



Hitting a turtle is trouble

The master of a fishing trawler that collided with a boat from the Royal Australian Navy, being manned by a Queensland Police officer, was fined and convicted in a Brisbane court.

The incident happened when the Navy diving operation ship, *Turtle*, was anchored in Moreton Bay with a Code A flag displayed, signifying the presence of divers.

Meanwhile, the *Nessa Jane* was travelling in a northerly direction at about six knots with both stabiliser arms deployed horizontally.

No-one on *Turtle* noticed the approaching *Nessa Jane* until it was about 100 metres away. The Master of the *Nessa Jane* heard several blasts of the *Turtle's* horn and took last minute, but futile, evasive action.

Although no one was injured, the *Turtle* sustained damage to its wheelhouse, guard rails, deck and life raft. The coxswain on the *Turtle*, a Detective Sergeant with the Queensland Water Police, boarded the *Nessa Jane* and engaged the master in a conversation.

In court, the master of the *Nessa Jane* admitted that in hindsight, he was not maintaining an adequate watch, was convicted for breaching four Collision Regulation Rules, and was fined \$2000.



Pair prosecuted over marine pollution incident

The master and skipper of a 14m timber-hulled fishing trawler were prosecuted late last year after their boat sank causing marine pollution at Rosslyn Bay, Yeppoon.

Previous to the incident, the trawler “Kerry K” was in a long-term state of disrepair and was unseaworthy. The harbour master immediately commenced oil pollution containment procedures after the submerged vessel began to leak diesel fuel into the harbour.

Maritime Safety Queensland continued mopping up leaking diesel for over two weeks until the vessel was salvaged. At least 2000 litres of oil leaked from the vessel, most of which escaped into the marine environment.

Both the skipper and the owner of the ship entered pleas of guilty to breaches of the *Transport Operations Marine Pollution Act*, and were fined \$12,500 and \$10,000 respectively.

General Manager Maritime Safety Queensland, Captain John Watkinson said the case should serve as a warning to owners and masters of unsafe vessels.

“Maritime Safety Queensland is determined to ensure that owners and operators understand and meet their responsibilities to maintain the seaworthiness of their vessels and protect the marine environment in which they operate,” said Captain Watkinson.

Double trouble for PWC owner

The owner of a runaway PWC which struck a swimmer at Moreton Island ran into double trouble when he provided false information on a marine incident report.

Sandgate Magistrate Court found the owner of the stand-up-style PWC guilty of operating a ship unsafely and aiding and abetting an unlicensed rider, fining him \$4000. The court also found that the owner falsely claimed to the shipping inspector that he was riding the PWC at the time of the incident.

The true rider of the PWC fell off the PWC before it careered out of control and struck a swimmer; he was fined for unsafe and unlicensed operation of a ship.

The incident happened after the owner had instructed the unlicensed rider on how to ride the PWC for about 20 minutes. Despite the tuition, the rider travelled for only two metres before falling off.

The PWC continued to travel at speed toward two four-year-old boys swimming on the shore, a technical fault causing the throttle to remain open.

An adult managed to grab the boys before they were hit by the PWC, but was struck on the legs. She was later transported to Redcliffe Hospital by the Coastguard, suffering severe bruising to both thighs.

The owner said he had falsified the marine incident report to ‘take full responsibility for the accident,’ but all he succeeded in doing was earning himself a bigger fine, and the unlicensed operator a further fine of \$1500.



Illustration purposes only.

Passengers and alcohol shouldn't mix

It's a statistical fact: many boaties in Queensland believe that there's no danger if passengers on board their boat drink alcohol in excess of the legal limit.

What does the typical Queensland boatie look like?

Something like this, according to data collected through the Recreational Boating Survey:

- Male 55+ living in south-east Queensland
- Has a recreational marine driver licence (or equivalent)
- Frequents rivers or estuaries in his 4-6 metre speedboat
- Takes one or two other people on a trip the lasts between 3-5 hours
- Always checks the weather before going out – using either the TV or internet – and checks tides (sometimes uses the Maritime Safety Queensland Tide Tables)
- Carries life jackets, V-sheet, flares, spare fuel on board and uses mobile phone for communication
- Tells family (for example wife) where he is going
- Disposes of onboard garbage in a bin on land
- If drinking alcohol while on the water, considers it unsafe for the skippers to exceed .05
- Understands General Safety Obligation and regularly maintains boat



Of over 2000 boaties throughout Queensland who took part in the 2006 Recreational Boating Survey, a troubling 28% indicated that, provided the skipper remains under .05, it is acceptable and safe for passengers to drink to excess.

Despite popular opinion, Queensland Water Police Senior Sergeant Warren Francis said there are ample reasons for passengers on boats to practice drinking restraint.

As someone who has attended many marine incidents, Senior Sergeant Francis, said that even though it is legal for passengers to be over the blood/alcohol limit applying to skippers, everyone should consider the extra dangers of on-water drunkenness.

“People frequently forget the third dimension,” he said. “If you have an incident on the road, the driver and passengers can sit on the side of the road and wait for the emergency services. When you are involved in a marine incident and the vessel is sunk, everyone goes into the water.

“Medical research shows that, if you have consumed alcohol, the body loses the ability to self regulate temperature and therefore cools down significantly faster. Hypothermia can set in more quickly.

“If a person is inhibited by the effects of alcohol, you have someone with a rapidly falling core body temperature, with limited or no ability to do anything about it.”

Results from the survey which was circulated to recreational boaties around the state, revealed that those in the 25-34 year old age group were more likely to drink while driving a recreational boat.

The survey posed 45 questions altogether, covering a broad range of subjects relating to boating safety – equipment and practices

– and marine pollution. Findings, such as those relating to boaties who frequent open waters, will assist in formulating future recreational vessel management and education initiatives.

Data from the survey suggested that boaties who frequent open waters were only slightly more likely to practice safe boating than those who use their boats in smooth or partially smooth waters. This is despite the increased risks of boating more than two nautical miles offshore.

For example, a small but significant 7% of all boaties said they did not check the weather forecast before making a trip in their boat, and those who frequent open waters were only fractionally more likely to check the weather forecast beforehand.

The carriage of EPIRBs, flares, V-sheets and spare fuel also raised concerns, as did the monitoring of the expiry dates on EPIRBs and flares.

The use of mobile phones as the principle source of communication while boating continues to climb. In the most recent survey 78% of boaties said they used mobile phones more often than any other means of communication, up from 67% in 2005 and 58% in 2003.

While mobile phones can be effective, they are not designed for on-water communication. Battery life, lack of coverage and their non-use by maritime safety authorities make them vastly inferior to other forms of communication such as VHF radio.

The information collected through the survey helps Maritime Safety Queensland target education messages and identify risk areas.

The full report of the 2006 Recreational Boating Survey is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Eyes: front and centre

A slight chop dimpled the blue water off Hamilton Island on a cloudy afternoon. People on a variety of water craft enjoyed the idyllic conditions as the daylight hours drew to a close.

A 10.5 metre Mustang-powered wake-boat sped across the waterway with a wake-boarder in tow. Both the observer and the driver looked back to see the skier fall off. The driver took immediate action, swinging the wake-boat around while keeping an eye on the fallen skier.

Several rowers in an outrigger canoe, quickly boarded their paddles as they realised their craft was in the path of the oncoming powerboat.

In panic, one of the rowers stood up in the canoe, waving a paddle in the air. Another started yelling, hoping to attract the attention of the boat's driver who was looking astern.

The warning failed to stop the collision. As a result of the impact, one of the rowers sustained a compound fracture to his leg. He required a prolonged stay in Mackay Base Hospital and several operations.

The driver of the wake-boat later admitted he had failed to keep a proper lookout and was convicted of unsafe operation of a ship causing grievous bodily harm.

Lessons

- Any boat undertaking waterskiing of any type (towing of person or persons) must have a capable observer who is 12 years or older. The observer should be instructed to watch the skier all times and communicate any happenings, such as the skier falling off, to the operator of the boat. The skier should use predetermined hand signals to communicate with the observer.
- If the observer is doing their job correctly, there should be no need for the operator of the boat to look behind. Typically boats engaged in skiing travel over 12 knots. The operator is responsible, in the first instance, to keep a proper lookout in front of the boat. Even at 12 knots, a boat travels about 30 metres in five seconds. In Queensland's crowded waterways, five seconds of inattention can lead to disaster.

Portable navigation system reaps vast benefits

Pilots navigating ships in Queensland's busiest ports are now using Portable Piloting Units (PPUs) – high-tech portable units that provide pilots with a separate source of navigation information, independent of the ship's equipment, and deliver vast savings to government and industry as a result.

The PPU typically takes about three minutes to set up once the pilot arrives on the ship's bridge. It consists of a sensor unit with twin aerials built into a waterproof case and connected by wi-fi to a rugged laptop computer. The laptop shows in real time the ship's outline and track superimposed over an electronic chart. By accessing highly accurate satellite positional data and using electronic navigation charts (ENC) accurate to within centimetres, the PPU provides pilots with a valuable tool for navigating through narrow channels and berthing or unberthing close to infrastructure.

While pilots continue to navigate visually and with traditional charts, PPU support and enhance the pilot's ability to manoeuvre a ship in close quarters, also improving safety.

The top level PPU used in Queensland's busiest ports also features a 'predictor', which displays the ship's predicted position, for example in 30 seconds time, given the ship's

current position, speed and the effect of tide and wind. This feature, coupled with bow and stern vectors, is invaluable when manoeuvring large ships in confined spaces.

Captain Chris Thompson, Director of Pilotage and Hydrographic Services, Maritime Safety Queensland, said the units gave pilots a choice of using both visual and instrument navigation in a similar vein to aircraft and they had already delivered a significant return on investment.

"At Weipa during the wet season, if a pilot was departing the port and approaching the main channel and a heavy rain squall occurred, the PPU would enable him to continue safely through the channel in spite of the resultant restricted visibility," Captain Thompson said.

"And at Hay Point, because of the accuracy of the system, pilots are able to load up to a slightly deeper draft and lessen under keel clearance. This can deliver great financial benefits to mining companies over the course of a year."

Captain Thompson said that the PPU is one important component of Maritime Safety Queensland's larger E-Navigation project,

the other being the shore based monitoring capability. This project was initiated as a result of the recent redevelopment of Hay Point's shipping infrastructure, which included a new dredged departure channel. Fewer navigation aids were needed due to the use of the PPU by MSQ's pilots, leading to a saving of around \$10 million.

"On top of the up front saving, we estimate that the E-Navigation project in its totality will bring an additional \$20 to \$25 million per annum into the Queensland economy from increased coal tonnage.

"This is a significant step forward considering the PPU and support systems initially cost around \$800,000."

The PPU system roll-out, including training of the pilots in its use, started in early 2007. All Hay Point licensed pilots are now fully trained, and the system has been endorsed by the Mackay Regional Harbour Master. It is expected that other major ports throughout the state will soon follow.

Highly accurate Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) reference stations situated in Weipa, Townsville, Hay Point and Gladstone, owned by Maritime Safety Queensland, transmit data to the PPU. The state's hydrographic surveyors will be using the same DGPS stations to survey ports and to create the highly accurate electronic charts used by the PPU.

This synchronisation between chart creation and the satellite signals used by the PPU provides pilots with an extra layer of safety and confidence in their portable navigation system.

Using a feature called PastTrack, all navigation undertaken while using the top level PPU can be recorded and viewed later as a training and evaluation tool, potentially improving pilot performance and safety.

Left: Mackay marine pilot, Philip Palmer, demonstrates the laptop component of a portable piloting unit. Above: The hybrid aerial system is typically placed on the ship's bridge, receiving and transmitting data and connected to the PC by Wi-Fi.



Hayden wants skippers to take the lead

Australian sporting icon, test cricketer Matthew Hayden, has again thrown his support behind the National Marine Safety Committee's latest boating education campaign – so that he can pass on to boaters the lessons he has learnt the 'hard way' about skipper responsibility.

The 2007/08 summer campaign "Lifejackets – Skippers Take the Lead", aims to motivate skippers to wear lifejackets and asks them to ensure their passengers to do the same.

"When you are the skipper of a boat, you've got people's lives in your hands," added Matthew.

"When you go out boating, and I have been in this same mindset, it's easy to think "oh, nothing is going to happen today, so the "x" factor gets removed."

"This campaign gives me the opportunity to demonstrate that not only do incidences happen, they happen really quickly and you have people's lives at stake," referring to the day a few years ago when his boat hit a wave, capsized and sank off North Stradbroke Island.

Matthew had gone out for a relaxing day of fishing with fellow cricketer Andrew Symonds and friend Trent Butler, when in a matter of minutes they found themselves in the water without lifejackets on.

"We were in a position where mistakes exponentially mounted and suddenly we were hit by waves, there was engine failure, we were sitting on the bar right on the crunch zone and we got smashed."

It took the trio an hour to swim to shore, battling currents, crashing waves and eventually, shock and exhaustion.

The public awareness campaign will run from December 2007 – February 2008 and features magazine advertising, radio advertising, television community service announcements and promotional material such as flyers and stickers for boat shows around the country.



The objectives of the campaign is backed up by marine-incident data and the NMSC-sponsored *Personal Flotation Devices Wear Rate Study 2007*.

The study recorded PFD wearing from at least 26 popular freshwater and saltwater boating locations in each state including Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Trained observers noted information on the site, weather and water conditions and the type and length of boat, boating activity, people on the boat and their PFD wear status.

One major finding in all four states was that passengers were more likely to be wearing a PFD if their skipper was wearing a PFD. When a skipper was wearing a PFD, the wear rate amongst passengers in each state ranged from 50% to 94%. In contrast, the wear rate amongst passengers of operators who were not wearing PFDs ranged from 4% to 11%.

Another major study showed that those who survive a boating incident are more than twice as likely to have been wearing a PFD compared to those who died.



According to NMSC's National Incident Database, 48 people died in boating incidents last year in Australia, and the main contributing factors were: the wind/sea state, error of judgement, alcohol or drugs and excessive speed. The major incident types were person overboard, capsizing, collision of vessels and swamping.

The NMSC's national campaign compliments Maritime Safety Queensland's upcoming "You're the Skipper, You're Responsible Campaign (see next page)."

For further details on the PFD awareness campaign or the Personal Flotation Devices Wear Rate Study 2007, go to www.nmsc.gov.au or www.safeboating.org.au.



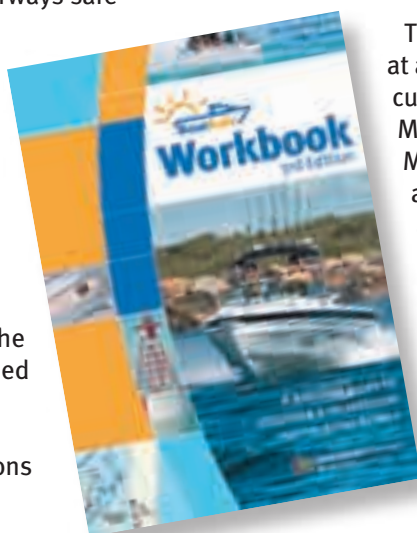
Cairns hosts Boating Safety Day

An open-to-the-public Boating Safety Day held in Cairns during November demonstrated the rich diversity of agencies and organisations involved in boating safety throughout Queensland.

Displays and demonstrations by a variety of agencies and departments showcased the services and organisations that, combined, seek to make Queensland's waterways safe and secure.

The Australian Navy patrol boat HMAS Childers was one of several boats open to the public, moored alongside the wharf at Maritime Safety Queensland's Portsmith Maritime Operations base.

Regular flare and fire-fighting demonstrations ran throughout the day, Marine Safety Officers manned an education trailer and fielded many questions, and a series of boating safety information sessions were held throughout the day.



3rd edition of workbook now available

The 3rd edition of the BoatSafe Workbook is bigger, brighter and available now.

The publication is a practical guide for anyone wanting to obtain a recreational marine driver licence, a personal watercraft licence, or update their boating knowledge.

With 20 extra pages in this edition, the Workbook includes revised and expanded information on navigating in shipping channels, the use of GPS for navigation, tidal movements and anchoring.

The workbook not only provides an excellent learning aid for people preparing to obtain their recreational marine driver's licence, but also offers experienced boaters with an excellent source of reference.

The Workbook is available at all Queensland Transport customer services centres, Maritime Safety Queensland Marine Operations Bases and some newsagents. It is also available for purchase on the Maritime Safety Queensland website (RRP \$10.30).

Some BoatSafe training providers may provide the Workbook as part of their BoatSafe course.

Collaborative relationship supports marine standards

National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) and Standards Australia recently signed a Project Management Services Agreement that will aid in the development and review of Australian Standards for marine safety.

Made up of representatives of the Commonwealth, States and Northern Territory Marine Authorities, the NMSC was established in 1997 to guide the development and review of consistent marine safety standards, legislation and policies within Australia.

The agreement establishes a collaborative relationship between Standards Australia and the NMSC to enable both parties to better manage the development of Standards to support the marine industry across Australia.

Both organisations believe aspects of marine safety can be accelerated by NMSC providing direct support for the development of some of these Standards.

Under the agreement, Standards Australia will pilot the revision of AS1799.1-1992 Small Pleasure Boats Code - General Requirements for Power Boats, through a co-resourced arrangement allowing the Standard to be made available via free download from the NMSC website for a period of seven years from the date of publication.

For more information on NMSC or Standards Australia visit websites: www.nmsc.gov.au or www.standards.org.au

New slogan launched

Maritime Safety Queensland's future education campaigns will focus on the skipper's responsibility, with the new slogan "You're the skipper: You're responsible".

The slogan was developed and is currently being used by New South Wales Maritime in safety campaigns south of the border, and will capitalise on the high rate of boating traffic 'cross-over' between the two states.

The message being broadcast to all boating skippers as part of upcoming campaign will

**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**

highlight their responsibility for the safety of all passengers. Saving lives often depends on big and small decisions made by skippers in regard to their boat, its safety equipment and the way it is crewed and operated.

Look out for the new campaign throughout 2008.



Mr John Tucker, CEO, Standards Australia and Ms Maurene Horder, CEO, NMSC signed the agreement on 19 November 2007.