

# BUYING A BOAT

When you're thinking about buying a boat there are many factors to consider to ensure that your purchase will be suitable for your intended boating activities, particularly if this is your first venture into boating.



## What type of boat do I want?

The type of boat that will suit your needs depends on how experienced you are, your intended boating activities, where you want to take it, and in what conditions. All of these factors, and more, will influence what you should be looking for in your ideal boat. Once you've answered these basic questions, you need to translate it into which boat features are right for you (hull shape, length, freeboard, engine size/type, and safety equipment). To assist with this, speak to dealers and manufacturers, the Boating Industry Association, Transport Safety Victoria or peak sporting bodies appropriate for the type of boating you intend to undertake.

## Which boat do I go for?

Once you have decided the type of boat that suits your needs, you will then have to check the boat is structurally sound and suitable for your purpose. It is important to look for the Australian Builder's Plate which must be attached to most new Australian and imported recreational boats. The plate provides information on a boat's capability and capacity when out on the water by specifying the maximum number of people and load allowed, buoyancy characteristics and the engine's rating and weight.

When selecting a boat it is important that you take the time to check that the boat is suitable for your intended purpose and in good condition. This includes checking such things as hull and deck condition, engine condition, fuel tanks, electrical systems, electronics, gauges and safety equipment.

When you go to look at a boat, new or second hand, make sure you allow enough time to fully inspect all aspects of the boat.

If you've decided to buy a trailable boat, make sure you carefully examine the trailer too. The trailer should be not only in good condition, but of an appropriate length and capacity to support your boat. The section at the end of this document highlights some of the main elements you should look at. Remember, this is not an exhaustive list and you should refer to comprehensive manuals and guides for detailed information on specific boat types.

## Thinking about buying a second hand boat?

If you are considering buying a second hand boat it is strongly recommended that you ask to see the service book or log for the boat and that you have the boat inspected by a qualified marine surveyor or mechanic prior to purchase. Also check that no used or non-original parts have been used to repair the boat as these may affect the performance and reliability of the boat. In addition, when buying second hand from a dealer, make sure that the dealer is registered through the Business Licensing Authority of Victoria available at [www.bla.vic.gov.au](http://www.bla.vic.gov.au).

## A few more thoughts...

If your boat has any type of mechanical propulsion you will need to be licensed to operate it. You should also consider further training or mentoring to develop your skills. Transport Safety Victoria can provide information on training available around Victoria at [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au) or phone 1800 223 022. Check what additional published resources are available. Transport Safety Victoria has some publications which deal with hull condition, pre-trip checks and marine batteries in more detail. Other state regulators also publish similar material so check their websites.

## We highly recommend that you look at:

### Hull condition

- > Look for repairs - are they adequate?
- > Is there cracking or corrosion on an aluminium hull?
- > Is there cracking or delamination on a fibreglass hull?
- > Consider asking for a sea trial - this may expose flaws.

### Deck condition

- > Look for the same signs of flaws that you looked for on the hull.
- > Check the condition and mounting of all fittings.

## We highly recommend that you look at: (continued)

### Engine condition

- › Is the engine of a suitable size and power output for the boat? Remember that, for any given power output, a 4-stroke engine will usually be heavier and more bulky than a 2-stroke engine but may be more economical and reliable.
- › Check whether the engine starts and runs smoothly, cold and hot.
- › Engaging a marine mechanic is recommended to inspect the engine for you.

### Fuel systems

- › Check for corrosion, cracks and leaks in hoses and fastenings.
- › Are fuel tanks easily accessible for inspection?
- › Don't forget to check ancillary fuel systems such as cooking and heating.
- › It is highly recommended that expert advice is sought from a marine mechanic specialising in engine installation and maintenance when buying a boat powered by an inboard petrol engine.
- › If the boat is fitted with a petrol driven inboard engine, it is recommended that vapour detectors and venting systems are also fitted. These items should be professionally fitted, inspected and serviced.

### Electrical systems

- › A battery that is specifically designed for marine use should always be used.
- › Look for corrosion and moisture through the whole system.
- › Ensure that all gauges and switches are working.
- › Many boats have multiple batteries set up to start the engine and ongoing power for electrical equipment. It is a good idea to have these multiple installations inspected by a qualified marine electrician.

### Safety equipment

- › Make yourself aware of what safety equipment will be required for your chosen boat and area of operations. Check that any safety equipment, where included with the boat, is of good quality, has been serviced as required and complies with the relevant standards.
- › Full details of the minimum required safety equipment is contained in Schedule 4 of the *Marine Safety Regulations 2012* (Vic) or contact Transport Safety Victoria for more information.
- › Other items that should also be carried include sufficient fresh water and sunscreen to avoid dehydration and sunburn and maps and charts to aid navigation.

**Note:** The required safety equipment outlined in the Marine Safety Regulations 2012 (Vic) is the minimum safety equipment that MUST be carried on board boats. Operators are encouraged to carry any additional safety equipment that they believe will make their boating experience safer or more comfortable. For example, it is a legal requirement that boats travelling beyond 2 nautical miles from the coast carry a 406 MHz emergency positioning indicating radio beacon (EPIRB). However, boaters operating on inland and enclosed waters are also able to carry EPIRBs which will assist search and rescue operations locate boaters in an emergency situation.

### Miscellaneous

- › Sacrificial anodes should be of the same type, mounted firmly against the metal, and should not be painted. If there is less than 50 percent of the anodes remaining they should be replaced.
- › Check that the navigation lights conform with current regulations.

## Where to get more information

- › **Phone:** 1800 223 022
- › **Website:** [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)
- › **Email:** [information@transportsafety.vic.gov.au](mailto:information@transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

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