In preparation for the campaign, inspectors quietly observed boating and jet ski activity in the area to identify peak times, places and particular behaviour problems. They determined that speeding and jet skis riders ignoring distance-off requirements, particularly from people in the water, were the main areas of interest.

Maritime Safety Queensland called in its enforcement partners who followed up individual patrols with a joint agency campaign over two weekends in mid-April at Currumbin and Tallebudgera Creeks.

During that crackdown, 78 vessels were intercepted including 35 jet skis and 18 marine infringement notices were issued for offences such as speeding, non-registration and incorrect safety gear.

Several operators in boats less than 4.8 metres in length received warnings about new lifejacket wearing requirements, which became effective on 1 April, making the wearing of personal flotation devices compulsory when crossing a declared coastal bar such as Currumbin.

People receiving a marine infringement notice can face fines up to \$375. Repeat offenders risk having their Recreational Marine Driver Licence suspended or cancelled.

This joint marine safety operation has been successful and it certainly ensured jet ski and boat operators were a lot better behaved by the end of this particular campaign.

It just shows what can be achieved by targeting and ‘managing’ those few hoons out on the water who risk not only their own lives, but endanger others with their irresponsible behaviour.



Compliance partners come together

In June, the sixth annual Maritime Compliance Forum was held in Mackay.

Over 70 delegates attended from a broad range of departments and agencies, all having an active interest in improving the state’s marine safety outcomes.

Enforcing Queensland’s marine safety laws is a multi-agency task involving Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and

Queensland Water Police.

Representatives from NSW Maritime, SEQ Water and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority also attended the conference which was organised by Maritime Safety Queensland’s Compliance Unit.

The forum gave delegates an opportunity to discuss improving collaboration between organisations and to reflect on the effectiveness of past compliance initiatives.

Licence suspension streamlined

Those who intentionally and seriously violate maritime safety laws take note: the courts of Queensland will have the power to suspend or cancel your marine licence. This applies to all recreational and commercial marine licence holders.

Previously, Maritime Safety Queensland was restricted to a lengthy “show cause” process before it was able to suspend or cancel a licence, even if an offender or their vessel was an immediate danger to themselves, the general public or the environment.

Unless a person had caused a marine incident, they were free to continue operating a ship until the show cause process had been concluded.

New powers under the recently-proclaimed Maritime and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006, mean courts will have the power to suspend or cancel licences

for a range of serious offences such as breaches of the safety obligation, safety equipment requirements or unsafe operations, as well as dangerous operations of a ship and drink driving offences.

The new regime also allows courts to place restrictions on an operator’s licence, bringing maritime law in line with laws governing motor vehicle licences.

Other changes to legislation will ensure owners are held accountable for the ongoing safety and seaworthiness of their vessels. With over 200,000 registered boats and fast-approaching 600,000 licence holders across the state, it is up to everyone who uses Queensland’s waterways to ensure that they remain safe and that the marine environment is protected.



Australian made and imported recreational boats under six metres, built after 1 July this year, should have either basic or level flotation, under the new marine safety initiative that has the support of all states.

“Flotation is one of the key elements of the Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats (ABP), which will be introduced into legislation around Australia,” explained National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) CEO Maurene Horder.

Ms Horder explained that the ABP details a boat’s capacity and capability to encourage safer boating.

“If you are buying a new boat, the ABP makes it easier to choose one that best

suits your needs, allowing you to compare the amount of gear and people that can be carried, engine rating and weight and, if the boat is under 6 metres, buoyancy performance.

“This will mean smaller recreational boats will float in some form if swamped, as, under the ABP standard,” Ms Horder explained.

All smaller boats must have at least basic flotation. Ms Horder pointed out that people buying a boat should be aware of the buoyancy characteristics and take this into account when deciding on the best boat for them.

You wouldn’t from a caravan, would you?

It’s a no brainer for caravan and mobile home owners - you empty your toilet’s holding tank into the facilities at the caravan park, not on the side of the road, or in the caravan park itself.

For the new manager of Mooloolaba Marina, Mark West, installing a sewage pump-out facility as part of the marina’s re-development is common sense. The facility is one of a growing number throughout the state.

With a long history in caravan park management, including managing the state’s biggest park at nearby Cotton Tree, Mr West installed the system at the marina to give yachties and boaties the option to comply with marine pollution laws with a minimum of fuss.

“For me it’s just boats instead of caravans,” Mr West said.

“The facility is for cruising boat owners who have been at sea, who are diligent and don’t want to pump the waste into the ocean.

“About 15% to 20% of tenants at the marina are living on their boats, but they tend to use the amenities block.”

The mobile pump-out facility is part of the marina’s new development, scheduled for



completion in August this year, adding 70 new berths on two additional fingers.

The mobile pump can be wheeled to any boat at the marina, and the contents then pumped into a purpose-built onshore disposal point.

Mr West said Maroochy Shire Council preferred this method to a static pump-out facility in the marina itself where boats would pull alongside.

With a static facility, large amounts of saltwater are required to transfer sewage to council systems, and this can be detrimental to machinery in sewage treatment plants.

EPIRB abuse is expensive

Maritime Safety Queensland scored a major win in May when a court imposed a hefty fine and compensation totalling more than \$30,000 for improper use of a distress signal on a commercial vessel.

The Magistrates Court in Mackay convicted a deckhand and fined him \$5000 as well as ordering him to pay nearly \$25,000 for the cost of a search and rescue operation launched when he activated an emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB).

The court heard Brett Douglas Jamie, 25, had simply wanted to get to shore off the trawler *Nizam* after it had headed out from Gladstone on 4 August, 2004.

Three days later the master was awoken by a helicopter overhead and ascertained from Jamie that he had activated the EPIRB. The master immediately radioed the pilot of the aircraft and informed him that there was no emergency. The pilot returned to Mackay but a Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol vessel continued out to the *Nizam* to investigate the activation of the EPIRB.

Jamie told the QBFP officers he had been scared of falling off the fishing vessel. However, he declined their offer to convey him ashore.

The prosecution told Acting Magistrate Ron Muirhead that Jamie had acknowledged his situation was not an emergency and said that setting off the EPIRB probably wasn’t the “right thing to do”. Jamie admitted that he had not tried to cancel the activation or notify the master about what he’d done.

Jamie was charged under the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 for using a prescribed signal of distress in a way other than prescribed. Jamie had not entered a plea and did not attend the hearing, which was conducted ex-parte*.

Acting Magistrate Muirhead described the seriousness of the offence as “the top end of the scale”, especially as there appeared to be no justification for Jamie’s action.

A heavy penalty was imposed, in default 80 days’ imprisonment, as a deterrent to anyone thinking about unnecessarily activating an EPIRB, he said.

* Where a person has been summonsed to appear and fails to answer the summons, the hearing can proceed in their absence, or ex-parte. This involves the court hearing the facts of the case and determining that the charge has been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

Learning from marine incidents



Reported marine incidents stable

The number of reported marine incidents remained stable in Queensland last year, despite the continued strong growth in ownership of registered recreational vessels.

Maritime Safety Queensland's annual analysis of reported marine incidents, tabled in May, shows that throughout the state, boats were involved in 633 reported marine incidents during the year – exactly the same number as the previous year.

These incidents resulted in 12 deaths, also the same as the year before.

Recreational vessels were involved in 10 of these deaths, including four incidents involving speedboats and two that involved jet skis.

Of the total number of incidents, 289 or more than 45% occurred in the densely-populated Brisbane and Gold Coast regions.



Collisions between vessels and unintentional groundings dominated the incidents, 49 of which resulted in deaths or serious injury, five more such incidents than in 2004. Fatalities occurred in 10 of them, and 45

people suffered serious injuries that required them to be taken to hospital – seven more than in 2004.

Human factors contributed to more than 75% of the 49 incidents that involved deaths or serious injuries, with inattention identified as the culprit in 38% of the incidents. By far the majority of incidents – 298 of them – occurred in smooth waters.

Of the 49 incidents that resulted in fatalities and serious injury, 25 occurred in the Brisbane and Gold Coast regions.

On the other hand, the south east region of Queensland is one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia. Queensland's population growth is a little over 2% per annum, but the annual rate of growth in recreational vessel registration in Queensland is more than double that – about 5%.

More than one in every 15 people over the age of 15 years now owns a boat in Queensland.

The full report can be viewed on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.



For the first time, the Marine Incident Report is available on CD and can be ordered by emailing name and postal address details to: maritime.safety@msq.qld.gov.au

Look before you leap!

A family hired a dinghy for a family day out on the water.

The boat hire company said the man who was to drive the boat was given a thorough briefing to ensure he understood the features of the boat and the area where it would be used.

The dinghy had an inboard motor with no gearbox and a rudder to steer. While on the water, the mooring rope became entangled on the rudder of the dinghy.

The man tried to clear the rope with his hand without any success. He then lowered his daughter into the water to try to remove the rope. As she was lowered into the water her foot was struck by the still turning propeller, driven by the motor that the skipper had left running. She was badly cut and had to be admitted to hospital.

The rope was eventually removed using an oar and the boat returned to the hire company on shore.

Lessons

- Ensure you are familiar with the propulsion system on your vessel.
- If the engine does not have a gearbox, be aware that the propeller can be turning while the engine is running.
- Don't use a child to do an adult's job. Removing entanglements of any kind is dangerous and should only be attempted by well-equipped and cautious adults.

Not a lifesaver unless you are wearing it!

On a pleasant Friday evening, the owner of a 30-foot timber cabin cruiser decided to go fishing for the weekend. With a friend on board as his deckhand and his trusty dog, they set out.

During the night, the boat's engine stopped and the man dropped anchor to assess the problem. As he looked around, he discovered the rear deck of his boat was underwater and not long after, the boat sank.

Both men abandoned ship, but did not put on their life jackets. In the dark, the men hung on to floating debris and were eventually separated by tidal currents.

The deckhand managed to find a life jacket floating in the water and eventually put it on. After several hours, he drifted onto the mainland and raised the alarm the next day. Sadly, the body of the boat owner was found the next day.

Lessons

- A Personal Flotation Device is a mariner's best friend.
- Personal flotation devices should be easily accessible for every person on board the boat.
- If there is any doubt about the watertight integrity of the boat, a Personal Flotation Device should be put on straight away.
- If there is time to put on a Personal Flotation Device, don't abandon ship without one.

The “Met Bureau” - a boatie’s best friend

From the earliest weather records kept by mariners who came to our shores, the importance of understanding the dynamics of Australia’s ever-changing climate is clear.

The science of our weather is the core business of the national Bureau of Meteorology. It provides essential marine weather services for everyone putting to sea. Forecasts and warning services, originating from capital city regional offices, are available to boaties around Australia’s considerable coastline, as well as local area water services in selected regions.

The bureau’s forecasts and warnings, data-gathering systems and services are as sophisticated as any in the world. On ocean-going tankers and liners, yachts and tinnies, skippers rely on the information from the bureau to make decisions before and during a journey.

Among these critical services are:

Routine coastal water forecasts for areas within 60 nautical miles of the coast. They are issued by Regional Forecasting Centres in each capital city several times daily and changes are monitored continuously.

Routine high seas forecasts issued twice daily by the Regional Forecasting Centres in Perth, Darwin, Brisbane and Melbourne for the areas beyond the coastal waters surrounding Australia.

Warning for coastal waters issued whenever strong winds, gales, storm or hurricane-force winds are expected. The initial warning attempts to give a 12- to 24-hour lead-time and warnings are renewed every six hours.

Warnings to shipping on the high seas issued whenever gale, storm or hurricane-force winds are expected. The initial warning attempts to give a 12- to 24-hour lead-time and warnings are renewed every six hours.

The bureau in Queensland also issues forecasts and warnings for the Great Barrier Reef Offshore Waters (Bowen to Yeppoon, abutting the 60 nautical mile coastal waters boundaries). Its Rockhampton office covers the Keppel Bay Waters area.

The boating fraternity can get access to marine weather statements by a range of media including recorded telephone services, Internet, facsimile, satellite communications, HF and VHF radio, as well as ABC and commercial radio and television.

HF radio broadcasts of marine weather such as forecasts, warnings and observations can be received according to a published schedule from station VMC at Charleville. Some bureau offices, Coast Guard and VMR units make VHF broadcasts, either on schedule or as-requested.

The Queensland Manager of Public and Marine Weather Services, John Harris, said the marine VHF broadcasts out of the bureau’s Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton offices, were a valuable interaction between boaties and the bureau.

“The marine VHF broadcasts are two-way, allowing boaties to ask the bureau questions or to inform the bureau of conditions on the water - and also, of conditions that might not, perhaps, be reflected in the forecasts,” Mr Harris said.

Be weather aware

While the Bureau of Meteorology strives to provide accurate forecasts and warnings there is no replacing responsible precautions taken by a boat operator. For example:

- know the local factors that influence sea conditions and know where to reach shelter quickly;
- be aware that weather maps and forecasts in the morning newspaper are prepared the previous day;
- be aware that the wind and sea conditions given in forecasts and warnings are for ‘mean’ or average conditions; actual wind speeds might be up to 40% higher than the mean figure, and actual wave heights could be up to twice the forecast height;
- check the latest forecast and warnings before going to sea;
- know what conditions exceed your safety limits;
- beware rapidly darkening and lowering clouds – squalls might be imminent;
- when at sea, listen to the weather reports on public or marine radio; and
- be flexible – change your plans if necessary.

“The Bureau of Meteorology does not end its service to boaties with forecasts, warnings and observations.

“We regularly attend boat shows, deliver presentations to marine organisations and clubs, conduct media crosses with up-to-the-minute forecasts and comments, present pre-race briefings for events such as the Brisbane-to-Gladstone Yacht Race, and talk at open-to-the-public seminars such as ‘Weather on Water’ in conjunction with Maritime Safety Queensland.

“We are also the instigator and co-ordinator of a total of six Marine Weather Services Consultative Committees from Cairns to the NSW border.”

These committees involve many other marine organisations (including Maritime Safety Queensland) and key industry individuals. The committees are a conduit between the bureau and the marine industry, and have helped to establish, and verify the need for vital weather forecasting and warning services, as well as observation sites along the Queensland coast.

The bureau gathers and stores data on marine-site observations, and ocean surface and sub-surface conditions that help accurate forecasting and research.

Maritime Safety Queensland offers a Maritime Weather Service through a 1300 number at the cost of a local call anywhere in Queensland. See the MSQ website for details and 1300 numbers.

Commercial training makes sea-change

A recently-launched training scheme in Brisbane could be the first step towards improved training in the maritime sector, boosting job opportunities and reducing costs for marine-based businesses.

The pilot scheme solves a number of long-standing challenges in delivering quality, competency-based maritime training.

It's new, radical and the result of unprecedented cooperation between key players who see eye-to-eye on one thing – the need to attract and keep top people in the maritime sector.

Industry, private and public training institutions, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, Maritime Safety Queensland, the Department of Employment and Training and others are uniting forces for the purpose of effectively passing on skills and knowledge to the next generation of mariners.

The pilot, the first of its type in Australia, offers Master Class 5 students a broader and deeper range of on-the-job experience, and at the same time, saves employers the cost and disruption to their operation when they release crew to attend a block course at a land-based training facility.

In the past, some students have been forced to resign from full-time work in order to become qualified.

It is expected that the first cohort of 30 students – half from the fishing and half from the commercial sector – will start in early August.

Ken Wiltshire from Maritime Safety Queensland said the idea behind the pilot program is simple: get students out of

Pilot scheme could change the face of maritime training

the classroom and give them on-the-job experience in as many real life settings as possible.

Traditionally Master Class 5 students require up to nine consecutive weeks in a classroom. Through the pilot program this will be replaced with an integrated skills/knowledge approach.

This will combine a series of 30 single-day, on-the-job workshops over eight months, exposing students to a range of settings, giving them the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge, completing mandatory tasks in the workplace.

Workshops for the commercial sector will be held on weekdays, with workshops for the fishing sector on Saturdays.

Mr Wiltshire said in the past this practical method, though widely acknowledged as necessary, was unattainable because most training organisations lack the funds or infrastructure to carry it out.

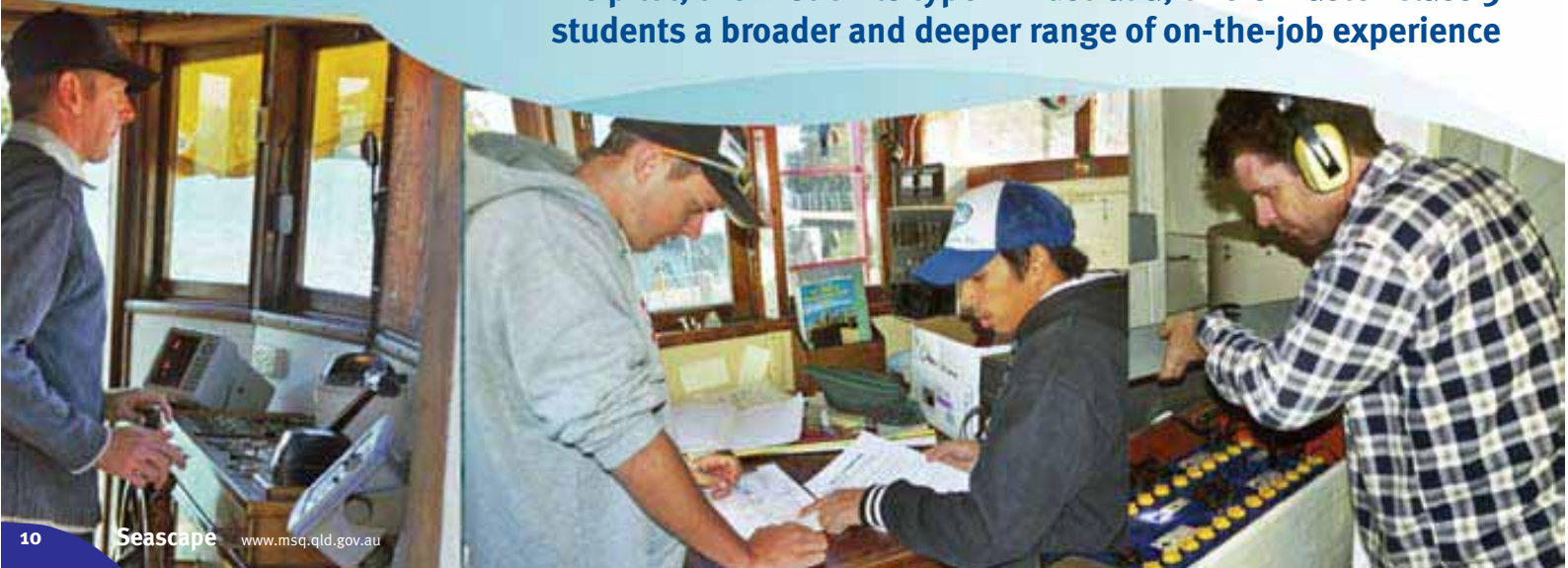
Cooperation between maritime-based businesses has overcome this obstacle.

“Industry has come on board and commercial ship owners are actually putting their vessels forward to give these students exposure to different types of operations,” Mr Wiltshire said.

“We will give course participants exposure to different vessels and in doing so broaden their knowledge of commercial ship operations.

“The Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service (ROPES) Book will be used by course participants to support this approach

The pilot, the first of its type in Australia, offers Master Class 5 students a broader and deeper range of on-the-job experience



Advantages of pilot training scheme:

- Gives students a broader and deeper range of on-the-job training.
- Relieves employers of the inconvenience and financial burden of sending a crew member to a course running nine consecutive weeks. Instead, training is spread over eight months.
- Is competency-based and recognises the previous experience of the participants.
- Values the skills and knowledge of those in the workforce, giving them the opportunity to pass these on to the next generation.
- Gives owner/operators who perform training the opportunity to reflect on their own practices.
- Trials model assessment tools developed by Maritime Safety Queensland in consultation with industry, designed to promote consistency and integrity in assessment processes.



and encourage the completion of specific tasks in the work environment.

“We also have a number of major ship builders and repairers within the Brisbane Region offering their facilities and expertise in support of the pilot.

“Access to these facilities will bring students face-to-face with the problems and challenges associated with a vessel operator’s responsibilities in the area of programmed maintenance.”

During the course of the pilot program the full range of competencies required for successful completion of the Master Class 5 will be covered off. Students will be briefed on their workplace responsibilities and the theoretical aspect of the workshop in the classroom before they go on site.

The pilot is being delivered by Brisbane North Institute of TAFE at the Gateway Campus and would not have been possible without the support of John Armstrong’s Australian Maritime Training Centre.

Faculty Director of Brisbane North TAFE, Gordon Elledge, said that TAFE had made radical changes to their teaching and assessment methods to make the pilot scheme possible, for example, holding workshops on Saturday. The scheme’s immediate and continued success hinged on TAFE’s determination to maintain such a change, and also on solid commitment from industry.

“We at TAFE have taken the blinkers off and are thinking competency-based training in the fullest sense,” he said.

“But industry needs to take ownership of training for this to be successful.

“We need qualified, competent people on vessels or in the workplace becoming mentors. That’s not only passing on skills and knowledge, but allowing the students time to actually do the work on the job.

“For example, giving the students the opportunity to take control of the vessel, dock it or fuel it – whatever they need to do for that particular competency.”

Industry representatives involved in the pilot could get access to free mentoring workshops offered by TAFE before and during the scheme.

“This is an opportunity to trial this format,” Mr Elledge said.

“After the pilot finishes we’ll evaluate warts-and-all, grab the good bits and iron out the bad ones so it can become better.”

The pilot program is an initiative of the Brisbane Marine Safety Committee, a body representative of industry and government.

Mr Wiltshire congratulated Richard Matterson (Chairman of the Committee) and his dedicated team for introducing such an important scheme.



Marine safety conference news

The Marine Safety Conference 2006 to be held at the Gold Coast International Hotel from 12–14 September, will highlight significant safety issues for the recreational and commercial maritime sectors.

“This is an opportunity for the industry to come together to discuss how we can make our waterways safer,” explained organiser and National Marine Safety Committee chief executive Maureen Horder.

“A recent study by the committee shows watercraft cause more serious accidents each year than heavy transport vehicles, buses, aircraft, train or trams.”

The *Serious Injury Due to Water Transport Accidents Australia* report published last year, based on hospital data, found that between 1999 and 2003, about 2572 people were seriously injured in water transport accidents, with an average 12 new cases per week nationally.

“This is the fifth Marine Safety Conference organised by the committee and it gives government and industry the opportunity to put marine safety issues on the national agenda.”

International experts as well as Australian government and industry representatives will speak at the conference.

Professor Michael Tipton from the University of Portsmouth in the UK, who wrote *Essentials of Sea Survival*, will be a key note speaker.

The first day will concentrate on recreational boating. With about one million recreational boats registered in Australia, this sector constitutes significant maritime activity.

Recreational topics to be featured include: marine incident investigation; a debate on Personal Flotation Devices; legislative measures for preventing alcohol-related drowning; understanding the bureau of meteorology’s forecasts; and the industry’s skills shortage.

The second day of the conference will be dedicated to the commercial sector, with discussions on the National Standard for Commercial Vessels, search and rescue; training and safety in the fishing industry; and safety management systems.

The third and final day will feature the Australian Maritime Safety Authority Shipping Symposium, site visits to local Gold Coast boat manufacturers and presentations on environment and legislation.

For more information about the Marine Safety Conference 2006, go to the National Marine Safety Committee’s website, www.nmsc.gov.au and follow the links.

Late news

Safety comes first at Fraser



With 277 registered boats at this year's Fraser Island Fishing Competition, all of them jostling for the best fishing spots, safety was a high priority.

For the 15th year in a row, Maritime Safety Queensland representatives were on hand at Fraser Island to remind everyone that whether they're engaged in fierce competition or having fun on the water, they must operate their boats safely.

Over the four days, Maritime Safety Queensland was a constant presence at the competition, from the safety briefing given to all competitors before the official fishing begins to the daily patrolling of the gutter as boats head to sea and return.

All skippers were required to log in and out with the marine safety radio centre, run by Maritime Safety Queensland from the Waddy Point camping grounds. Failure to do so meant disqualification from the day's competition.

The busiest day saw 235 boats launched in the surf gutter, navigating breaking surf and shallow sand banks to gain access to offshore waters. A capsizing can result if the wave patterns are misjudged or a breakdown occurs.

The agency gave out daily awards, sponsored

by Century Batteries and Pains Wessex, to competitors who demonstrated boating safety excellence. For example, one skipper received an award after he stopped fishing to assist another competitor in distress.

Maritime Safety Queensland's Senior Marine Operations Officer at Urangan, Cliff Cockburn, said most skippers "did the right thing".

"They understand and fulfil their general safety obligation," he said. "However Maritime Safety Queensland's education boat is on hand to tow boats that run into difficulties back to shore."

The radio crew logged on 790 boats over the six days, each boat carrying a crew of at least three persons. Considering the number of boats going to sea, the number of breakdowns were minimal and with no incidents occurring in the gutter, the professionalism of skippers was to be commended.

Next year's Toyota Fishing Expo is scheduled for the 19-25 May 2007.



Sanctuary Cove booms

The 2006 Sanctuary Cove Boat Show was the biggest and best ever, says the show's manager, Harry Davis.

The show, which ran from 18 to 21 May, is recognised as one of the largest shows of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and is renowned as one of the only boat shows in the world to feature superyachts.



Well over 400 exhibitors, including joint-sponsor Maritime Safety Queensland, occupied a combination of marina and hard stand space to show a huge range of marine-oriented products. The value of available boats ranged from \$A1300 to \$A13 million.

More people attended the show this year than last year, with the Saturday being the biggest hit. Initial feedback indicated that organisers had achieved their goal of attracting people who were there to spend money.

This year's show again attracted significant attention from overseas visitors, including the first contingent of maritime industry representatives from China.

Staff on the Maritime Safety Queensland stand fielded thousands of questions over the four days, the hot topics being capacity labels for recreational boats and new life jacket laws.

The Honourable Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas MP, attended a special breakfast on the Friday to present the Marine Manufacturing Innovation Award, sponsored by the Department of State Development, Technology and Innovation.

This year's award went to Polycraft from Bundaberg for advanced roto moulding technology, extensive design research and practical testing.

Upcoming events - 2006

JULY

18-20 Crocfest, Weipa

AUGUST

4-6 Gold Coast Home Show and Outdoor Adventure Expo

6-7 Caloundra, Coastguard Classic Boat Regatta

17-18 Cairns Industry Forum (Marine Board)

31 - Sept 5 Brisbane Boat Show

SEPTEMBER

12-14 Marine Safety Conference, Gold Coast

New Marine Information Bulletins

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

- Compass Adjusters
- Draft for public comment - Australian Standard, personal flotation devices.

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