

AUSTRALIAN WINDSURFING ASSOCIATION INC.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

November 2002

THE PLAN

This Plan outlines the minimum risk management principles to be adopted by the Australian Windsurfing Association Inc, its affiliated State Associations and their respective affiliated clubs and members when sanctioning and or conducting windsurfing *events*.

DEFINITIONS

- ◆ The word *event* shall mean ‘any activity (racing or otherwise) directly associated with the sport of windsurfing which is sanctioned by the Australian Windsurfing Association Inc or any of its affiliated State Associations and which is conducted on a no-fee-for service basis (other than reimbursement of actual costs incurred) by financial members of clubs affiliated with their respective State Association or secondees formally recruited by such clubs’.
- ◆ The word *adequate* shall mean ‘in accordance with the requirements of the relevant State law or, where no such State law exists, in keeping with common practice’.
- ◆ When an *event* involves racing, then the word *participant* shall mean ‘a current financial member of a club affiliated with a State Association which is in turn affiliated with the Australian Windsurfing Association Inc or a person who has purchased public liability insurance from the event organising authority and who has complied with all other *event* entry requirements.’
- ◆ When a word is printed in ‘*italic*’ type the relevant definition applies.

BACKGROUND

Clubs and their volunteer officials have a duty of care to those who participate in *events* organised by them. In exercising this duty of care, the law requires those responsible to take reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of injury to *participants* and or damage to property as a result of risks which are reasonably foreseeable.

OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To reduce the incidence of damage to property and or injury to *participants*, officials and other persons associated with *events*.

- ◆ To provide a safe environment for *participants* to enjoy the sport of windsurfing.
- ◆ To minimise the potential liability of members, clubs and Associations as a result of poorly managed *events*.

SIGN-ON/SIGN-OFF SYSTEM

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ A reliable, easy to use and administer sign-on/sign-off system must be used. As a minimum, the system must accurately record the number of *participants* entered in an *event* by name and sail number and must be capable at anytime of reliably and quickly identifying *participants* who have signed-on and who have signed-off.
- ◆ *Participants* should be made aware at the race briefing of the purpose of a sign-on/sign-off system and the importance of their cooperation to ensure its effectiveness.
- ◆ Wherever possible, sign-on/sign-off should apply to each race or period of racing. Signing-on at the commencement of an *event* and signing-off several hours later at its completion should be discouraged. Consistent with the *event* program and resources available, the more frequent the sign-on/sign-off system is applied the more quickly any unaccounted for *participants* are identified.
- ◆ Race management boats should not leave the course area until it has been confirmed that all *participants* have signed-off from racing or have been otherwise accounted for.
- ◆ Steps which should be taken to initially determine whether a *participant* who has failed to sign-off within the nominated time for doing so is indeed on shore are:-
 - is his or her equipment on the beach?
 - is his or her car still in the car park?
 - question other *participants* as to whether they have any knowledge of the 'missing' *participant's* whereabouts.
 - if there is a public address system available, use it to page the 'missing' *participants*.
 - if the 'missing' *participant* has nominated a contact phone number on his or her entry form, use it in an attempt to determine their whereabouts.
- ◆ Immediate steps which must be taken if a 'missing' *participant's* whereabouts cannot be determined:-
 - alert all race management boats including all coach boats (if in attendance).
 - attempt to determine from other *participants* where the 'missing' *participant* was last seen on the course area.
 - organise a coordinated a search of the course area and foreshores with priority given to areas affected by prevailing winds and current flow.

- alert water police, coast guard and similar agencies. Request their assistance if necessary.

PERSONAL BUOYANCY

- ◆ *Participants* must wear *adequate* personal buoyancy whilst competing in an *event* with the only exception being when competing in a wavesailing *event*. *Event* organisers have the right to require all *participants* to wear personal buoyancy regardless of the relevant State law.

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ Race management personnel must wear or carry *adequate* personal buoyancy.

RACE BRIEFING

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ At the race briefing, *participants* and race management personnel must be advised of all reasonably foreseeable safety concerns applicable to the venue and course areas. Examples of these are (but not limited to):-
 - difficulties in launching and landing – rocks, oysters, slippery surfaces, sudden deep or shallow water, breaking surf.
 - the presence and location of known reefs, shallows, rocks, weed beds, sand bars and strong currents.
 - the presence of other water users especially high speed ferries etc having right of way and large shipping.
 - exposed rigging areas necessitating the pegging down of equipment.

RESCUE FACILITIES

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ As a minimum, rescue boats must be *adequate* in number and type commensurate with the *event* based on the number of *participants* entered, the competency and skill level of those *participants*, the sea state and tidal conditions of the course area, the proximity of safe/hostile shores and the distance the course area is from the venue launching area.
- ◆ Rescue boats should have reliable radio communication one to the other and to the venue shore base.
- ◆ Rescue boats should have *adequate* first aid equipment on board and at least one crew member should have a good knowledge of first aid.

- ◆ Rescue boats and their crews should be experienced in towing and handling disabled windsurfers in all sea conditions without the risk of injuring the *participantr* or damaging their equipment.

FIRST AID

- ◆ *Adequate* first aid equipment must be available at the venue and on the rescue boats.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS - STORMS

- ◆ Possible adverse changes to weather conditions affecting the *event* must be regularly monitored using the latest, most reliable forecasting source available.
- ◆ Every effort must be taken to avoid *participants* being exposed to severe storm activity during an *event*. Should this happen, *participants'* safety is the main priority.

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ Consideration should be given to abandoning such racing in sufficient time to allow *participants* to return safely to the venue launching area and to sign-off before the storm activity affects the course area. Ensure all *participants* have signed-off or are otherwise accounted for. Should this not happen, then:-
 - Those race management boats which are not at risk should remain on the course area to provide assistance to *participants* in distress. Likewise, coach boats (if in attendance) should be asked to assist.
 - As an alternative to towing/escorting *participants* to the safety of the shore (which could be time consuming), they can be:-
 - tethered in a group to one another or to an anchored course mark or to an anchor set by a race management boat and collected after the storm activity has abated. It is important to record the names, sail numbers and whereabouts of such *participants*.
 - taken on board a race management boat after their equipment has been tethered to an anchored course mark or to an anchor set by a race management boat. It is essential in such cases that some form of identification is attached to the abandoned equipment indicating that the *participant* has been accounted for and has not been inadvertently separated from his or her equipment. A harness attached to one of the footstraps or to the boom could serve this purpose. It is important to record the names, sail numbers and whereabouts of such *participants*.
 - Once the storm activity has abated:-
 - all race management boats and coach boats (if in attendance) should be deployed to assist *participants* return to the venue launching area and sign-off.

- ensure all *participants* have signed-off or are otherwise accounted for.
- retrieve *participants* abandoned equipment if relevant.

WAIVER/RELEASE AND INDEMNITY

When an *event* involves racing then -

- ◆ The following text must be included in both the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions:-

‘ENTRY DISCLAIMER

It is the competitor’s sole decision to enter this event and to start and or to continue to compete. By way of entering, competitors acknowledge that participation in this event can be dangerous and accept that their participation is at their exclusive risk in every respect. In addition, by way of entering competitors shall hold harmless the organising authority, its officers, members, servants and agents and all other competitors in respect of all liability for injury to person and or damage to property howsoever arising from their participation or intended participation in this event. The organising authority, its officers, members, servants and agents accept no responsibility in respect of loss of life, personal injury or loss or damage to property which may be sustained by reason of a competitor’s participation or intended participation in this event or arising for whatever reason in connection with this event.’

- ◆ The following text must be included on the Entry Form:-

‘In accepting my entry, I agree to be bound by the racing rules and all other rules governing this event. I acknowledge that I am solely responsible for deciding to enter and to start and or to continue to compete. I further acknowledge and agree that participation in this event can be dangerous and shall accept that my participation is at my exclusive risk in every respect. By way of my entry being accepted, I hold harmless the organising authority, its officers, members, servants and agents and all other competitors in respect of all liability for injury to person and or damage to property howsoever arising from my participation or intended participation in this event. I fully understand that the organising authority, its officers, members, servants and agents accept no responsibility in respect of loss of life, personal injury or loss or damage to property which may be sustained by reason of my participation or intended participation in this event or arising for whatever reason in connection with this event’.