

FAO: Club Water Safety Adviser

'Row Safe'

Please see below the response made by the ARA's Hon. Water Safety Adviser to a document circulated by Mr and Dr Blockley. You may already have spoken to your Regional Water Safety Adviser and so be aware of the ARA's comments regarding this matter. However we thought it would be helpful for all our Clubs to receive the information sent to RWSAs, as follows:

The document referred to above makes certain serious allegations and statements, mainly to the effect that *'Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing'* is only guidance and that the ARA "is obliged in law to set and enforce national standards of practice and equipment". In other words that *Row Safe* should be a set of rules which the ARA enforces.

Several bodies are quoted as saying that this is the case. One of these is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), who, in fact, make several telling statements to the opposite in their Review of rowing safety:

"From our observations and discussions with those involved with managing the risks within the sport, the changes to the underlying systems and approach that are already underway 'should' ensure that future manifestation of the code (i.e. Row Safe) is robust enough to meet the challenge."

"The proposed system within the 'Row Safe' scheme addresses the majority of the shortfalls with the current code, and should cement the ARA's transition from rule setting to a goal based risk management approach."

The other bodies mentioned in the document do not say that we must have enforceable rules; even the CCPR document on the role of Governing Bodies does not. What is required is clear guidance, education and training.

The RoSPA review particularly states that the networks of WSAs "...are technical advisers and need to assist with the parameters and deal with specific issues. They cannot and should not police the sport, which is by its very nature voluntary"

I am afraid that the document circulated contains errors, confusions and misleading statements.

As you are aware throughout the two years in developing *Row Safe*, there was wide consultation at all stages, not only with RWSAs, but with the membership, outside experts and with the ARA's safety consultant.

There should be no confusion as to the status of *Row Safe*. It is the official ARA safety document and under the Rules of the Association "*All affiliated and individually registered members of the Association are required to adopt the minimum standards advised in 'Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing'.*"

It is, as titled, a guidance document and the minimum standards are those advised for clubs and members to fulfil their duty of care, by providing a comprehensive reference and educational resource for a goal-based risk management approach.

Regards,

Stuart Ward
Chairman ARA National Water Safety Committee

If there are any points you or your clubs are not sure of or worried about please contact your Regional Water Safety Adviser.