MEDIA STATEMENT

12 July 2021

Border-breaching boaties beware

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is cracking down on the state's maritime borders as breaches of Queensland's COVID-19 border restrictions continue.

MSQ general manager Angus Mitchell said several boaties had been intercepted and fined, placed into hotel quarantine or turned back in recent weeks in an expensive reminder of their responsibilities.

"Maritime Safety Queensland is the lead agency responsible for the offshore border response to contain the virus spread by ensuring boaties comply with health advice," Mr Mitchell said.

"MSQ has a full-time, on-water presence, patrolling our maritime borders and keeping Queenslanders safe. It is carrying out targeted intelligence-based and random vessel intercepts, assisted by the Queensland Water Police."

Mr Mitchell said MSQ had recently fined the four-member crew of a 34-metre superyacht which berthed in Southport last week after leaving a Sydney hotspot and providing false and misleading information upon arrival.

"Thankfully they all tested negative to COVID-19 which is a great relief considering they had attended the Wallabies versus France rugby international in Brisbane last week," he said.

"As of 1 July 2021, anyone who provides false or misleading information or breaches the directions can expect an on-the-spot fine of more than $4000, a court-imposed penalty of up to $13,785 or six months' imprisonment."

Mr Mitchell said MSQ also identified two other sailing vessels which arrived on the Gold Coast from the Sydney hotspot last week.

"A 68-year-old skipper was placed in government hotel quarantine and issued with a $4003 fine for failing to comply with a COVID-19 border direction while another skipper was fined $4003 and turned around at the border," he said.

"The message is clear, if you have been in a COVID-19 hotspot and you cross our maritime border, you will be intercepted and face the consequences.

"The Chief Health Officer declared the Greater Sydney area a COVID-19 hotspot backdated to 21 June as the COVID-19 situation continued to escalate.

"While that situation exists, MSQ will rigorously challenge any vessels planning to enter Queensland waters."

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