

Responsible Boat Ownership - Own it

Buying the right vessel



Australia's waterways are a boater's paradise. A boat offers a unique way to relax, connect with nature, and create unforgettable memories. But with so many options, making the right choice is key to ensure a safe and enjoyable time out on the water.

This guide helps you navigate the journey to finding the perfect vessel to suit your lifestyle and activities.

Determine your boating needs

What's your dream? A quiet paddle on a lake, an exhilarating sail, or a trip to a remote fishing spot?

- **Activities:** Think about how you'll use your vessel — fishing, watersports, or cruising.
- **Passengers:** How many people will you typically have on board?
- **Waters:** Where will you be boating—rivers, bays, or the open ocean?

New to boating? Consider starting with a smaller, more manageable vessel or craft. Always carry your boating or personal watercraft licence when operating a powerboat or personal watercraft.¹ Consider taking additional courses to build your knowledge, or refresh your skills and confidence for a safe and enjoyable experience out on the water.

Set a realistic budget

Purchasing a vessel is a big commitment. The purchase price is just the beginning - there are other associated costs and factors you may need to consider such as:

- Ongoing maintenance and servicing
- Insurance and registration
- Mooring or storage fees
- Fuel, accessories and upgrades.

¹ The Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction in Australia not requiring a boat or pwc licence. Visit your state or territory agencies website for more information on licence requirements.



Research different types of vessels

There is a range of vessels to suit different types of activities on the water, including paddle, powerboats, and sailboats. When choosing a vessel, consider:

- **Size of vessel and hull design:** What's right for your intended use?
- **Propulsion:** Manual, wind, or engine power?
- **Amenities:** What features are important to you?
- **Storage:** Will you be keeping it on a trailer, a mooring, or at a marina?

Tip: If you're considering a trailer boat, check your vehicle's towing capacity to ensure you can safely transport your vessel.

Inspect the vessel

Before you buy a vessel, it's important to thoroughly conduct an inspection, checking all sides including inside and out while looking for signs of damage, corrosion or wear.

- **Australian Builders Plate (ABP):** For powerboats, look for the ABP, which should be clearly displayed where it can be seen by the driver – for example, in the cockpit or near the steering position.
This plate provides crucial information about the boat's maximum engine power, load capacity and flotation performance.
- **Ask if the vessel has been modified** and if it has been modified, ask for details of the modification.
- **Conduct an on-water test:** It is recommended to always test the boat on the water to assess its performance and handling.
- **Trailer Inspection:** If it's a trailer boat, make sure you also inspect the condition of the trailer.

Seek advice

Don't go it alone. Sometimes, the vessel with a great price that looks 'too good to be true' may have hidden flaws or issues. Get expert insights to help you make an informed decision before you purchase.

- **Marine Surveyor:** For larger vessels, especially those kept in the water on a mooring or berth, a trusted marine surveyor is highly recommended. Their expertise can uncover hidden issues, giving

you peace of mind and potentially saving you from costly repairs down the line.

- **Boating Industry Association (BIA) Members:** Look for the BIA logo when dealing with businesses. It's a sign that you are working with a reputable BIA member who abides by an industry Code of Practice. BIA has also put in place a Broker Accreditation system to further promote its members as a trusted source when it comes to buying and selling boats.
- **Vessel Identification (HIN):** A HIN (Hull Identification Number) is a unique number that identifies the vessel. This can be used to check ownership details, helping you avoid purchasing a stolen or encumbered vessel.

Consider maintenance requirements

Owning a vessel means commitment to its care and ongoing maintenance. Be realistic about the time and cost involved in keeping your vessel in good condition so it is fit for purpose.

- Regularly complete servicing and repairs as needed.
- Conduct routine cleaning and care of the vessel.
- If you have a mooring, ensure annual maintenance of moorings and berthing lines.

A note on "unsafe" vessels

Before you buy, it's crucial to ensure the vessel is safe and fit for its intended purpose. An "unsafe" vessel may be described as one that is:

- Not capable of undertaking a voyage for which it was designed
- Unable to complete a voyage under its own intended propulsion without risk of capsizing, sinking or becoming uncontrollable
- Not compliant with regulated registration or safety equipment requirements
- Polluting the waterways with fuel, oil, rubbish, or human waste.

Boating is a great experience, and buying a vessel should be too. By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to a lifetime of adventure on the water.

For more information and resources, visit www.anzsbeg.com.au/responsible-boatowner-campaign

