

What's stopping you from keeping you and your mates safe? Survey Conclusion for FRDC Project 2017-047

Looking to Improve safety in the Commercial fishing industry

Dr Kate Brooks

Knowing the fishing industry is a high-risk environment where it can all go wrong in a blink of eye is one thing; but just accepting high levels of risk as part of the job (and the thrill) compared to minimising those risks and taking care of everyone, while still keeping the independence and thrill of fishing, is another; and the challenge!

Thanks to the FRDC¹, Dr Kate Brooks and a small team of researchers and industry people are working to identify exactly what factors are at influencing safety in the industry.

The research is based on a benchmark survey to assess the safety culture in the fishing industry. Exploring experience, beliefs and attitudes toward safety in management, with co-workers, and fisher's levels of training, the online survey was open for two and a half months (mid-April to June 30th). It was fully completed by 215 people across the industry, across Australia. The majority of these (74%) were in NSW and WA, which are the States where case studies for the project are being undertaken.

An incentive to complete the survey, provided by FRDC, were 8 Lifejackets/PFD's awarded to participants, randomly selected from all those who completed the survey.

These were:

- Brenton Osborne - Cowell, SA
- Michael Jensen – Carnarvon, WA
- Paul Jordan – King Island, TAS
- Lyall Mills – North Geelong, VIC
- Michael McDonald – Peregian Beach, QLD
- Michael O'Brien - Darwin, NT
- Jason Vidler - Woodburn, NSW
- Sean Glass - Lindisfarne, TAS (fishes in NSW)

Analysis of the survey results will be undertaken over the next month and from this data, ideas about potential changes in approaches to safety management and extension will be identified. In October, both the survey findings and ideas will be talked through with fishers from the case study areas. Our objective is to gauge relevance of overall findings to their particular circumstances; understand their reactions and responses, and most importantly to receive their ideas and input into any pilot that is developed for the next stage of the project, in 2019.



Figure 1: Michael O'Brien sporting his new PFD!

Dr Brooks said 'In the past, attempts to improve WHS have focussed on training — more, better, sooner and immediately after an incident; or on an increase/improvement of regulations. Instead, we're working with fishers to understand what their limits are, and what "flicks the switch" to not only keep them safer, but for all to be safer in the industry.'

To receive updates on the progress of the project, email Kate Brooks at kate@kalanalysis.com.au

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