

## It's search and rescue, but not as we know it

Australia is responsible for 16 million square kilometres of ocean and a search and rescue area comprising of 52.8 million square kilometres, more than one tenth of the Earth's surface.

We have a coastline spanning nearly 60,000 kilometres, with sparse regional populations and vast distances between our major coastal cities. It's easy to get lost in a sea that size - and that is exactly what's happening to our commercial boating sector.

The Federal Government has become the single national regulator for domestic commercial vessel safety. The National Law – *as it is called* – replaces eight federal, state and territory laws with a single law for the safety of all commercial vessels and their crew in Australian waters. This represents tens of thousands of boats and can be anything from the caravan park milk bar renting out kayaks to commercial fishing trawlers and tourist boats operating in the Whitsundays...and everything in between.

While the responsibilities have flowed from the States to the federal government, the dollars have not. The lack of proper funding to support the transition is putting more pressure on small business and mum and dad operators.

Teresa Lloyd, CEO of Maritime Industry Australia Limited (MIAL) the country's largest representative of maritime interests, says "the conflict and complexity with the States providing funding is paralysing the sector. It's a farce for fishing and ferry operators alike. \$20 million in the budget and the problem goes away. Why not let them get on with running their businesses instead of enduring another 12 months of argument over fees and charges that could see many go out of business?"

"Whilst MIAL applauds the move to the single law, the search will be on for the missing funds in tonight's budget. We need to search for the money to rescue the industry."

This Media Release is also supported by:





*Photo courtesy Brad Malyon.*

*End Release.*

*Note: Domestic Commercial Vessel is any non-recreational craft*

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For further information:

**MIAL**

Alison Saunders

W: 03 9647 6000

M: 0409 694 297

E: [alison.saunders@mial.com.au](mailto:alison.saunders@mial.com.au)

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Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) represent the collective interests of maritime businesses, primarily those operating maritime assets or facilities from Australia. MIAL is uniquely positioned to provide dedicated maritime expertise and advice, and is driven to promote a sustainable, vibrant and competitive Australian maritime industry and to expand the Australian maritime cluster.

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