



The Honourable Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PP1802-11

Your ref: Petitions

06 JUN 2012

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to a petition number 1802-11 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Ms Mary-Anne O'Neill, former Member for Kallangur on 17 May 2012, about outboards and boat registration. The petition requested that consideration be given to the registration of outboard motors rather than boats.

In Queensland, a recreational ship or commercial ship (other than a barge or a composite ship) with a motor or auxiliary of 3 kW or more (over 4 hp) must be registered when on the water.

Maritime Safety Queensland has the responsibility under its marine safety legislation for regulating the maritime industry and ensuring marine safety. To ensure marine safety several mechanisms are used, one of which is requiring certain ships to be registered. This is the accepted practice nationally and internationally.

The registering of ships (or boats), among other things, assists in identifying the ship and owner of the ship for the purpose of search and rescue operations as well as in compliance and enforcements matter. Ship and owner details can be checked against the registration details to ensure the correct identification and ownership of the ship.

Accordingly, an application for registration of a ship requires information about the owner and details about the ship. Once registered, the owner or master of a registered recreational or commercial ship must ensure the ship's registration number is displayed appropriately and legible from 30 metres away. Registration numbers must be at least 200 millimetres high on both sides of a ship capable of planning and at least 75 millimetres high on both sides or on the stern on all other ships.

This information and display requirement is particularly significant for search and rescue agencies responding to maritime emergencies. When operating a ship in the ocean or any marine waterway, sometimes the marine environment can change quickly and emergencies can arise unexpectedly. There is potential for a more serious outcome to a marine incident in these situations when delays occur because a ship cannot be easily and quickly identified to initiate a search and rescue operation.

For enforcement agencies dealing with compliance matters, it is necessary that enforcement officers are able to identify a ship and owner of a ship when a potential contravention of marine safety legislation has occurred. For example, owners and masters of a ship have a general safety obligation to ensure the ship is safe and operated safely. To establish that a ship has been operated unsafely, certain elements must be proven, such as the identity of person; relationship of person to ship, (such as owner); and identity and nature of ship and operation. Relying on ship registration records is essential in these circumstances.

The benefits delivered are effective emergency responses and service efficiency. The state's ship registration systems facilitate the safe and sustainable use of marine waterways within boating communities and the marine industry. On the basis of risk and safety benefits, the efficacy of a ship registration system soundly outweighs the costs associated with the registering of two small boats.

Registration fees are calculated on the length of the ship. For example, the fee for a recreational ship 4.5 metres or less is \$69.70 (plus recreational use fee of \$17.75). For a commercial ship 4.5 metres or less the fee is \$58.80 (plus boating facilities fees - for a ship 10 metres or less \$10.35 for each metre or part of a metre, and compliance monitoring fees - for a hire and drive ship 7 metres or less \$57.25).

To require the registration of an outboard motor, which is to be used on more than one ship, rather than the ship itself is not a viable option for ensuring marine safety. Also, this would not be an equitable system bearing in mind that not all registered ships are operated by an outboard motor. The current ship registration system is a more apt mechanism to effectively achieve marine safety objectives within an increasingly busy and complex maritime environment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Emerson', written in a cursive style.

Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads