



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Transport

# Boating Communities

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**MARINE**  
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*Supporting WA's Boating Community*

# General Manager Marine Safety



Welcome to the first edition of the new Department of Transport's marine safety newsletter Boating Communities.

The new Department is responsible for marine transport in WA and is the peak State authority on marine safety matters.

With the creation of the new Department comes an even stronger commitment to improve safety on our waterways.

There will be an ongoing focus on education which will see continued promotion of the Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST). You can also expect to see more of the safety education team and their trailer at boat ramps and marinas over summer.

To date there have been around 124,000 RSTs issued which, when compared with the 90,000 registered recreational vessels in WA, is a wonderful result.

The new Department will also be a key player in the delivery of boating facilities and recent increases in boat registrations will help meet growing demand and provide better infrastructure.

The number of registered recreational vessels in WA increased by 24.6 per cent to more than 90,000 in the past five years and pressure for new facilities will continue to rise with current projections showing there will be a near doubling of boat registrations by 2025.

The recent allocation of \$1.7 million to 14 boating infrastructure projects as part of the Department's Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme highlights the good return boat owners are getting on their boat registration fees.

The Scheme is funded directly from boat registrations and this year's total funding was more than double the amount allocated in 2008.

Registrations also fund the promotion of boat safety, including Boating Communities.

In this edition we ask readers to register to receive the newsletter online to allow the printing and mailing costs associated with the publication to be redistributed to other marine safety education activities. Turn to the back page for details on how to register.



**David Harrod**

General Manager Marine Safety

# Who's getting hurt and why?

The University of WA is researching injuries among kite surfers, water skiers and users of personal water craft (PWC) and wants your help.



The research by the School of Population Health and Sport Science, Exercise and Health will look at what types of injuries are inflicted and how often.

There had been a huge increase in the number of people participating in kite surfing, water skiing and PWC use.

The number of injuries among these water users may well have increased, but the incidence of injuries and their type is unknown.

UWA is asking people in the metropolitan and Peel regions, aged over 17, who have been involved in these water sports for at least six months to help us get some answers.

All information provided will be confidential, with the responses unable to be linked to individuals.

Among other things, the web-based survey will ask you:

- where you practise/compete;
- the type of equipment you use; and
- about any injuries in the past year.

If you would like more information or are interested in helping with this study please contact Catherine by phone on 6488 1305 or email <catherine.hill@uwa.edu.au>.



*The Minister for Transport Simon O'Brien officially open 67 new pens at Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour*

## New Department of Transport

Keeping people safe on the water and providing boating infrastructure are keys to the role of the new Department of Transport.

July 1 marked the first day of operations for the new Department following a decision to split the now defunct Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Central to the work of the new Department is the promotion of safety on the water for the growing recreational and commercial sectors in WA and the ongoing maintenance and provision of new facilities for the boating community.

Appropriately the first day of operations for the new Department saw the Minister for Transport Simon O'Brien officially open 67 new pens at Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour and announce similar projects for two regional centres.

The \$3 million Fremantle floating pen project was undertaken to meet demand for berths for the growing number of larger recreational vessels in WA.

In WA, during the past 10 years the number of larger registered vessels measuring more than 7.5 metres in length has increased from 4,000 in 1998 to 7,200 in 2008 – an increase of 3,200 vessels or more than 40 per cent. In addition, Department of Transport projections show that with sustained high growth in the sector by 2025 the number of these vessels could double.

To help meet demand in the regions Mr O'Brien announced the new Department would canvas support for more boat pens at Geraldton and Exmouth where there are currently waiting lists for a pen.

Expressions of interest will soon be called for 50 new pens at the Batavia Coast Marina and 44 pens at Exmouth Boat Harbour and people will be asked to make a financial commitment and clarify the size of pen required.

Both proposed construction projects will rely on boaters prepaying pen licence fees - a similar funding arrangement for the new state-of-the-art pens at Fremantle.

Following the expression of interest period, the Department will assess the level of commitment from potential penholders and establish the scale of each project.

Tenders will then be called for the design and construction of the pens based on the information received.

People wanting further information about the project can contact the Department on 9216 8876.

# It could have been a lot worse

Two students were conducting research on 'near shore fish communities' in the Wilson Inlet at Denmark when their open aluminium dinghy hit a rock at high speed.

The skipper had accelerated on entering deeper water. The passenger saw a rock ahead and shouted a warning – which wasn't heard.

When the boat hit the rock, both were thrown overboard.

The skipper was shocked but sustained no physical injuries.

However, the passenger hit the rock at speed, receiving serious leg injuries, a broken nose and teeth, facial lacerations and bruising.

Someone fishing nearby went to the rescue at once. An ambulance took both to Denmark Hospital and the severely injured student was transferred to Fremantle Hospital.

## What are the lessons for boaters?

The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972, outline specific requirements for keeping a look out and the actions to take to avoid collisions.

The lessons from this incident are:

- always maintain a proper look-out (by sight and hearing); and
- always maintain a safe speed so you can take effective action when the unexpected happens.

Remember to always be familiar with the area that you are going boating ... Check the local chart for any hazards.

Sometimes you also need to be lucky. If there had not been someone fishing nearby the two students could well have perished.

# Three levels of security at ports

With 99 per cent of Australia's exports transported by sea, safeguarding port operations against the threat of international terrorism is a major issue.

Across the globe, stringent port security arrangements have been introduced progressively since the September 11 incident.

The security arrangements flow over to affect those who are engaged in boating for leisure, with three security threat levels around all port facilities in Australia.

The range of restrictions to the port facilities will vary according to the security threat level in place at any particular time.

The security threat level is set by the Federal Government and this could, at the highest threat level, cause a port to be closed completely to all recreational vessels.

What this means for the recreational boater is that access to port maritime security zones (MSZ) throughout Australia would be allowed only to those personnel and, in some cases, to those vessels authorised to be within the MSZ.



Stringent port security arrangements have been introduced.



*A new starboard cardinal navigation aid has been installed in Rocky Bay on the Swan River*

## Updating navigational aid information — keeping you informed

Navigational aids are strategically placed in the water and onshore to assist with your safe movement when boating.

The Department currently manages more than 1000 navigational aids in WA.

We are continually updating information about these to ensure that all recreational and commercial boat owners and operators are aware of changes made and new marine hazards identified.

These 'temporary notices to mariners' are designed to advise you of events that may present navigational difficulties, such as:

- the installation of infrastructure (e.g. a new jetty being built; a harbour being developed; installation of a navigation aid or environmental monitoring station)

- dredging or other operations
- special events, such as fireworks displays where boating is restricted
- changes to rules in a specific area, such as increased or decreased speed limits.

Therefore, if you are going boating, even if you have been to an area before, it makes sense to check if there have been any recent changes.

When we install a new navigational aid or make changes, we always publish the details in the Government Notice Board in *The West Australian* and in the public notices of local papers.

We also provide the details to all chart retailers so they can give them to you if you buy a chart on which the information has not yet been updated.

The easiest way to be sure that you know navigational details of where you are planning to go, is to check out 'temporary notices to mariners' on our website at: [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19808.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19808.asp)

In the past few months, the Department has been engaged in a large number of capital works projects and navigational aid improvements and details of some of these are provided on our website.

# Changes to commercial certificates

The Council of Australian Governments is working to recognise certificates of competency issued by all states and how they must be recognised by the other states.

The National Marine Safety Committee has produced a standard for the operational practices of commercial vessels. Part E of the standard will become law in all states by October this year. More information is available from <[www.nmsc.gov.au/documents/NSCV/PARTE.pdf](http://www.nmsc.gov.au/documents/NSCV/PARTE.pdf)>.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is also working on a project – Tinny to Tanker – to allow holders of a commercial certificate of competency to apply for, or transfer into, an AMSA certificate of competency. More information from <[www.amsa.gov.au/Marine\\_Qualifications/TinnytoTanker/index.asp](http://www.amsa.gov.au/Marine_Qualifications/TinnytoTanker/index.asp)>.

Future administration of all commercial certificates of competency and certificates of survey will be undertaken by AMSA. More information on this project – National Approach to Maritime Safety Regulation – from <[www.amsa.gov.au/namsr/](http://www.amsa.gov.au/namsr/)>.

# Improved boating management for the Swan

With boat numbers in the Swan River tipped to double by 2025, the Swan River Trust has released its new boating management strategy.

The strategy addresses a range of boating issues including moorings, launching facilities, wash, noise, maintenance and dinghy storage.

The strategy was developed in response to an increase in boating and growing community concerns about environmental and social impacts.

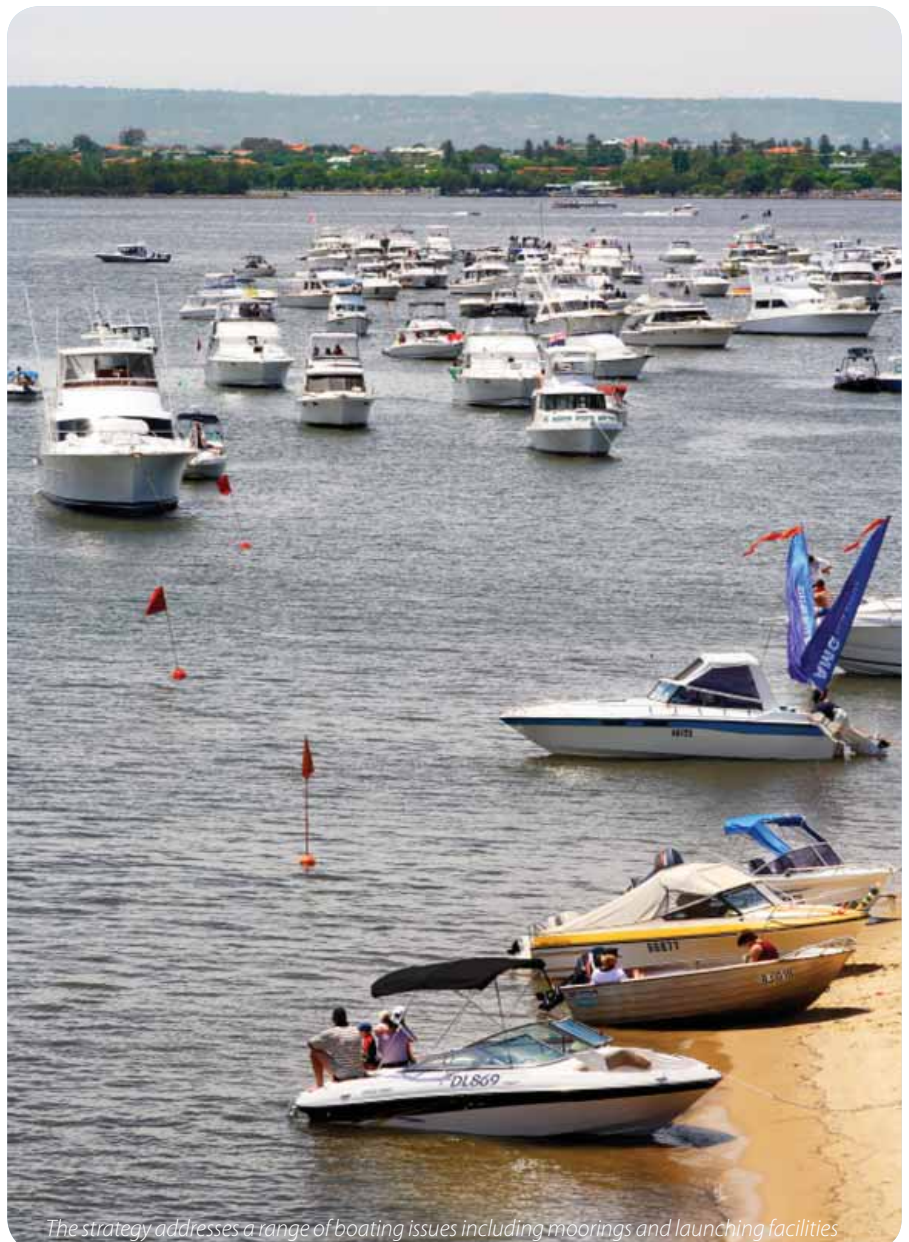
The draft strategy attracted over 40 submissions, with boat wash and moorings attracting the most comments and noise being seen as an increasing concern.

The Swan River Trust is also working with the Australian Maritime College to research boat wash impacts on other users and on the shoreline and introducing joint river patrols with the Department of Transport.

The new strategy was launched at the unveiling of five new short-stay (four-hour limit) courtesy moorings funded by the Trust.

The EzyRider moorings have less impact on the riverbed and seagrasses than anchors and other moorings. They are located on either side of the Stirling Highway Bridge in Fremantle, at Applecross near the Canning Bridge, near Mends Street in South Perth and opposite Meads Restaurant in Mosman Bay. More Swan River Trust public moorings are planned.

The Trust's new boating management strategy is available online at <[www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au](http://www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au)>



*The strategy addresses a range of boating issues including moorings and launching facilities*

# Does someone know where you are?

Every year over 1,800 boaters need to be rescued off the coast of WA.

Some of them can thank their lucky stars that they were found in time – because no one knew where they had gone or when they were expected back.

Trouble can happen to you – engine failure, flat battery or fuel problems – so just make sure you give you and your passengers every chance by telling a volunteer sea rescue group:

- your vessel's name/registration;
- departure point and time;
- destination;
- trip intention;
- how many people are on board;
- amount of fuel carried; and
- when you expect to get back.

It's useful to tell them what safety equipment you have on board and your car and trailer details.

It is also vital that you switch your radio to the emergency channel when you are at sea – **and leave it on!**

Finally, log off with the volunteer marine rescue group when you return – otherwise they will start searching for you.

**Marine Radio  
Emergency and Calling  
Channels**

27MHz channel	_____	27.88
VHF channel	_____	16
HF channel	_____	2182



*Log on and leave it on.*

# RST can help high school graduation

Students in years 10, 11 and 12 who complete their Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST) can gain three points towards their secondary school graduation with the Western Australian Certificate of Education.

Students thinking about doing this in 2009 will have to be enrolled with the WA Curriculum Council by August through their school to gain the three points. Students will not require extra work but must complete the RST and the paperwork on time.

In 2008, over 25 schools and 369 students took advantage of this program and it helped them graduate from school.

For more information go to our website at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19091.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19091.asp) or speak to the person in charge of student enrolments at your school.



*Students can now gain three point towards their WACE certificate.*

# Know your weather - 'sea' and 'swell'

Boating ought to be about pleasure yet when you look at the conditions in which people go to sea, you wonder at their idea of fun.

After getting ready and trailing the boat all that way, nothing short of terrible weather is going to put them off. And why didn't they get a weather forecast? Maybe they did. There may be people who believe that the Bureau of Meteorology gets it wrong.

The bureau provides services for the vast extent of Australian waters. Forecasts and warnings for various sectors of the coast are broadcast routinely through coastal radio stations. The problem is that some boaters don't understand the information given.

Forecasts used to have adjectives describing waves instead of giving heights. Boaters had a few disagreements over the choice of words, perhaps feeling that "moderate" was more like "pretty damn rough".

But now, when heights are given, they have to think a bit more and decide if a 2 metre swell is big or small or if a 3 metre sea is good or bad news.

There's more decisions to make. Forecasts generally cover large sized areas. Even the metro waters forecast covers several hundred square kilometres. It would be asking a bit much for wind and sea to be the same all over it.

Parts will be sheltered, depending where the weather is coming from, so that waves will be smaller there than the general forecast. Deciding where or where not to go on a given day is smart use of the forecast.

Weather forecasts, however you get them, give you the main information on wind direction and speed, swell height and sea height.

you get on the seaward side of reefs and what hits the beaches where the sea-bed rises up to meet the shore.

So, things are different depending on where you operate but what is a big sea or swell? What do you listen for on the radio?

15 knots is a significant wind speed for trailable boats. If you're in a small boat either travelling or anchored where you get the full impact of this wind, then it's probably not going to be very comfortable.

The seas could be over a metre high and white caps will be starting to form, particularly in unprotected waters. But 15 knots doesn't make the day a write off. An easterly for instance would not make this wave height until a long way offshore, although

inshore the waves would be close together and choppy. With a westerly wind off the ocean, you might decide to fish inside Garden Island in Cockburn Sound or somewhere with a significant barrier between you and the wind and waves.

A typical swell height on the west coast is about 1.5 metres. The mental picture of your fishing ground will be based on that kind of swell. If the forecast is for something bigger, the waves may break further out, with the odd bigger wave breaking where you don't expect it to.

Therefore the rule of thumb could be that you forget the shallow lumps and reefs on days of over 2 metre swell.

For more information on the weather visit our website at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imatearine/19172.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imatearine/19172.asp)



*Large seas and swell can make for an unpleasant day at sea.*

'Sea' means the locally generated waves made by the wind you can feel. How big they become depends on wind speed, how long the wind blows and how far the waves have been driven.

'Swell' waves are the fossils of the sea that were built by a wind that probably stopped blowing a long time ago, a long way away. You feel all of them too, outside reefs and islands.

Swell is not as lumpy as 'sea', and it can get ignored by weather forecast listeners. Swell however, is the bit worth listening to, particularly if you're thinking of fishing or diving near reefs.

Swell is what interests surfers because it moves fast, holds lots of water and makes satisfying breakers. What makes swells break is shallowing water which is what



*EPIRBs must be disposed of responsibly to avoid accidental activation*

## Dumped EPIRBs cause false alarms

A dumped 121.5 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) that caused a false alarm recently in Esperance left emergency service personnel and local police angry and frustrated.

The false EPIRB alert caused an Australian Search and Rescue aircraft to be sent from Perth to 20 nautical miles south-east of Esperance.

After over three hours of fruitless searching the beacon was found in long reeds in a park.

The false alarm was the third in WA since the 121.5 MHz EPIRBs were switched over for 406 MHz ones.

The false alarms highlighted the importance of disposing of old EPIRBs properly.

No responsible boater would be so irresponsible as to activate an EPIRB in a malicious way. But there are clearly irresponsible people who would do so if they found a discarded beacon.

Their actions cause expensive and time-wasting searches that could be using resources needed for a real life emergency.

Owners with old 121.5 MHz beacons are reminded that they can dispose of them at any Battery World store or any of the Department's regional offices.

If an EPIRB is activated by accident – turn it off and immediately ring the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (Freecall 1800 641 792), or your nearest marine radio station.

# Round the regions

## Kimberley

Continuing expansion of commercial vessel activity in the Port of Broome has led to a change in the areas available for water skiing, personal water craft activities and parasailing.

Safety concerns had led to consultation with water users by the Department and the port.

The result is that certain areas have now been defined and officially gazetted as safe for these activities.

The changes cover the waters of the port, which extend from Roebuck Bay around the Broome peninsula to Cable Beach

The Department has published a new boating guide which explains the boundary changes and special signage has also been erected.

For full details of the changes and the areas go to our Publications section on the Recreational Boating Safety page on our website at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/19128.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/19128.asp)



Broome boating guide.

## Esperance

The design for a new concrete causeway crossing at Bandy Creek in Esperance will minimise future damage to the boat harbour and the surrounding landscape in the event of a major flood.

The new structure will address problems such as those that occurred in 2007 when 180 millimetres of rain fell on Esperance in 24 hours. Thousands of tonnes of sand were deposited in Bandy Creek boat harbour trapping vessels in their pens and causing costly delays for commercial operators.

The wider causeway will accommodate higher flows and during flood events water would flow over it, minimising water build up and the risk of erosion.

The new causeway will have 45 pipes at its base to ensure tidal flushing and fish movement between the creek and the harbour. The design will provide access for pedestrians and emergency and service vehicles across the causeway.

A dredge is operating within Bandy Creek boat harbour and boaters should take care.

You can view the design for the causeway by visiting [www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/19880.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/19880.asp)

The Lake Quallip water ski area about 40 kilometres west of Esperance has been opened for public use and is proving a popular site.

Personal water craft have been seen operating close to dolphins. Operators are reminded that there are rules and regulations to ensure safe practice. A brochure *Ride Safe* is available from our website or any of our offices.



Bandy Creek Boat Harbour after the 2007 flood.

## South West

An additional patrol vessel will boost safety patrols of popular boating destinations including Geographe Bay, the Blackwood and Collie rivers, Koombana Bay and the Leschenault Estuary.

The opening of the new highway between Perth and Bunbury later this year was expected to increase the number of vessels visiting the region.

The concern is that some skippers will not be familiar with the waterways and that will increase demand for marine education and compliance services.



PV 12 deployed to the South West region.

The vessel, PV12, will be based at Busselton because of its proximity to other popular South West boating destinations and the high demand for local patrols in Geographe Bay.

Geographe Bay is an increasingly busy waterway and officers are constantly reinforcing the need for boat owners to ensure they have the required safety equipment.

Officers will be checking Recreational Skipper's Tickets, safety gear and carriage of EPIRBs.

The South West Boating Guide, local area guides and safety brochures are available from most marine dealers or the Department's Bunbury office or visit our Publications section on the Recreational Boating Safety page on our website at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19128.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19128.asp)

## Metropolitan

Congestion and conflict between water users and concerns for safety has led to a major overhaul of on-water gazettals in the Rockingham area, including a new 'boating prohibited' and speed restriction area.

Marker buoys defining the new zones have been installed in Mangles Bay to help skippers and other users comply with new gazettal areas.

An update of the Rockingham Boating Guide is available from the Department's website at our Publications section on the Recreational Boating Safety page at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19128.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate/19128.asp)

The changes include:

- creation of defined mooring zones
- an eight-knot speed restriction area and boating prohibited area at Point Peron making it safer for people to swim or snorkel
- a boating prohibited zone at Palm Beach jetty to protect fishermen and others using the jetty and surrounding waters
- removal of the Shoalwater Bay ski area and the creation of a 12-knot speed restriction area incorporating the wildlife conservation zone
- increasing the size of the personal water craft area adjacent to the Navy Causeway.



Rockingham boating guide.

# Speed Limits

Many specific areas of protected waters are subject to speed limits and signs generally mark the beginnings and ends of these areas.

You should always refer to local charts, signs at ramps or the Department's local boating guides, because you might launch your boat within a speed-limited area and not see a sign.

In addition to gazetted speed-limited areas there are general or automatic speed limits. These apply when you are near things or people. They require you to drop to 8 knots or less if you get within 45 metres of a person in the water; a moored vessel; a jetty or wharf; a river bank or low water mark; or within 15 metres of a vessel under way.

The 8 knot limit also applies in or through mooring areas, and under any bridge unless skiing is specifically allowed through it. Mount Henry Bridge is one of these exceptions.

There is also a local rule for the whole of the Swan and Canning rivers that applies a 10 knot limit between sunset and sunrise.

The reasons for the general limits are not hard to see; they give you time and space to spot and react to hazards. Snorkellers

cleaning boat bottoms bob up in mooring areas, many navigational aids are unlit, and so on. And, as always, the most important of the collision regulations ties in: all the time you must maintain a good lookout.

Another rule may also require you to slow down; International Collision Rule 5 which says that at all times you must travel at a safe speed.

It gives examples of when you might pull back the throttle: poor visibility, large numbers of other craft in the vicinity, background light from shore lights, nearby hazards, and shallowing water. An obvious one to add is when you are unsure where you are.

As with most safety regulations, all of these are simply good sense.



## Boating Communities emailed

*Boating Communities* is now available from our website in Adobe pdf format, and we would like to email you as soon as future editions become available.

If you would prefer to receive your copy of the newsletter electronically rather than by post we will need your name, address and email address, so that we can:

- take you off the mailing list;
- add your details to our subscribers list; and
- inform you by email when the next edition becomes available for download.

If you would like to receive *Boating Communities* this way, please visit our website at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19994.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19994.asp) to register your interest.

## Tow in surfing

New safety requirements under the Marine Act 1982 for tow in surfing are being trialled until 6 April 2010.

If you are engaged in this activity using personal water craft, you will be required to comply with these safety requirements, which you can find by clicking on the following link:

[www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19242.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19242.asp)

For more information, please contact the Marine Operations Centre on 9431 1000.

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