

23 November 2022

BIA Welcomes SA Govt Flood Support

The Boating Industry Association today welcomed news the SA Government has committed to a \$51.6 million initial financial assistance package for River Murray communities, households and businesses who will be affected by large-scale flooding.

BIA President Andrew Fielding said the SA Government announcement was appreciated by the boating industry which includes the important Houseboat Hirers Association division in SA and other related marine businesses.

“On behalf of the industry in South Australia, I offer our thanks to the State Government which is funding this support program,” Fielding said.

“The impacts of flood water on the Murray River system is putting boating industry members and commercial houseboat operators under considerable stress now, and this will continue for months to come until the flood subsides and infrastructure is re-instated.”

Andrew Fielding said the BIA would continue to work with the State Government in the best interests of the boating industry impacted by flood waters. This has so far included working with the SA Government to assist them in formulating the assistance package, for commercial houseboat operators/ managers, financially impacted by the current flood situation.

The BIA has been engaged with various agencies and ministerial offices throughout the last several months, explaining the financial impact and issues commercial houseboat operators faced, with nearly all hiring operations having ceased in the past month.

The entire commercial houseboat fleet in the Riverland from Blanchetown to the border has now ceased hiring operations, due to safety concerns and a duty of care to vessel owners and clients/ hirers with the fast current and the loss of traditional houseboat mooring sites no longer accessible due to inundation, submerged infrastructure and floating debris.

The majority of the commercial houseboat fleet below Lock 1 to Wellington has ceased operations but several are still operating in reduced circumstances, however most normal hiring operations are likely to cease by the end of November. Operators are now working with their clients to make arrangements to defer bookings in place over the next several months, ensuring all are accommodated with options to enjoy their houseboating holiday as soon as conditions permit.

The priority in recent weeks for commercial houseboat operators in the impacted areas has been to secure and protect assets as best they can, to withstand the flows predicted by installing additional new mooring posts depending on location, rafting up houseboats together side by side, usually where they are normally moored either on the river or in and off-stream marina. Additionally all other work assets associated with their



respective businesses which could be inundated, are either being moved or have been moved to higher ground.

SA Premier Peter Malinauskas said: "We know the rising floodwaters will cause distress and damage to many South Australians' lives and livelihoods, from families to tourism operators and other businesses. That's why we have acted swiftly to establish disaster funding for those already dealing with the extra water that's coming down the river, as well as those who may be impacted in the coming weeks."

In SA, people wanting more information on the River Murray flood event can call the SA SES flood and storm information line on 1800 362 361 anytime.

BIA members requiring assistance should call George Bolton, BIA Member Support Manager SA.

For information on BIA go to: bia.org.au

Media contact: media@bia.org.au; m. 0418 279 465

About the Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA)

The Boating Industry Association (BIA) is the peak boating industry body in Australia, representing the interests of the sector, businesses and the wider community of boating enthusiasts. BIA is an advocate for boaters and supports the safe and responsible enjoyment of recreational boating as a positive and rewarding lifestyle for Australians. A not-for-profit organisation, BIA aims to promote participation in recreational boating, strengthen government advocacy and support for members and expand the opportunities for professional growth and career pathways in the marine industry. bia.org.au