



Transport
for NSW

Centre for Maritime Safety

Indigenous Boating Safety Forum Report



January 2017

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Forum attendees came from marine safety regulators across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, with strong representation from leading non-government, water-safety organisations.

1. Introduction

The inaugural Indigenous Boating Safety Forum was held in Darwin in the Northern Territory (NT) on 25 May 2016.

The Forum was chaired by Neil Patchett, A/Principal Manager at the Centre for Maritime Safety and Transport for NSW. It was attended by 31 representatives from 22 organisations within Australian, New Zealand and Papua New Guinean government jurisdictions.

We would like to thank all the event participants, particularly the NT for providing the venue and Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) for their event support.

2. Executive Summary

In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be over represented in drowning statistics. As a result, some states have implemented a number of initiatives to address this from safety awareness efforts through to Indigenous ranger programs – although these have been delivered largely by independent agencies.

New Zealand has an extremely high rate of boat ownership, in part due to the proximity to navigable waters across the width and breadth of its land, but also due to its limited regulation of recreational boating use. Consequently, New Zealand has a relatively high fatality rate which includes people from both Maori and Pacific Island communities.

Papua New Guinea is a developing country whose islands rely almost entirely on sea transport. Papua New Guinea traditionally had little in the way of safety regulations or national awareness programs to support a culture of safe boating. This is now changing with the introduction of the Small Craft Act 2011, which commenced on 13 February 2015.

The issues and challenges influencing safe boating by Indigenous people are largely similar across this geographical region, including –

- The availability of safety equipment
- Training in the correct use of this equipment
- A lack of boating regulations in some areas
- Communication barriers related to distance, language and culture.

This report provides a summary of the presentations given by maritime industry experts and the working group discussions during the Forum. The Report also outlines a set of (draft) guiding Principles which have been developed by Forum attendees in response to the issues raised. The Principles set out a collaborative approach towards preventing boating deaths and injuries in Indigenous communities.

3. Background

At the Spring 2015 meeting of the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG), a number of members spoke of their individual programs that support safer boating practices and drowning prevention in several jurisdictions. The Chair recommended (and the Group supported) an approach to the NT to provide a host venue for the next group meeting, and to initiate an Indigenous Boating Safety Forum.

The Autumn 2016 meeting of ANZSBEG and the Forum was held in May, in Darwin. The Forum was designed to focus on boating and water safety programs to support the Indigenous people of Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. It provided government and industry organisations with a platform to share and discuss ideas as well as draft a set of guiding principles to work collaboratively with an aim to prevent death and injury in Indigenous communities.

The Forum was initiated and managed by NSW and supported by ANZSBEG members. Special support for the Forum came from the AMSA and the NT. Presentations were made by AMSA, NT, Queensland, Western Australia (WA), New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.



The NT Government employs a number of strategies to educate the Indigenous population about boating safety.

4. Methodology

A full day was allocated to the Forum, and in order to ensure a good attendance, it took place the day before the regular Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG) meeting. ANZSBEG members and their nominated stakeholders were invited to participate.

The inaugural Forum was chaired by Transport for NSW representative, Neil Patchett, in the capacity as Chair of the ANZSBEG. Transport for NSW also provided secretariat duties.

Presentations

Presentations from maritime industry experts were given in the morning and post lunch sessions. They were given by:

- Larrakia Nation (Welcome to Country)
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA)
- Marine Safety Branch (Department of Transport - NT)
- Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries - NT & The Marine Rangers
- Water Police - NT
- Department of Transport - WA
- National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea
- AMSA
- Maritime New Zealand
- Maritime Safety Queensland

Working Groups

For the final session of the day, Forum attendees were split into four working groups and they were asked to discuss the following topics in relation to Indigenous boat safety as well as identify challenges and possible solutions:

- Safety risks
- Research and data
- Opportunities and measurable objectives
- Engagement and communication

Post Forum

This report was produced covering the presentation summaries, discussions and outcomes from the Forum. A set of guiding Principles was also developed. The report was prepared by Transport for NSW in liaison with Forum presenters.



The Forum attendees heard how communication with indigenous peoples needs to be in appropriate language and have regard for cultural aspects.

5. Summary of presentations



Educating communities on the danger of overloading was a challenge acknowledged across all jurisdictions at the Forum.

5.1. Royal Life Saving Society Australia

The RLSSA is a public benevolent institution (PBI) founded in 1894. Its primary functions are to reduce the occurrences of drowning and encourage people to take up the role of community lifesavers. The RLSSA achieves this through:

- Advocacy
- Education
- Training
- Health promotion
- Aquatic risk management
- Community development
- Research
- Media and marketing
- Sport
- Leadership and participation
- International networks

Over one million Australians undertake a Royal Life Saving course or program every year, including rescue skills, CPR and first aid training.

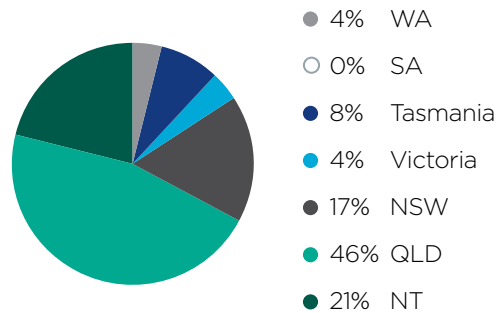
Presenter: Amy Peden, National Manager Research and Policy

Amy is responsible for maintaining the National Fatal Drowning Database and produces the annual National Drowning Report. She also provides research on a range of topics including child drowning, swimming and water safety and drowning in inland waterways. She advocates for the prevention of drowning in the media and works to implement drowning prevention strategies and programs.

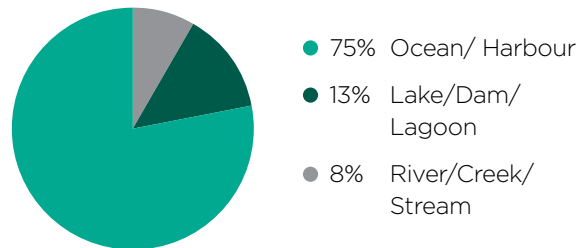
Statistics sourced by the RLSSA from media monitoring and police reports, and cross-referenced with the National Coronial Information System, between 2002/03 and 2014/15, showed that 4 per cent of all boating incidents in Australia were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In this period there were 24 Indigenous drowning deaths as a result of boating incidents (12 per cent of all (200) Indigenous drowning deaths). Of the 24 boating related drowning deaths:

- **54%** were Aboriginal
- **46%** were Torres Strait Islander
- **79%** of the drownings were male
- **29%** were known to have involved alcohol, with 86% of those over 0.05% blood alcohol content (BAC). The average BAC was 0.20mg/L, which is four times the legal limit.

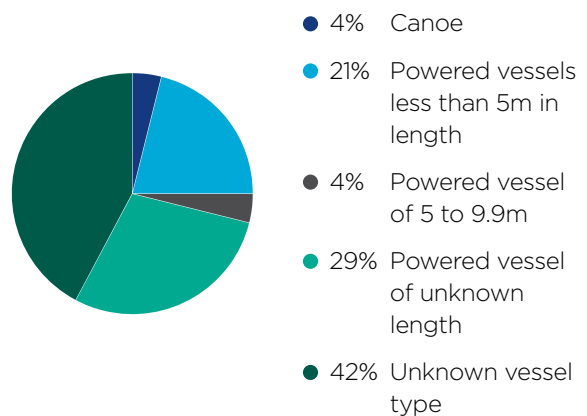
Indigenous boat drownings by state:



The location of boating drownings:



The type of boat involved in the drownings:



The RLSSA has identified that data quality differs between jurisdictions, as well as between urban and rural areas. Factors such as Indigenous origins are poorly reported in the National Coronial Information System, and information around alcohol involvement, vessel type and lifejacket use is variable.

The RLSSA is a member of the Australian Water Safety Council, which produced the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2016-2020. The strategy outlines priority areas for Australian peak water safety bodies to collaborate on in order to prevent drowning. The ultimate goal is to reduce fatal drownings by 50% by the year 2020. Other bodies include, Surf Life Saving, AUSTSWIM and Federal, State, Territory and local governments.



Australian Water Safety Strategy 2016-2020 and Northern Territory Water Safety Strategy 2012-2016

The NT Water Safety Strategy 2012-2016 aligns with the Australian Water Safety Strategy. Goals five and 10 of the NT Water Safety Strategy are particularly relevant to Indigenous people.

Goal five is focused on reducing drowning deaths in inland waterways. The objective for all relevant NT Government areas is to increase awareness of river-related drowning deaths and prevention strategies with a particular focus on rural and remote residents. To do this, the NT Government are implementing culturally aligned community awareness campaigns for -

- Inland waterways
- Boating and alcohol
- Water as a lifestyle through life stages
- Local activities



Goal 10 is focused on reducing drowning deaths that are attributed to watercraft and recreational aquatic activities by promoting safe boating education through lead agencies and community action groups. The goal will also focus on advocating for national consistency in policy, legislation and best practice in recreational boating. To do this, the NT Government plans to:

- Introduce a Marine Infringement Notice Scheme
- Deliver a safe boating campaign
- Review the alcohol restrictions for skippers
- Conduct a minimum of 600 safety gear inspections per year on recreational vessels through Water Police

5.2. Marine Safety Branch (Department of Transport - NT)

The Marine Safety Branch is responsible for administering the Marine Act and Regulations in the NT. These legislative documents outline the safety standards from both recreational and commercial vessels that operate in the NT. The marine branch is also responsible for the management, response and preparedness for ship-sourced pollution, navigation aids, education campaigns and compliance.

Presenter: *Bradley Thomson - Nautical Officer, Department of Transport - NT*

Bradley is responsible for recreational boating education, compliance and enforcement. He conducts nautical examinations for seafarer qualifications, maintains and oversees navigation aids in the NT outside the ports, and manages the NT's preparedness for oil spills.

The NT Government employs a number of strategies through the Marine Safety Branch to educate the Indigenous population of the NT about boating safety and the importance of carrying safety gear. These strategies include:

- Working with local marine ranger groups who are seen as local champions and role models for marine safety in each community, to provide them with the tools to educate their own community members.
- Engaging local police to conduct practical safety demonstrations in conjunction with marine safety staff.
- Providing safety gear packs on a loan system to community members to borrow each time they go fishing, hunting or are transiting between communities.

The Northern Territory Indigenous Maritime Safety Initiative

The Marine Safety Branch is partnering with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and local communities to implement a marine safety initiative which is aimed at Indigenous community members. The NT Indigenous Maritime Safety Initiative (NTIMSI) is similar to the Torres Strait Marine Safety Program, which was a program designed to improve and promote boat safety in the Torres Strait area.

The initiative provides the following -

- Education programs
- Safety demonstrations
- Readily available safety gear
- Ensuring that boat users understand the importance of carrying the right safety gear
- Focused attention on laws that relate to recreational boating

A range of promotional material highlighting safety information has been developed to support the program.

The Marine Safety Branch and AMSA staff travelled to most coastal communities in 2015 to discuss the anticipated NTIMSI activities with marine ranger groups. Marine rangers were also advised about recent changes to recreational vessel regulations.

In many Indigenous communities, safety gear is either very expensive or not readily available. This makes compliance difficult so the Marine Safety Branch is seeking funding for more safety gear loan packs. The loan packs could be sponsored by local mining companies, industry or the Commonwealth Government.

The Marine Safety Branch is also rewriting and tailoring the Safety Guide for Pleasure Craft for Indigenous people.



Supporting communities with safety gear and training in its use has delivered good results in several jurisdictions.

Case study - Safety Gear Packs for Groote Eylandt

The Anindylakwa Land Council obtained safety packs for local community vessels because of concerns for fisherman and island travel.

Fisheries and Marine Safety visited the islands and provided training to the individuals who had received the packs in order to ensure they knew how to use each piece of equipment. The participants were trained in safety and survival techniques as well as how to use the safety gear. The training also covered the use an EPIRB which many of the participants had not seen or heard of before.

This land council is in a good financial position so they have been able to purchase the packs. Unfortunately, other coastal communities do not have the same funds. Due to the success of this initiative, marine safety will be actively seeking government or corporate funding to roll this initiative out elsewhere.

Following the success of the Anindilyakwa Land Council initiative, the AMSA, as part of the NTIMSI, has also been able to provide four safety gear packs to the Warumiyunga community on Tiwi Islands. The local police are responsible for the packs which are administered through a loan system.

The local police are extremely supportive of the program because it ensures locals carry safety gear. The loan system also gives police the opportunity to ask individuals for trip details which includes location and duration. The police can then check that individuals return safely, or provide help should a search and rescue mission be required.

5.3. Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries - NT & the Marine Rangers

Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries - NT (Fisheries Division)

A significant aspect of the NT Fisheries' role focuses on Indigenous engagement in compliance, research and enforcement engagement in collaboration with Water Police. They also assist in coastal patrol surveillance and reporting and build capacity in the appointment of Indigenous Fisheries Inspectors to assist in the overall management of the resource.

Presenter: Simon Xuereb - Manager of the NT Fisheries Indigenous Community Marine Ranger Program

Simon leads a team whose focus is Indigenous engagement in compliance, research and enforcement engagement in collaboration with Water Police.

Marine Rangers

Marine rangers are Aboriginal community members who promote marine safety initiatives in the community. The first marine ranger group was established in the NT in the early 1990s by The Northern Land Council. There are currently 16 established marine ranger groups distributed along most of the NT coastline. Marine rangers have extensive marine experience in their areas of operation and have the ability to target campaigns at a community level. This helps them perform a number of functions, including –

- Patrolling areas adjacent to their community and identifying fisheries compliance risks.
- Fisheries research functions.
- Provision of fisheries surveillance reports and intelligence.
- Provision of a fee for service work e.g. ghost net retrieval.
- Assisting with search and rescue operations (SAR).

The NT Government, through the Fisheries Division, established the Indigenous Community Marine Ranger Program (ICMRP) in 2002. It was formed in order to support existing Indigenous marine ranger

groups and engage in coastal surveillance activities including monitoring of fishing. The Fisheries Division provides grants under the ICMRP. However the rangers are not NT Government employees.

Consultation is regularly undertaken about marine ranger activities with the Anindilyakwa, Tiwi and Northern Land Councils, who are the representative bodies for Aboriginal people in their areas. Service level agreements have been established with the various councils that outlines clear and concise engagement protocols. This ensures the marine rangers and the NT Government have a productive and beneficial working relationship.

As part of the relationship, the Fisheries Division runs workshops with marine rangers to provide training and build the marine ranger skills in fisheries management and monitoring activities.

Certificate of Survey

It is mandatory requirement for all marine ranger vessels to have received a Certificate of Survey in order to qualify for funding. Within these remote communities, it is more than likely that the marine rangers and NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) boats are the only vessels who have received a Certificate of Survey.

Fisheries Division Initiatives

The Fisheries Division partnered with Marine Safety to fund a 'safety pack' initiative on Groote Eylandt and provided training and the administrative support to the community.

- Provided EPIRB registration and training
- Implemented safety at sea policy regarding Marine Ranger operations with various Land Councils



The marine safety challenge extends across recreational and commercial vessels.

Case Study - Vessel purchased by a Land Council that does not meet survey requirements

All vessels must comply with AMSA National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) survey requirements.

A vessel was purchased by a Land Council for an Island region. At the time of purchase, the vessel was under Queensland survey but did not comply with NT survey standard.

The Fisheries Division was usually involved in the procurement of Land Council vessels, including ranger vessels, but on this occasion the boat was out of scope. However the Fisheries Division still advised the Land Council not to purchase the vessel.

The Fisheries Division was sufficiently concerned about the particular purchase of this vessel that it proposed a safety at sea policy should be implemented by all land councils.

Land councils reacted by stating that the safety at sea policy was an imposition and created an unnecessary administration for rangers.

Two weeks later the vessel sank due to being overloaded with 21 people on board.

An investigation found that the vessel was not in survey, and that the Land Council did not carry out any of the recommendations to survey the vessel.

The court case had a profound effect on Land councils who must now ensure that they comply with maritime obligations.

The Fisheries Division are now consulted in vessel procurements and provide advice in relation to vessel survey requirements and maritime industry processes.

5.4. Water Police - NT

The NT Water Police perform a number of functions for various government departments and their relevant Acts. These functions include –

- Regulation and safety enforcement of recreational and commercial vessels
- Shipping Inspections
- Search and rescue coordination

The Water Police are made up of 17 staff who attend around 150 incidents per year.

Presenter: Sergeant John Pini - Water Police - NT

John is a team leader in marine and fisheries enforcement and compliance operations and oversees the marine SAR capability.

The Water Police are assisted with search and rescue activities in urban marine areas by three volunteer organisations - Surf Life Saving NT, Northern Territory Emergency Service and the Australian Volunteer Coastguard NT. The Water Police also receive search and rescue assistance from marine rangers in Indigenous community areas. Marine rangers also receive training in enforcement and compliance from the Water Police.

For coastal stations the Water Police role is secondary, as they are primarily involved in search and rescue. However keeping adequately qualified members in coastal stations is a significant challenge.

The NT has a number of marine related environmental and regulatory challenges, which includes –

- A significant level of boat ownership and use, with high traffic volumes inside harbours and primary fishing zones, but low traffic volumes outside these areas.
- A lack of regulatory control, with there being no requirement for licences (regardless of size or power), or registration of recreational vessels.
- An absence of marine safety education opportunities.

- No regulations controlling the use of alcohol by recreational or commercial boat users.
- Limited mobile phone or marine radio coverage.
- A remote and dispersed population.
- A unique natural environment, which involves:
 - Monsoonal weather systems and cyclones
 - Weather that can appear deceptively mild
 - 8m spring tide variation in some areas
- A limited rescue service, with the closest Tier 1 aircrafts situated in Cairns and Perth, and winch-capable helicopters that are only located in Darwin and Katherine.
- Lack of access to safety gear in general, but particularly in remote areas, where it is often not even available in the local stores.
- Secrecy due to illicit trade.
- An ambivalent approach to boat safety by recreational boaters, which includes:
 - Inadequate use of safety gear
 - The use of poorly maintained vessels
 - Inadequate planning for weather and fuel use
 - Overloaded vessels
 - Lack of use of navigational equipment
 - Drinking whilst in charge of a vessel
 - An expectation of local recovery by family

Collaboration

The Water Police would like to collaborate further with local police and the Indigenous marine rangers, as mechanism for –

- Identifying and delivering appropriate boat safety messages, especially in remote communities.
- Implementing similar strategies to those that have been effective in the Torres Strait.
- Strengthening search and rescue capabilities in remote communities.
- Promoting the use of safe vessels and appropriate safety equipment.

Case studies

1. Tiwi Islands

Three Aboriginal males left Casuarina Beach just before midnight for Bathurst Island.

They became confused and followed a barge thinking it was the Vernon Island lights. They ran out of fuel on south east Melville Island.

The men were found three days later when another barge saw a faint light on shore and investigated.

They were close to perishing from dehydration.

2. Tiwi Islands

Five Aboriginal males were in a 3.9m Dinghy travelling overnight from Buffalo Creek to Melville Island.

The heavily intoxicated skipper flipped the vessel in surf near the coast of Melville Island. The other males clung to jerry cans and eskis to get to shore and walked inland. The matter was reported the following morning.

A helicopter search located the vessel and body quickly. There were no vests or safety equipment found.

3. Bickerton Island

Two Aboriginal males set out from Numbulwar to Milyakburra. They broke

down near the south west coast of Bickerton Island and one swam to shore using an empty jerry can as a float. He took hours to reach the community and police were not notified until much later.

Anindilyakwa Rangers were used as the primary SAR asset and located the dinghy washed up on the mainland. The body of the other male (who was a diabetic and in very poor health) was never found. They had a good capability for long range deployment.

4. Crocodile Islands

Four Aboriginal males traveling in a 4.5m dinghy departed from Darbilla Creek in the morning, for Moorooonga.

Their EPIRB was activated but the accuracy of their position was poor due to not being 'encoded' i.e. it did not have a GPS chip. EPIRB accuracy relies on the position of satellites. Satellites are set up to cover peak population areas therefore the NT generally does not get consistent coverage.

A Ranger vessel was dispatched and re-tasked as information changed. The dinghy was tracked live via web link.

The night time search was hampered by poor weather and navigation around shallow areas made finding the dinghy difficult. However, the dinghy and all its passengers were rescued at 4:45am.



Demonstration days have help promote awareness of how to use safety equipment including items such as distress signaling flares.

5.5. Department of Transport - WA

Western Australia’s Department of Transport marine units have a number of responsibilities that include; marine safety, provision of coastal facilities and the sustainable use of the Western Australian coastline. The Department’s Marine Safety Business Unit’s (MSBU) purpose is to provide and enable safe, accessible and sustainable use of navigable waters.

Presenter: Antoinette Boyd - Marine Safety Community Education Officer

Antoinette is a member of a team that promotes marine safety initiatives metropolitan and regional communities through –

- Education programs
- School talks
- Practical safety demonstrations
- Engagement with the general boating public at targeted events
- Distribution of marine safety education brochures and stickers

In response to the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality 2004, the Department of Transport, Marine Safety - WA ran a pilot project which saw the development and distribution of a Recreational Skipper’s Ticket (RST) Indigenous Communities Assessor Resource kit in November 2008.

The pilot project was set up to assess the uptake of the RST in remote communities in the Kimberley region. The kit was designed to assist with Indigenous learning and

provide support material for the delivery of RST. The kit included:

- A RST workbook which had been reworded in plain language and avoided jargon and technical terms.
- A CD which incorporated a workbook for assessors to aid in teaching and assessment.
- RST assessment practices adapted to include verbal assessment.

The primary aims of the project were to:

- Develop an understanding of the number and local of Indigenous boating communities in the Kimberley.
- Identify any challenges restricting the uptake of the RST in remote areas.
- Determine further promotion and substantive equality opportunities to encourage a safer Indigenous boating community.

A 2009 evaluation of the uptake of RST within remote Indigenous communities throughout the Kimberley region showed that –

- Overall the Indigenous community was very supportive and uptake of RST across the Kimberley region was high.

- Many welcomed the chance to increase RST and boating safety awareness.
- There was an overwhelming need for the provision of Coxswain training.
- Operators who are taking charters or using boats for hire and reward need to be informed about what they stand to lose if they are not compliant.

The Policy Framework for Substantive Equality was broadened in 2013 to address all forms of systemic discrimination. The Policy remains an important step towards focusing the Western

Australian Governments' response to the differing needs of our diverse society and provides a powerful framework for change away from the one-size-fits-all approach.

The Department of Transport's Marine Safety Business Unit's will undertake further evaluation of the RST, which could include a theory assessments being conducted at Department of Transport offices in a similar way to how drivers licences take place, and the delivery of theory tests to communities through the Remote Area Driver Licensing teams.

5.6. National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea

The National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) of Papua New Guinea functions and responsibilities are defined in the NMSA Act 2003 and includes; maritime safety, marine pollution control and corporate governance. The maritime safety area is responsible for navigational aids and charts, vessels meeting safety standards, the certification and documentation of seafarers as well as search and rescue coordination.

Presenter: Peter Bell, Project Manager, Small Craft Act Implementation Project

The project provides financial, communications training and infrastructure support to Papua New Guinea's 15 Maritime Provinces to assist them to implement, administer and enforce the Small Craft Act.

Papua New Guinea is a developing country with a population of five million people. Most of these people live in coastal areas and rely almost entirely on sea transport, which are typically 23 foot open fibreglass "banana boats".

The National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea has implemented a five year project to improve safety at sea for communities using this type of craft. Papua New Guinea has a number of boating safety challenges, including –

- Reaching very isolated subsistence communities with low incomes.
- Little or no communication infrastructure.

- Low rates of literacy.
- Many different languages spoken on the islands.

The NMSA is addressing these challenges by –

- Liaising with industry to improve craft design in order to achieve swamped flotation buoyancy, improved craft visibility and the distribution of safety equipment at the point of sale.
- Assisting the 15 maritime provinces to develop their capacity to regulate and register small craft.
- Providing training to provincial officials and the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary to undertake awareness and compliance activities.
- Undertaking a range of safety at sea awareness activities that take into account the issues of isolation, literacy and language.

Although the data is incomplete, since the project commenced in 2013, the NMSA has recorded a 40 per cent reduction in the number of reported incidents involving small craft.

5.7. Australian Maritime Safety Authority

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is a statutory authority established under the Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990 (the AMSA Act). AMSA's responsibilities and functions include, promoting maritime safety and protection of the marine environment, preventing and combating ship-sourced pollution in the marine environment, providing infrastructure to support safety of navigation in Australian waters, and providing a national search and rescue service to the maritime and aviation sectors.

Presenter: Captain Michael Barnett, Regional Harbour Master – Cairns, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)

Michael is the Chair of the Torres Strait Marine Safety Program (TSMSP).

Presenter: Shaun Skerritt, Senior Program Advisor – SAR System Engagement & Policy, AMSA

Shaun coordinates safety education activities in the Torres Strait, including AMSA's ongoing contribution to the TSMSP. Shaun also provides support to other AMSA business units by providing a regional presence and liaison point for all maritime stakeholders in the region. This extends throughout the Torres Strait, Far Northern Cape York and Western Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The Torres Strait stretches 150 kilometres from the tip of Cape York Peninsula in North Queensland to the south-west coast of Papua New Guinea. Islands, reefs, and coral sand cays are scattered throughout the region, the northern-most island reaching to within five kilometres of the Papua New Guinea coastline.

The region includes 18 island communities, with populations ranging from 55 to 1,631 as well as two mainland communities. The islands are scattered over a geographic area of 48,000 square kilometres and the region's total population is 8,306 of whom 6,168 are Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people.

The reliance on seaborne transport over long distances across open-ocean in small open boats was resulting in very high incidences of search and rescue (SAR) incidents in the Torres Strait.



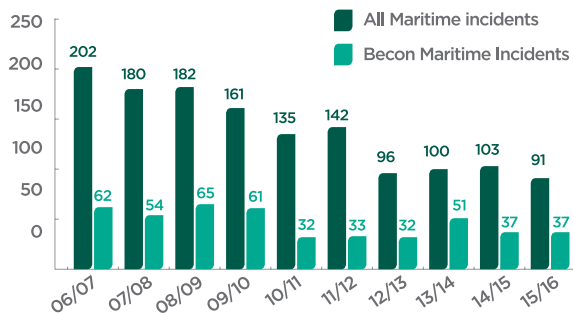
Workshop at Warraber Island.

Torres Strait Marine Safety

The program began in 2006 and was a joint initiative of organisations including MSQ, AMSA and the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA). The Queensland Police Service (QPS) and National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) of Papua New Guinea became program partners in later years.

The project began after it was identified that Torres Strait Islanders had a 1 in 12 chance of being involved in a marine incident, compared to 1 in 3,300 of Queenslanders in general. Today, Torres Strait Islanders have a far lesser chance of being involved in a marine incident.

Torres Strait Incidents 2006/2007 - 2015/2-016 FY



The Steering Committee of the TSMSP provides a management structure and funding arrangements to address a number of agreed priority actions in line with the Torres Strait Marine Safety Strategy. The programs primary focus is –

- Improving and promoting boating safety in the Torres Strait.
- Reducing the number of SAR operations in the area.
- Increasing the survivability of persons lost at sea.
- Supporting development of the near coastal maritime industry in the region.

Boating Safety Education

TSMSP operational personnel plan and deliver a range of boating safety education throughout the Torres Strait region, including supporting the delivery of the BoatSafe program to high school students.



Senior students from the Northern Peninsula Area College undertaking Shipboard Safety Skill Set training.

Maritime Safety Education Workshops have been delivered to each of the (23) school campuses throughout the Torres Strait region. Almost 3,000 properly fitting lifejackets have been distributed and a marine safety equipment educational kit provided to each campus for ongoing maritime safety education and broader curriculum support.

Students from the Thursday Island and Northern Peninsula Area Colleges receive BoatSafe training so that graduating students leave school with a Recreational Marine Drivers Licence and other maritime safety skills and qualifications.



Participants completing their Certificate II in Maritime Operations – Coxswain and Marine Engine Driver training on board a commercial charter vessel, a 'floating classroom', whilst they travel throughout the Torres Strait region during the training period.

Safety Grab Bag EPIRB Program



Shanice Havili, AMSA Indigenous Boating Safety Officer (left) and, then Marine Officer, MSQ, Tanya Takai-Bowie (right) promoting the use of 406MHz EPIRB's.

TSMSP operational personnel manage a Safety Grab Bag Scheme and 406MHz EPIRB Replacement Program to make essential life-saving equipment available to community members when they travel by vessel throughout the region.

A lack of appropriate safety equipment in good condition was found to be a common problem during vessel inspections and marine incident investigations. As such, Safety Grab Bags are available to recreational boat users who are unable to properly equip their own boats. Thirty eight Bags are available free of charge for short term borrowing from police establishments throughout the region.

406MHz EPIRBs are an essential piece of life saving equipment for all offshore voyages and have saved the lives of thousands of people around the world, including many lives in the Torres Strait.

Commercial Licensing Courses

The Torres Strait Maritime Pathways Project (TSMPP) has been a partnership between the TSRA, MSQ and AMSA. The primary aim of the TSMPP is to further develop the skills and capability of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people, residing within the Torres Strait region, to operate commercial vessels and create maritime career pathways.

Since November 2013:

- 95% of 210 participants have completed training and achieved nationally accredited qualifications.
- 85% of TSMPP participants are employed in maritime related industries including the near coastal, freight operations, commercial fishing/diving, passenger ferry and government vessel operations.

The TSMPP delivers Coxswain, Master up to 24 metre and Certificate of Safety Training programs in the Torres Strait and at the Australian Maritime College (AMC).

The TSMPP also delivers Certificate III in Fishing Operations and Vocational Wild Harvest Dive training.



TSMSP sponsorship of major community events, such as the Island of Origin Sporting Tournament, provides an invaluable opportunity to promote the key messages and strategies of the TSMSP within the Torres Strait region. Up to 1,500 people can attend these events with many travelling by small vessels to do so.

Media, Marketing and Communication



AMSA, MSQ and QPS officers following a Maritime Safety Workshop at Saibai Island with various stakeholders including recreational boat operators, commercial fishers, land and sea rangers and local council representatives. The land mass in the background is Papua New Guinea!

A crucial element of the TSMSP is engagement with Traditional Owners, community representatives and industry leaders throughout the region to discuss current and emerging maritime safety issues. This includes working with the PNG-NMSA to deliver TSMSP boating safety education to those villages in the Western Province which are subject of the Torres Strait Treaty. From this engagement and consultation, an intensive media, marketing and communications strategy is maintained

through various forums including radio, print and online media, press advertising. Further engagement is provided via the sponsorship and attendance of major community events throughout the year that target specific seasonal and cultural activities.

Indigenous Maritime Advancement Program

AMSA and My Pathway are currently developing a co-sponsored submission to the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet under the Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

This approach would replicate the successful arrangement underpinning the TSMSP/ TSMPP – drawing together resources and investment from across different levels of Government, Community and Industry with two aims in mind –

- Improving employment opportunities for indigenous people in the marine industry.
- Improving marine safety in the many Northern Australia coastal communities (Cairns to the Pilbara) based on regional need and partner commitment.

5.8. Maritime New Zealand

Maritime NZ (MNZ) is New Zealand's regulatory, compliance and response agency for the safety, security and environmental protection of coastal and inland waterways. MNZ is a Crown entity which was established in 1993, and is governed under the Maritime Transport Act 1994. The organisation has approximately 190 staff located in offices throughout NZ.

MNZ operates a search and rescue response service through its Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ). At 30 million square km, the search and rescue area is one of the largest in the world.

MNZ delivers an integrated communications and advertising campaign each year. The organisation also links with the recreational boating sector to deliver additional funding, education and compliance.

Presenters

Baz Kirk - National Advisor Industry Support.

Baz has dual commercial and recreational boating responsibilities which involves engagement with key stakeholders and organisations on issues facing their respective sector groups. Baz has a background in Commercial Fishing, Maritime Schools and Marine Search and Rescue.

Pania Shingleton - Education and Communications Manager MNZ.

Pania is responsible for the MNZ's annual integrated advertising and education campaign for recreational boat users.

Neil Murray - General Manager Coastguard Boating Education (CBE)

CBE provides boating safety education in New Zealand. The organisation trains over 10,000 adults per annum, plus a further 45,000 school-age young people. Their courses are aimed at providing critical safety education to those who own, operate and/or may go out on someone else's boat. CBE is a member of the NZ Safer Boating Forum and of Water Safety NZ.

It is estimated that in 2015 New Zealand had 920,000 boats for a population of almost 4.5 million, or one boat for every 4.84

people. There are a number of reasons for the high proportion of boats including -

- Easy access to water that has abundance of seafood and is classed as safe from predators.
- The customary and cultural significance of boats.
- Boats and equipment are inexpensive.
- Limited regulation of recreational boating use.

Ethnic Distribution

Europeans are spread throughout New Zealand, while Maori, Pacific Island and Asian ethnicities are more concentrated to particular regions and cities. A large proportion of Maori reside in the North and East of the North Island with a high concentration of Pacific Island and Asian ethnicities living in the Auckland area. The South Island is predominantly European, even in the large centres.

MNZ undertook a survey in 2013/14 which showed that 79% of recreational boat users are New Zealand European, 10% Maori, 3% Pacific Islander and 2% Asian. However the proportions varied by region.

Maori

- 16% of all Maori boat users use small craft like dinghies, jet skis and paddle craft.
- 11% of kayakers/canoers identify as Maori, whilst 7% of power boat users and 3% of sail boat users identify as Maori.



Pacific Island

Pacific Island people are also significantly more likely to use ‘other’ small vessels, with 8 per cent using small craft, and 3 per cent use kayaks/canoes, while sail boat and power boat users only make up a combined 3 per cent.

New Zealand had 24 fatalities in 2015 – three were female and 21 were male. Determining the ethnicity of each fatality is a sensitive matter, and in many cases this information is not available until after a Coroner’s hearing – if at all.

Boat user fatalities are highest among males 55 to 64 years of age.

Issues and Challenges

New Zealand has a number of marine-related environmental and regulatory challenges, which includes –

- Rapidly changing weather patterns.
- A coastline with many shallow bar entrances and shallow estuarine areas, meaning tidal changes cause swiftly running currents that catch boat users out.
- Inexpensive and readily available second hand boats. Boats are available for purchase through online and trade centres, and the associated equipment often do not meet safety standards.
- No regulatory requirement to wear lifejackets, undertake licensing or registration.
- One third of boat users do not wear lifejackets, with males over 60 years of age, and under 30 years of age, most resistant.

MNZ research has identified the following characteristics associated with boat users wearing lifejackets –

- Identity – “If you have to wear a life jacket you shouldn’t be out there.”
- Perceived threat – “You’ll have time to put it on if anything goes wrong.”
- Straitjackets – Bulky, unfashionable, not masculine.
- Independence – Mates don’t tell mates what to do

Campaigns

To counter these characteristics, MNZ has developed a key proposition that “Lifejackets only work if you wear them.”.

Safety Campaigns

MNZ launched the “Get it on – or it’s no good.” Lifejackets for Life Campaign in 2013. This campaign has been very effective in the following –

- Raising awareness of the need to carry a lifejacket all the time.
- Changing the behaviour of boat users to wear a lifejacket all the time.

MNZ has a limited budget for advertising campaigns therefore campaigns must be focused. In 2016, MNZ will also be concentrating on the compliance and enforcement of boat users to modify behaviour. MNZ is currently targeting males aged between 30 and 55, as they are considered to be family orientated and therefore more likely to be responsible and open to behavioural change.

Although these campaigns are not focused solely on indigenous people, aspects have been modified to reach Maori and Pacific peoples. For example –

- Making Jo Bro the hero of some advertisements
- Using the Maori television channel as an advertising medium, such as sponsoring lifejackets on the “Get Your Fish On.” fishing show.
- Funding NZSAR to translate NZSAR’s Boat Safety Code into 17 different languages including Maori and Pacific languages.



Waterproof phone cases have proven successful as an engagement device with communities and also providing a practical solution for mobile phones carried in a marine environment.

Other Initiatives

Mobile phones are the most common communication device for recreational boat users so MNZ have established a strong digital program, which includes –

- Advertising on the “MetService’s Marine” app. The development of this free app was sponsored by MNZ. It’s been downloaded 120,000 times and delivers MNZ lifejacket and safety messages on a regular basis.
- The creation of a “Virtual coastguard” which uses geographic GPS targeting around NZ’s 15,000km of coastline. Anyone using a mobile phone on the water automatically receives a push message to remind boaties to wear their lifejacket via Facebook, Instagram, Google and 24 different ad networks. The mobile does not require an app it just has to be on, or very near, the water. This is a MNZ initiative which is supported by safety partners Coastguard NZ and the NZ Safer Boating Forum.

MNZ and the NZ Safer Boating Forum have also created a new waterproof mobile phone bag and the safer boating mini-guide, which provides directions on how to find safer boating information online via mobile app and YouTube.

Folau Malu

Folau Malu is a project funded by MNZ that targets high risk Pacifica groups. The project is delivered through CBE, who is a significant provider of boating safety courses.

Case study

The Folau Malu project was initiated as a result of an incident in May 2012 that hit the Pacific Island community in Auckland hard. The incident involved a Tongan father and his seven year old son who drowned after their dinghy capsized in the Manukau Harbour near Mangare Bridge in Auckland. Three of his children were rescued.

Folau Malu targets high risk hard-to-reach groups. This includes Maori, Tongan, Samoan and the Chinese. The project partners are MNZ, WSNZ and CBE. They have recognized that different ethnicities require distinct approaches to deliver boat safety messages. In order to deliver messages, the program does the following –

- Enlists the help of community opinion leaders.
- Establishes an identifiable brand with adapted resources for each ethnic group.
- Selects appropriate delivery sites such as maraes, rugby league clubs, community halls and fishing clubs.
- Structures events such as the Day Skipper & Basic Sea Survival to encourage good attendance by whole families, leaders and influencers in the community. These events are held on weekends with food provided.

5.9. Maritime Safety Queensland

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is a branch of the Department of Transport and Main Roads within the Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Division. Their role is to protect Queensland's waterways and the people who use them. MSQ is responsible for improving maritime safety for shipping and small craft through regulation and education, minimising vessel-sourced waste and responding to marine pollution, providing essential maritime services such as aids to navigation and vessel traffic services, and encouraging and supporting innovation in the maritime industry.

Presenter: Judith Bugden, Principal Advisor (Strategic Projects)

Judith works with all parts of MSQ to help design relevant and timely safety education messages which include trend analysis and external benchmarking. Judith also works on any other strategic change projects as required.

MSQ (Maritime Strategy Unit and Cairns Region) – Social Media Trial (Queensland)

MSQ is planning to trial the use of social media to distribute boat safety messages to specific groups. With research showing that Facebook usage in remote communities is up to twenty per cent higher than the national average, it is considered an important communication tool to engage with the community. Social media has the advantage of being relatively inexpensive, easily targeted and flexible.

Research has been undertaken into the use of social media, including liaising with relevant communities and benchmarking. Although Facebook usage is high in remote areas, there are still concerns about access for all. The next step is wider implementation.

5.10. Transport for NSW - Centre for Maritime Safety

The Centre for Maritime Safety is a business unit within Transport for NSW which is responsible for the strategic and policy direction of maritime issues statewide and maintains key stakeholder relations. The Centre for Maritime Safety works closely with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) which is the maritime operational delivery agency.

The Centre for Maritime Safety conducts analysis of boating incident data for NSW. Analysis shows a long-term downward trend evident for both recreational and commercial fatal incident rates, taking into account vessel numbers, with fatal incident rates for recreational vessels declining by approximately 44 per cent over the 20 years to 2012-13. During the 10 years to June 2012 there were –

- 167 fatalities (average 16.7 per year), with 103 fatalities attributed to drowning (62 per cent of total), 93 per cent of whom were not wearing a lifejacket at the time of the incident.
- 472 incidents resulting in serious injuries without any fatalities (averaging 47 per year).
- 3,754 incidents in total (averaging 375 per year).

Over the 10 year period to June 2012, the most common types of recreational vessel fatal incidents involved vessel capsize (34 per cent) and persons falling overboard (25 per cent). The most common causes of these incidents were adverse weather conditions (14 per cent) a lack of judgement (9 per cent), excessive speed (9 per cent) and hazardous waters (9 per cent).

Boating fatality trends continued in 2014-15 with 16 fatalities, which is close to the long term annual average for boating fatalities (16.9). Of the 16 fatalities, 15 were on recreational vessels.

Data has not been collected on the ethnicity of the boating fatalities or those who receive serious injuries.

CMS is a participant in the Transport for NSW Aboriginal cadet program which

employed 14 Aboriginal cadets in April 2015. The organisation implemented a targeted employment program as part of the 2015 Vocational Education Training (VET) cadet intake to provide Aboriginal people with an opportunity to develop a career within the Transport for NSW.

RMS established the Aboriginal Maritime Services Traineeship initiative in 2014, which provides employment pathways for Aboriginal people through the Maritime Division. Four trainees completed the 2014 – 2016 pilot program and four more trainees entered the program for the 2015 – 2017 intake. The program provides an opportunity for the trainees to enter a career pathway which delivers an understanding of the maritime environment and its challenges and equips them with practical skills, and knowledge to undertake a variety of roles within the industry. An added benefit of the program is that the trainees as advocates for boating and water safety messages to their communities..



Forum attendees representing Papua New Guinea were impressed with a sample L150 Ultra auto inflatable that showed how culturally appropriate graphic designs could be applied to modern lifejackets.

6. Summary of working group discussions

6.1. The Safety Risks

Current challenges	Proposed solutions
The limited availability of safety equipment in many indigenous communities. The equipment is often not stored properly and is unreliable.	Greater access to training in use and storage of safety equipment.
Many indigenous communities are isolated, and have limited access to telecommunications or radio zones. Vessels travel long distance and sometimes miscalculate fuel requirements.	More community engagement with elders on long distance travel risks and precautions, including improvement of the radio network and radio training.
Vessels are often not built to ABP standards and lack of registration.	Ensure vessels are built to ABP standards and introduce registration in NT.
Consumption of alcohol by skippers.	Limit the consumption of alcohol by skippers through regulation and education, and advocate skipper responsibility.
The absence of skipper licensing in indigenous areas.	Provide skipper and basic skills training and advocate better weather knowledge.
Community pressure and lack of knowledge about load capacity often results in boat overloading.	Provide education in vessel capacity i.e. equipment plus people.
Equipment failure resulting from weather and heat factors.	Proper storage of safety equipment with easy access.
Often it is too hot to wear certain lifejackets.	Availability of different lifejacket styles for hot weather use.

6.2. Research and data

Challenges	Solutions
<p>The ability to access good information on boat type, lifejacket usage, alcohol, ethnicity, near-misses and exposure rates.</p>	<p>Work with communities and relevant authorities to gather useful data.</p>
<p>Collecting consistent data across jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Liaise with signatories of the International Lifejacket Wear Principles to gain agreement on consistency of data categories.</p> <p>Mirror national census categories.</p>
<p>Ensuring analysis of data is acted upon.</p>	<p>Ensuing programs are evaluated, work with communities which includes partnering with indigenous groups to ensure programs are appropriate.</p>
<p>A greater understanding of how indigenous people use boats.</p>	<p>Qualitative research is undertaken that includes behavioral, attitudinal aspects, as well as perceptions to boating and water safety.</p>



The Forum acknowledged the value of liaising closely with indigenous communities and their leaders as a mechanism for communicating safety messages.

6.3. Opportunities and measurable objectives

Opportunities	Solutions
Local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger networking through ANZSBEG • Shared resourcing through ANZSBEG • Concentrate on safety • Identify where to broadcast the message e.g. social media, schools • Respect and engage community including women and children • Consistent standards across ANZSBEG pushed by the Group • Use of fishing shows, BCF, BIA, Radio
Reduce recreational related fatalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baseline for improved indigenous statistics. • Increase grab bag usage rates

6.4. Engagement and communications

Challenges	Solutions
How to engage indigenous communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with communities – particularly in remote areas • Develop campaigns to suit individual communities • Liaise with communities - listen to their needs and collaborate on all communication aspects. • Identify communication channels and delivery mechanisms that are appropriate to the community, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media - Key community leaders - Events - Use of visual aids such as pictures and video • Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate timing e.g. during wet season - Language used

7. Indigenous Boating Safety Principles

1. We recognise the importance of sharing ideas, resources, and establishing consistent boating safety strategies for communicating with indigenous peoples.
2. We recognise the value of liaising closely with indigenous communities and their leaders as a mechanism for communicating safety messages.
3. We recognise the communication with indigenous peoples needs to be cognisant of appropriate language, channels used, and cultural aspects.
4. We recognise the importance of promoting to indigenous people the use of lifejackets as a priority drowning prevention action.
5. We will advocate and promote the proper use, care and storage of boat safety equipment by indigenous peoples.
6. We will endeavour to support indigenous peoples with awareness of, and access to, appropriate safety equipment.
7. We will advocate the use of vessels that conform to appropriate safety standards, especially regarding positive buoyancy, and, if required, have a certificate of survey.
8. We will promote consistent safety messages to indigenous peoples.
9. We will advocate responsible behaviour to skippers and passengers and promote the dangers of alcohol and drug consumption when boating.
10. We will advocate the sharing of boating incident data and statistics involving indigenous peoples.

8. Next steps

Transport for NSW, in the capacity of ANZSBEG Chair will do the following –

1. Produce this report out of session which summarises the 25 May 2016 Forum.
2. Develop a draft set of guiding Principles out of session for dealing with Indigenous boat safety issues.
3. Establish and host an Indigenous Boating Safety Forum at Marine 17 to progress the issues raised in this report.
4. Promote, at Marine17, the finalisation of the proposed guiding Principles to support and promote safe and responsible use of vessels by indigenous communities.

9. Appendices

9.1. Attendees

Mike Beanland	Australian Boat Schools/Perth
Mark Thurgood	Australian Canoeing Ltd
Samuel Potts	Australian Maritime College
Shaun Skerrit	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
Nik Parker	Boating Industries Alliance Australia
Craig Earl-Spurr	Bureau of Meteorology
Neil Murray	Coastguard Boating Education
Andrew McGuinness	Department of Education
Sri Srinivas	Department of Transport - NT
Bradley Thomson	Department of Transport - NT
Antoinette Boyd	Department of Transport - WA
Grant Rubock	Larrakia Nation
Peter Hopkins	Marine and Safety Tasmania
Pania Shingleton	Maritime New Zealand
Baz Kirk	Maritime New Zealand
Judith Bugden	Maritime Safety Queensland
Peter Wilkins	Maritime Safety Queensland
Captain Michael Barnett	Maritime Safety Queensland
Simon Xuereb	NT Fisheries
Peter Bell	National Maritime Safety Authority - PNG
Ishmael Kawi	National Maritime Safety Authority - PNG
Alfred Talania	National Maritime Safety Authority - PNG
Amy Peden	Royal Life Saving Society
Floss Roberts	Royal Life Saving Society - NT
Stephen Gazzola	Royal Life Saving Society - NT
Sarah Anderson	Surf Life Saving Australia
Trevor Radburn	Surf Lifesaving NT
Vanessa Udovicic	Transport for NSW
Neil Patchett	Transport for NSW
Lisa Taylor	Transport Safety Victoria
Sergeant John Pini	NT Water Police

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