

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Fishing and Boating



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BOATERS AND FISHERS URGED TO STAY SAFE THIS EASTER

The Andrews Labor Government is reminding all Victorians to stay safe when getting away to the water this Easter long weekend.

New data has revealed that tragically, 79 per cent of drownings in boating incidents in the past decade have involved not wearing or wearing an incorrectly fitted life jacket.

Victorians planning on heading out on the water are being reminded to ensure they check the conditions, keep an eye on children and wear a correctly fitted lifejacket when out boating.

A recent spike in boating incidents during March are another serious reminder to stay safe on the water following incidents, including a fatal drowning at McLoughlin's Beach in Gippsland and a rescue of three people on the Barwon River in the state's South West.

Forty-eight people have drowned in Victoria's waters since 1 July 2020, the worst toll on record. Ten of these people lost their lives in boating incidents, with more than 150 fatal or serious injury boating incidents this financial year to date.

Rock fishers made up 15 per cent of fatal drownings in Victoria in the 2019-20 financial year, a six-fold increase on the ten-year average.

Water Police will be patrolling key holiday spots including Port Phillip Bay, Western Port Bay and lakes in Victoria's North East including Lakes Eildon, Nagambie and Hume to help prevent boating incidents.

To increase safety, Maritime Safety Victoria is working with accredited trainers to educate new boaters on the risks boaters face and continues to educate existing boaters and fishers. They will be targeting drug and alcohol affected operators and also focusing on safety equipment such as lifejackets and fire extinguishers.

Boaters and fishers are encouraged to download the Boating Vic and Vic Fishing apps to receive advice for how to stay safe on the water – including localised weather updates, facility information and ramp cameras at some of Victoria's most popular long weekend destinations.

All boaters are reminded to ensure their vessel is safe and has been serviced before heading out this weekend, particularly if your boat has not been checked since lockdown.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"Taking the time to check conditions before heading out on the water will help ensure a safe and memorable time with your family this Easter long weekend."

"Over this summer we've seen the worst period of drownings in Victoria's history, with ten people tragically losing their lives since July 2020."

Quotes attributable to Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp

“Boating is an enjoyable experience, even more so when you’re well prepared. You can stay safe by following a few simple rules – don’t drink alcohol while enjoying the water and ensure you have all the appropriate and working safety equipment.

“Check the weather as conditions can change quickly. Always wear a life vest and let someone know your plans.”

Quotes attributable to Life Saving Victoria General Manager Government and Industry Paul Shannon

“The risks around water don’t stop when summer ends. We know that families will be bringing kids down to the water, having fun on boats and jet skis among other things to enjoy the last of the warm weather.”

“It’s vital that you ensure you have the appropriate skills for your activity before going out on the water.”