



# NMSC Media Release

7 July 2010

## New PFDs for Australian Boaters

Personal flotation devices made to the new Australian Standard AS 4758 can now be sold and worn around the country.

National Marine Safety Committee CEO Margie O'Tarpey explained that Australia's marine safety authorities have met the timeframe of 1 July 2010 set by the NMSC to accept personal flotation devices made to AS 4758.

The NMSC has produced a point of sale brochure for retailers, dealers and the general public explaining the PFDs made to the new standard and what they mean. Copies can be attained from marine safety authorities or the NMSC.

Ms O'Tarpey explained that it is important for retailers and the general boating public to understand how to identify the markings on the new PFDs.

"The new standard identifies PFDs for different uses according to "Levels" rather than "Types" and the new Level 150 PFD has increased performance characteristics compared to most PFD Type 1's.

The new PFDs are marked as -

- Level 150 – is a new level of PFD suitable for offshore use
- Level 100 – is similar to PFD Type 1 and the minimum requirement for offshore use
- Level 50 – is similar to PFD Type 2
- Level 50S (Special Purpose) – is similar to PFD Type 3

"Standards Australia developed AS 4758 to more closely align with international standards and to take into account advances in PFD design and manufacture."

The NMSC confirmed that this change will have a minimum impact on boaters as retailers can still sell PFDs made to the old Australian standards, marked as PFD Type 1, 2 or 3.

"In the majority of cases, boaters won't need to replace their existing PFDs as long as they are in a good, serviceable condition.

"However, some marine agencies have applied limits to accepting older PFDs based on when they were manufactured so if unsure, boaters should check with their local marine safety authority."

PFDs are recognised as a key safety feature in recreational boating. An NMSC study\* found that people who survived a boating incident were more than two times more likely to have been wearing a PFD compared to those who died and concluded that if PFD usage increased to 50%, 2 -3 lives could be saved nationally each year."

NMSC cautioned that even though new PFDs manufactured to AS 4758 are starting to appear on retailer's shelves, full market availability may not be reached until the 2010/2011 boating season.

*The NMSC aims to achieve nationally uniform marine safety practices and is made up of an Independent Chair and the CEOs of Australia's marine safety agencies. ends\*The National Assessment of Boating Fatalities in Australia 1992 – 1998 Report.*

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