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New Boating Safety Program for Primary Schools

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said students in Western Australian primary schools would be the focus of a new initiative aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of safety on the water.

"I congratulate the Minister for Transport, Simon O'Brien MLC, on launching the Junior Crew program. The aim of the education package, specially designed for students in years three, four and five, is to introduce children throughout the State to boating safety messages," said Dr Nahan.

"WA's coastal lifestyle sees many school-aged children involved in a range of water-based activities. This program provides a basic understanding of the skills and knowledge required to be safe on the water."

Dr Nahan said the State-wide introduction of the program follows a comprehensive trial in selected WA primary schools last year which resulted in overwhelming support from teachers and the more than 300 students who participated.

The program provides a resource pack for teachers, including learning aides such as a story book introducing students to 'Skip the Boat Safe Bird', as well as worksheets and flash cards.

A feature of the program allows for students to receive a visit from Department of Transport marine officers with a patrol vessel.

"The introduction of the primary school program will complement the successful introduction of the Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST) in WA which had seen more than 129,000 people gain the marine qualification," said Dr Nahan.

"As a yachty myself, I have been impressed with the boating community's support of the RST and that combined with the introduction of the Junior Crew program will help to improve the community's awareness of the need to be safe on the water at all times."

For more information about the Junior Crew program visit the website <http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/juniorcrew> or contact the Marine Education Boatshed on 9339 7851.

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