

27 September 2018

Investing in fishing safety

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) has just invested \$350000 to help improve workplace health and safety in the commercial fishing industry across the country.

This is part of the FRDC's new National Research Development and Extension Marine Safety and Welfare Initiative. Working with industry partners such as Austral Fisheries and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, the Initiative aims to achieve the ambitious goals of zero deaths, an 80 per cent reduction in injuries and 100 per cent compliance with safety regulations.

Workplace fatalities in fishing and aquaculture have averaged five a year for the past five years, making the sector the most dangerous in Australia – 25 times more dangerous than mining or construction (based on fatalities per thousand workers).

The project, led by Tanya Adams of Taylored Health and Safety Pty Ltd, will provide the industry with a tool kit to assist with the implementation of the existing safety regulations. This will be done by building capability, as well as providing training.

This research will also audit all existing health and safety current and past marine safety studies and ensure the results are linked in a cohesive set of actions the industry can take.

“The FRDC is highly committed to improving safety in the fishing industry. At a national level, we are seeking to halve the number of fatalities and accidents in the sector by 2023” says Dr Patrick Hone, FRDC's Executive Director.

Over the past year the FRDC's own internal policies have made wearing life jackets or personal flotation devices mandatory for all FRDC staff and all those working on FRDC projects while on board vessels.

The FRDC through investing in knowledge, innovation, and marketing aims to increase economic, social and environmental benefits for Australian fishing and aquaculture, and the wider community.

The FRDC is a co-funded partnership between its two stakeholders, the Australian Government and the fishing and aquaculture sectors.

Photo caption: FRDC's Managing Director Dr Patrick Hone (centre) and FRDC General managers John Wilson (right) and Crispian Ashby (left) showing the importance of wearing safety gear while on the water.

Photo credit: FRDC

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