

Lake Dunstan - there's a new Harbourmaster in town



The Harbourmaster's vessel, Kaitiaki, on the water at Lake Dunstan.



This summer, ORC's Harbourmaster team will be on the water at Lake Dunstan to keep an eye on recreational boating, after the maritime safety delegation was transferred back to ORC from the Central Otago District Council (CODC).

ORC was responsible for safety on the lake until 2006, when it was delegated to CODC. Last year, the process began to reverse the delegation, and as of 1 September, it sits with ORC once again.

ORC Harbourmaster Steve Rushbrook is looking forward to spending more time in Central this summer.

"We'll be getting out on the lake to patrol, talk to boaties and other people enjoying the lake, and make sure everyone's got a good understanding of the rules and they're enjoying themselves safely."

As part of the transfer of delegation, ORC's navigational safety bylaw has been updated and merged with the former CODC navigational bylaw to cover Lake Dunstan. That means some changes to the rules, but Steve said there would be no surprises for Lake Dunstan's regular water users.

"This will give more consistency across our region and with our neighbouring regional councils.

"Another benefit of the transfer will be a greater level of service for Lake Dunstan water users, as the ORC Harbourmasters will provide year-round harbourmaster expertise for the lake, and be available on-call 24/7."

Safer boating this summer

Steve and his deputy, Pete Dryden, have been putting an implementation plan into action ahead of the upcoming summer recreation season.

"We've spent a fair bit of time on the lake, getting familiar with the area and the locals. We've got an implementation plan that includes changes to signage, upgrading navigation safety buoys and marks, building awareness in the community of the rules, and kicking off monitoring and enforcement activities on the water," Steve said.

Steve and Pete will be participating in Maritime New Zealand's "No Excuses" campaign over the summer, to check that boaties are following life jacket rules and the safer boating code.

"The key messages of the safer boating code are to wear your lifejacket, take two waterproof ways to call for help, check the marine weather forecast, avoid alcohol and be a responsible skipper. We'll be getting out on random days during summer to monitor compliance with the rules, and to generally educate boaties about the safer boating code," Steve said.

The updated Otago Navigational Safety Bylaw can be viewed on our website, at www.orc.govt.nz/NavBylaws



Deputy Harbourmaster Pete Dryden putting new signage in place.