

Response to the Office of the State
Coroner of New South Wales

**Report into Boating Incident
Murray River, Barooga
6 April 2002**

Coroner	Coroner, C. H. Becker
Date of findings	1 November 2002
Inquest location	Albury
Recommendation(s)	The incident was examined and reported on by the Office of the Coroner. The Coroner made two recommendations to the Waterways Authority ¹ .
Status of recommendations	Completed.

Background

In the early hours of 6 April 2002, following an evening of drinking, three men set out from a boat ramp in Cobram, on the Murray River, in a small runabout. After some time the driver of the vessel was hit by an over-hanging branch and was thrown out of the vessel. He was unable to be located at the time and his body was retrieved from the river nine days later. At the time of the incident the deceased had a high blood alcohol concentration.

¹ The Waterways Authority was renamed as NSW Maritime on 1 September 2004

MURRAY RIVER, BAROOGA, 6 APRIL 2002

No.	Coroner's recommendation	NSW Maritime's response ²
1.	That the legislation be changed such that all occupants of a vessel on enclosed waters be required to wear an approved Personal Flotation Device apart from those vessels which for various reasons should be exempted;	<p>In 2002 NSW Maritime, in consultation with its peak advisory group, undertook a review of the need to extend the compulsory wearing of lifejackets. The review concluded that current data did not support further changes to current lifejacket requirements on enclosed waters. Instead, a greater focus on education for at risk groups was considered essential. The value of wearing life jackets is constantly highlighted in NSW Maritime on-water safety education campaigns.</p> <p>This recommendation is considered closed, noting no regulatory changes were implemented at the time.</p>
2.	That there be a greater focus on education aimed at making people aware of the risks associated with being in vessels on enclosed waters and in particular after having consumed alcohol.	<p>NSW Maritime conducts extensive education campaigns to warn boater of the risks associated with alcohol on the water including the "Go easy on the drink" campaign.</p> <p>Random breath test (RBT) provisions are provided in the Marine Safety Act 1998 and NSW Maritime conducts joint on water patrols with the NSW Police conducting random breath testing.</p> <p>A brochure "Don't go overboard with alcohol" is produced by NSW Maritime and information on boating and alcohol consumption is included in the Boating Handbook.</p> <p>This recommendation is considered closed.</p>

² The response should be considered in conjunction with the published regulations, policies and safety initiatives outlined on the NSW Maritime website and in published materials.

