

# Paddle Safe Strategy

2014 – 2017

## Introduction

The Maritime Management Centre (MMC) is responsible for the Boating Safety Communications and Education Strategy 2012-15 and Maritime Policy Agenda 2012. MMC works closely with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), the operational delivery agency.

This Strategy supports the Boating Safety Communications and Education Strategy; the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group's (ANZSBEG) Work Plan and the Maritime Policy Agenda 2012, which all list paddle safety as a priority boating safety issue. This Strategy also supports the objectives of the NSW Water Safety Strategy 2013-15.

The term paddle craft for the purpose of this Strategy encompasses the following craft: kayak, surf-ski, canoe, stand-up paddle board, and pedal craft.

Paddle craft activity is rapidly increasing as it provides a relatively inexpensive way for people to enjoy our waterways. From information received from paddle craft dealers it is estimated that there are between 3000 to 5000 paddle craft sold annually in NSW. Paddle NSW estimates there are approximately 70,000 paddlers in the State. As these craft are not required to be registered, the exact numbers in use is unknown.

Paddle craft are used in far more locations than any other craft. From coastal areas to rivers and inland lakes and dams, they can navigate on open waters as well as shallow and narrow waterways. Paddle craft are low-profile vessels which are, at times, difficult to see from other craft, are also highly susceptible to capsize and are a popular entry level craft.

## Objectives

The objective of this Strategy is to promote safe and responsible use of paddle craft and this includes, among other safety issues, increasing visibility and wearing a lifejacket.

## Statistical Analysis

Over the 10 year period 2002-03 to 2011-12, there have been seven fatal incidents involving paddle and rowing craft. According to the publication *Boating Incidents in NSW Statistical report for the 10-year period ended 30 June 2012*, paddle craft counted for 15.7% of vessel usage. In relation to incidents that resulted in a fatality, the incident rate for paddle and rowing craft was at 8.4%. This figure was the same for yachts, but the major difference is that the estimated usage of yachts was 36.2%, while the estimated usage for paddle and rowing craft was under half of that at 15.7%, indicating just over double the risk of a fatal incident occurring in a paddle or rowing craft. Of the fatalities, most could have been prevented if the victim was wearing a lifejacket.

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## Safety messages

The key safety messages to paddle craft users are:

- 1) Wear an appropriate lifejacket
- 2) Increase visibility of the craft and yourself, including the use of a white light at night.
- 3) Know your ability and plan your trips accordingly – paddling at times can be very physically demanding.
- 4) Have the right equipment
- 5) Know the boating rules
- 6) Understand the conditions of your trip and plan to suit the conditions.

The general boating public also needs to be aware of the need for care and caution around these craft, with the following safety messages:

- 1) Keep a proper look out
- 2) Distance off
- 3) Wash

## Target audience

Primary audiences:

- 1) Paddle craft public
- 2) Retailers – marine and non marine paddle craft distributors
- 3) Paddle craft Hire and Drive organisations

Secondary audiences:

- 1) Paddle NSW
- 2) Other paddle organisations and clubs
- 3) General boating public
- 4) School-age public

## Education tools

Tools to reach the various target audiences and promote safety messages include:

- Paddle safe DVD
- Paddle safe brochure
- Paddle safe sticker
- Paddle Safety on Sydney Harbour brochure
- NSW Maritime Boating Handbook
- NSW Maritime website
- Boat for Life website – Promote the website through other websites such as Paddle NSW, Fat Paddler, and The River Canoe Club of NSW.

- ANZSBEG website
- YouTube

### **Paddle safe information pack to retailers**

Non marine and marine retailers selling paddle craft will be contacted by letter offering them the opportunity to supply their customers with a paddle safe information pack.

The information pack includes: the paddle safe DVD, paddle safe sticker and paddle safe brochure.

## **Education Channels**

### **Boating Education Officers (BEO)**

BEO to use the Paddle Safe key messages and tools to engage and inform the following:

- Paddling public
  - Typically at popular points of entry to the water
- Retailers of paddle craft
- Hire and drive operators
  - Any such effort must be aligned with BSO compliance activity (see BSO item) to avoid duplication
- Schools: especially secondary schools where paddle craft may be used as part of the schools sporting curriculum.

### **Boating Safety Officers (BSO)**

BSO to use the Paddle Safe key messages and tools to engage, educate and promote compliance of the following:

- Paddling public
  - On the water
- Paddle craft hire and drive
  - During any compliance work related to such operations

## **6) Media**

TfNSW and RMS media to collaborate in delivery of Paddle Safe key messages to the media via magazines, online and newspapers.

## **8) Event support**

RMS to consider support of major paddle events in NSW, such as the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic which is a 111km race at night on the Hawkesbury River and has over 600 paddlers compete. Any such partnerships should be used to promote the key messages.

Top 5 paddle events in NSW:

- Hawkesbury Classic Marathon

- Myall Classic Marathon
- Bridge to Beach Harbour Race
- 20 Beaches Ocean Race
- PaddleNSW Sprint Championships

### Partners

There are a range of partners who could help improve the uptake of this Strategy and these include the following:

- Paddle NSW - provide an excellent avenue to promote paddle safety direct to paddle craft users.
- Retailers – provide point of sale contact with paddle craft users and are able to supply the paddle safe information pack to the user.
- Hire and Drive operators of paddle craft - a direct contact with paddle craft (often first time) users ensuring compliance with lifejacket wear and the visibility of their hire craft.
- Other paddle organisations and clubs - promote safety at their events and links to Boat for Life website.

### Reporting and evaluating

The Strategy will be evaluated annually by the MMC in conjunction with RMS to ensure effectiveness. Where changes are required these will be published as updates to the Strategy.

This Strategy will be reported on to the Boating Safety Education and Compliance Committee at their quarterly meetings by RMS as the delivery agency.

Evaluations methods will include the following:

- Analyse the number of paddle safe information packs requested by retailers.
- Analyse the number of paddle safe information packs provided to paddle events
- Analyse the number of hits on safety website: Boat for Life
- Monitor on water compliance statistics from previous years and moving forward, in relation to lifejacket wear and displaying a white light at night.
- Incident data analysis
- Media activity

### Providing feedback and input

Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be forwarded to:

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