

WAFIC Safety Update – July 2026

Introducing AusAlert – Australia’s New Emergency Warning System

AusAlert is a new national warning system that uses the latest technology to send emergency messages to compatible mobile devices.

It’s a fast and reliable way to help people be informed and better prepared during local and national emergencies.

Federal, State and territory emergency services can use AusAlert to send fast, clear messages to the public about national, local and regional emergencies.

AusAlert was created in response to the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements which found that mobile-device-based emergency warning systems are especially effective at keeping communities informed during disasters.

The Australian Government funded the AusAlert project in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets.

It sends information about local and national disasters, including what is happening now or what might happen soon. During a disaster, you may receive an alert if you have a compatible mobile phone, tablet or smart watch.

Cell-broadcast technology allows an emergency message to be sent to every compatible mobile device in a specific area at the same time through a mass broadcast from a nearby mobile phone tower.

If your compatible device is near the emergency and in range of a nearby mobile phone tower, it can receive the alert almost instantly. If you enter the emergency area after the message was first sent, you can still receive the alert.

The alert may contain information such as:

- the type of emergency (for example, bushfire or flood, cyclone)
- where it is
- how serious it is
- the actions you need to take
- where more information can be found
- the name of the organisation that sent the message.

More info go to: www.ausalert.gov.au

AMSA National Compliance Plan and Inspection Focus for 2026/27

AMSA recently released AMSA 2026–27 National Compliance Plan.

The plan outlines AMSA's key compliance focus areas for inspections from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. The plan helps industry understand the areas AMSA will focus on during the year and allow industry to prepare for inspections.

The Plan is developed using safety data, environmental insights, emerging trends and subject matter expert input that supports a consistent, intelligence led and risk-based approach to regulation.

A key feature of this year's National Compliance Plan includes a dedicated inspection program for domestic commercial vessel safety (including fishing vessels) targeting:

- safety management system implementation,
- watchkeeping and lookout practices,
- electrical safety,
- fatigue management

Compliance activities will be supported by targeted communication, education and guidance initiatives to improve understanding of regulatory obligations, promote voluntary compliance and support safer operations across the maritime industry.

The [National Compliance Plan 2026-27](#) is available for viewing on the AMSA website.

Worksafe WA Fines Company \$1.75m over Worker Death

A construction company has been fined a record \$1.75 million over the death of a worker who was struck by a falling structural steel column, the highest fine ever imposed under WA's workplace safety laws.

The company pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of a worker.

The company had been engaged by a principal building contractor to erect structural steel, including standing columns, at a large industrial construction site in Malaga in July 2024.

In order to erect the steel columns, they were moved by crane using a series of lifting devices to a designated assembly point then further secured by a dogger and a rigger.

The dogger applied a lifting device to the crane's lifting chains, and the column was lifted and suspended 30cm from the ground in anticipation of being placed on the rag bolt assembly by the dogger and rigger. While the dogger was elsewhere on the site the rigger entered the danger zone of the suspended column. The lifting device failed and the column fell onto the rigger, resulting in fatal injuries.

The lifting device was non-proprietary and not compliant with the Lifting Standard as it was not rated or marked with its working load limit. There were no records on how long it was used for, where it was sourced from, who manufactured it, if it was ever inspected or tested or its rated capacity.

The court heard that the company's directors were aware that the lifting device was not rated or compliant but did not remove it from use.

The Magistrate found that this incident was at the highest end of seriousness of offending and that the defective lifting equipment ought to have been immediately removed from site when it was identified.

Research Delivers Safety for Crew and Protection for Species in Tuna Fishery

A five-year project in Australia's Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery has delivered new evidence that protected species mitigation and crew safety can be improved together.

Led by industry peak body Tuna Australia, the [project](#) combined field trials, engineering analysis and controlled fishing gear 'flyback' simulations to explore how new and improved mitigation technologies can enhance crew safety by reducing impact.

'Flyback' events occur when hooks are bitten off or lines fail under tension, causing branch lines to recoil toward the crew at high speed. One of my crew was hit with a lead swivel and it looked like a gunshot wound. He also broke three ribs and punctured his lung.

Funded by the [Fisheries Research and Development Corporation](#) (FRDC), with support from the [Australian Fisheries Management Authority](#) and [AMC Search](#), the project examined line weighting, tori lines and the testing of 'flyback' blocking bars and screens.

Simulations undertaken by the project recorded 'flyback' speeds of hundreds of kilometres per hour, with results showing that weighting and gear configuration can significantly influence risk.

Tuna Australia CEO David Ellis said industry has always been committed to protecting vulnerable animal species (such as seabirds) but some mitigation measures to protect the seabirds can create unintended workplace health and safety risks for crew.

This project has delivered clear evidence on how to improve safety while maintaining strong environmental protection performance. One of the excellent aspects of this research is that it is industry lead with fishers involved as co-investigators.

Industry trialled several gear innovations at sea (such as sliding safety leads) resulting in less flybacks towards the crew making it safer for them to bring the fish closer to the boat and land the fish.

Crew feel a lot safer out on deck, catch rates have remained identical and bin tangles have reduced in number.

A suite of extension materials has been developed to support uptake of the findings, including short videos and infographics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeVXG9bZEV0>

These resources translate the research into practical, on-deck guidance for fishers and safety managers. The materials are also available in Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia, ensuring they are accessible and understandable to all crew aboard tuna longline vessels.

The project recommends that future protected species mitigation guidance explicitly consider crew safety alongside conservation outcomes, and that simulation-based testing continue to support evaluation of new tools before widespread adoption.

Examples of the materials available for use on vessels and crew inductions are below.

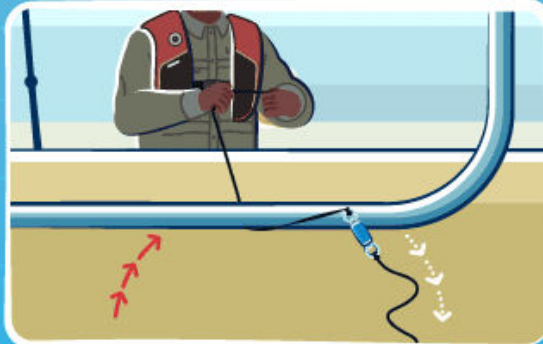
Making tuna longline fishing safer



Hauling branchlines under a flyback safety bar can deflect weighted fishing gear away from crew.

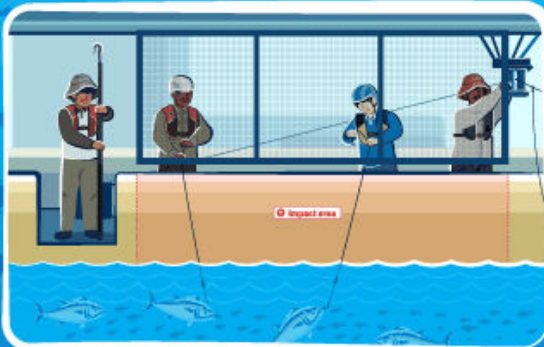


Flyback bars consistently deflect line weights downwards.

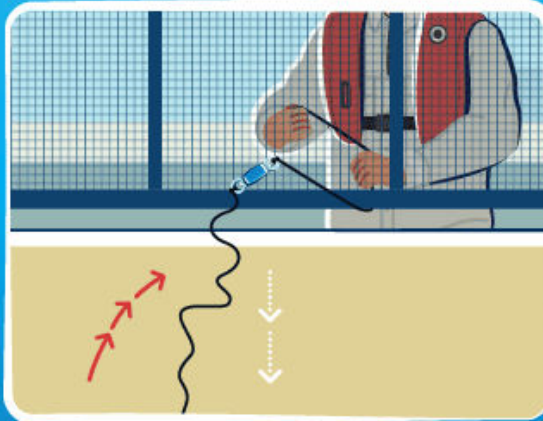


Safety screens can:

- Reduce weighted swivels from reaching the working deck
- Reduce the flyback power of weighted branchlines
- Provide sun protection.



Safety screens can capture and envelop the weight.



Based on research by Tuna Australia and partners: Fishing line flyback simulation project report by AMC Search.

The safety recommendations provided herein are for general informational purposes only and do not constitute professional advice or a guarantee of incident prevention. Users are responsible for assessing risks based on specific circumstances and must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and industry best practices. The provider of this information disclaims any liability for reliance on these recommendations.



Supported by:



Improving safety when using wildlife mitigation devices in tuna longline fisheries



Fishers must use tori lines and line weighting to protect longline baits from being scavenged by seabirds. This equipment can be dangerous for crew to use.

i Tori lines can be difficult to set and retrieve, which can cause manual handling and other injuries.

i Weighted fishing gear can recoil back to the boat under strain, causing "flyback" injuries to fishers.

✓ Flybacks can recoil at up to 250km/hr.

✓ Flybacks have caused significant injuries, impairments and deaths in global longline fisheries.



Actions to reduce safety incidents when fishing:



Use modified sliding safety leads.
These can reduce flyback events while not impacting catch rates.



Avoid using weighted hooks, or swivels within 1 metre of the hook.
The closer a weight is to the end of a branchline, the more dangerous it can be in a flyback scenario.



Use a custom-made safety bar or screen
to deflect or catch flybacks.



Use tori lines made from lighter materials and with detachable droppers
to improve handling and deployment.

Based on research by Tuna Australia and partners:

Fishing line flyback simulation project August 2023

Authors: Dr Tom Mitchell Ferguson, Dr Roberto Ojeda, Dr Nick Rawlinson

Fishing line simulation project Part II August 2024

Authors: Dr Tom Mitchell Ferguson, Dr Roberto Ojeda

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Supported by:



AMSA Services Fee Increase for 2026/27

From 1 July 2026, annual indexation will be applied to AMSA domestic commercial vessel fees for service. This year's 2026-27 indexation factor is 4.6%.

Affected fees are associated with industry applications for:

- certificate of competency – near coastal
- certificate of survey
- certificate of operation
- AMSA Marine Surveyor accreditation scheme
- unique vessel identifier
- National Law Exemptions including Exemption 2, Exemption 6, Exemption 7 and Exemption 40.

For example, effective from 1 July 2026, the fee for a new certificate of operation will increase from \$239 to \$249.

You can view current domestic commercial vessel fees for service [here](#).

If you have any questions regarding AMSA's annual fee indexation, please contact [AMSA Connect](#).

Workplace Bullying Needs to be Understood and Prevented Under WA WHS Laws

Exposure to psychosocial hazards and risk factors in the workplace is specifically covered in the new WA WHS laws as they can affect performance and increase the risk of accidents or incidents.

If you manage or control a workplace (which includes a fishing vessel), you are responsible for ensuring the physical and mental health and safety of workers.

Unreasonable behaviour (bullying) is defined by the 'effect' of the behaviour, not the 'intent' of the behaviour, as there may not be any specific intent to cause harm to someone's health.

Addressing it early helps prevent it from becoming accepted behaviour.

Examples of behaviour, **whether intentional or unintentional**, that may be bullying include

- abusive or offensive language
- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately excluding someone from work activities
- withholding necessary information or support
- setting unrealistic deadlines
- assigning tasks beyond a person's skill level
- spreading rumours

Bullying can harm both the person targeted and those who witness it. It can lead to:

- anxiety, depression, and panic attacks
- physical issues like headaches and fatigue
- loss of confidence and self-esteem
- isolation
- decreased work performance and concentration
- suicidal thoughts.

For more information go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/bullying>

AMSA Inspection Report 2025

AMSA inspectors check that domestic commercial vessels are safe by following Australian regulations and standards.

Each year, AMSA analyses inspection data across all domestic commercial vessels (DCVs) and regulated Australian vessels (RAVs) operating in Australian ports.

For DCVs, AMSA employs a 'targeting prioritisation model' that is risk-based. Several factors are used to calculate a risk score for DCVs including compliance history, age of a vessel, construction, operation, and certification status. The higher the risk score the more frequently a DCV is likely to be inspected. AMSA continues to refine the DCV risk calculator based on evolving inspection data, allowing further refinement of risk scores and prioritisation.

The purpose of this report is to provide data to AMSA producing a risk-based approach to their next National Compliance Plan.

The most common issues were structural and equipment problems and safety management system (SMS) issues, partly due to newer rules.

- Number of DCV inspections increased in 2025 by 9% to 2,481 (compared with 2,275 in 2024).
- Deficiency notices showed an 8.4% decrease from 2024, indicating a meaningful improvement in overall compliance.
- The DCV deficiency improvement allowed the AMSA inspectorate to focus on those higher risk vessels.
- However, detainable deficiencies increased from 140 to 198 (+41.4%), indicating persistent safety-critical issue - in structural conditions and Safety Management System (SMS) implementation.
- 122 of the DCV inspections included operational monitoring, during which inspectors observed the crew performing an emergency drill or operational procedure to assess the effectiveness of the vessel's safety management system.

Marine Safety Inspectors will issue a DCV with a deficiency if they reasonably believe that a condition on the vessel is in contravention of the National Law Act 2012, including associated regulations and standards.

Deficiencies which are assessed as having a high risk to safety of persons or the environment will likely lead to further compliance action.

The most common deficiencies by deficiency type on DCVs in 2025

- Life-saving appliances (22% of all deficiencies),
- SMS (20% of all deficiencies), and
- Fire Safety (14% of all deficiencies).

The highest deficiency rates (deficiencies per inspection) by vessel class for DCVs in 2024 remained for fishing vessels (4.27) and passenger vessels (3.78), followed by non passenger vessels (2.95) and hire and drive vessels (2.51).

For deficiencies that are a high risk to safety of persons or the environment, AMSA may use a National Law notice to ensure that the DCV does not operate until the high risk is rectified. This could be in the form of a prohibition notice, a dire risk deficiency action notice or a detention notice.

Full report: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/inspections-report-annual-2025.pdf>



AMSA Marine Order 504 outlines what is required for inclusion in a safety management system (SMS) including risk assessment and crewing requirements for domestic commercial vessels (DCVs).

In 2024/25, Marine Order 504 underwent a review and consultation process.

AMSA circulated a reminder to industry to ensure they ‘Act to Comply’ with the changes introduced on 1st June 2025 by amending their safety management systems.

In-depth information, guidance and resources to help navigate and apply the changes is available on the AMSA website at: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/changes-safety-management-system-requirements-1-june-2025>

Fatigue Management

Changes to AMSA regulations placing far greater emphasis on vessels having a vessel specific management plan for the fatigue of their crew.

These changes have been set out in Marine Order 504 and to assist with understanding the requirements for managing fatigue AMSA recently held a webinar.

You can watch the 30 minute webinar at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeDZQDevo4M>

Drugs & Alcohol Policy

From 1 June 2025, all domestic commercial vessels must have a drug and alcohol policy as part of their safety management system (SMS).

Developing a drug and alcohol policy is essential for compliance and safety. Make sure all personnel understand their responsibilities before 1 June 2025 to ensure a safe and responsible maritime environment.

View the guidance online: [Drug and alcohol policy - Class 1, 2 and 3](#)

Guidance: [How to develop a drug and alcohol policy - Class 1, 2 and 3 vessels PDF251.25 KB](#)

More information go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/duties-relating-drugs-and-alcohol>



DCV SAFETY TOOLKIT

AMSA has published guidance to assist duty holders comply with fatigue management requirements in Marine Order 504.

The toolkit is designed to help duty holders prepare an effective fatigue risk management plan and includes links to:

- Marine Order 504 changes and frequently asked questions [Q & A | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)
- [Fatigue risk management checklist](#)
- [Fatigue management: Guidance Marine Order 504 changes](#)
- How to write a fatigue management plan
<https://email.amsa.gov.au/link/id/zzzz69d59c2520322569P/page.html>
- A guide for domestic commercial vessels to develop their safety management system for class 1, 2, 3 and 4 operations. <https://www.amsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Guidelines-for-a-Safety-Management-System.pdf>



AMSA recently held a webinar on fatigue management on domestic commercial vessels.

If you missed the session, or would like to revisit it, you can now watch the [webinar recording](#) or download the [audio brief](#) below.

The questions and answers from the webinar will be available soon.

Have You Got the Right Safety Equipment On-Board?

Having the right safety equipment on board gives you and your crew the best chance of survival if something goes wrong.

The safety equipment you need depends on your class of vessel, and how you operate.

AMSA provides safety equipment lists for:

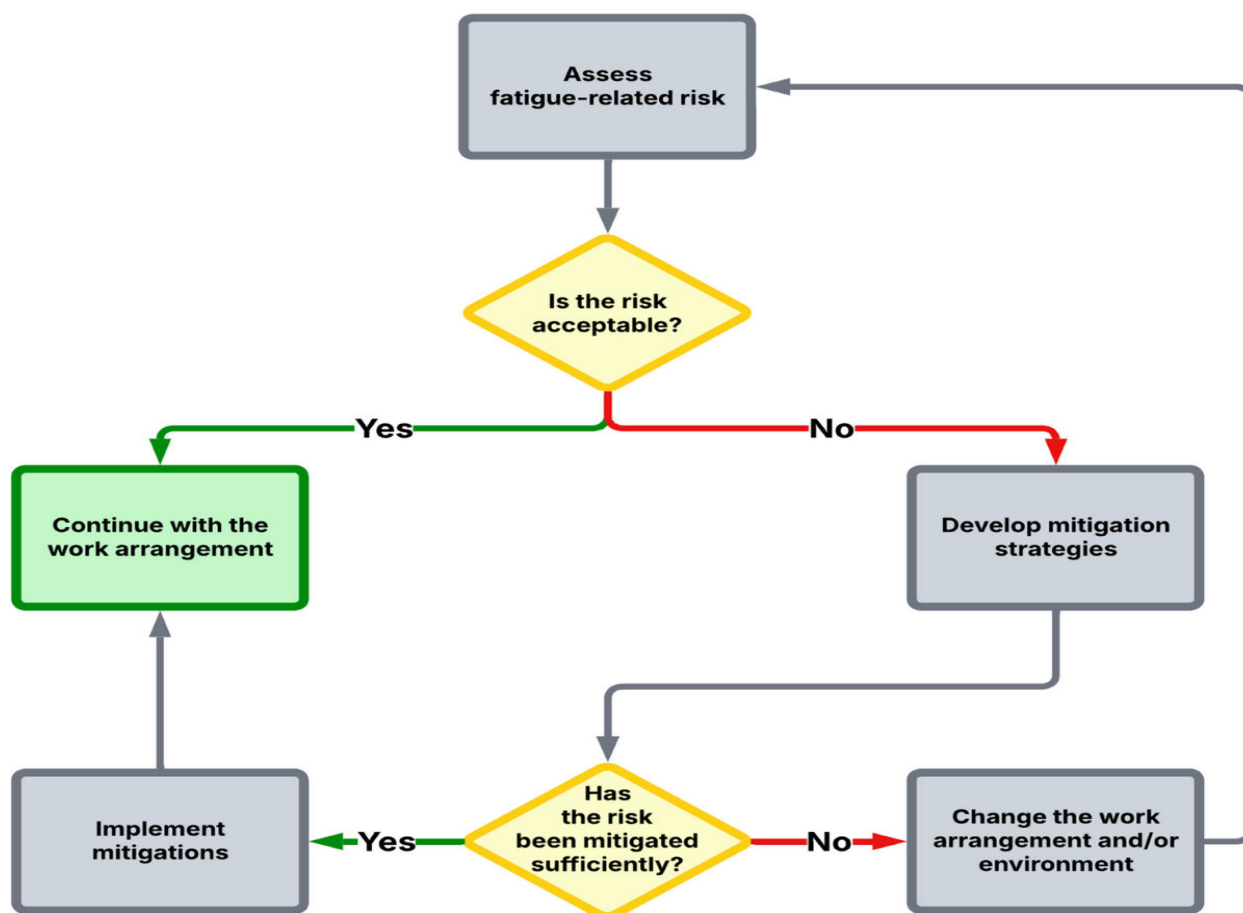
- Class 1, 2 and 3 surveyed vessels
- Non-survey vessels
- Non-survey fishing vessels operating in warm waters and within 2 nautical miles of land
- Non-survey beach fishery vessels operating anywhere in Australia
- Tenders.

Go AMSA safety equipment lists: [Your safety equipment | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)

Fatigue Risk Assessment Flow Chart

Assessing the risk of fatigue in your fishing operation is a crucial part of your safety management system. Using a flowchart to complete the assessment is a helpful tool.

Walk through this flowchart onboard your vessel, with your crew, to ensure full coverage of the issues and involvement of all persons in the operation.



Registered EPIRB Helps Bring Three Fishermen Home Safely

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is urging Australians heading out on the water to be well prepared, ensuring they have appropriate safety equipment and an emergency plan in place before setting off.

In the early hours of this morning (13 April), AMSA detected the activation of an emergency beacon linked to a life raft from a domestic commercial vessel (DCV) near Cape Flattery, approximately 56 kilometres north of Cooktown, Queensland.

AMSA contacted the vessel owner's registered emergency contact, who confirmed the vessel was operating in the area with three people on board.

A Cairns-based aircraft and helicopter were tasked to investigate. A nearby recreational vessel also responded and their crew, sighted a distress flare, located the three people ashore and recovered them safely. The aircraft later located the DCV, which was found to be on fire.

This outcome shows just how vital it is to carry and correctly register an EPIRB, and to have visual signalling devices like flares on board. Responders were able to act quickly and coordinate a search that led to all three people being brought home safely.

New Initiative for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for WA Workers

The WA Government's has announced the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program Support Fund 2025 - 2029 (Support Fund) to assist work-related suicide prevention initiatives.

MATES in Construction and *Steering Healthy Minds* have been awarded grants in the initial phase of the program and through the *Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety* program, funding has been provided to Suicide Prevention Australia to develop a suicide prevention competency framework and learning modules for the mining industry.

The Support Fund is administered by WorkSafe in partnership with the Mental Health Commission and has been established to support targeted suicide prevention programs for Western Australian industries known to be at greater risk, including construction and transport.

The program will see \$3.39 million awarded over four years to help organisations implement mental health and suicide prevention programs at work, recognising the important role workplaces play in the mental health of their workers.

In response to stakeholder requests for guidance, WorkSafe has developed an information sheet to provide guidance for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) on how to prevent and manage incidents involving suicide and suicidal behaviours within workplace settings or in accommodation facilities connected to the workplace.

Go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/publications/suicide-and-suicidal-behaviour-work-related-contexts-information-sheet>

Project to Improve Coordination of Qualifying Sea Time

Limited, fragmented and inconsistent access to qualifying sea time is a critical challenge to Australia's maritime training system.

Qualifying sea time is mandatory for certification by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) under the International Shipping and Domestic Commercial Vessel (DCV) frameworks.

However, inconsistent access to training berths has long constrained workforce entry, progression and retention across maritime roles.

Industry Skills Australia has secured funding through the Australian Government's *Support the Maritime Workforce* initiative to respond to directly to longstanding industry concerns.

The project will nationally coordinate a single, industry-preferred approach to sea time access and, subject to feasibility and approvals, design a pilot to test practical, scalable solutions.

Access to qualifying sea time is one of the most significant constraints and even where training demand exists, limited training berth availability slows certification, delays workforce entry and progression, and reduces the return on investment in training.

For industry, this project aims to shift sea time access from an ad hoc, employer by employer challenge to a more coordinated, transparent and scalable system. By identifying a nationally viable coordination model and testing it through a pilot, the project seeks to make it easier for employers to support trainees and strengthen workforce pipelines, while maintaining safety and regulatory standards.

Key outputs will include:

- A business case assessing options for nationally coordinated access to sea time
- Mapping of existing and potential training berths across Australian and internationally operating fleets
- Analysis of alignment with AMSA certification requirements
- Commercial, workforce and cost impact analysis of an industry-preferred coordination model
- A pilot implementation plan, including governance, compliance and evaluation arrangements
- Evidence based recommendations for scalable, long-term national coordination of sea time
- Design of a controlled pilot for future implementation in the final phase to test a selected coordination approach, including monitoring and evaluation of pilot outcomes to inform advice to government.

The project is scheduled for full completion by **December 2026** for pilot implementation in 2027, with findings and recommendations provided to government.



Stay Afloat Team returns to support Western Australia

The WA Stay Afloat team, made up of Mel and Steve, is back on deck and working with WAFIC and industry members to help support those who may be struggling with balancing their mental health and wellness in the current operating environment

Contact Stay Afloat: wa@stayafloat.com.au

Accelerating Qualifying Sea Time through Maritime Simulation

Australia's maritime workforce faces significant delays in accessing vessels to accumulate the qualifying sea time required for Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) certification.

Industry Skills Australia is running a project to explore how simulation can be used to safely accelerate '*qualifying sea time*' for Australia's maritime workforce.

It will examine where high quality, regulator-aligned simulation can complement traditional sea time pathways and improve training access and consistency.

Simulation technology is used globally to build advanced seafaring skills, increase safety and reduce training bottlenecks. In Australia, simulation is already used for workforce training, but its potential to accelerate qualifying sea time remains unexplored. Industry, trainers and regulators have expressed strong interest in expanding the use of simulation, provided that, safety and compliance with AMSA and International Maritime Organisation standards are maintained.

This project will:

- Assess where simulation can safely replace or supplement physical sea time for high demand roles for international and domestic vessels.
- Improve training accessibility for regional, remote and equity cohorts.
- Aim to reduce reliance on limited sea berths and alleviate certification delays.
- Support a resilient, future ready maritime workforce trained to consistent national standards.
- Trial how simulation can be integrated into maritime certification pathways in a safe, credible and evidence-based way.
- Provide evidence-based advice on the viability of simulation for certification, supported by a model suitable for consideration by regulators and industry.

The project will be fully completed by June 2027, following completion of feasibility, regulatory approvals, simulation trial implementation, and final reporting to the Federal Department of Transport and AMSA.

Webinar Recording: Risk Assessments That Work for Your Team

Harriet Fowler from The Sydney Fish Market led an interactive session and shared her team-based approaches that move beyond paperwork to make risk assessments easy to apply.

The webinar covered:

- How to approach risk assessments so they reflect 'work as done'
- Practical ways to involve your team in identifying and managing risk
- How to keep risk assessments simple, relevant and useful.

Missed the webinar? Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNHBjZVo6fs>

The Sea Safe national safety project is led by [Seafood Industry Australia](#), funded by the [Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#) and the [Fisheries Research and Development Corporation](#)

Sea Safe – Regular Safety Drills – Habit not Hinderance

Listen and learn from fishermen who see safety as an everyday part of their business.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rmMRZP8j4o>

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/video/2018-107d/default.html>

Focus on Stability: Ways to Manage a Vessel's Stability and Prevent Capsize

Stability refers to the ability of a vessel to return to its upright position after being heeled over by wind, waves or other forces. Stability isn't just about design — it's also about how you operate.

Overloading, poor stowage, fishing gear hook-ups on underwater objects and movement of people on board all increase the risk of instability.

It is now an AMSA requirement for vessel operators to identify risks to vessel stability in their safety risk assessment and include management arrangements in their safety management system (SMS).

Competent persons, such as [accredited marine surveyors](#) and naval architects are best placed to assess vessel stability. The presence of stability documents on their own does not ensure that the vessel will be stable in all operational scenarios.

The best way to verify if a risk to stability has been appropriately considered is to assess the vessel against the applicable stability criteria in the [National Standard for Commercial Vessels \(NSCV\)](#), or if applicable, the [Uniform Shipping Laws Code \(USL Code\)](#).

Learn about stability risks for fishing vessels at <https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/domestic-commercial-vessel-requirements/fishing-vessel>.

This guide sets out:

- The basics of stability: buoyancy and gravity
- How the forces of buoyancy and weight are simplified
- How the centre of gravity moves
- How the centre of buoyancy moves
- How stability changes as a vessel rolls over

Stability hazards to look out for:

- Modifying a vessel or installing new fishing gear
- Overloading leading to capsize
- Swamping of the deck and 'free-surface effects'
- Water ingress and downflooding
- Shifting catch or fishing gear Stabilisers Trawling, dredging and towing
- Fouling or snagging of fishing gear
- Lifting, pulling on board or splitting the catch
- Lifting the catch at the stern with an A-frame
- Lifting or winching at the side Risks from heavy seas, breaking waves and broaching
- Planning your stability for the whole trip
- Inclometers and how they help

AMSA also requires operators to record modifications to the structure or equipment of a vessel that may change its stability. This change was introduced so that owners, masters and crew are aware of any modifications made to the vessel that may impact stability.

Go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/changes-marine-order-504/new-sms-requirements/record-vessel-modifications>

Note: The requirement to identify stability risks in the risk assessment does not apply to vessels eligible for a simplified SMS, however, owners of these vessels should identify and manage any stability risks, such as vessel loading, through the risk assessment process.

Stability Issues Contribute to Fishing Trawler Capsize

In 2024, a range of vessel stability issues caused a fishing trawler to roll over.

A trawler with two crew was heading ashore to repair generators that were shutting off while at sea. While in calm waters close to the shore, the vessel capsized and rolled on its side.

The master suffered a head injury and was taken to hospital.

The master had not followed the vessel's stability book properly. The investigation also found that the stability book didn't meet relevant standards.

The stability book did not consider relevant standards because it had:

- no catch conditions included
- fuel tank assumptions that were inconsistent with the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV).

In addition, the master did not maintain the vessel's stability according to the stability book. For example, he had ignored documented fuel tank management requirements.

Other issues:

- the lightship declaration was inaccurate - the owner failed to report modifications that exceeded 3.4 tonnes
- the risk assessment failed to identify or control risks associated with fuel and ballast management
- the deckhand wasn't qualified for the duties he was assigned to undertake.

Under the AMSA National Law, owners of vessels with a stability book must:

- base lightship assessments and declarations on accurate information
- conduct a [risk assessment of vessel stability](#) in the vessel's SMS
- keep a [record of modifications affecting vessel stability](#) in the vessel's SMS
- make sure the master is instructed and trained to operate the vessel according to the stability book.

Find out more information:

- [Vessel stability](#)
- [Intact stability requirements - C6A \(NSCV\)](#)
- [Buoyancy and stability after flooding - C6B \(NSCV\)](#)
- [Stability tests and stability information - C6C \(NSCV\)](#)

Real People, Real Safety Experiences – Hear it Directly via Industry Webinars

Seafood industry Australia (SIA) through the 'Seasafe Program' brings together personal stories, safety insights, and useful tips to help highlight safety risks and management through real-world stories from industry, both on and off the water.

Working in the fishing and seafood industry comes with unique challenges and risks. But with those challenges, one thing remains the same: *Everyone deserves to return home safe.*

By sharing experiences, raising awareness of common risks, and promoting practical solutions, the site aims to strengthen safety practices across the industry. Hear directly from people working across Australia's commercial seafood industry, sharing their experiences, lessons learned, and practical advice.

Whether it's a near miss, a hard lesson, or a simple change made to an operational approach that made a big difference, every story has the potential to help others work more safely.

Explore the topics on the website to learn from one another and make safety part of everyday life, on the water, on the wharf, and beyond.

Register to receive webinar screening dates: email info@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au

You can find the previous recordings here: <https://www.seasafeoz.com.au/webinars/>

Watch the fisher-to-fisher videos - <https://www.seasafeoz.com.au/peer-to-peer-safety/>

If you would like to share your safety story email to: info@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au



Improved Recognition of 'Prior Learning' by Training Organisations

The Commonwealth Government has published materials to help raise awareness of what quality Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) looks like and to assist students, employers and the broader community.

RPL can fast-track careers, address skills shortages in high demand industries, and open doors to new opportunities. Quality RPL is a structured process that identifies the skills and knowledge a student has gained through work or life experience, then assesses them against the requirements of the qualification being considered.

The resource pack is designed to help RTOs provide clear and consistent information about RPL to students, employers and the broader community is available.

Go to: [Real Skills Deserve Real Recognition Resource Pack](#)

New AMSA Rules to Simplify SMS Requirements – Watch Webinar!

AMSA has simplified safety management system (SMS) requirements for smaller, less complex DCVs and operations to:

- uphold or improve safety outcomes
- align better with operational needs
- reduce administrative burden.

Note: If you are eligible for simplified SMS and you already have a full SMS, you can choose to change to simplified SMS or keep your full SMS.

Watch information webinar at:

https://email.amsa.gov.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz67da3179c8617110/?vid=t-8Fg8B7v_I

AMSA 2026-27 Annual Regulation Review Program

AMSA is finalising the 2026/27 Annual Regulation Review Program. Many projects are currently underway and will be carried over into the 2026-27 program.

Key proposed regulatory projects	Description of Action
1. Alternative approval process for novel technologies <i>(Project is underway and will continue in FY26-27)</i>	Introducing a risk-based alternative approval process into the Novel Vessel Policy Statement for emerging technologies.
2. Guidelines for battery electric propulsion on vessels <i>(Project is underway and will continue in FY26-27)</i>	Establishing guidelines that outline acceptable standards, usage categories, and operational areas for battery electric DCVs.
3. Marine Order 503 – Certificates of survey (MO503) and associated general exemptions <i>(Project is underway and will continue in FY26-27)</i>	Review current Certificate of Survey requirements to address workability issues, clarify requirements for novel vessels and reduce red tape in some areas.
4. Construction and equipment standards for non-survey vessels (NSCV Part G)	Reviewing and updating design, construction and equipment standards for non-survey vessels.
5. Review of standards for communications and navigation equipment (NSCV Part C7B and C7C)	Review of required outcomes and prescribed standards for communications and to modernise navigation equipment requirements for new and existing DCVs.
6. Review of fire safety requirements for DCVs in survey (NSCV Part C4) <i>(Project is underway and will continue in FY26-27)</i>	Address priority policy issues for fire safety design and equipment standards, including introducing fire safety measures for smaller lithium-ion battery installations.
7. Review of safety equipment carriage standards for DCVs in survey (NSCV Part C7A) <i>(Project is underway and will continue in FY26-27)</i>	Review to ensure requirements are contemporary, risk based and appropriate for the size of vessel. Includes revision of standards for lifejackets and life rafts.

AMSA Releases New Guidance for ‘Carrying Observers’ on Fishing Vessels

AMSA has announced new certification rules for vessels to carry fishery observers to comply with safety and certification requirements.

AMSA considers observers to be ‘**special personnel**’ as defined in Part B (General Requirements) of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV).

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/national-standard-commercial-vessels-nscv/general-requirements-b>

You can access the guidance here: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/carrying-observer-commercial-fishing-vessel-under-national-law>

The majority of fishing vessels may not currently have a certificate or permit that allows special personnel on board.

To help, AMSA is providing a transition period to allow industry time to update their certificates or permits as follows:

- Certificate of survey holders: if your certificate does not permit the carriage of special personnel, you will need to apply to include special personnel numbers when the certificate is due for renewal.
- Exemption 02 or Exemption 40 holders: if your approval does not permit the carriage of special personnel, you will need to apply before 30 June 2030 by submitting an [AMSA form 579](#) (Exemption 02) or [AMSA form 523](#) (Exemption 40).

In the meantime, AMSA advises that you may continue to carry fishery observers provided all other requirements outlined on the guidance page are met. This includes ensuring that the maximum number of people that the vessel is certified to carry is not exceeded.

Operators will also need to check their vessel is safe to carry an observer.

- Have you conducted a risk assessment to make sure it is safe to allow an observer on board?
 - Did the risk assessment consider the maximum number of persons that the vessel is certified to carry? (See vessel certification requirements below)
 - Is your safety management system (SMS) up to date and does it cover observers?
 - Have you considered how the carriage of an observer may impact the safe loading of equipment and cargo?
 - Is all required safety equipment on board and in working order?
 - Have you inducted and trained the observer and recorded this in your SMS?
 - Have you recorded an observer’s presence on board in the vessel’s logbook?
-

AMSA Proposes Changes to Survey Rules – Marine Order 503

Marine Order 503 (Certificates of survey – national law) 2018 (MO503) outlines certificate of survey requirements for domestic commercial vessels (DCVs).

Proposed changes are set out at [Proposed changes to certificate of survey requirements | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#).

Key proposed changes to existing requirements:

1. Clarify who is responsible for notifying AMSA of a change in vessel ownership

AMSA is proposing to require that the person receiving a vessel (e.g. a buyer) must notify AMSA of a change in vessel ownership instead of the person handing over the vessel (e.g. a seller).

This change ensures that the person who is now responsible for the vessel informs AMSA of the change in ownership.

2. Clarify when certain existing vessels become transitional vessels

Applies to existing vessels obtaining a certificate of survey for the first time.
AMSA is proposing to clarify that existing vessels that are issued a certificate of survey for the first time will become a transitional vessel and must meet the relevant transitional standards.

This only applies to existing vessels that previously did not have a certificate of survey due to operating under an exemption.

3. New Vessels

Allows a new vessel that is less than 35m in length to meet the construction, engineering or anchoring standards in either the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) or class rules.

AMSA is proposing that new vessels less than 35m can choose to comply with either the construction, engineering or anchoring standards in the NSCV or class rules if design approval was completed by an RO.

4. Transitional vessels - include the use of Clause 3.12 of USL Code 5F (1989).

AMSA is proposing to change the transitional standards for arrangement, accommodation and personal safety to include the use of Clause 3.12 of USL Code 5F (1989).

This change includes escape provisions that are not covered in the NSCV Part C1.

5. New vessels entering service for the first time, or existing vessels that have made a Schedule 1 change

Must now meet the watertight & weathertight integrity standards in the NSCV Part C2.
AMSA is proposing to make it mandatory for applicable vessels to comply with the NSCV Part C2 for watertight and weathertight integrity standards.

Currently, new vessels can meet either the NSCV Part C2 or the USL Code.

6. 'Sister vessel' arrangements – clarify 'sister' vessel' as a vessel built to the same design as another vessel.

These vessels can use the original vessel's plan approval for a certificate of survey application instead of having to apply for a full plan approval. This makes it easier to obtain a certificate of survey for a sister vessel.

AMSA is proposing that the definition of sister vessel be clarified to better explain when vessels may access this arrangement.

7. Reduce the requirements when updating certain existing vessel components and equipment.

This proposed change will enable existing vessel owners to make improvements without triggering transitional requirements for the whole vessel. Owners still need to ensure the updated components and equipment meet current standards comply with a reduced set of transitional standards for other aspects of the vessel.

AMSA is proposing to reduce the transitional standards that apply to a vessel when there is a change to any of the following aspects:

- a. battery type or capacity*
- b. fixed fire system*
- c. gas system*
- d. electrical power and generators.*

8. Align survey timeframes with the 5 year survey cycle

This will apply to vessels relying on a previous certificate of survey to determine the standards or survey requirements that apply.

AMSA is proposing to change the timeframe from 2 years to 5 years for the maximum length of time.

A new vessel can re-enter survey while still using the standards that applied to the vessel it last held a certificate of survey when applying for a renewal before a vessel with an expired certificate of survey is required to undergo an initial survey before a certificate of survey can be issued.

AMSA is also proposing to introduce a maximum five year period during which a previously permitted type of operation may be reinstated without being treated as a Schedule 1 change.

These changes will align with the 5 year survey cycle (see 8 above).

9. Increase the maximum period a certificate of survey may be suspended

AMSA is proposing to increase the maximum duration a vessel can have its certificate of survey suspended for, from 6 months to 24 months.

This change aligns Marine Order 503 with the suspension periods in other marine orders.

10. Allow more time to conduct periodic surveys.

AMSA is proposing to increase the timeframe in which certain vessels have to undergo a periodic survey. The change will apply to medium-risk vessels and allow a 'Year 3 periodic survey' to be completed in the 15 months before, or 3 months after it is due.

This change will give these operators more flexibility to complete a periodic survey.

11. Allow certificate of survey to be varied to reduce the number of people allowed on board (Note: Minimum/Appropriate crewing requirements under Marine Order 504 still apply).

Apply to vessels seeking to reduce the number of people they are permitted to carry.

AMSA is proposing to allow a certificate of survey holder to seek a variation when reducing the number of people they are permitted to carry on board. This will reduce the costs for survey holders because they'll no longer need to submit a full renewal application when making this change.

12. Clarify the conditions where AMSA may revoke a certificate of survey

Focus is on vessels involved in marine incidents or vessels that are no longer domestic commercial vessels.

AMSA is proposing to clarify that AMSA may revoke a certificate of survey if a vessel is involved in a serious incident, such as sinking or being significantly damaged. This change will ensure vessels are suitably repaired and re-certified before restarting operations after a serious incident.

AMSA is also proposing to clarify that AMSA can revoke a certificate of survey if a vessel stops operating as a domestic commercial vessel. This could be because a vessel:

- has been decommissioned*
- has become a regulated Australian vessel*
- has become a foreign-flagged vessel.*

This change will reduce the potential for confusion about the status of the vessel and ensure that we have accurate data on the domestic commercial vessel fleet.

13. Require owners to notify AMSA if an insurance claim is made on a damaged vessel

A new requirement applying to vessels that have been damaged and an insurance claim made.

AMSA is proposing to require a vessel's owner to notify AMSA if they make an insurance claim on a vessel that has been damaged.

This ensures AMSA is aware of vessels that have been significantly damaged and that may need to be reassessed before resuming operations.

4. Remove the hull material from the definition of 'modifier' on vessels with a hull at least 15 years old.

AMSA is proposing to stop using hull material as a criteria for deciding if an older vessel needs more frequent surveys.

Age is the most significant factor for determining a vessel's risk and all vessels with a hull at least 15 years old will be required to undergo more frequent survey.

15. Allow AMSA to make determinations and approvals on AMSA's initiative

AMSA is proposing to enable AMSA to make determinations or approvals in specified circumstances without the need for an application.

This will reduce administrative burden and allow vessels to use correct standards or approvals without delay.

Please go to [Proposed changes to certificate of survey requirements | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#) to view to proposed changes.

To see existing rules go to: [Marine order 503 - Certificates of survey - national law | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)

New AMSA Online Portal – Apply Online for Near Coastal Tickets.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has released a new online application portal for Near Coastal certificates of competency.

You can [access myAMSA via this link](#) from midday on Wednesday, 25th June 2025 at which point it will be live on AMSA's website.

AMSA has been developing this online application portal for Near Coastal certificates of competency with the goal of saving seafarers time by **enabling seafarers to apply online for their tickets** – instead of having to travel to an Australia Post outlet to apply in person.

myAMSA uses the Australian Government's Digital Identity verification app, [myID](#), to allow seafarers to securely log into their **myAMSA** account. If seafarers don't have a myID app, they can go to the myID website to [get set-up](#). It's quick and easy.

All applications received through **myAMSA** (beta) will be processed. If approved, a Near Coastal certificate of competency will be issued in the mail.

Feedback is crucial to refining the portal, and the experience of Near Coastal seafarers will help shape future updates and improvements to myAMSA which will be fully released later this year.

Contact for feedback: Chris Battel, AMSA on chris.battel@amsa.gov.au

Eligibility:

- Seafarers need to be ready with all their documentation to submit a Near Coastal certificate of competency application through myAMSA beta from Wednesday 25th June.
- They'll also need a myID which is the Australian Government's Digital Identity app that will securely verify their identity upon logging them into myAMSA for the first time.
- If they are an existing seafarer with an AMSA record, they'll also need their AMSA ID on hand (displayed on the back of a certificate of competency card).

For further information go to: [myAMSA help and feedback | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)

Read more [about myAMSA beta](#) on AMSA's website.



WA Memorial for Lives Lost at Sea – Proposed Sea Organ at Bathers Beach

A small group of volunteers wants to highlight the bravery of, and sacrifices made by, WA's commercial fishing fleet.

The WA Fishers Lost at Sea Memorial Association (FlatSea) has come up with a pretty amazing idea about how to do that. They originally thought about some kind of a statue but it really didn't feel like it was doing justice to what people went through. (Go to: <https://www.flatsea.org/>)

So, they started investigating some more engaging and interactive options for the memorial and came upon an interesting concept in the Croatian city of Zadar where, when walking along the foreshore, you will hear a gentle melody that reminds you of voices carried over water.

On

The hauntingly beautiful sounds are created by a 'sea organ' constructed on the water's edge through the ocean swell moving through a system of [polyethylene](#) tubes and a [resonating cavity](#). White marble steps leading down to the water were built later concealing the pipes.

It is one of the world's biggest musical instruments and is a triumph of art and engineering.

To view the Zadar, Croatia sea organ go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pShgrfYdhhs> / <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/nO-eTNb6KEc>

FlatSea organisers believe a 'sea organ' would be a perfect tribute to the unfortunate souls who have been lost at sea while pulling pots, lines and nets along the WA coast - a giant, naturally powered musical instrument filling the beachside air with notes from the ocean.

First step – where to put it? Fremantle was an obvious choice and discussions with authorities and families have identified an area within Bathers Beach Bay – on the southern rock groyne.

Next a feasibility study will be carried out to determine engineering and access details.

Finally, construction - which will require funding – expected to be a mix of government support and community donations from across the nation.

If you want to be involved please go to: <https://www.flatsea.org/>
