



# Boating Communities

NEWSLETTER Number 6 May 2007



## First RST deadline met

The first of April was the first deadline for the introduction of the Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST). Congratulations to all 55,000 who gained their RST and met the deadline.

This includes, of course, everybody under 25. It is now compulsory for everyone under the age of 25 who is the skipper of a powered boat with a motor greater than 4.5 kW (6 hp) to hold an RST. For everybody over 25, the first of April 2008 is the deadline for gaining an RST.

Pleasingly, many of the 45,000 experienced recreational skippers offered a special exemption from the practical assessment for the RST took up the offer, prior to it expiring on 1 April 2007.

If you have a Western Australian commercial deck qualification, or a current recreational boat driver's licence from another state, you can apply to any registered assessor for an RST through the skills recognition process.

There are many other qualifications, both Australian and overseas, that are also recognised. Check the Department's website <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/recboating/3136.asp> to see if yours is one of them.

It is important to note that it is not enough just to possess an acceptable equivalent qualification – you must go through the skills recognition process and get an RST. No further assessment is required, however you must have your qualification verified. For more information on the skills recognition process please visit our website: <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/recboating/3136.asp>.

If you are the skipper and unable to show an RST to an authorised officer from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, the Department of Fisheries or Water Police, you will be fined.

# Boating Communities



## From the General Manager Marine Safety



Following a busy summer which sadly saw a significantly increased number of boating fatalities on Western Australian waters, the Department is focussed on the final stage of its implementation of the Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST) to the State's boating community.

Tragically, since June last year there's been 12 boating deaths, including ten fatalities from six recreational incidents which is more than double the annual average.

The figures reinforce the importance of the Department's work to introduce the RST which, with the exception of under 25s, will become a basic safety requirement for the skippers of vessels with a motor greater than 4.5 kW (6hp) from 1 April 2008.

With less than a year to comply skippers would be wise to contact one of the Department's authorised providers as soon as possible to book their RST assessment.

There are more than 200 RST assessors throughout the State and over the past few months the majority have worked tirelessly to give experienced skippers the opportunity to benefit from the Department's limited exemption from practical assessment or to meet the under 25s deadline of 1 April 2007.

In the months ahead RST assessors will be busy meeting demand for their services as the second and final RST deadline approaches.

As a member of the State's boating community you are urged to undertake a RST assessment within the next six months and assist in the smooth implementation of this significant marine safety initiative.

**David Harrod**  
General Manager  
Marine Safety

## Personal Flotation Devices

Thank you to all those who made submissions to the National Maritime Safety Committee (NMSC) on the wearing of PFDs (see Boating Communities Edition 5, December 2006).

There were 35 submissions from WA, about 12 per cent of the national total.

Several organisations made detailed submissions and were invited to make presentations to the NMSC's Reference Group. Seven speakers represented large aquatic organisations and there were not big differences in their points of view. All saw the safety benefits of wearing PFDs on certain occasions at least, generally approved of the principle of national guidelines, and preferred an educational, either instead of or, as well as a legislative approach.

It was pointed out to the Reference Group that local circumstances vary, and any guidelines developed must be flexible.

Individual submissions naturally varied, but there was a lot of common ground. Many people believed there were circumstances where PFDs should be worn as a matter of course: children at all times, at high speed, when well offshore, when under tow, when crossing a bar, at night, in rough weather and when boating alone were common opinions. Other people, though, felt the decision on when PFDs should be worn should be up to the skipper.

There were also strong views on when wearing a PFD would be inappropriate or when any benefit would be outweighed by the inconvenience. When fishing, when inside the cabin and when at anchor were common, and a significant number of submissions believed that boating was a low risk activity and there should be no compulsion at any time to wear PFDs. Others raised the point that many accidents occur out of the blue rather than at predictable times.

Referring to the submissions and to available data and statistics the NMSC's Reference Group is now mapping the way ahead. There is much more data to be gathered, including analyses of Tasmania's and Victoria's experience with their PFD legislation. There are also issues with varying PFD standards, acceptable risk and cost-benefit.

Although no firm decisions have been made it seems clear that education will remain an important element in any PFD strategy.

**Ali Coates**  
Manager  
Safety Education

## New navigational aids: Houtman Abrolhos - Pelsaert Group

The Abrolhos group of islands are located 60km west of Geraldton, and consist of 122 islands sectioned into three main groups: the Wallabi Group, Easter Group and Pelsaert Group, which extend from north to south across 100km of ocean.

In 2001/2003 the Department installed navigational aids within the Wallabi and Easter Group of islands to provide a safer passageway for vessels when navigating the Abrolhos channels. To follow, the installation of 13 additional navigation aids within the Pelsaert Group of islands is in progress and expected to be complete before the end of June 2007.

Concrete blocks will anchor the floating buoys and two will be lit to provide additional guidance to vessels approaching the access channels. Buoys are proposed for all locations due mainly to the depth of water and the lack of sufficient flat areas in the vicinity to utilise tripod type marks as have been used in the other island groups.



## Reporting marine incidents and complaints

For many years it has been a requirement that marine accidents beyond a certain severity must be reported to the Department. If your vessel has been involved in an accident that caused serious injury or death, or the vessel was damaged enough to make it unseaworthy, you – as skipper or owner – must report the accident.

You must make the report within seven days of the accident, and the Department has a special form for this. You can pick it up from one of the Department's offices, download it from our website: [www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/1282.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/1282.asp) or phone 92168999 to have one sent to you.

Department for Planning and Infrastructure		Marine Incident Report <small>WA Marine Act – 04/23/03, 04/20/07</small>	
<b>Instructions for Completion of Form</b> Complete and return within 7 days of incident to: <b>General Manager Marine Safety</b> Department for Planning and Infrastructure, PO Box 402, Fremantle, W.A. 6155 Telephone: 08 9216 8999 Facsimile: 08 9216 8979 Complete each section by placing an "X" in the appropriate boxes.		Boat Name: _____ Registration / LFD / SPV No: _____ <small>PLEASE PRINT FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON COMPLETING REPORT</small> Name: _____ Address: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____	
<b>INCIDENT DESCRIPTION</b> Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____			
<b>TYPE OF INCIDENT</b>			
A <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION aa <input type="checkbox"/> Of vessel ab <input type="checkbox"/> With a fixed object ac <input type="checkbox"/> With a floating object ad <input type="checkbox"/> With an animal ae <input type="checkbox"/> With overhead object af <input type="checkbox"/> With submerged object ag <input type="checkbox"/> With water	B <input type="checkbox"/> ENCLOSING ba <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional bb <input type="checkbox"/> Unintentional bc <input type="checkbox"/> CAPSIZING bd <input type="checkbox"/> SINKING be <input type="checkbox"/> SWAMPING bf <input type="checkbox"/> FLOODING bg <input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF VESSEL	H <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURAL FAILURE I <input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF STABILITY J <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE K <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLOSION L <input type="checkbox"/> PERSON OVERBOARD M <input type="checkbox"/> ONBOARD INCIDENT ma <input type="checkbox"/> Falls within vessel mb <input type="checkbox"/> Choking / poisoning mc <input type="checkbox"/> Other onboard injury	N <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER PERSONAL INJURY na <input type="checkbox"/> Hit by person / vessel nb <input type="checkbox"/> Struck nc <input type="checkbox"/> Poisoning nd <input type="checkbox"/> Drowning ne <input type="checkbox"/> Other injury caused by operating vessel nf <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER INCIDENT TYPE
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>			
<b>WEATHER</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> Clear B <input type="checkbox"/> Partly C <input type="checkbox"/> Cloudy D <input type="checkbox"/> Rain E <input type="checkbox"/> Flood F <input type="checkbox"/> Fog	<b>WATER</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> Calm B <input type="checkbox"/> Choppy C <input type="checkbox"/> Rough D <input type="checkbox"/> Very rough E <input type="checkbox"/> Strong current F <input type="checkbox"/> Rip	<b>WIND</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> None B <input type="checkbox"/> Light (1-10 knots) C <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate (10-14 knots) D <input type="checkbox"/> Strong (15-20 knots) E <input type="checkbox"/> Storm (over 20 knots)	<b>VISIBILITY</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> Good B <input type="checkbox"/> Fair C <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<b>LOCATION</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> Inland waters B <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed waters C <input type="checkbox"/> Inshore waters D <input type="checkbox"/> Offshore waters		<b>SEVERITY</b> A <input type="checkbox"/> Fatal incident B <input type="checkbox"/> Serious injury C <input type="checkbox"/> Injured D <input type="checkbox"/> Major damage E <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate damage F <input type="checkbox"/> No damage G <input type="checkbox"/> Property damage only	

There is no law that insists you report unsafe marine acts by others, but many people feel it is their duty as a good marine citizen and the Department encourages this. If you witness dangerous behaviour, abuse of the regulations, or unsafe acts generally, call the Department's Marine Operations Centre on 9431 1000. If Marine Officers are available they will be sent to the scene.

If you feel strongly about the matter, you will be invited to complete a Marine Safety Complaint Form that would be the basis of enquiries and possible prosecution by the Department's Senior Investigating Officer.

The Marine Operations Centre can post you a form, but the quicker way is to download a form from the website: [www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/recboating/14034.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/recboating/14034.asp)

## Reefs, boats and breakers

Boats spend a lot of time in or near reefs. It might be necessary to pass through them to get into open water, or being there could be the whole point of the trip – snorkelling, pot pulling or fishing. However, most capsizes also occur in these places.

In a single year at least 56 boats capsized on Ningaloo Reef. They were owned by visitors rather than locals and, besides being in less than familiar waters, they experienced something that lower west coast boaties barely think about: tides.

A passage through the reef may have had enough water over it on the way out at high tide but may have shallowed enough by the time you come back in to allow breakers to occur there. Pack your tide tables.

Waves break when friction with the seabed slows the wave which results in it steepening to the point where it will start spilling over and breaking. Typically a three-metre wave breaks in about four metres of water.

We shouldn't just think about swell and breakers up north, plenty of boats have come to grief on the Stragglers, at Rottneest, and on the coastal reefs that parallel a lot of our coastline. Look at the charts published by the Department and you will see they carry a warning: in heavy swell breakers may occur in depths of less than six metres.

How big a swell should worry you? If you are accustomed to fishing a particular area you will have a mental picture of where the breakers usually are. Your picture will probably be of 1.5 metre swell, which is the most common height for a lower west coast summer. If the forecast is for more than that the breaker pattern could be different, and you would need to think about a different fishing spot.

Think about a couple of other things too. The Department recommends that non-swimmers and children always wear life jackets (PFD Type 1) on board. At times of heightened risk everybody else should put them on too. Those times include passages through reefs, especially if wind, sea and swell are up.

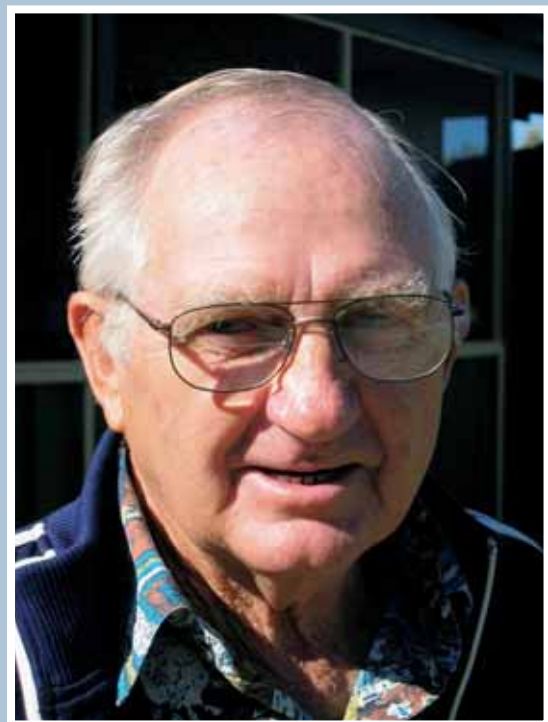
Particularly in open boats, even small amounts of water slopping around can be dangerous. If a following sea humps up on you, or you overtake a steep wave, that water will run towards the bow. The shift of weight could be enough to start a broach that in extreme cases could roll the boat. Shallowing water is just the sort of place for that to happen. All boats have to carry a bilge pump or bailer: use yours.

## Alf's story: How good advice saved his life

Alf Sweetman, 67, of Dongara normally pulls his craypots with a mate, but one day when the swell was bigger than normal his mate couldn't make it.

Alf watched the swell for a while to get a feel for it, then he set out in his runabout to his pots about a mile offshore and five miles north of Dongara.

As he was pulling he turned and saw a pair of monsters practically on top of him. Giving Alf no time to react the first of them capsized the boat, throwing him into the water. He surfaced to see the bow, the only part of the boat out of the water, hit by the second wave and sink.



His 26 year-old boat had no flotation built in. A life jacket surfaced beside him, he struggled into it and slowly frog kicked the mile to shore.

He had suffered a gash in his head that needed medical attention, but after making it ashore all he could do was lie there in exhaustion. Finally, he made it to his feet and had covered four miles towards Dongara before a passing fisherman picked him up and took him into town for emergency treatment.

This story with its happy ending has an interesting twist. Just the week before the accident the Department's Regional Transport Officers Pip Allen and Grant Barrett had checked Alf's safety gear; it was all in order, but the life jackets were tied up in the bow.

"If something happens you will never be able to get them out", was the advice.

"I've been 27 years on the water, mate, I'm too old to take risks", was the reply from Alf.

But something stuck with Alf, and after washing out his boat that night he untied two life jackets and put them on the floor. He is still thanking his lucky stars he did: he swears this was the only thing that saved him.

## A day in the life of a vollie

After starting out as a volunteer radio operator with the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group 22 years ago, David Slowley is . . . a radio operator. He is also the President and has done most of the other jobs within the group.

On this weekday morning he is in the radio room in the group's tower near the public ramp by the Garden Island causeway, logging on a boater who was later than most getting afloat. He notes the details down on the running sheet to pass on to his one o'clock relief.

What will the relief do, I ask, if that boat does not log off at the nominated time?

"He'll call up the boat at that time and again half an hour later. If it's a member we'll have his phone number and we'll ring to check if he's home. We'll do a ramp search to see if his car's still there. For a non-member we'll contact the Water Police who will get onto the next of kin. If we find he is still not back we get a job number from the Water Police and call out the duty crew for a search," David said. This is reassuring to hear.

Searches for overdue boats are now rare, it seems. But there are still searches after flare sightings, and dispiriting events they usually are, invariably they are the result of children firing flares on shore. There is a moral here, don't leave flares – and EPIRBs come to that – in your boat on a mooring or even in your backyard. Flares are magnets to some children.

Things are slowing down now after a busy summer. The first burst of good weather in October saw a surge in boating activity, and a corresponding number of people who needed help because of neglected motor maintenance. The opening of the crayfishing season kicked things along, and the school holidays made things really busy. But it was all working smoothly and gently by Easter.

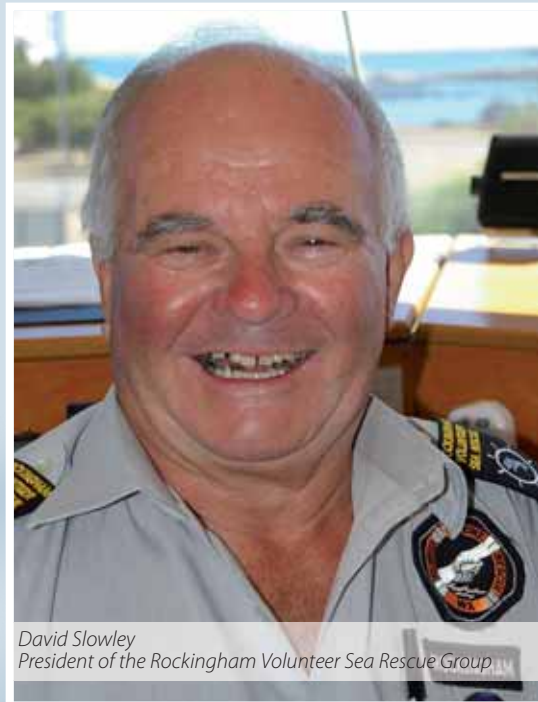
Gary Carter, the duty boat skipper, looked up the records for the past month and found 14 rescues and two medical emergencies: a heart attack 11 miles offshore and a man knocked unconscious on a yacht at Herring Bay, Garden Island. The emergencies were the subject of immaculate radio procedure by the boats concerned, and their Pan Pan calls got immediate help. Rendezvous were arranged and Sea Rescue ferried out paramedics, meanwhile maintaining radio links with the ambulances.

The lads at Rockingham Sea Rescue have noticed an interesting trend in the claimed reasons for breakdowns: fuel problems have become very common.

A little probing, though, reveals that the 'problem' is often simply lack of the stuff.

David also urged boat owners to be fussy about the quality of fuel in their tanks.

"When it's getting old put the fuel in your car or lawn mower or somewhere that's less important than your boat". He is also a keen advocate of preventative maintenance generally. "Get at least the annual service done and make the regular checks".



David Slowley  
President of the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group

Gary reminisced about one client who launched at night, and whose motor was so sick it flattened the battery without starting it.

"By this time it had drifted away from the ramp, so the skipper paddled a surfboard ashore to get his car battery. On the way back to the boat the battery fell in the water. He was close enough to shore to paddle a line there and pull himself in, but instead called Sea Rescue," Gary said.

A duplex failing here: poor maintenance and not using his own resources well.

When asked about the numbers of people logging in with Sea Rescue before setting out there was a general groan.

"On a busy day we get 60 log ins, and I reckon 20 times that number go out," was David's estimate.

He made the point that you did not need to be a member of the group to log in and get safety coverage – it was available for everyone.

"Just select 27.90 on your 27 meg radio (the Sea Rescue working frequency) and call up," was the advice.

There is a routine attached to this that is explained in the Recreational Skipper's Ticket Workbook - that you can also pick up by listening to other boats logging in.

Besides the routine, the main pieces of radio protocol are first to work out what it is you are going to say, and then to listen to make sure you are not going to talk over anybody else when you say it. If you feel some tuition would be useful, Sea Rescue run marine radio operator courses.

Rockingham's coverage is from 06:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs – unless there is a search going on. If you do not log off then the radio is manned until you are found.

The Sea Rescue volunteers not only freely give their time, they also raise almost all the money to keep their services and boats running. FESA helps, as do valued sponsors, but raffles, sausage sizzles and all the other traditional fund-raisers provide most of the money. Be generous when you see these people because one day they might save your life.

# Round the Regions



## Kimberley

Marine regulations call for all boats in unprotected waters to carry an efficient anchor and line. Regional Transport Officers in Broome report that many boat owners have a mistaken idea of what constitutes 'efficient'.

The main safety reason for the anchor is to be able to hold your position if you break down. Since you will have no choice of bottom in which to anchor, you need an anchor that will work in just about any kind of bottom. Reef anchors work very well in rocky bottom, but are next to useless in sand or mud so they are not 'efficient'.

By all means carry one, but you will also need what is usually called a sand anchor. The Recreational Skipper's Ticket Handbook has a section that discusses them and shows techniques for using them.

**Kimberley Regional Office: 9192 0200.**

## Pilbara

In April this year a vessel in distress off Karratha activated a number of flares at 15-minute intervals in sight of at least six other vessels. Whilst the crew eventually made it back to shore under their own power and a member of the public onshore alerted authorities, no assistance was rendered by the nearby vessels.

The inaction of the other vessels' skippers was disappointing - and it was also illegal. Under the WA Marine Act and international convention skippers are obliged to assist people in distress unless they are unable to do so, assistance is no longer required, or the circumstances make it too dangerous. If skippers cannot assist themselves they should ensure that someone else does.

None of the exclusions applied in this case, and no one got on the radio to report a flare sighting. You should never assume someone else has seen a flare or other distress signal - always make a response.

**Pilbara Regional Office: 9185 6100**

## Gascoyne

### Coral Bay

The Department's on-water construction at Monck Head of the Coral Bay Boating Facility is well under way. There is a newly gazetted Boating and Swimming Prohibited area around the construction site that people should keep clear of for their own safety.

A recent patrol to Coral Bay where about 50 vessels were checked at sea showed a gratifyingly high level of compliance with safety gear rules. Several cautions, however, were given for speeding in restricted areas.

**Gascoyne Regional Office: 9941 1830**

**Exmouth Office: 9949 2079.**

## Mid-West

### New nav aids for the Abrolhos

Until the beginning of the current century there were no navigation aids to ease the way into anchorages in the Abrolhos Islands - or any detailed charts either. But by mid winter this year, the third of the Island groups will have a set of nav aids.

The Pelsaert Group joins the Wallabi and Easter Groups, that had their nav aids installed in 2001-2003, in offering marked channels into safe anchorages. 13 floating buoys are in the process of being laid, and two of them will be lit to give guidance to vessels approaching the channels.

Used alone, nav aids do not guarantee your safety, you should always use them in association either with a chart or with a great deal of local knowledge.

**Mid-West Regional Office: 9956 0117**

## Metropolitan

### Wash

Wash from passing boats has always been a problem in confined waters, and the increasing boat population only makes it worse. Most people obey the speed limits that help to reduce the problem, but in some places something extra is needed.

One of the very vulnerable places with a lot of traffic is the stretch of Swan River that includes Swan Yacht Club and Aquarama. Boats in pens and, especially, those at the fuelling berth regularly get damaged from the wash of boats passing close by.

Following the marked channel in this area - staying on the Mosman side of the two green starboard hand channel marks that are upstream of the east cardinal mark - will be welcomed by the marina pen holders. Many boaters are doing this, but to remind all the others of the problem the Department is placing seven Reduce Wash buoys around the area.

### Narrows Bridge PWC area

There have been complaints of PWCs freestyling close to the take off and landing beach area at the Narrows. The take off and landing area extends for about 90 metres and, although you may travel in and out at speed, within the area you may not freestyle. It's all about safety for yourself and others.

### PWCs at Hillarys

The waters near Hillarys are very popular with PWC users, but there are rules - which are rigorously policed by the Department of Fisheries. Here are some of the more important rules:

- Everybody on board must wear a PFD; within 400 metres of shore this may be a Type 1, 2 or 3. Beyond 400 metres it must be a Type 1

- To operate a PWC you must now hold a Recreational Skipper's Ticket if you are under 25. If you're between 14 and 16 years old you are also limited to 8 knots and daylight hours only
- Freestyling and wake jumping is prohibited within any speed restricted area, within 30 metres of another PWC and within 50 metres of another vessel or person in the water
- You may tow skiers in the water ski area (when you will need an observer at least 14 years old), but when not towing you must stay well clear of the landing and take-off area and any vessels towing skiers
- All boats must stay outside Boating Prohibited areas, which locally include the Boyinaboat Reef Dive Trail as well as the Hillarys Boat Harbour Beach.

## South West

Weekend boaties in the Bunbury-Geographe Bay area have lately witnessed the unusual sight of a blue flashing light on the water. Not a navigation aid, it is the Department's patrol boat PV 16.

Actually they would only have seen the light if they were close to PV 16 stopping a boat the marine officers were interested in. One they were recently interested in for illegal water skiing led them on a high speed chase that ended with the boat running aground and the occupants fleeing on foot. Which was when PV 16's officers discovered the boat also lacked safety gear.

The South West Regional Transport Officers report that local boaties welcome the on-water presence. Land patrols and ramp checks for safety gear have their place but, the locals feel, for ensuring safety on the water nothing beats patrols on the water.

**South West Regional Office: 9792 6610.**

## Great Southern

### Emu Point environment protection

Emu Point Boat Harbour is in an environmentally sensitive area and is close to popular swimming beaches. Diesel fuel is particularly toxic to marine life, but any accidental spills can now be attacked and contained much more quickly.

A dedicated shed has been built there to hold an oil spill containment boom and clean up equipment. All regular harbour users and local businesses have keys to ensure a timely response to a spill.

### Denmark River

The Denmark River has been dredged to provide a wider and deeper channel at the river mouth. This complements other recent improvements for boating including two concrete launching ramps with a finger jetty between them. After an assessment, the Department will adjust the position of navigation markers.

## Peaceful Bay

Safe passage into the shelter of Peaceful Bay will be improved with the planned resurvey and resiting of the leads into the anchorage. The leads will be lit to allow local sea rescue volunteers to safely leave and enter the bay at night. This will also be a boon to passing vessels seeking shelter.

**Great Southern Regional Office: 9892 7312**

## Esperance Goldfields

The Department has responsibility for marine oil and chemical spill response throughout the State.

Enhancing its ability to make a rapid and appropriately equipped response to pollution incidents in Esperance Port and harbour, the Department has located a purpose-built vessel in the region.

The six metre rigid-buoyancy vessel is built in high density polyethylene. Immune to almost any kind of damage to itself, its soft, slippery construction material will be kind to other vessels when carrying out its secondary role: marine safety compliance patrols in Esperance and surrounding areas.

The vessel was designed to handle the oil spill response equipment stockpiled at the port and at Bandy Creek Boat Harbour. The centre console layout, the large clear work area and the great stability suit it to deployment and recovery of oil spill boom – the prime weapon in containment of a spill.

The Department works closely with Esperance Port to ensure the best response. Last year port staff undertook the Department's oil spill response training to become part of its network of skilled personnel throughout WA.



## Moore River boating guide



The latest issue of the extremely popular Regional Boating Guide series covers Guilderton and the lower part of the Moore River. As usual there are reminders of important information that applies wherever you go boating: safety gear; rules of the road; and so on, as well as specific local information.

Near Guilderton the river provides one of the safest environments on the whole coast for family fun afloat. There are two townsite ramps to get you on the water plus another further upstream on the other bank.

Some indication of river depths is given, but more important is the message the guide puts across that you are lucky to see two metres anywhere, and those depths can drop quickly when the river mouth opens. A useful tip is to keep to the eastern channel when passing Diamond Island about 2 nautical miles from the river mouth.

Shallow water and the possibility of obstructions are part of the reason for the 5 knot speed limit that applies throughout the Moore River. Other parts are the likelihood of meeting swimmers and canoes almost anywhere, and the fragile environment that must be protected from propeller wash.

## Snorkelling

The State Marine Laws insist that divers protect themselves with a diver's (International Code A) flag, either on a personal float or on the dive boat. There is no such insistence for snorkellers, yet a little thought suggests that they could be in more potential danger than scuba or hookah divers.

They operate nearer the surface, have to come up far more often, and are at least as hard to see as divers. Fisheries Officers report that there have been large numbers of near misses by boats. Please think about towing an A flag on a float, especially if you are snorkelling near a fairway or channel.

## Marine safety displays

Many of you will have seen the Department's Marine Safety display at boat and agricultural shows around the State. The display material is interesting in its own right, but at least as important is the opportunity to talk to the people providing advice at the display.

There will nearly always be one of the Department's officers from the local region on hand to discuss local matters with you. These people will be a mine of information on the boating scene and there will always be marine safety education specialists from Fremantle.

Professional mariners with many years' experience in small vessels, they can answer your questions on any subject from interpreting weather forecasts to the meaning of a symbol on a chart. What's more, they welcome the chance to talk to people as interested in boating as they are themselves.

Look for the Marine Safety Displays at the following venues:

<b>Kununurra Agricultural Show</b> .....	13 to 14 July
<b>Karratha FeNaClNG Festival</b> .....	4 to 5 August
<b>Perth Boat Show</b> .....	15 to 19 August
<b>Dowerin Field Days</b> .....	28 to 30 August
<b>Bunbury Boat Show</b> .....	19 September
<b>Mandurah Boat Show</b> .....	12 to 14 October
<b>Esperance Agricultural Show</b> .....	19 to 20 October
<b>Albany Agricultural Show</b> .....	9 to 10 November



### Marine Safety

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<http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/>

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