QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

Code of conduct

Safe on-water conduct on the Brisbane River

Introduction

The safe operation of passive craft on Queensland's waterways is a priority for state and local government authorities, commercial operators and sport and recreational organisations. This code of conduct has been adopted to provide guidance on several aspects of the safe on-water conduct of passive craft including general rules of the river, interacting with other vessels, adapting to environmental factors, participant safety and incident reporting.

The code of conduct is written for the benefit of all commercial and recreational users of the Brisbane River. The code of conduct is available to all river users on Maritime Safety Queensland, Rowing Queensland and Brisbane City Council websites.

Application

Safe on-water conduct is the responsibility of all vessels. The *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* (the collision regulations) applies to all vessels operating on Queensland waterways. In particular all vessels have an obligation to:

- maintain a proper look out by sight, hearing and all other means available
- proceed at safe speed (which is determined by prevailing conditions and environmental factors)
- take all necessary action to avoid a collision
- overtake safely.

The requirement to comply with the provisions of the above regulations is further supported by section 211 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* and section 125 *of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulations 2004* and integrated as part of this code of conduct.

Passive craft are often operated by novices learning to paddle, row and to control the craft. Passive craft operated by persons learning or training usually travel slowly and cannot always be manoeuvred quickly. They can be severely impacted by ship wash. All commercial and power-driven vessels other than passive craft are required to take these circumstances into account when in the vicinity of all passive craft. Passive craft are less visible than larger vessels and operators should take appropriate precautions (refer section 1 and 2 of the code).

Passive craft will minimise any operation in the centre third of the river where commercial and power-driven vessels usually operate.

Definitions

Centre third in the context of this code means the third of the river which lies in the centre of the river and is flanked by the two outer thirds.

Outer third – in the context of this code means the thirds of the river which are nearest to either of the banks – refer to diagram.

Collision regulations – the *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* published by the International Maritime Organisation. Available on the Australian Maritime Safety Authority website as an appendix to Marine Orders Part 30.

Commercial vessels – includes power-driven vessels for commercial purposes (for example BCC CityCats, Charter vessels, commercial fishing trawlers and barges).

General safety obligation – as defined in section 43 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994.*

Proper lookout – as defined by the collision regulations. A look out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

Recreational power craft – includes power-driven vessels for recreational purposes (for example jet skis).

Passive craft – non power-driven vessels (for example rowing boats and kayaks) for the purpose of this code, does not include sailing vessels.

Ship – as defined by section 10 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994.*

Shipping inspectors – officers appointed by Maritime Safety Queensland and includes Maritime Safety Queensland officers, Queensland Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol

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Supervision – within the context of organised on water activity conducted by a club, school or association is taken to be a reference to the risk management plan prepared by these entities.

Vessel – includes every description of water craft.

Waterway – indicates any navigable waters including but not limited to rivers, estuaries, creeks, lakes, dams.

Master – is the person in control of the vessel.

1 General guidelines for passive craft

The safe operation of a passive craft requires knowledge by individuals, coaches, crews and coxswains of the basic matters listed below:

- The individual, club or school safety procedures and risk management plan.
- Access to first aid equipment and the names and contact details of qualified first aid officers.
- Protocol for reporting on water incidents to the club or school officer, state sporting organisation/recreational governing body and Maritime Safety Queensland.
- The need to use safe and serviceable equipment.
- The need for adequate instruction in the safe use of the environment and boatmanship of the equipment.
- Every vessel is to be operated safely within the limitations created by weather (fog, mist, rain and lack of light).
- Simple commands for boat control on and off the water from instructors, coaches and officials.
- Passive craft should be aware of what is around them. Obligation is to maintain a proper look out and if in doubt stop.
- Stationary passive craft should stay as close to the bank as possible, out of the way of passing vessels.
- An understanding of the directions and indications of channel markers.
- An understanding of the general on-water safety guidelines for all vessels.
- Communication with and understanding of other 'river users' signals. All communication must be concise, courteous and professional.

2 General guidelines for all commercial vessels and recreational power craft

There are a number of basic on-water safety guidelines which, if observed, will minimise the risk of incident. The matters listed below are reflected in the collision regulations and relevant legislation:

- Every vessel is to maintain a proper look out by sight and hearing listed in Rule 5 of the Collision Regulations.
- Every vessel is to operate at a safe speed determined by factors listed in Rule 6 of the Collision Regulations.
- Every vessel is obliged to take measures to avoid a collision listed in Rule 7 of the Collision Regulations.
- Every vessel operator is to ensure that the vessel is safe to operate and equipment is in working order.
- Every vessel is to be operated safely within the limitations created by weather (fog, mist, rain and lack of light).
- Vessels on the Brisbane River must not cause a wash that could cause a marine incident, for example could capsize another craft (refer paragraph 6).
- Every vessel operator is to be aware of local hazards and environmental conditions.
- Commercial vessels and recreational power craft must consider their size, speed and impact of wash when operating near passive craft.
- Communication to other river users must be concise, courteous and professional.

3 Guidelines for the operation of passive craft

Care must be taken by individuals or crews of all passive craft on and around pontoons and boat ramps.

Passive craft in most circumstances approach pontoons or boat ramps against the tide. Individuals and crews departing and returning to a pontoon or boat ramp on the incorrect side of a river (due to tidal considerations) should be on the incorrect side of the river for a minimal distance (the recommended distance is approximately 100 m from pontoon/ramp).

Individuals and crews should cross the river in a straight line perpendicular to the bank. As a general rule passive craft must only be in the centre third of a river for the minimum amount of time when crossing the river.

Individuals and crews on the opposite side of the river for the purpose of returning to a pontoon into the tide must pay particular care and maintain a proper lookout to avoid collision.

When crossing the river, all vessels are to proceed to the opposite side via the shortest possible route and are to proceed with extreme caution whilst maintaining a proper lookout.

Individuals and crews should not attempt to cross the river in areas of poor visibility.

All vessels are to ensure clear line of sight both upstream and downstream before crossing. As a guide, vessels should cross where they can be seen at a minimum distance of 500 m when crossing from the side of the river.

4 Environmental considerations

All vessel operators shall consider environmental factors and modify on water conduct as follows:

4.1 Lighting

Passive recreational craft must take particular care when in low light conditions, such as before and just after sunrise and just before and after sunset.

Passive craft must display a flashing white all-round light visible for two nautical miles.
(Refer to Annex A)

All recreational vessels including passive craft on the water at any time between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a lighting device for signalling to attract attention. Examples of lighting devices – torches, lanterns, fluorescent lights and cyalume sticks.

4.2 Restricted visibility

Visibility on water can be reduced by fog or mist. In such circumstances, rowing crews must take particular care on the water. During times of fog or mist, appropriate lighting must be used, even if it is outside normal times of low light conditions.

If visibility is down to less than 1000 m prior to departure, rowing boats must not go on the water. If visibility is reduced to less than 1000 m whilst a passive craft is on the water the crew must proceed with extreme caution back to their pontoon.

4.3 Noise

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) has published a number of guidelines on nuisance and noise.

All users of the Brisbane River need to be considerate of other water users and of neighbouring properties. Abatement Notices or on the spot Penalty Infringement Notices (PIN) can be issued by the Brisbane City Council and DEHP.

All coaches need to be considerate of other water users and of neighboring properties when off water and in the shed or on-water. Abatement Notices or on the spot PIN can be issued by DEHP.

Prior to 7 am and after 7 pm no amplifying devices are allowed to be used in the vicinity of residential areas on the Brisbane River.

4.4 Tides

Individuals, crews and coaches must be aware of tidal movement of the particular waterway they are operating on.

Tides
The Brisbane River has a 2–2.5 m rise and fall creating a tidal flow of 2–4 knots.
All rowing crews and coaches must be aware of their environmental conditions and must take the tidal flow into consideration when stopping, in the vicinity of CityCat pontoons, launching or docking and crossing the river.
All rowing crews and coaches should also be aware of effect of the tidal flow, together with other environmental conditions such as strong wind, and proceed with due care.

4.5 Hazards

Waterways often have hazards which may be submerged or may not always be visible or marked with buoys. Low tide can expose sand banks or mud banks. Individuals, crews and coaches must be aware of specific hazards which may include:

- pontoons and pylons in the water
- moored or anchored vessels
- bridge footings
- aids to navigation (buoys and beacons)
- shallow water
- submerged rocks
- debris.
- Various marinas on the Brisbane river

In addition to hazards, there are many other factors that may pose a risk to the safe operation of vessels. All river users must familiarise themselves with ‘area specific’ hazards before commencing any on water activity, eg:

- Sixteen and Seventeen Mile Rocks – green beacon
- White Rocks and Chelmer Marina – indicated with various marker buoys
- Dutton Park Rocks – red marker buoy
- South Brisbane and Town Reaches – between the Go Between Bridge and Story Bridge because of the river crossings by the CityCats

- Bulimba Reach – in the vicinity of ferry terminals and fuelling facilities.
- Bulimba Point
- Downstream of Bulimba Reach – subject to heavy commercial vessel traffic
- Downstream of Sir Leo Hielscher Bridges – commercial shipping area.

4.6 River construction works

Construction work continues to be conducted on the Brisbane River to infrastructure which includes:

- bridges
- pontoons
- retaining walls
- walkways
- CityCat terminals.

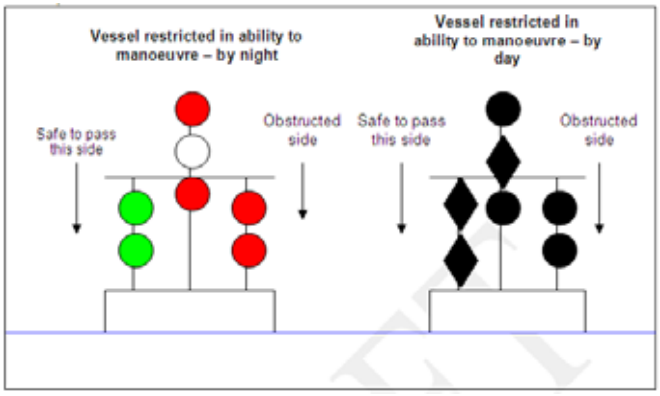
As a result, a number of barges in various configurations are moored in the outer third of the river and may pose a hazard to the safe operation of passive craft. Due to the mooring configuration of these barges, this may also result in forcing passive craft into the centre third of the river to avoid reconstruction operations.

The effect of this will be experienced in all areas of the Brisbane River.

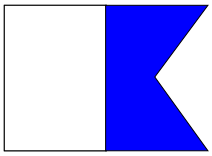
Passive craft users should familiarise themselves with the areas of reconstruction work being conducted and identify the hazards that this may pose to their activity prior to using their passive craft. This is particularly significant when combined with low light conditions and/or conditions of restricted visibility as addressed in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this code.

Commercial vessels must display the appropriate lights and shapes required under Part C of the collision regulations. Barges (greater than 12 m in length) engaged in underwater operations that have obstructions to either side will display dayshapes or lights as defined under Rule 27 of the collision regulations. Vessels engaged in diving operations of a size that make it impractical to display all the lights and shapes contained in Rule 27 (d) shall display the red-white-red lights in a vertical line or the code flag ‘A’ (alpha).

Lights and shapes as defined under Rule 27 of the collision regulations (when at anchor)

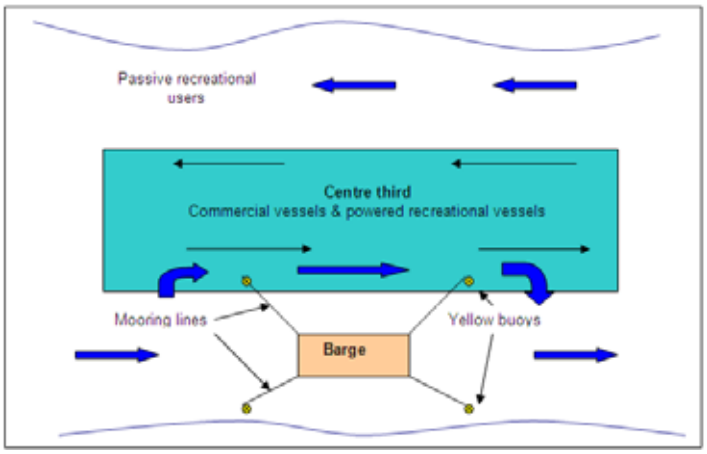


Code A flag



Barge anchors are marked with yellow marker buoys indicating the anchor’s position. At night these buoys can be identified by yellow flashing lights.

Barge configuration example / area of caution



Commercial vessels and recreational power craft are required to pass moored barges at a safe distance with due regard to the position of their anchors and mooring lines. Vessels displaying the code flag sequence ‘R’ (Romeo) above ‘Y’ (Yankee) must be passed at a slow speed to limit the effects of wash on that vessel. Moderation of speed in this way will also reduce the effects of wash on passive craft that may need to enter the centre third of the river to avoid these moored barges. Power-driven vessels must be considerate to passive craft that may need to enter the centre third.

Flag R over flag Y – proceed at slow speed when passing

Passive craft users should utilise areas in a way that avoids passage into the centre third of the river. If users identify the need to enter the centre third of the river to avoid reconstruction works, they should do so with special attention and due regard to the passage of commercial and recreational powered vessels while ensuring that they pass barges and moorings at a safe distance.

4.7 Bridges

There are numerous bridges spanning the Brisbane River. On approach to the bridges be aware of the location of pylons and consider the current and other river users. Passive craft should stay on either of the outer thirds of the river to navigate under the bridge. To safely navigate the bridge it may be necessary to move into the centre third of the river (staying on the correct side) to pass under the bridge. If this is the case, individuals or crews should move back to the outer thirds once past the bridge. The exception to this is that individuals or crews should not under any circumstances navigate through the centre spans of the William Jolly and Go Between Bridge.

4.8 Reaches of the Brisbane River

4.8.1 Town Reach and South Brisbane Reach (between the Story Bridge and the William Jolly Bridge)

This section of the river is heavily used by commercial vessels. A maximum speed of 15 knots applies to all 'vessels' over 8 m operating between the Story Bridge and the William Jolly Bridge. The speed limit for all 'vessels' from the Story Bridge to Mowbray Park CityCat terminal is 40 knots provided the 'vessels' operation does not create a marine incident.

Passive craft in the Town Reach and South Brisbane Reach of the river need to exercise extra caution and keep a proper lookout for commercial vessels making cross river stops.

4.8.2 Mowbray Park to Bretts Wharf

This section of the Brisbane River is heavily used by commercial vessels, cross river ferries also operate. The maximum speed is 40 knots provided the 'vessels' operation does not create a marine incident.

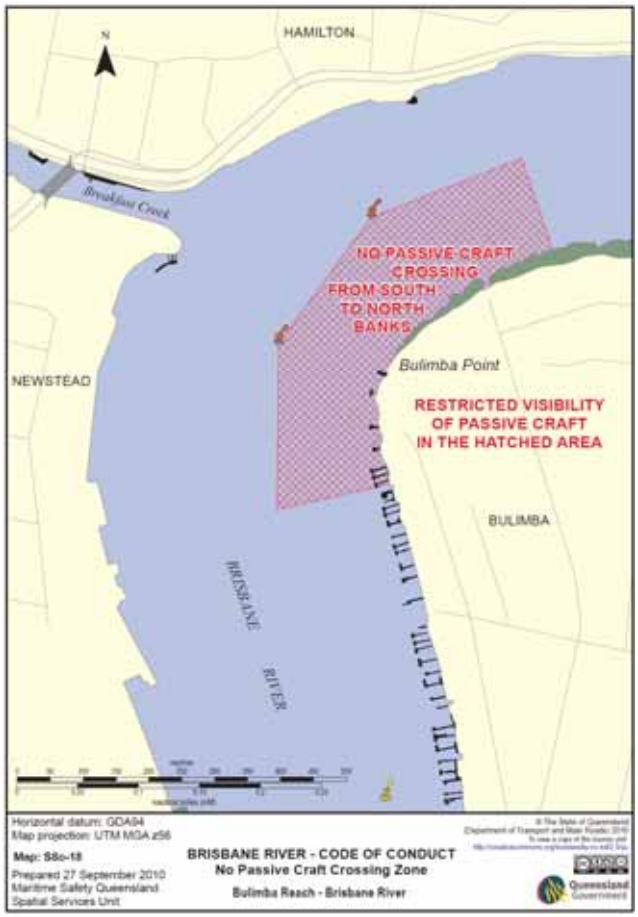
There are two inlets in this area of the Brisbane River. Commercial vessels need to keep a proper lookout for passive craft. All individuals and crews using these inlets need to keep a proper lookout as they enter and exit the Brisbane River.

The two inlets are:

- Norman Creek.
- Breakfast Creek

Passive craft requiring to cross from Bulimba Point (south bank to north bank), must proceed 500 m upstream or downstream before crossing the River.

Diagram 1 – Breakfast Creek



5 Commercial vessels and recreational power craft

Commercial vessels should generally operate as close as practicable to the starboard side of the centre third of the river unless it is unsafe to do so. Masters are required to give position calls via VHF channel 12 and/or 13 on approach to sharp/blind bends and bridges, with additional calls when overtaking other vessels or in restricted visibility.

Commercial vessels and recreational power craft operate in the centre third of the river however they do enter the outer thirds when docking and crossing the

river. When entering and exiting the outer thirds of the river, commercial vessels and recreational power craft are required to maintain a proper lookout for all passive craft.

All vessel masters have a legislated responsibility to ensure their vessels do not operate at a speed greater than 6 knots within 30 m of a person in the water, a ship at anchor, moored or made fast to the shore or aground and a jetty, wharf, boat ramp or pontoon.

5.1 Docking and departing pontoon procedures

The size and design of larger commercial vessels may create blind spots which limit the visibility of masters to see other small craft. A number of safety procedures have been adopted to minimise the likelihood of an incident or close-quarters situation:

5.1.1 Docking

- Wash is minimised if on approach the master slows the vessel prior to altering course from the centre third of the river. All commercial vessels should leave the centre third of the river at an angle approximately 45 degrees to the bank. Masters should allow sufficient time to reduce the angle of approach prior to berthing in order to reduce the risk of collision.
- If a passive craft is within a 100 m radius of a ferry terminal or pontoon then the commercial vessel must wait for the passive craft to depart the 100 m zone.
- If a commercial vessel is within a 100 m radius of a ferry terminal or pontoon, the passive craft must stop outside this 100 m zone and wait for the commercial vessel to dock. The tidal flow of the river must be taken into consideration by all passive craft in this instance.
- Once the commercial vessel is docked the passive craft can progress through the safety zone quickly. A minimum distance of 13 m of separation between the passive craft and a berthed commercial vessel is to be maintained when passing through the exclusion zone.

5.1.2 Departing pontoon

- Departure angles from pontoons shall be as steep as safely practicable. Manoeuvring the vessels bow out will assist in the reduction of wash by decreasing the distance travelled to the deeper water close to the centre third of the river.
- Commercial vessels will give way to passive craft currently within the 100 m zone.

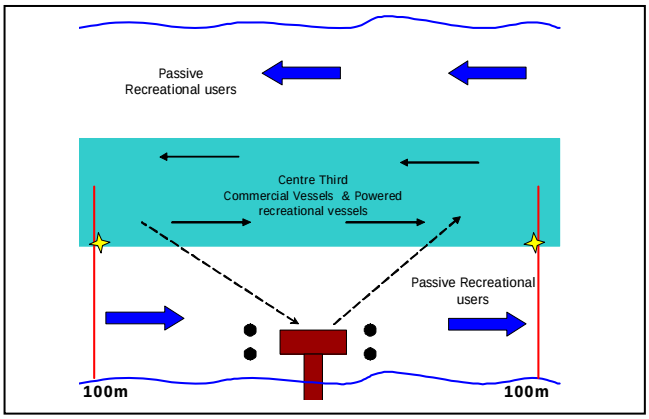
If the passive craft is approaching the 100 m zone and sees a commercial vessel departing the;

- passive craft must stop at the 100 m zone and allow the commercial vessel to depart. If the passive craft has any uncertainty at all then they should remain outside of the 100 m zone until the commercial vessel has safely departed.

5.1.3 Exclusion zone markers deployed

At nominated CityCat terminals within the Brisbane River, yellow markers buoys and markers have been established to designate the 100 m zone to assist mariners and passive craft to comply with the exclusion zones.

Diagram 2 – Exclusion zone markers



Under no circumstances are passive craft or coaching boats to navigate under pontoon or terminal gangways.

Diagram 2 above indicates a typical passage of navigation for commercial vessels docking and departing from terminals. Passive craft should note the angle of entry and exit into the terminal and observation of approaching commercial vessels should be from this angle. When passing all pontoons or terminals individuals and crews should navigate so as to allow for a safe passing distance (13 m) from the docked vessel. Passive craft are not permitted to stop, turn or cross the river in the exclusion zone.

6 Incident reporting

Under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, a marine incident is classified as an event causing or involving:

- the loss of a person from a ship
- the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person caused by a ship's operations
- the loss or presumed loss or abandonment of a ship
- a collision with a ship
- the stranding of a ship
- material damage to a ship
- material damage caused by a ship's operations
- danger to a person caused by a ship's operations
- danger of serious damage to a ship
- danger of serious damage to a structure caused by a ship's operations.

Maritime Safety Queensland has responsibility to collate and analyse the marine incident data provided by people involved in marine incidents.

A marine incident must be reported to a shipping inspector within 48 hours of the incident. The report must be made on the approved form. Contact details for Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices and the approved form are available from www.msq.qld.gov.au.

This form is used to report all incidents, no matter what type of vessel is involved.

As well as reporting requirements stipulated by Maritime Safety Queensland, Rowing Queensland has established an incident reporting protocol for reporting all on water incidents and off water incidents as they relate to conduct in the boat sheds (including boat launching and loading) or travel to and from regattas.

The reporting of unsafe conduct of all water users and incidents 'on and off water' is critical to the safe use of Queensland water courses. For example excessive speed when overtaking can create a wash which endangers rowing boats.

All instances of unsafe conduct and incidents are to be reported to:

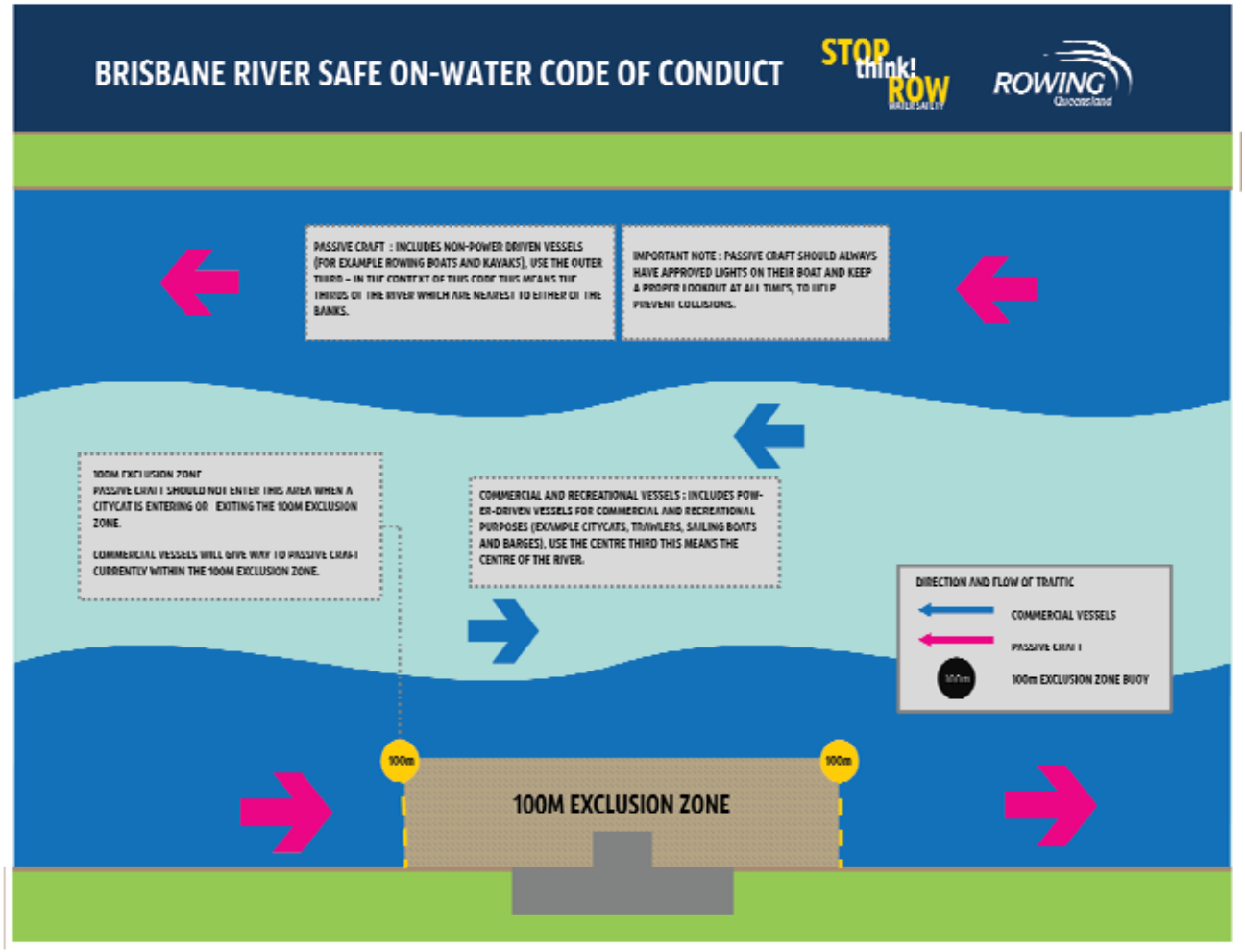
Rowing Queensland
Education and Safety Officer
(07) 3842 1200 or
safety@rowingqld.asn.au

7 Endorsement of the code of conduct

This code for safe on-water conduct on the Brisbane River is a document endorsed by:

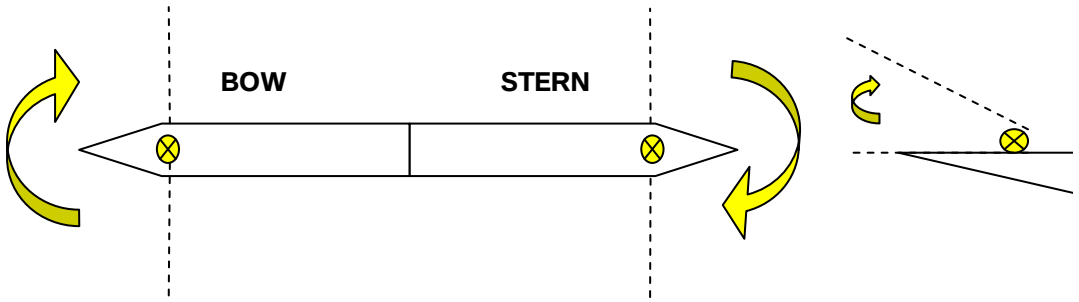
- Rowing Queensland Inc.
- Maritime Safety Queensland
- Brisbane Ferries
- Brisbane City Council

Annex A



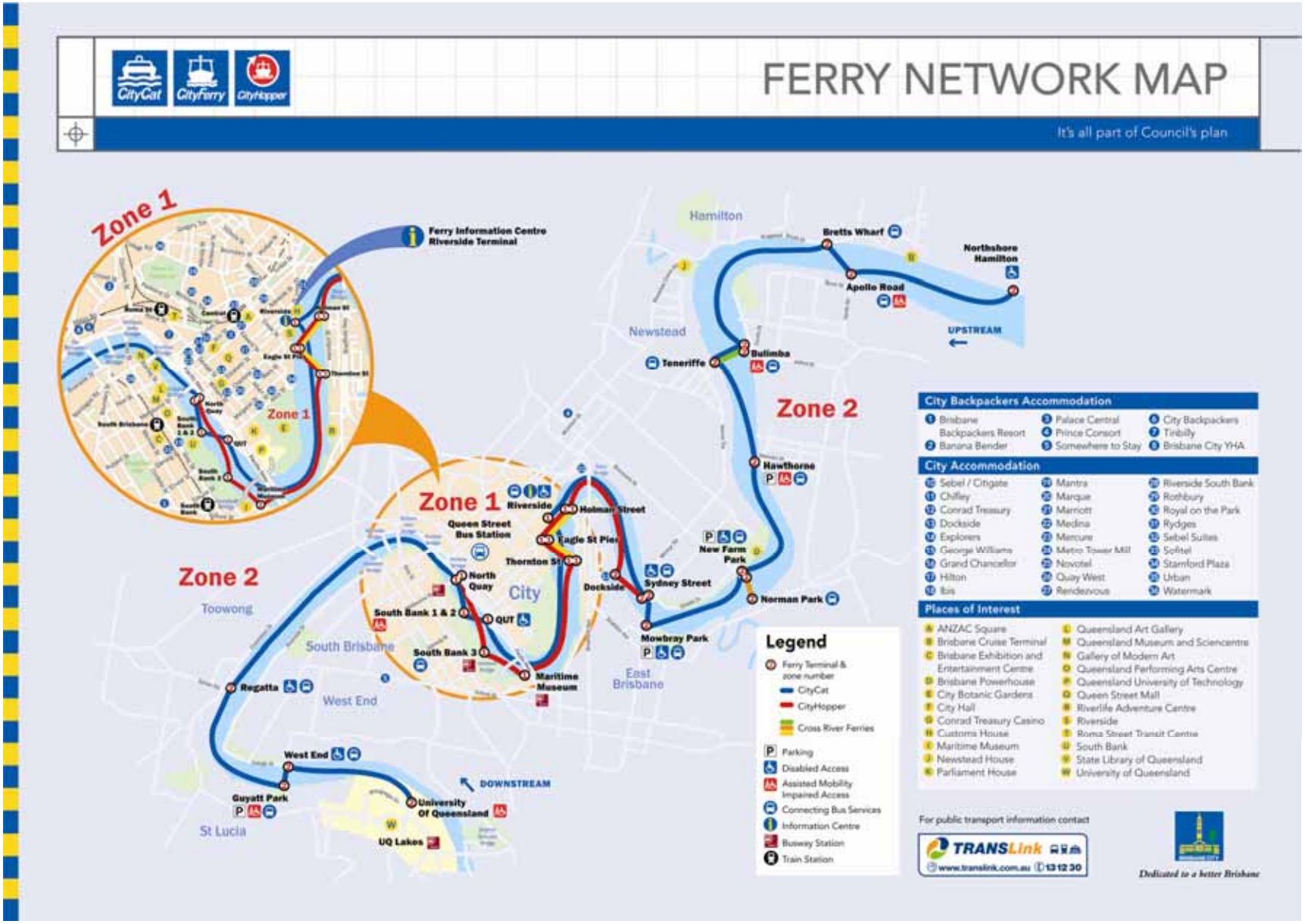
Water Safety - Boat Lights

Range of visibility



Authorities will be on the water enforcing lighting requirements

Annex B


CityCat
CityFerry
CityHopper
FERRY NETWORK MAP
It's all part of Council's plan
Zone 1
Ferry Information Centre
Riverside Terminal
Zone 1
Zone 2
Toowong
South Brisbane
West End
St Lucia
Guyatt Park
West End
Regatta
University Of Queensland
UQ Lakes
DOWNSTREAM
Zone 1
Riverside
Holman Street
Queen Street Bus Station
Eagle St Pier
Thornton St
North Quay
City
South Bank 1 & 2
QUT
South Bank 3
Maritime Museum
Dockside
Sydney Street
Mowbray Park
East Brisbane
Hamilton
Bretts Wharf
Northshore Hamilton
Apollo Road
UPSTREAM
Newstead
Teneriffe
Bulimba
Hawthorne
New Farm Park
Norman Park
Legend
Ferry Terminal & zone number
CityCat
CityHopper
Cross River Ferries
Parking
Disabled Access
Assisted Mobility Impaired Access
Connecting Bus Services
Information Centre
Busway Station
Train Station
City Backpackers Accommodation
Brisbane Backpackers Resort
Banana Bender
Palace Central
Prince Consort
Somewhere to Stay
City Backpackers
Tinbilly
Brisbane City YHA
City Accommodation
Sebel / Citigate
Chifley
Conrad Treasury
Dockside
Explorers
George Williams
Grand Chancellor
Hilton
Ibis
Mantra
Marque
Marriott
Medina
Mercure
Metro Tower Mill
Novotel
Quay West
Rendezvous
Riverside South Bank
Rothbury
Royal on the Park
Rydges
Sebel Suites
Sofitel
Stamford Plaza
Urban
Watermark
Places of Interest
ANZAC Square
Brisbane Cruise Terminal
Brisbane Exhibition and Entertainment Centre
Brisbane Powerhouse
City Botanic Gardens
City Hall
Conrad Treasury Casino
Customs House
Maritime Museum
Newstead House
Parliament House
Queensland Art Gallery
Queensland Museum and Sciencentre
Gallery of Modern Art
Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Queensland University of Technology
Queen Street Mall
Riverlife Adventure Centre
Riverside
Roma Street Transit Centre
South Bank
State Library of Queensland
University of Queensland
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