

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

**Report into Boating Incident
Tweed Heads
8 October 2006**

Coroner	Coroner, J. Linden
Date of findings	24 July 2007
Inquest location	Tweed Heads
Recommendation(s)	The incident was examined and reported on by the Office of the Coroner. In his findings, the Coroner made one recommendation to NSW Maritime.
Status of recommendations	Closed.

Background

On the afternoon of 8 October 2006 a couple were fishing from a hired houseboat on the Terranora Creek at Tweed Heads. The male, who was fishing from the top deck of the houseboat, fell overboard. A life ring was thrown to him but, due to a strong tide, he was unable to reach it. His body was recovered very shortly afterwards.

TWEED HEADS, 8 OCTOBER 2006

No.	Coroner's recommendation	NSW Maritime's response ¹
1.	<p>(T)hat commercial hirers of houseboats and other motorised vessels make enquiry (by a specific question on all hiring forms) as to the swimming ability of the hirer and each other person likely to be on the vessel and on the same form and prominently displayed on the vessel there be a notice to the effect "It is recommended that persons on board this vessel wear life jackets at all times while on open deck areas".</p>	<p>NSW Maritime wrote to operators within the industry to seek their views on the Coroner's recommendations. The industry did not support the specific recommendations in relation to lifejackets as these were considered impractical.</p> <p>The National Standard for Commercial Vessels places obligations on all commercial vessels in relation to Safety Management Systems and the identification and mitigation of risk. NSW Maritime has developed guidelines for each type of commercial vessel, including houseboats and other motorised vessels that are available for hire. The guidelines include sample checklists detailing the subjects to be covered by the pre-hire safety briefing, such as the wearing of lifejackets, and are available to all operators.</p> <p>NSW Maritime has also raised the wearing of lifejackets with the National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC). The suggestion that lifejacket requirements be changed from coastal lifejackets to the easier to wear, lighter PFD-type lifejacket has been incorporated into the NMSC's draft Leisure Craft Standard.</p> <p>This recommendation is considered closed.</p>

¹ 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.