

2 April 2020

## COVID-19 and Australian Recreational Boating – BIA and MIA Guidance Note

This update to BIA and MIA members summarises recent and in-progress activities to inform and assure members we are doing all possible: to a) ensure that member businesses get through this crisis in the best possible shape; b) Provide solutions for Government regarding boating activity within the critically important framework and objectives of government policies and directives; and to c) ensure the recreational boating industry is well placed with governments and consumers as we come out of this crisis.

### Boating Activity

Recent updates and guidelines from State Governments and agencies to limit the spread of COVID-19 have left our members and boaters unsure of what level of boating is permissible; and others frustrated that the regulations are inconsistent across States.

We are working within government parameters of **Stay at Home** unless you are:

- going to work or education (if you are unable to do so at home)
- shopping for essential supplies such as groceries or other services and return home without delay
- going out for personal exercise in the neighborhood, on your own or with one other
- attending medical appointments or compassionate visits<sup>1</sup>

As a responsible and professional industry, we must always measure our request for an allowance for any level of boating activity within the above stated permissible reasons for leaving home and the primary objective of limiting the spread of the virus.

Certainly, many grey areas have arisen around 'exercise' including recreational fishing and boating, and whether seeking services pertaining to boating are essential services, noting the fishing exemption in QLD and now NSW. BIA is on the front foot working through these grey areas with government and their agencies in a systematic way to find manageable solutions that help the government agencies clarify permissible activities at

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/limits-on-public-gatherings-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

a practical level. BIA is also working where possible and reasonable to keep some level or type of recreational boating activity happening in States where possible.

Our industry does not want a 'Bondi' incident, that closed the beaches, happening with any level of recreational boating that may be possible in one State or more. We do not want a Florida example; where boaters had raft-ups that damaged the public perception of boaters and resulted in a blanket ban of boating. We are working with government on the detail of the many grey areas to provide a sensible, manageable and responsible outcome while ensuring the over-riding objectives of government's fight against the virus are adhered to. We must as an industry; with hand on heart always measure requests for an allowance for any level of boating activity within the various State Government justifications for leaving home.

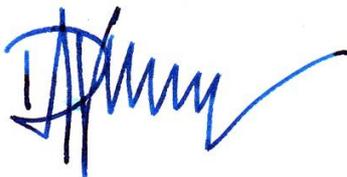
We must also in our deliberations acknowledge the impact of any possible boating mishap or boating emergency. Marine Search and Rescue and other emergency services do not have the same capability to perform rescues on the water, nor does our industry want to put any additional demand on any emergency services and facilities needed in the fight against COVID-19.

BIA and MIA are also on the front foot with all State Governments on permissible activity at marinas and boat yards. Detailed information has been sent to all member marinas and boatyards.

We know these matters are changing by the hour. BIA and MIA are committed to keep you up to date with developments in our united efforts to support our members.

Stay healthy and safe.

Yours sincerely,



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