

THE RIGHT GEAR – WATERCRAFT



Watercraft activity is using an item of non-powered recreational aquatic equipment in the water. Examples include surfboards, body boards, kayaks, surf skis, stand up paddleboards, wind surfers and kite surfers. Approximately 1.5 million of the Australian adult population participate in surfing and 1.1 million participate in other watercraft activities.

Several programs have been run by Surf Life Saving (SLS) and other water safety partners in recent years to address the prevalence of watercraft and surfing incidents. For example, Paddle Safe, an education campaign in Tasmania, promotes safe paddling for aquatic users, supervisors, teachers and the general community. In Queensland, there has been a program for surfers to learn resuscitation and essential lifesaving skills; Surfers Saving Lives aims to reduce drowning deaths in blackspot locations and increase safety across the surfing community. Furthermore, Surf Life Saving Australia has partnered with the UNSW Sydney to research rescues performed bystanders, where 28% of surfers say they have performed a rescue while participating in the activity.

MINIMISING YOUR RISKS

Before you take out your watercraft it's important that you **STOP. LOOK. PLAN**

STOP

- check the weather. Is it a paddling day today?
- check the tides and other water conditions

LOOK

- check your craft
- ensure there are lifejacket for each person (if appropriate)*
- ensure you have a phone and/or radio

PLAN

- let someone know where you're planning to go and when you plan to be back
- know what to do in an emergency
- remember alcohol and paddling don't mix

TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

- Dial 000 on your mobile or signal for help
- Stay near your craft if possible
- Stay calm and move away from any danger

**Currently, legislation is state-based and varies according to each state*