



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria  
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

## MEDIA RELEASE



### Warning Signs Required for At-Risk Boat Ramps

17 March 2021

State leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, Stuart Grimley MP is calling on the government to install real-time warning signs at high risk boat ramps in Victoria. These signs will provide vital information to help boaters to understand conditions on the water.

Mr Grimley has written to Minister for Fishing & Boating, Melissa Horne, to ask for warning signs to be installed at high-risk boat ramps in Victoria. In his letter, Mr Grimley asked the Minister to "consider implementing real-time swell warning signs at strategic boat ramps in order to save lives on Victorian waters".

According to the Maritime Safety Victoria 2018/19 Annual Report there were nine marine fatalities from recreational vessel in Victorian waters, an increase of over 31% compared with the average of the three preceding years. There were 24 capsizing incidents during this period, so this number of fatalities could have been much higher.

There are a number of factors that can cause issues out on the water. Many inexperienced boaters can fall into a false sense of security when there is little to no wind, believing that the off-shore conditions should be fine. This is when trouble can often ensue.

There are warning signs already in Victoria for fire danger and algae levels that provide real-time colour-coded warning levels daily of conditions. These warning signs save lives. A similar type of system could be used at major boat ramps throughout Victoria, updated regularly by the local Coast Guard. The installation of QR codes on signs could lead boaters to a weather and swell conditions forecast or information as well.

These signs could play a major role in saving lives on the water. The benefits of these signs easily outweigh any cost of installation. Mr Grimley has written to the Minister for Fishing and Boating, the Hon. Melissa Horne to look into these signs.

#### Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"As a keen fisherman myself, I have a good understanding of conditions on the water. However there is no information on boat ramps in my area, that tell amateur boaters about the conditions on that day. Adding an extra layer of information for conditions on the water could be potentially lifesaving.

"I was contacted by an experienced charter fishing operator who has expressed his concerns about recreational vessels he sees journeying out into high swells during light winds. On one recent occasion he flagged down a boat passing under the Barwon Heads Bridge going to cross the bar.



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The in-experienced boater and his two young passengers had no idea of the dangerous swell they were heading into. Thankfully the boater turned around and headed back to the ramp.

There were 24 capsizing incidents according to Maritime Safety Victoria 2018/19 Annual Report. Just recently there was a capsizing caught on camera in Barwon Heads. You can only imagine the devastation on families lives if each of these incidents resulted in deaths. If the installation of electronic warning signs saves one life, then it is money well spent.”

I hope my letter prompts the Minister to direct her Departments – including Fisheries Victoria – to look into the viability of this idea and how it might look; including who is best placed to manage the warning changes on the signs. I look forward to the Minister’s response to my letter.”

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