

## **SUBMISSION TO ESL REVIEW**

In recent years Sea Rescue has moved from an efficient streamlined volunteer based organisation widely supported by the community including fund raising. Today, in a few short years after the organisation was absorbed by FESA we see a bloated government run organisation that apparently requires a levy to be maintained.

Increases of the magnitude suggested are not sustainable but boating is unfairly seen as luxury expenditure with the oft-taken view 'if you can afford a boat, you can afford to pay' and - 'if you can afford a big boat, you can afford to pay more'. If this logic is adopted then people who choose to live in high-risk bushfire prone areas should pay more and people who live in expensive houses should pay more if they summon an ambulance. My wife and I were mid-level public servants for much of our working life and resent being labelled as wealthy and affluent just because we saved up our funds to allow us to spend time on the water.

In 2011 boat registration fees increased dramatically (+27%). Since then fees have increased year on year significantly above CPI with 10% increases in 2014 & 2015. The increase in 2011 was justified on the back of substantial increases in public facilities made available to the boating public. The Minister at the time cited the number of new ramps and other facilities that had been provided by the Dept. of Transport. The Minister went onto say that the cost increase would be proportionate to the length of the vessel as larger boats use more facilities. The statement by the Minister in 2011 that larger vessels use more facilities is absolute nonsense. In fact, I would strongly suggest large well found boats are for the most part independent of Dept. of Transport infrastructure.

I choose to pen my vessel in a private member sailing club where I pay rates for my pen to the Fremantle City Council. Due to the size of my vessel, I am restricted to many of the bays and estuaries that consume Dept. of Transport funding (eg. Peel Inlet). Due to the height of my mast I am unable to transition the traffic bridges at Fremantle and do not use any of the facilities on the Swan or Canning waterways. Likewise, I am unable to use any of the ramps due to my vessel's design and weight. If I do occasionally make use of a DOT mooring or jetty for an overnight stay, I am charged fees according to the size of my boat. **I also pay membership dues of \$45 per annum to the Fremantle Sea Rescue Group simply because I consider them to be a worthwhile organisation.**

Most of my time on the water is offshore sailing, where a high degree of self-sufficiency is critical to the safety of all on board. Although we are a cruising yacht we carry and maintain most of the safety equipment that would be found on a round the world racing yacht. Actual experience is many of the rescues are small open craft operating in open waters, often in poor weather that "suddenly went bad" with a basic level of safety gear with many incidents due to equipment failure such as dead batteries, engines that won't start or water in fuel tanks or simply run out of fuel. If any in-depth study was conducted I'm quite sure it would find that members of the boating public that sail with sufficient experience and a well-found boat would most

likely prove to have a very small demand on Marine Rescue services. In my own experience I was subject to one marine rescue in 2003 in my power boat (requiring tow only) and none since 2009 in my yacht.

Small, open craft operating in the open ocean are significantly more likely to require marine rescue services than a well-founded offshore sailing vessel, yet the yacht will most likely pay a significant premium over other vessels. Engine failure on a yacht is easily overcome by raising the sails. Small non-registered vessels such as kayaks, canoes, surf skis and other craft without motors would not pay any levy despite being a high-risk category. Imposing an Emergency Services Levy across all users discriminates against those that prepare well, use a suitable vessel with appropriate experience and training and regarding key warnings such as weather. For the most part, there is little differentiation in sea rescue between assisting a small craft and a large vessel.

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