

Recreational Vessels Advisory Group

Date:	Tuesday 16 February 2016, 1700 hours
Venue:	Meeting Room 1A & 1B, NSW Maritime, 33 James Craig Rd, Rozelle
Chair:	Michael Drake (MD), Principal Manager Port and Maritime Policy, Transport for NSW
Admin:	David Chieza (DC), Assistant Policy Officer, Port and Maritime Policy

Attendees:	
Geoff Duvall (GD)	Australian Power Boat Association
Michael Jarvin (MJ)	Boating Industry Association
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
David Hunter (DH)	Roads and Maritime Services
Greg Blackburne (GB)	Scuba Clubs' Association of NSW
David Edwards (DE)	Yachting NSW

Apologies:	
Alan Barrett (AB)	Boating Industry Association
Tony Andrews (TA)	Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries)
Phil Newman (PN)	Paddle NSW
Malcolm Poole (MP)	Recreational Fishing Alliance of New South Wales
Phil Dulhunty (PD)	Seaplane Pilots' Association
Andy Kent (AK)	Surf Life Saving NSW

Date of next meeting	Tuesday 10 May 2016
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1 Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 MD welcomed attendees to the meeting and relayed apologies from Alan Barrett, Malcolm Poole, Philip Dulhunty and David Edwards.

2 Review of actions from previous meeting

- 2.1 **Action 1** review: MD said he consulted with TfNSW Campaigns who advised that the current advertising and awareness programs adequately covered CALD communities, and there would be no additional approach at this stage.
- 2.2 **Action 2** review: DH advised this was completed.

- 2.3 **Action 3** review: MD advised that a paper was submitted to MAC on the 'proposed wharf at Rhodes Point' highlighting the concerns raised by PaddleNSW. The paper was noted by MAC and the Minister and MD said the issue is being dealt with through the normal channels.
- 2.4 **Action 4** review: DH said this action would be addressed during the Summer Compliance Campaigns update.
- 2.5 **Action 5** review: DH advised that there was a meeting to discuss boat ramp projects with Tony Johannsen (TJ) from Boating Now RMS team. DL said the situation at Terrigal Haven Boat Ramp was really bad noting that the consultant was using old guidelines when new ones were available and being used by another section of the same consulting firm.
- 2.6 DH said he would seek further advice from TJ and maybe request someone attend the next RVAG and present on this and other Boating Now matters.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
1. Invite relevant RMS staff to present an update on Boating Now projects and any issues with Terrigal Haven Boat Ramp project.	DH	Next RVAG

- 2.7 PH said there were some corrections to previous minutes hosted online that he'd like to make changes to. MD said this was okay and he could e-mail his comments to DC.
- 2.8 It was moved by MD and seconded by DC, that the minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2015 were a true and accurate record.

3 Reports

3.1 Boating Incident Report:

- MD stated that the recent fatality on the Murray River during the Southern80 meant that there were now seven recreational boating fatalities so far in 2015-16. He said one observation was that the same demographic represented in incident statistics was attending the Old4New mobile vehicle program.
- DL told the group he had received more information regarding the Broughton Island fatality in June 2015 that involved two fishermen. He said the deceased was alleged to have been sucked out from the hatch where head gone to assist his friend suffering a leg injury.
- DH said it's worth noting that serious injuries were down by 57% compared to the same period last year, and he attributed the reduction to the strong compliance campaign during the summer.
- MC also noted the small number of alcohol related incidents even though the overall data available was low.
- JR said we should try to access incidents data from hospitals as well to complement the current source. MD agree and said there was data already coming in from various sources including a new RMS complaint hotline and hospitals in NSW and VIC however this would take some time to collate.

3.2 Licence/registration statistics report:

- MD said registration and license data as expected has stabilized with the exception of PWC registrations which showed a 10% increase.
- MD stated there were now over 500,000 license holders in NSW and that anecdotal evidence showed that the waterways are busier particularly an increase in paddlers and yachts.
- AM asked if it was worth comparing the stats against car driver licenses and vehicle registrations to see if there are any broader trends, MD responded that a comparison across jurisdictions would probably be more helpful and if all jurisdictions shared their

data we'd be able to run some useful comparisons, there are preliminary discussions to try and achieve this.

- MJ said the BIA's figures mirrored the stats in a similar way that attendance numbers at boat shows influenced sales. He also said BIA surveys have shown that roughly every 10 years boats were doubling in size which would also give the impression of busier waterways.
- MD mentioned that former Maritime Safety executive Howard Glenn was now the national CEO of the BIA a development he hoped would lead to closer and better partnerships between Government and industry in boating safety.

3.3 Expired flares:

- DH said that RMS was half way through the new expired flare collection program which was running alongside the Old4New mobile vehicle project.
- DH stated there was extensive media coverage of the program and some 2,245 expired flares had been collected so far and the program just finished in the North and would be heading to Southern NSW. He said he's written to Afloat magazine to highlight the success of the program so far.
- AM asked how many expired flares RMS was expecting to collect and DH responded that you couldn't really put a figure on it as you can't tell from just vessel registrations as there's no way of knowing which vessels go offshore or not.
- MJ said BIA thinks this is a great program and supports its ongoing work into the future. DH said the program will be suspended during the quieter months beginning in May and will resume again at the start of the next boating season.
- MD advised members there is no intention to get rid of or replace the use of flares as they are the mandated emergency signalling device in accordance with national standards.
- DH agreed and pointed to advantages of traditional flares over other devices such as the infrared signature generated from the heat of an activated flare which was useful for detection by rescue authorities particularly in poor visibility.

4 New Marine Safety (General) Regulation – TfNSW update

- 4.1 MD said the new Regulation is proposed to commence on 1 July 2016 but until then the new law applies and nothing has changed. He also said all new laws will be publically gazetted and that a full brief would be provided at the next RVAG.
- 4.2 JR mentioned there would need to be a sufficient grace period for on water education on the new laws. MD agreed and said BSOs would engage with boaters educating them on the new laws for a specific grace period yet to be agreed upon.
- 4.3 DH said in the past a grace period of three months was deemed sufficient however assuming the new laws come into place on 1 July 2016 this would mean conducting on water educational campaigns during the quieter months, which is not ideal.
- 4.4 JR suggested that the grace period could be extended to four months and carry on into October 2016 to maximize reach, DH said that's a possible option and he was keen to hear more views from members on any ideas around this.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
2. RVAG members to provide comment and ideas offline to DH on how a grace period could be managed and implemented prior to the new laws coming into place.	All members to DH	ASAP

Lifejackets, dredging and Terrigal Haven boat ramp

- 4.5 MD advised members to note a paper by MP with a summary of issues regarding lifejackets, dredging and Terrigal Haven boat ramp.

- 4.6 MD added that the new lifejacket laws will streamline a lot of the wear requirements e.g for paddlers, small boats as well as providing clarification with regards to 'boating alone'.
- 4.7 MD said with regards to dredging Crown Lands were the responsible authority and DH added that around \$7m was allocated to dredging projects and that Crown Lands had identified sites for dredging but no funding had been allocated to Box Head.
- 4.8 MJ asked if Crown Lands could be invited to the next RVAG to present on current and future dredging projects. MD said he's happy to invite any Government agency to present on relevant issues following specific questions or concerns raised within RVAG.
- 4.9 DH said he was meeting Crown Lands' Coffs Harbour Regional Manager soon and would request info on appropriate contacts for RVAG.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
3. Contact Crown Lands to seek appropriate contacts and summary of current dredging projects. Investigate if appropriate to invite Crown Lands to present at next RVAG.	DH	ASAP

- 4.10 DL stated that with regards to Terrigal Haven boat ramp the planning, contracting and supervision of this project should not be left with Gosford Council as he felt the project was not progressing under their management. JR added that if the correct guidelines are being used a lot of the issues and concerns could be resolved.
- 4.11 DL also advised that the main issue is around the design not meeting the expectations of all the interested parties such as surf boats, fishing, rescue and others. MC said he's aware there have been issues with this boat ramp since HMAS Adelaide scuttling in 2009 when a lot of infrastructure was promised but is yet to be delivered.
- 4.12 DL stated that RMS are providing significant funding for this and should impress upon Council to follow the correct guidelines.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
4. Discuss with Gosford Council that the appropriate 'boat ramp guidelines' should be used and referred to regarding the Terrigal Haven Boat Ramp project.	DH	ASAP

- 4.13 DL said it was worth mentioning that MP has been doing a lot of good work particularly with regards to boat ramp improvements and that he should be encouraged and supported by members.

5 Lifejacket Wear Initiative – TfNSW update

- 5.1 MD advised that the Old4New Lifejacket Exchange program had completed a run up North and was visiting sites on NSW South coast. He mentioned that whilst sales were lower people were still interested in the product and that overall sales since the program began were just under 15,000 units.
- 5.2 PH suggested that perhaps the 6am start of the site visits was perhaps not the most convenient time, particularly for families. MD said people were still travelling significant distances in some cases, to make a purchase and the primary target audience were reflected in the people in queues when the van showed up.
- 5.3 MD reminded members that lifejacket servicing remains a key priority for the mobile project and that self-servicing was a simple and not onerous process. He gave examples of instances in Tasmania where lifejackets failed to deploy and where found later to have been out of service and in some cases missing the gas cylinder.

- 5.4 MJ asked if all members could be provided with a summary cheat sheet of key lifejacket safety messages and stats e.g worst year and best year numbers that they could easily access when filtering safety information through their networks. MD agreed and said information was already available but perhaps difficult to find in one location.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
5. Develop and distribute a brief summary of key lifejacket safety messages for use and distribution by RVAG members.	MD	ASAP

6 Summer Compliance Campaigns – RMS update

- 6.1 DH said four state-wide campaigns had been completed out of a total of seven planned for this year.
- 6.2 DH said because of this high visibility of BSOs they were getting much higher and stronger compliance data leading to the right output and safety outcomes.
- 6.3 DH mentioned the PWC compliance campaign on the Georges River that followed the Minister's announcement for stronger action. He said this was supplemented by Marine Area Command officers providing additional resources for this campaign.
- 6.4 DH advised that a 2year trial setting up a dedicated location for wakeboarding activities at Rogan's Reach near Seelands on the Clarence River commenced on 1 October 2015 through the Clarence River Boating Management Plan.
- 6.5 DH said the Plan is working well and make work as a template model for other similar waterways and that the steering committee has already met once since the start.
- 6.6 JR asked if representatives from the Williams River boating community also formed part of the steering committee if a future template will be applied to the Williams River. DH responded that the Williams River Boating Management Plan was nearing completion and a separate committee with appropriate representation would be established in due course.

PWC Compliance and Enforcement Review

- 6.7 PH stated that the industry had done a lot of work on promoting safety but more needed to be done from Government to compliment these efforts. He cited the example in Victoria where the Government was actively targeting PWC owners with safety messages including mail outs which NSW should consider doing.
- 6.8 PH mentioned that he'd heard that some Boating Education Officers (BEO) where not giving the accurate advice such as mention of bans and restrictions. He said there is a large number of compliant PWC users and MC agreed highlighting a User Group meeting he attended in December last year where it was evident there were many PWC riders who did the right thing.
- 6.9 MD said there are a range of options available regarding PWC compliance and education initiatives and that these would be implemented as appropriate. MD stated there is a hoon element to deal with and behavioural issues such as intimidation that affect the enjoyment of the waterway by boaters and recreational users who have just as much right to be on the water as well.
- 6.10 MC mentioned that any new initiatives targeting PWC riders should be advertised extensively.
- 6.11 MJ suggested that stats on where PWC riders got their license from and for how long they've held it may yield some useful intelligence. He also said South Australia introduced a new campaign called "Don't be that guy" at Murray's Bridge which NSW could seek to model.

- 6.12 MD said jurisdictions already share some data on campaigns and learnings which NSW is always eager to look into and he noted that as part of the new reforms a practical component will be added to the process of obtaining a PWC license.
- 6.13 PH stated that a PWC forum for key stakeholders is needed to further address the issues of compliance and education and that industry is willing to take part in such an event. MD accepted that but stated that any such forum would need to include a broad representation of all waterway users.

7 Boating Now – update (deferred to next meeting)

- 7.1 DH said a comprehensive brief on the Boating Now program will be provided at the next meeting.

8 General Business

- 8.1 MC said he noted a number of organizations had not been present at the last couple of RVAG meetings and wondered if the group was not losing its structure and impact noting the absence of a Waterski representative. MD mentioned that membership is still very strong and members do tender their apologies when not able to attend, he also suggested a lot of communication was occurring off-line between members.
- 8.2 DL advised members that the Pittwater Council was conducting a waterfront review which members should be interested in from a boating safety and access perspective. He said more information was available on the Council's website.
- 8.3 DL also said members should not that he'd received some advice that there are concerns that boaters where either not aware or don't understand the 'Dive Signs' on display at boat ramps, which could be an issue to address in the future.
- 8.4 MC requested some options for members to consider with regards to RVAG meeting frequency and suggested a fresh approach could lead to stronger attendance.

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due
6. Develop two options for a new RVAG meeting schedule for members' consideration and comment with a view to adopt a new schedule at the next meeting.	DC	ASAP

Subsidized mooring apparatus – Lake Macquarie

- 8.5 JR advised that the Hunter Local Land Services was offering to subsidize the installation of seagrass friendly moorings in certain areas of Lake Macquarie an issue affecting moorings on Lake Macquarie. He asked if RMS had been consulted or provided any endorsement.
- 8.6 MD stated that this TfNSW supports the use of environmentally friendly moorings where appropriate, however this specific project was not run by TfNSW or RMS. MD said if any further information became available to would be passed onto to the group.

Update on Marine Rescue NSW Levy audit

- 8.7 JR said in June 2015 MAC was advised that a Marine Rescue NSW (MRNSW) State Funding Expenditure Review was underway and he enquired as to whether RVAG would be privy to any of the review's findings.
- 8.8 MD advised that this issue has been raised at the most recent MAC meeting where it was reported that an independent audit is currently being undertaken and should be completed in the coming months. It was reported that the audit has raised no major issues of concern.

- 8.9 MD explained that the funding of Marine Rescue is a matter for the former Ministry of Police and Emergency Services (now the Office of Emergency Management within the Department of Justice).
- 8.10 JR said he would take up any further questions on the issue directly with the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services.
- 8.11 The meeting closed at 19:20hrs.

Summary of Actions

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1.	Invite relevant RMS staff to present an update on Boating Now projects and any issues with Terrigal Haven Boat Ramp project.	DH	ASAP
2.	RVAG members to provide comment and ideas offline to DH on how a grace period could be managed and implemented prior to the new laws coming into place.	All members to DH	ASAP
3.	Contact Crown Lands to seek appropriate contacts and summary of current dredging projects. Investigate if appropriate to invite Crown Lands to present at next RVAG.	DH	ASAP
4.	Discuss with Gosford Council that the appropriate 'boat ramp guidelines' should be used and referred to regarding the Terrigal Haven Boat Ramp project.	DH	ASAP
5.	Develop and distribute a brief summary of key lifejacket safety messages for use and distribution by RVAG members.	MD	ASAP
6.	Develop two options for a new RVAG meeting schedule for members' consideration and comment with a view to adopt a new schedule at the next meeting.	DC	ASAP