



Boating Industry Association

## Media Release

20 May 2020

# Recreational Boating Back in NSW

The Boating Industry Association (BIA) today welcomed the relaxation of restrictions on recreational boating in NSW following encouraging signs of containment of COVID-19.

Darren Vaux, BIA President, thanked the NSW Premier and Health Minister for their support for boating.

“Recreational boating in NSW is on the road to recovery”, Vaux said. “The State Government today confirmed that members of a household can go out boating in all forms of recreational craft which importantly includes the most popular type of boat ... the family runabout.”

“This means a typical family household can go out together as there does not need to be 4 square metres of space for each person onboard. Meanwhile people who are not from the same household can also go recreational boating but should maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from others, as is reasonably practicable.

“The Boating Industry Association welcomes this news for the boating public, businesses and jobs while maintaining a conservative approach to the protection of public health and safety.

“It has been proven that recreational boating in all its forms is good for both mental and physical health and is a low-risk activity that can be enjoyed whilst adhering to physical distancing and hygiene rules,” Vaux said.

“With more than 20 per cent of all Australians engaging in some form of boating activity annually, getting out on the water is a way of life for many Australians and an important part of the social, physical, mental and economic recovery from COVID-19.

“Recreational boating is now permissible under physical distancing criteria in States and Territories across Australia.

“Reactivating boating will also start to repair the boating industry, which is closely aligned to tourism and discretionary spending, and is hurting with staff layoffs and business closures as a result of the pandemic.”

In 2018-19 the industry had a turnover of \$8.65 billion, directly employed more than 28,000 people with more than 14,500 contractors. Seventy-five per cent are in small businesses, employing local workers and supporting local communities distributed around the Australian coastline.

The BIA reminds boaters to practice safe and responsible boating which includes:

- ensure the weather and sea conditions are suitable
- ensure your boat and equipment are suitable and your safety gear is complete and in-date

- tell someone where you are going and your estimated time of return
- wear a lifejacket, especially for children, those 60+ or if going out alone
- be COVID Safe and follow physical distancing, gathering and hygiene advice

The BIA worked to support the easing of restrictions, with the NSW Minister for Health yesterday signing an Exemption to the Public Health Order (COVID-19) Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 2) 2020 to allow members of the same household to use their recreational vessel for all on-water activities even if the vessel does not allow for four square metres of space per person. Commercial and charter vessels may operate but must ensure they are operating with the restrictions associated with their category of business and the required social distancing requirements.

The BIA will continue to support governments in disease control measures and that includes the need for COVID Safe workplace hygiene measures that are an important part of containment and recovery.

Boating is a way of life for many, with 85% of the population living within 50km of the coast and almost 1 in 5 households in NSW owning a boat or watercraft.

More information at: [www.bia.org.au](http://www.bia.org.au)

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