

5 February 2022

The Hon. David Elliot MP  
Minister for Transport  
GPO Box 5341  
Ph: 02 8574 6290  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

I am writing to you on behalf of the Boating Industry Association Ltd to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Transport in NSW and to briefly outline our commitment to working with the State Government in support of the social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits of boating.

The Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA) is the peak body in Australia that represents the interests of recreational and light commercial boating which includes: boat manufacturers, importers, brokers, insurers, retailers, charters, yacht and boat clubs, marinas, events, designers, surveyors and trades from boat builders to riggers, and more. BIA is an advocate for boaters and the boating lifestyle and supports safe, responsible, and enjoyable boating.

The boating economy generates significant benefits through employment. In 2021 the industry reported national turnover of \$8.835 billion, directly employed more than 27,630 people with more than 10,000 contractors. Seventy-five per cent are in small, family businesses, employing local workers and supporting local communities.

In NSW more than 85 per cent of the population live within 50km of the coast. Little wonder almost 1 in 5 households have a boat or watercraft. People of all ages, gender and ability can participate in boating across paddle, sail and power for leisure and sport. It is estimated that some two million people go boating each year in the State.

NSW has more than 533,000 people with a licence to drive a powerboat and more than 230,000 registered vessels and a countless number of non-motorised craft (such as small paddle and sail craft) which do not require registration or licensing.

Boating however is more than numbers, it is a way of life for many Australian families with most vessels being family runabouts and small paddle, and sail craft.

Boating has proven to be a standout choice in leisure activity through the pandemic. The combination of no international travel, the staycation phenomenon, flexible work practices and the need to be COVID Safe have seen interest in getting out the water ramp up significantly.

A boat is like an island where you choose where to go, when and who with, and its supports compliance with social distancing. Not only that, but it is good for your body and mind. Work in social science has shown that on a boat, feel-good hormones like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin go up, while cortisol (stress) goes down. Boating is good for you.

With this in mind, we offer our ongoing support to you and your ministerial team in the Transport portfolio. Our priorities include seeking government support for the following:

- safe, responsible and enjoyable boating
- recognition that boating – across paddle, power and sail - is a standout choice of leisure for a considerable number of Australians
- continue to address the need for new and improved access and infrastructure to ensure safe and convenient access for people of all ages and abilities
- industry growth and investment
- boating jobs.

We value the long-term working relationship that the boating industry has with the NSW Government through our partnerships in safety (ie Sydney International Boat Show and lifejacket programs, through the various recreational, commercial and property advisory committees (RVAG, CVAG, MPAG) and at a personal level through my Chair of your statutory Ministerial Maritime Advisory Council (MAC).

We support the Transport for NSW goal of putting the customer at the centre of everything it does and ask that such an approach be applied to its maritime customers that enable the Waterways Fund.

The core functional responsibilities in maritime for Transport for NSW are: i) safety; ii) infrastructure; and iii) property. The latter is the only one of these core functions which does not benefit from a well-considered NSW strategic maritime policy framework. It is noteworthy that maritime property is the one functional area that has seen the most frequent tension with customers and stakeholders on matters of policy and administration.

With NSW set upon a pandemic recovery plan and demand for boating access and infrastructure remaining high into the future, now is an appropriate time to develop and publish a maritime property policy framework in NSW.

We wish you all the best as Minister for Transport and stand ready to assist wherever possible. We would welcome an opportunity to meet and discuss the above.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself on 0411 555 645 or Neil Patchett, Co General Manager (Policy and Advocacy), e. [neil@bia.org.au](mailto:neil@bia.org.au) or m. 0418 279 465 on any matters related to boating in NSW.

Yours sincerely,

**Boating Industry Association**



**Darren Vaux**  
President