



# Making Rowing Safer for all in Tasmania

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Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) and Rowing Tasmania work collaboratively to help provide safety management information to the Tasmanian rowing community. The following points are topics for consideration for all clubs, schools, coaches, rowers, and other parties connected to the sport of rowing when using Tasmania's shared waterways.

It is imperative that all clubs and schools affiliated with Rowing Tasmania, as recommended by Rowing Australia, have an appointed safety officer who is responsible for developing and maintaining a safety management plan (SMP). This SMP must adequately and specifically cover the situation of an individual or crew rowing alone and training without a coach boat.

The SMP should be continually reviewed and updated when necessary and be readily available to coaches, rowers, club officials, and volunteers.

The points below should also be used in conjunction with the Rowing Australia, On Water Guidelines. (<http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/ra-on-water-safety-code-and-guidelines/>) and information from Rowing Tasmania, <https://www.rowingtasmania.com.au>.

### **MAST compulsory safety requirements for each powered rowing coach boat in smooth waters (inland rivers and lakes)**

- Life jacket to be worn whilst under power at all times by occupants:
  - AS 4758 Level 50 in smooth water (inland lakes and rivers); or
  - AS 4758 Level 100 or Level 150 in sheltered and coastal waters;
  - Additional 4 x AS4758 Level 50 or above life jackets for rescue purposes to be carried when coaching
- Anchor rope and chain;
- Auxiliary propulsion (oars);
- Bailer or bilge pump;
- Fire extinguisher;
- Flares (if operating outside smooth waters). Whilst this would be unlikely, in the case of an emergency with a capsized scull it may be a quick way of attracting another coach boat, so flares should be given consideration in smooth waters also;
- Operator to be licensed if motor 4hp or greater; and
- Boat to be registered with MAST if over 4hp (if only used for rescue/coaching, fee exempt, but must display registration number).

## **MAST compulsory safety requirements for rowing shells – life jackets**

- Under the Marine and Safety (General) Regulations a life jacket, AS 4758 level 50 or above must be worn by each crew member in a rowing shell if **their** coach boat is not within 500 metres of the crew. MAST may issue an infringement for non-compliance.
- Whilst belt-styled life jackets meet the Australian Standard other options should be considered.
- When training at Lake Barrington or any other regatta venue outside of the hours of approved competition, an approved life jacket must be worn if that crew's coach boat is not within 500m of the shell.

<https://www.rowingtasmania.com.au/education-safety/life-jackets/>

## **MAST compulsory speed limits – Motor Boats and Licence By-Laws**

- Coach boats are advised they are not to exceed 5 knots within 120 metres of a person swimming;
- Coach boats are advised not to exceed 5 knots within 60 metres of a mooring, moored boat, or other vessel or shore line; and
- Must adhere to legislated 5-knot limits at all times.

## **Recommended additional safety equipment for coach boats**

- A flotation device that can be thrown to those in the water in case of an emergency with a rowing shell;
- Communication – a handheld VHF or mobile phone for contact with emergency services or other on-water support is **highly recommended by MAST** and should be included in the club's SMP;
- A VHF should be fully charged and switched onto channel 16 whilst on the water. Dual watch on channel 12 on the River Derwent for communication with Hobart VTS.
- Thermal/safety blankets – these come in small packages, are easily stowed and are ideal after cold water immersion;
- Torch – when training in darkness;
- Always use “kill” switch on outboard if on coach boat alone; and
- Consider the use of “prop guards” to ensure safe rescue.

## Navigation light requirements – coach, rescue boats

The following requirements are **mandatory** under the International Collision Regulations:

- Port and starboard side lights showing an arc of unbroken light of 112.5 degrees from the bow (combined 225 degrees); and
- An all-round white light showing an unbroken light over an arc of 360 degrees OR a stern light and masthead light.

If navigation lights are not permanently fitted to a coach boat, it is essential when fitting auxiliary lights that they are on the correct side of the boat and meet the International Collision Regulations as described above.

## Navigational light requirements – rowing shells

Lighting requirements between sunset and sunrise and other times of poor visibility, are as follows:

- strobe light forward on the bow with 360 degrees of visibility
- white light on the stern which will be visible at 270 degrees aft of the stern
- Lights will have a range of at least 1 nautical mile
- These lighting requirements are legislated in the *Marine and Safety (General Regulations) 2019*.
- Coaches and crews or the nominated safety officer must ensure lights are operable and fully charged prior to leaving shore
- MAST may issue infringement notices for non-compliance

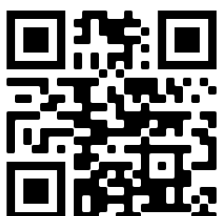
## Additional MAST comments on light requirements – rowing shells

Shells and rowers **must not** display red “bike riders” lights under any circumstances as they may cause confusion with conventional port lights on other craft.

## Weather forecasts

- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issues two forecasts a day at 0530 and 1630. These are available almost instantly and warnings are issued when between forecasts; ([http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteve/?loc=TAS\\_FA001](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteve/?loc=TAS_FA001));

- Coaches should obtain the very latest forecast available to them prior to any training session and brief the crews;
- Access to weather is via BOM, Deckee App, or the MAST phone weather service; Push notifications of warnings are also displayed for your operating area on the Deckee App almost immediately.
- Smartphones allow easy and instant access to weather reports;
- Useful information including weather is also obtainable from the Deckee App. Deckee is available for free download on iPhone, iPad and Android.



[Download Deckee](#)

## Tides

- Coaches should be aware of tidal movement prior to training sessions and relay information to crews; (<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/#!/tas> or Deckee App), and
- Coaches and crews should be aware of freshwater flow-run and debris after heavy rain.

## Rescue in the event of rowing shell capsize

- Clubs/schools are advised to take into account the number of rowers aboard the largest shell which is monitored by a rescue boat and the load capacity of the rescue boat to facilitate the rescue of the rowers; and
- Means of retrieving rowers from the water should be considered and practiced often; and
- Life jackets are suggested as an added safety feature for novice crews even in the presence of a coach boat.

Shell Capsize <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfmEpdP2KDo>

## Visibility of rowing shells

- Recommended bright clothing and caps be worn by rowers in addition to the required lighting requirements; and
- Possibility of reflective tape on either side of the bow to enable instant spotting with a torch should lights not work.
- Legislated lighting requirements will enable other waterway users to see you.

## Wash from other vessels

- To avoid sustaining wash for longer periods, shells should slow down and turn parallel to the wash to expedite the passage of another vessel in either direction.

## The angle of the shell to wash

- Recommended that crews position shells parallel to the wash using oars to maintain stability.

## Exclusion Zones and Prohibited Areas

- A 90-metre exclusion zone exists around any vessel that is under pilotage and engaged in berthing operations. Only vessels engaged in assisting with the berthing operation are permitted to operate within the exclusion zone. Tug wash can be dangerous.
- There is a prohibited area of 60m on either side of any vessel under pilotage. If that vessel is accompanied by an escort vessel (blue flashing light) you cannot pass between the escort vessel or the vessel under pilotage.
- A vessel under pilotage control is identified by a red and white vertical flag.
- Some vessels have pilotage exemption, and the same rules apply to the vessel under pilotage. Pilot-exempt vessels are identified by a white flag. These will generally be seen on the River Derwent and are often larger fish farm vessels.
- Waterside restricted security zones apply to certain TasPorts wharves and vessel activities. Additionally, cargo and routine operations of vessels may pose a hazard on the waterside of vessels. At times, vessels may also operate a ship's propulsion such as thrusters to hold the vessel alongside the berth in elevated wind conditions. Rowers should maintain a distance, where possible, of not less than 50 metres from any TasPorts wharf when there is a vessel at a berth in port.

- Coaches must make themselves aware of any other Notices to Mariners that may have been issued that could impact their activity. Notices to Mariners are found on [www.mast.tas.gov.au](http://www.mast.tas.gov.au)
- [The Deckee App provides push notifications of Notices to Mariners when issued for your area of operation.](#)
- There are two main 'exclusion zones' on Lake Barrington, one at Devils Gate Dam in the north and the second downstream of Cethana Power Station in the south. The exclusion zones are marked by signage and hazard buoys. These are areas you should not enter at any time.
- Obey all exclusion zones. Water conditions can be dangerous around dam spillways and tailraces with currents that may not be visible from the surface of the water.

### **Side of Channel**

- As per International Collision Regulations, rowers should keep as far as safe and practical to the starboard side (right-hand side) of a channel, being mindful of the depth of water and of any obstructions.

### **Increase in wash severity**

- With regard to keeping to the starboard side of the channel, rowers should be aware that wash can increase in severity in shallow water.

### **Noise from the coach boat**

- Coaches are to be conscious of excessive noise from the use of megaphones in early morning training sessions around populated areas. Where practical, the megaphone should be faced away from the shore where disturbance is to be minimised.

### **Action by charter vessels and ferries**

- Rowers should be aware that if a charter boat or ferry is concerned or unclear of a shell's actions, five rapid blasts may be sounded to alert the crew in accordance with the International Collision Regulations;
- All charter boat skippers and crew to maintain a vigilant lookout for rowers and slow down for an appropriate distance to reduce wash; and
- Carrying a VHF radio will allow rescue boats direct communication with a charter vessel or ferry if required.

## Swamping

- Coaches should brief their crews at regular intervals. Recommend viewing Rowing Tasmania and MAST DVD – “Making rowing safer in Tasmania”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfmEpdP2KDo>

## Rivers

### Stumps and debris - upper Tamar (Launceston), upper Derwent (New Norfolk), upper Huon (Franklin)

- Coaches and rowers should be aware that stumps may be an obstruction in certain parts of the river, especially after a flood;
- Coaches and crews should be aware of debris after heavy rain that may cause difficulty to shells and coach boats;

and

- Rescue and Coach boats are not to exceed 5 knots in the vicinity of the Seaport development.

## Tamar River

The Tamar River has strong tidal flow and is narrow. Rowers and coaches must be aware of the correct side of the channel to row to avoid collisions. A chart is displayed within this document.

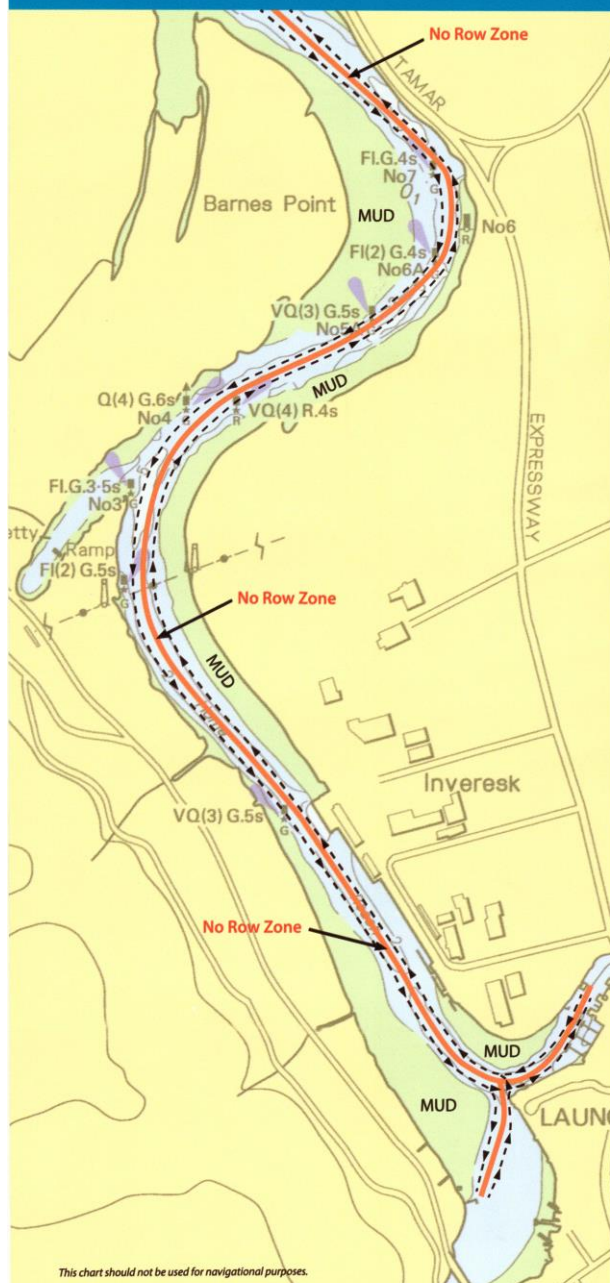
- **Tidal Movement:** Coaches should make themselves aware of tidal movements and flow of the Tamar;
- **Seaport Development:** Rescue and Coach boats are not to exceed 5 knots in the vicinity;
- **Royal Park Precinct:** High tidal range (3.8mtr) Mud flat allow min Tide 500mm for pontoon access at low tide;
- **South Esk River:** (Gorge flood, strong river flows), debris in the river after a flood;
- **Ferries:** Lady Launceston and Tamar Odyssey do regular trips up the Gorge;
- **Home Point / North Esk River junction / Seaport / Bridges (Charles St, Tamar St):** Vessels under Pilotage have right of way (red and white vertically divided flag);

The mouth of the river experiences very strong tidal flows on both outgoing and incoming tides. When running against the wind, it can be a very rough area, further complicated by the large number of boat movements from Seaport Marina, ferries and other rowing crews (from North Esk, St Pat's and Scotch Oakburn College) operating in a very small channel (particularly at low tide);

- Crews and coach boats should proceed with care through the spans of the Charles Street Bridge when heading up and downstream. Crews and coaches should be aware of tidal flow, especially when heading west (downstream) and approaching club house pontoons in the vicinity of Seaport and on the northern bank. Crews and coaches should also be aware of the strength of tidal flow against the wind when deciding to come alongside a pontoon.
- **Home Reach Precinct:** Mud flats, debris stuck in mud after a flood, high commercial usage, dredging operations, shipping, a broken pile at the 2000 metre mark (below the surface at high tide). The direction of travel needs to be reinforced, as coxswains and rowers (who are travelling in the opposite direction of sight) tend to veer into the middle of the river. Also, crews need to be mindful that if they pull out of the channel to allow a larger vessel to pass, the height of its wash will increase proportionally to the shallowing of the bottom. (There have been instances of boats being lifted and then dumped on the mud by passing vessels);

- **Tailrace Precinct:** Subject to strong river flows when the power station is operating. A whirlpool is visible on some tides near the mouth of the tailrace and its meeting with the Tamar River. This can be strong enough to turn a rowing scull around;
- **Stephenson's Bend Precinct:** Subject to strong tidal flow, wind and large wash from passing vessels. Mudflats exposed. Large volumes of crews pass this area on way to Tamar Island;
- **Tamar Island Precinct:** Subject to mud flats exposed, strong tidal flows, wind. Waves can stand up quickly when wind and tide are opposite, with only one isolated emergency exit pontoon;
- **Safety alerts to be emphasised:** Strong tidal flows, wind, fog, high volume of craft on the river, the direction of travel chart, always watching for obstacles ie: other craft, piles, debris, dredging, mud, visibility of crew.
- **Non-functioning navigation lights should be reported to** [admin@mast.tas.gov.au](mailto:admin@mast.tas.gov.au)
- It is strongly recommended that when there is fog, crews, and their coaches do not boat due to reduced visibility.

# Tamar River – Rowing Zones



## Rules to be observed by all crews

1. A rowing boat should stay to the outside parameters of the designated local flow pattern to minimise the risk of a collision with another vessel.
2. Maintain a proper lookout of sight, hearing and other means available.
3. Take all necessary action to avoid a collision.
4. Overtake safely.
5. Give way to ferry ie stop and allow it to pass in the no row zone. Do not try and race it.

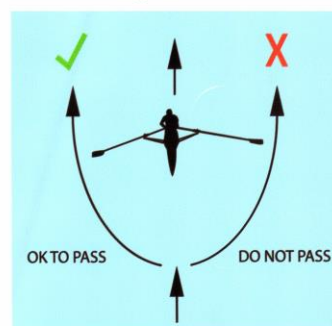
— No Row Zone

- - - Direction of Travel

When tide is incoming and above the half tide you can row over the mud banks if suitable/safe.

6. Obey navigation markers in accordance with navigational rules.
7. Correct navigational lights to be fitted to all rowing shells and coaches boats.
8. Crews rowing through bridges on the North Esk to give way to crews travelling with the tidal flow.

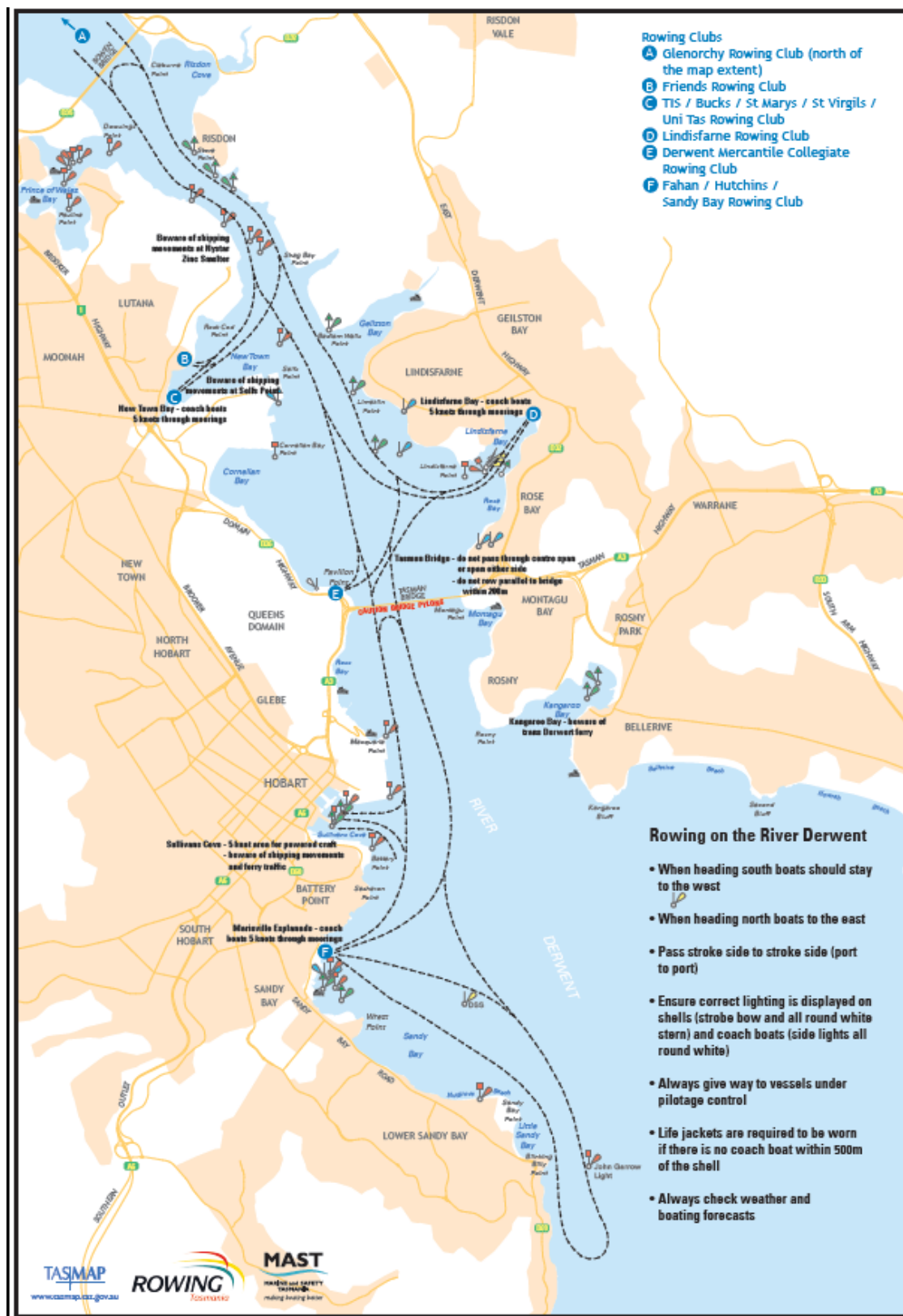
## Overtaking another crew



## Lower River Derwent

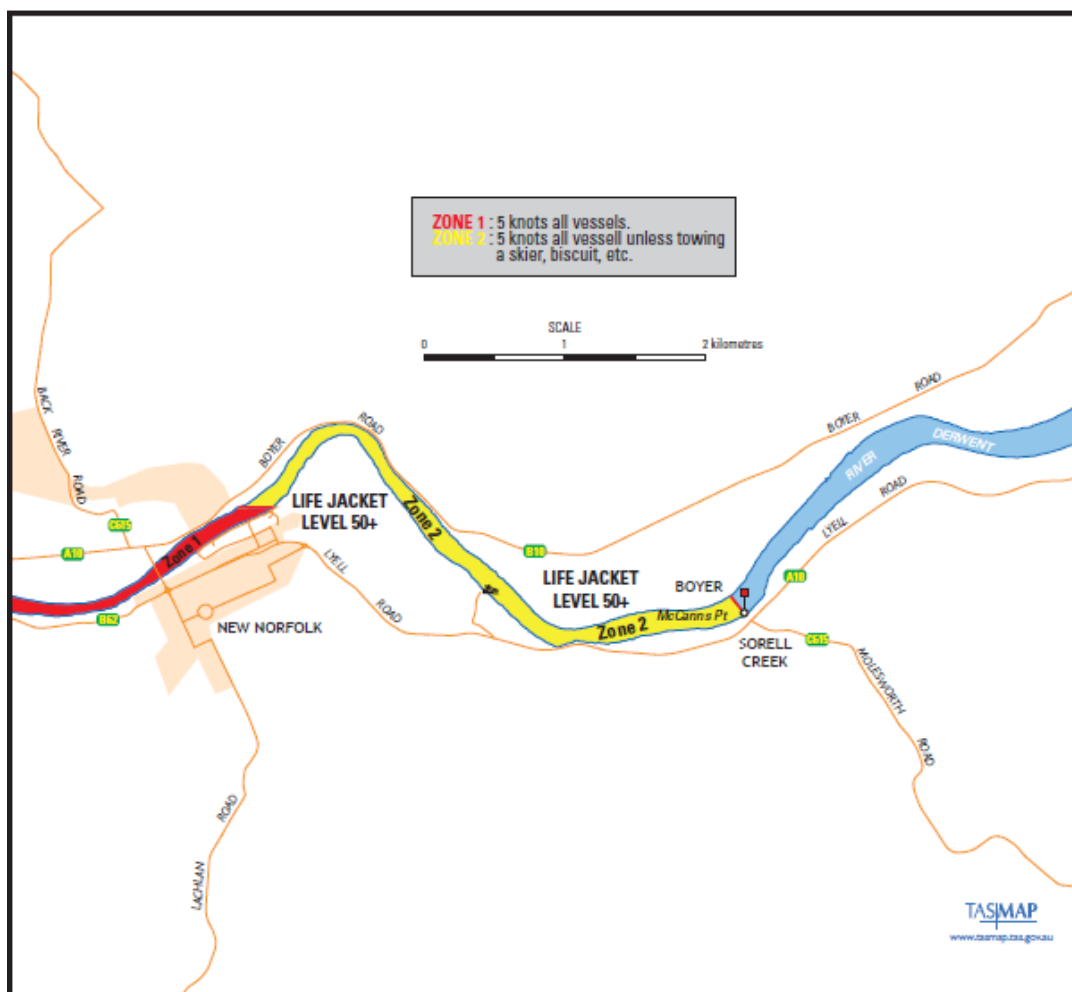
**Rowers and coaches must be aware at all times of the correct side to pass one another if heading up or downstream to avoid collisions. A chart is displayed within this document.**

- Coaches should make themselves aware of commercial shipping movements in the Port area; Early morning can see the arrival of Cruise Ships in Sullivans Cove.
- Vessels under Pilotage have right of way (red and white vertically divided flag);
- Coaches and crews using the area north of the Bridge and the Sullivans Cove area on the western side of the river should keep a watch for tugs and the regular ferry run upstream from Sullivans Cove;
- Coaches and crews using Sullivans Cove or the transit line to Bellerive must be aware of the trans-Derwent Ferry Service and its schedule;
- Be aware of potential shipping movements around Macquarie Wharf;
- Be aware of potential shipping movements around Selfs Point and Risdon Wharf areas;
- Coaches south of Sullivans Cove should be mindful of recreational boating movements in and out of the Royal Yacht Club Tasmania and Derwent Sailing Squadron marinas and the general mooring area of Battery Point and Sandy Bay. This is paramount in the early morning when boats heading downstream into the sun;
- Coaches on the eastern side of the river should be aware of recreational boating movements from the Geilston Bay Boating Club (Geilston Bay) Motor Yacht Club Tasmania marina and moorings at Lindisfarne Bay and the Bellerive Yacht Club marina and moorings in Kangaroo Bay;
- Coaches and shells are not to travel through the middle span of the Tasman Bridge or spans on either side; and
- Be aware of the Vessel Abort Area – Between Rosny Point, Kangaroo Point and the main channel to the Bridge. This is marked on the navigation chart.
- Rowing should not occur in the prohibited area 200m on either side of the Tasman Bridge in an east-west direction
- Tasports Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) is available for information on VHF channels 12 and 16 on a 24/7 basis.
- **Non-functioning navigation lights should be reported to [admin@mast.tas.gov.au](mailto:admin@mast.tas.gov.au)**



## Upper Derwent River – New Norfolk

- The river downstream from the old boat ramp at the caravan park and on a line to the Aquatic club on the opposite side to Sorell Creek is a designated water ski area;
- The river upstream from the old boat ramp at the caravan park on a line to the aquatic club on the opposite side of the river is a designated 5-knot area for powered craft;
- Signage is in place to identify these areas;
- A working group comprising users of the river in the New Norfolk area has been formed so the shared waterway can be used by all.



## Mersey River - Devonport

- The main channel – rowers should, where possible, stay out of the main channel. i.e. stay between the beacons and shore; and
- Swing basin. Daily services operate out of Devonport and ships swinging on departure take up most of the swing basin.
- **Non-functioning navigation lights should be reported to [admin@mast.tas.gov.au](mailto:admin@mast.tas.gov.au)**

## General Tasports advice to Rowers and Coaches

- Rowing sculls are very difficult to see from the bridge of a ship, especially in low light conditions;
- Wash from large vessels can be unpredictable therefore they should be given a wide berth;
- Large vessels do not generally manoeuvre easily, therefore rowing sculls must keep well clear;
- Rowing shells will be difficult to detect on ships' radar or shore-based CCTV;
- Advice on shipping movements is contained on Tasports website [www.tasports.com.au](http://www.tasports.com.au) Go to "Marine", "Shipping Schedule" select the individual port. <https://www.tasports.com.au/shipping-schedule-all>
- Tasports VTS is available for information on VHF channels 12 (Hobart) and 14 (Burnie, Devonport, Launceston) and 16 on a 24/7 basis.

## Cruise Ships

- All rowers should be aware that Cruise Ships will be arriving at Hobart, Devonport and Burnie in the 22-23 season. Arrival times are generally early morning when rowing training is occurring. It is highly recommended and encouraged that at least one coach boat carries a hand-held VHF radio switched onto Ch 12 to enable communication with Tasports Vessel Traffic Services (VTS). The QR barcode below or the link above refers to shipping movements and should be checked prior to departure on the water.



[Tasports Shipping Schedule](#)

## Reporting of Incidents

It is a requirement under the *Marine and Safety (Maritime Incidents) Regulations, 2017* that an incident must be reported to MAST by the quickest possible means (section 6).

### 4. Meaning of "maritime incident"

(1) For the purposes of these regulations, a maritime incident is –

(a) the occurrence, in waters that are navigable, of any of the following:

- (i) the death or serious injury of a person on board a vessel;
- (ii) the death or serious injury of a person caused by a vessel;
- (iii) the loss overboard, or presumed loss overboard, of a person from a vessel;
- (iv) the loss, or presumed loss, of a vessel (whether from sinking, structural failure, explosion, fire or otherwise);
- (v) the abandonment of a vessel;
- (vi) the theft, hijacking or suspicious disappearance of a vessel; or

(b) the occurrence, in waters that are navigable, of any of the following to a serious degree:

- (i) the collision, or near collision, of a vessel with another vessel or any object;
- (ii) the grounding or stranding of a vessel;
- (iii) the flooding or swamping of a vessel;
- (iv) the capsizing or complete roll-over of a vessel;
- (v) a loss of stability of a vessel affecting the safety of the vessel (whether from shifting cargo or ballast or other causes);
- (vi) a loss of steerage or propulsion on a vessel;
- (vii) the disablement of a vessel to the extent that it requires assistance;

- (viii) a structural failure in the hull or superstructure of a vessel;
- (ix) damage caused to or by a vessel;
- (x) a fire, explosion or emergency involving dangerous substances on a vessel;
- (xi) the loss overboard of a shipping container, or other major item or quantity of cargo, from a commercial vessel;
- (xii) the loss overboard of spars, or rigging or other major items of equipment, from a sailing vessel;
- (xiii) the loss overboard of nets, dredges, cables or other major items of equipment, from a commercial fishing vessel.

Incident forms are available on the MAST website by using the following link.

<https://www.mast.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Incident-Report-Form-November-2017.pdf>

Under the *Marine and Safety (Maritime Incidents) Regulations 2017*, MAST may investigate a maritime incident by appointing an investigator.

This investigator prepares a report, setting out the results of the investigation, which is then published by MAST.

It should also be noted that within the safety guidelines of Rowing Australia, incidents must be reported as per below:-

*“Clubs must ensure that all members have access to and are educated and trained in their individual responsibilities to report incidents using the Club’s ‘Incident Reporting Logbook’ as a means of helping to develop safe practices.”*

RA defines an on-water incident or ‘near incident’ as an event causing or involving:

- the loss of a person from a boat
- the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person caused by a boat’s operations
- the loss or presumed loss or abandonment of a boat

- a collision with a boat
- the stranding of a boat
- material damage to a boat
- material damage caused by a boat's operations
- danger to a person caused by a boat's operations
- danger of serious damage to a boat
- danger of serious damage to a structure caused by a boat's operations

Reporting incidents provides important learning points and provide for on-going education.

## Further Recommendations

- Each club or school has a nominated **safety officer** who is registered with Rowing Tasmania to enable any ongoing issues to be directed to that officer. Each club or school has a Safety Management Plan (SMP) to cover emergencies that may occur on the water, both during training and competition, and that this plan be available to coaches, rowers, club officials and volunteers at all times and be maintained accordingly.
- That within that SMP the safety officer or another nominated person is responsible for each coach boat and rowing shell when leaving shore to ensure all safety gear is on board and that the required lights are being displayed between sunset and sunrise. This could be done by a simple tick a box sheet or computer-generated spread sheet for each vessel.
- That a form of communication is carried in the boat (handheld VHF or mobile phone in a waterproof pouch) especially when rowing alone.
- Coaches and all rowers should be familiar with the affects cold water immersion irrespective of the time of the year.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddaKr1N4xcY>
- Tasports, Rowing Tasmania and MAST meet at the start of each season and conduct a debrief at the completion of the season;
- All coaches, safety officers, and club or school officials encourage participants to log onto the following websites

<https://www.rowingtasmania.com.au><http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/rowing-australia-policies/>

These websites will direct you to on water Safety Code and Guidelines and other useful information.

This document has been compiled by MAST and Rowing Tasmania, with input from Tasports.

## **Disclaimer**

**The protocols and warnings contained in this document, 'Making Rowing Safer for all in Tasmania' are current at the date of last update and are provided for information purposes only, to assist clubs, schools, coaches, rowers and other connected parties ('Participants') with the health and safety of the sport of rowing. Rowing Tasmania Inc. and its sponsors, by this publication or at all, accept no responsibility in relation to the health and safety of those participating or connected to the sport of rowing. Participants are urged to develop their own health and safety procedures in consultation with appropriate advice, with protocols and warnings that are adapted to their own circumstances. The protocols and warnings herein published may well need to be supplemented by further and other measures referable to the Participants' individual circumstances. Participants engage in the sport or rowing at their own risk.**

**Last updated July 2022**