Thursday, 21 April 2016

**BOATING STATISTICS FOR 2015-2016 RELEASED**

Minister for Maritime Duncan Gay today released statistics from the latest boating season which show boating fatalities halved on NSW waterways since the previous season.

“We also saw serious injuries significantly down, which is an encouraging result but there is still more work to be done because every death and injury on the water is one too many,” Mr Gay said.

“The decrease in serious incidents is despite a steady increase in participation.

“With more people getting into boating, the safety education effort is a continuing one, which is why Roads and Maritime Services Boating Safety Officers continue to have a presence carrying out patrols in these cooler months when conditions are less popular for boating.”

In the 2015/16 boating season, poor weather conditions contributed to more than 30 per cent of fatalities, while 50 per cent involved falling overboard or capsizing.

“We know that wearing a lifejacket significantly increases your safety on the water,” Mr Gay said.

“Of the six fatalities, three were not wearing a lifejacket. Boaties should not become complacent – wear a lifejacket, don’t risk your life.”

During the latest boating season, collisions made up more than 40 per cent of all boating incidents and more than 30 per cent of serious injuries.

“We all need to share our beautiful waterways and respect can play a huge role in avoiding collisions.”

A dedicated boost to frontline resources in the bid to keep people safe on NSW waters has contributed to these encouraging reductions in fatalities and injuries.

After a review of safety targets, more than $1.5 million in funding was allocated to provide more frontline staff across NSW, as well as specialised equipment and training.

From the 2015 October long weekend to Easter Monday sundown this year, there were six fatalities on NSW waterways compared with 12 the previous year. During the same period, 40 people were injured compared with 64 in 2014/15.

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