

Recreational Vessels Advisory Group

Date:	Tuesday 8 September 2015, 1700 hours
Venue:	Quarterdeck Room, RMS Maritime Division, James Craig Rd, Rozelle
Chair:	Michael Drake (MD), Principal Manager Boating Safety, Maritime Management Centre
Admin:	David Chieza (DC), Assistant Policy Officer, Maritime Management Centre

Attendees:	
Jeff Richards (JR)	Boat Owners' Association of NSW Inc.
Chris Gillett (CG)	Marine Rescue NSW
David Lyall (DL)	Marine Rescue NSW
Murray Clarke (MC)	NSW Rowing Association
Andrew Mathers (AM)	Paddle NSW
Peter Hunter (PH)	Personal watercraft representative
Malcolm Poole (MP)	Recreational Fishing Alliance of New South Wales
Alex Barrell (AB)	Roads and Maritime Services
David Hunter (DH)	Roads and Maritime Services
Greg Blackburne (GB)	Scuba Clubs' Association of NSW
Phil Dulhunty (PD)	Seaplane Pilots' Association
David Edwards (DE)	Yachting NSW
Apologies:	
Geoff Duvall (GD)	Australian Power Boat Association
Alan Barrett (AB)	Boating Industry Association
Tony Andrews (TA)	Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries)
Phil Newman (PN)	Paddle NSW
Andy Kent (AK)	Surf Life Saving NSW

Date of next meeting	Tuesday 10 November 2015
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1 Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 MD welcomed attendees to the meeting and relayed apologies from Alan Barrett, Geoff Duvall and Andy Kent.

2 Review of actions from previous meeting

- 2.1 On review of the previous meeting minutes it was agreed that minutes should be published on the MMC website only after review by RVAG.
- 2.2 **Action 1** review: MD advised the group that papers were also subject to the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* (the GIPA Act) should anyone or members of the public were interested.

- 2.3 **Action 2** review: MD said the legislation was being debated in the Upper House at present and any developing updates will be relayed to RVAG out of session. MD noted that currently there are efforts to empower Councils to impound unattended boat trailers after a period of 3 months although the detail and process for this is yet to be resolved.
- 2.4 JR said his BOA had two main issues which are that this legislation seems to only apply to boat trailers and that authorities should consider using the vessel registration number as well when seeking to identify owners.
- 2.5 MP said there's a lot of abandoned equipment on the road side and this issue should not only apply to boat trailers.
- 2.6 JR noted that some Council's are already putting stickers on trailers even before the Government has passed the new laws. MD advised that Councils do have some powers under the existing *Impounded Act* which could be why some are placing the stickers.
- 2.7 MC questioned how compliance was going to be enforced noting very little detail had been made public particularly on definitions of the time limits and the term 'abandoned'.
- 2.8 JR said BOA has engaged with Councils and impressed upon them to prove that a trailer or equipment is actually abandoned. MP agreed but stated that boaters already pay registration fees so why can't they leave their trailers parked on the street, what's more important is finding a solution for the problem of 'off street' parking.
- 2.9 DA noted that there has been wide consultation with Councils who have indicated a desire to do the right thing and he urged members to await more information as it becomes available.
- 2.10 MD reiterated that the new laws will go some ways to clarifying issues such as time limits and definitions. He also said it is not an onerous thing for someone to move their trailer once every 3 months, so that it's not deemed abandoned.
- 2.11 **Action 3** review: DH presented a map on screen of the NSW Boating Now - Priority regional projects, and members were shown how each priority project is identified on the regional map along with a summary, costings, milestone dates and in some cases the relevant images. The link for the map is at <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/key-build-program/boating-now/map/index.html#/>
- 2.12 **Action 4** review: MD said discussions are taking place with colleagues in TfNSW to come up with a simplified guide to the 'NSW Light Vehicle Agricultural and Load Exemption Ministerial Order'. It is intended to invite a representative from the appropriate branch present to RVAG at the next meeting.
- 2.13 PH said the main thing was that trailers must not be more than 2.5m in width. However he noted there was one exemption for a vessel in the ACT that he's aware of.

3 Reports

3.1 Boating Incident Report:

- The boating incident reports for July and August 2015 were presented.
- MP noted that Split Rock Dam is not a designated alpine lake, however cold water does occur and he suggested that Maritime should look into the merits of including all dams and lakes in future cold water and hypothermia campaigns.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
1. Investigate the possibility and merits of including all dams and lakes where boating occurs, in the cold water campaigns.	MD	ASAP

- MD said amongst the serious injuries there were a number that involved back injuries, indicating that the skippers could have been deliberately going for the wake or waves.

- MP noted that whilst the injuries are being recorded the reporting structure and process could still be improved to indicate the circumstances leading to the injuring e.g when going for the wave or wake, were they also attempting to cross a bar or other activity.
- 3.2 Licence/registration statistics report:
- MD tabled licence and registration reports and said he would keep trying to provide historical figures to see if any meaningful trends were emerging.
- 3.3 Expired flares:
- DH advised the group to expect a 'Flare Collection Procedure' to be in place soon to make a uniform approach to collecting flares across the state.
 - DH also said RMS was investigating opportunities to have a vehicle collecting flares at scheduled deposit sites, in a model similar to the Old4New mobile vehicle project.
 - JR asked if Boating Safety Officers (BSO) could collect flares but DH responded that they were not equipped to do so.
 - PH recommended collecting flares on Boating Safety Day at the event sites, but DH said there were some challenges with regards to the storage and transportation of the large quantities expected so this would not be a practical solution.
 - JR asked if anyone was aware of talk of replacing flares with lasers. MD responded advice from AMSA was that laser flares are not acceptable as part of the mandatory safety equipment and as such the traditional flares must still be carried although there is no prohibition from carrying or using laser flares.

4 New Marine Safety (General) Regulation - update

- 4.1 MD advised that consultations on the new Reg closed on 28 August 2015 and that work had begun to process and analyse over 100 submissions that were received.
- 4.2 MD said some of the issues that received a strong mention included kill cords, definitions to bow riding, revised distance of requirements and support for reduction of PWC fees though there were many views to reduce the fees even more.
- 4.3 MD also said there were some issues with regards to compliance and prosecutions when it came to Young Adults offences which would be reviewed and addressed in the submissions analysis.
- 4.4 JR said there were still some concerns relating to the distance off rules which needed to be addressed. AM agreed and said there is concern in the paddling community about how the new distance off requirements would affect rowers.
- 4.5 MD reiterated that the main point when it comes to distance off is that if a person was in the water then a vessel would need to pass at a safe distance and if not possible then a safe speed would be the next option. Both PH and JR said more discussion needs to be had particularly around definitions and agreed to meet with MD soon to provide some input.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
2. PH and JR to have further discussions with MD regarding definitions and distance off requirements.	PH, JR & MD	ASAP

- 4.6 MD said the Reg review may also be discussed at the next MAC meeting before recommendations are made to the Minister for his consideration shortly thereafter.

5 Lifejacket Wear Initiative - update

- 5.1 MD confirmed that the Old4New Lifejacket Exchange would be back this summer for a third season accompanied by a second truck to carry additional stock to avoid some of the shortages that occurred last season.

- 5.2 MD said those that were affected by the shortages last season and had contacted the MMC were able to exchange and purchase the discounted product through the mail.
- 5.3 MD noted that a big part of this season's program would be a strong focus on lifejacket servicing and care, he also revealed that this season will see the program partnering with agencies including DPI (Fisheries) and Marine Rescue NSW at some sites to provide additional maritime expert advice to the public.

6 Boating Safety Day Launch – 27 September

- 6.1 DH said Boating Safety Day this year will be held on 27 September across five locations including Ballina, Nelson Bay, Bayview, Windang and Batemans Bay. He said there would be safety demonstrations and giveaways as well as a media campaign in the lead up to the event.
- 6.2 DL suggested RMS contact Pittwater Council and ask if parking at Rowland Reserve could be free for the duration of Boating Safety Day to encourage attendance. DH said he would investigate if this was possible.
- 6.3 MP stated that more needs to be done through such events to engage the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, he asked if any efforts had been made in recent Maritime campaigns. MD responded that TfNSW and RMS have a strong and ongoing engagement with the CALD communities noting the success with PWC local campaigns as well as radio and print advertising targeting CALD community, however he noted more can be done. DH added that he'd like to have more discussion on this matter at the next RVAG meeting.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
3. Discuss at next RVAG and seek input on better ways to engage with CALD communities.	DH and MD	10 Nov 15

- 6.4 **Summer Compliance Campaigns:** DH said this year's summer campaigns would see BSO state wide engagement in education and compliance initiatives. He mentioned the first 6 days would focus strongly on educational and awareness work followed by a strong compliance work in the last couple of days.
- 6.5 DH remarked that the compliance effort would likely be linked to the Water Police 'Viking' campaign.
- 6.6 JR questioned whether the 'User Groups' were feeding any information to RMS that was useful in constructing the compliance campaigns. DH responded that some of the user groups worked really well while a few others were not performing as originally planned.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
4. Provide a summary of the current 'User Group' structures and activities.	DH	10 Nov 15

7 Boating Now – update (see item 2.11)

- 7.1 **Boat Ramp Guidelines:** DL said putting the guidelines together was a worthwhile exercise and he commended the 'project group' for a job well done. He said the new guidelines are a living document and that RMS worked well with the RVAG project group. The guidelines can be found at <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/key-build-program/boating-now/index.html>.

8 General Business

- 8.1 **Cabbage Tree Bay (Designated Swimming Zone):** JR said moves by Manly Council to install a wider swimming zone in the vicinity of Cabbage Tree Bay had the effect of prevent access to the area for boats.
- 8.2 DH remarked that RMS was aware of this issue and was engaging with Council who were mainly concerned with tenders going in and out frequently at the risk of striking someone in the water. He added that RMS is engaged with Council to find a workable solution that would be acceptable to all parties.
- 8.3 JR referred to an earlier 'usage management plan' which was discussed at length and agreed to by all stakeholders but was never implemented by Council for some reason. DL suggested that maybe the 'usage management plan' should be raised at the next RMS and Council meeting and see if it can't be reviewed and implemented.
- 8.4 **Coffs Harbour Slipway Remediation Works:** JR said there was an incident where a yacht was struck by lightning near Coffs and could not be slipped anywhere nearby. He said this highlighted the need for a slipway at Coffs and asked if anything could be done to achieve this.
- 8.5 MD said Crown Lands were aware of this but questioned the cost remediation for such a proposal. MD also said he thought the economic viability of a commercial private operation was questionable.
- 8.6 DL agreed and said the location presented practical and environmental challenges which made it a bad choice for a slipway.
- 8.7 **Multiple Use Pontoon Design Standards:** MD advised the group that Transport for NSW (TfNSW) was looking to draft a set of guidelines and standards for multiple user pontoons and asked if there were any volunteers interested in providing advice.
- 8.8 DL said he would be interested and a few others who had been on the 'boat ramp guidelines' project group also expressed interest.
- 8.9 PH said it would be important to include a Rowing representative on that group as well. MD agreed and supported the idea of a group from within RVAG providing feedback on this similar to the great work done by the 'boat ramp guidelines' group.
- 8.10 DC said he would pass on the contact details of interested members to TfNSW for further information.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
5. Provide contact details of DL, JR, PH, MC and AM to TfNSW for inclusion in discussions regarding 'Multiuse Pontoon Standards & Guidelines'.	DC	ASAP

- 8.11 MC said that the pontoon at the new Homebush Bay Bridge had adopted a design model that would take out at least two spans of the bridge, which has a significant adverse effect on rowers and is a safety concern for water users in the area.
- 8.12 MC said there had been no consultation with the rowing community that he was aware of and he requested that RMS take urgent action to ensure rowers were not disadvantaged by the pontoon's installation.
- 8.13 DH said he would seek more information from sources at RMS and provide a status update.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due
6. Give a status update on the pontoon construction project at Homebush Bay and how this will affect	DH	ASAP

rowing activities in the area.		
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8.14 The meeting closed at 19:30hrs.

Summary of Actions

#	Actions	Person	Due
1.	Investigate the possibility and merits of including all dams and lakes where boating occurs, in the cold water campaigns.	MD	ASAP
2.	PH and JR to have further discussions with MD regarding definitions and distance off requirements.	PH, JR & MD	ASAP
3.	Discuss at next RVAG and seek input on better ways to engage with CALD communities.	MD and DH	10 Nov 15
4.	Provide a summary of the current 'User Group' structures and activities.	DH	10 Nov 15
5.	Provide contact details of DL, JR, PH, MC and AM to TfNSW for inclusion in discussions regarding 'Multiuse Pontoon Standards & Guidelines'.	DC	ASAP
6.	Give a status update on the pontoon construction project at Homebush Bay and how this will affect rowing activities in the area.	DH	ASAP