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Safety Issues at Deep Water Point Launching Ramp

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton, called on the Department of Transport to amend the Gazettal Notice allowing ski boats to take off from either side of the boat launching ramp at Deep Water Point in Mt Pleasant because of public safety concerns.

"Public safety has to be paramount and it is incongruous that you can have both a launching ramp and a ski take-off area right on top of each other," said Dr Nahan.

"The wash from the ski take off areas on either side of the Deep Water Point launching ramp is making the launching and retrieval of people's boats difficult and dangerous. The ski take-off areas should be moved away from the launching ramp as a matter of priority."

Dr Nahan said the Deep Water Point launching ramp is the nearest river access point for boaters from the Electorate of Riverton but it does not have floating pontoons or finger jetties to make launching and retrieving a boat safer.

"Deep Water Point is a very popular launching area but its lack of floating pontoons or finger jetties is the main problem," said Dr Nahan.

"The wash is damaging boats as they come off the trailer and people have to hold on to their boats in the water while someone parks the car and trailer. If there were finger jetties, the boat could be safely secured while that is happening and if the ski take-off areas were moved, there would be a buffer zone to protect the launching ramp from the wash."

Dr Nahan said funding for the installation of floating pontoons or finger jetties at launching ramps is available through the State Government and he encouraged the City of Melville to take up that funding so that the Deep Water Point launching ramp could be upgraded.

"There is no doubt that there has been a significant growth in the use of our waterways and also in the types of watercraft that are being used on those waterways," said Dr Nahan.

"As a result, a significant amount of money has been raised from the Recreational Skipper's Tickets that all boat owners are required to have and some of those funds are available to local councils like the City of Melville for projects just like this."

"However at the moment, it is a Catch 22 situation because if the City of Melville did put in new floating pontoons or finger jetties to assist people to launch their boats safely, the wash from the ski boats taking off from the shore would soon destroy the new infrastructure. So until the ski take-off area is moved, the launching ramp will remain unsafe."

Dr Nahan said he is aware that the Swan River Trust and the Department of Transport are currently undertaking a major review into the shared use of the Swan and Canning Rivers but it will take some time before the results of that review come to light.

"Marine officers are now targeting unsafe and illegal boating activities, particularly rogue water-skiers and their speedboats on the Swan and Canning Rivers. However, the safety issues at Deep Water Point launching ramp cannot continue to be ignored," said Dr Nahan.

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