**Sea Turtle Foundation Ltd**
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# MEDIA RELEASE

## SUPERBOATS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR TURTLE AWARENESS

Would be thrill seekers can come and get a glimpse of some supercharged action at the 6th and final round of the Australian Offshore Superboat Championships at the Strand this Saturday and Sunday (21st and 22nd of June). According to race organisers, over 20 Superboats will rip around the inshore waters of Cleveland Bay at speeds in excess of 220 kilometres per hour.

Whilst the sheer horsepower behind these machines is impressive to many, conservationists ask that boaties from all walks of life spare a thought for our charismatic marine wildlife. "We are using this event to highlight the impacts that boats can have on animals such as turtles and dugongs" said Ms Gitte Kragh, project manager of Sea Turtle Foundation. "Animals like turtles can have difficulty determining the direction that a boat is coming from. Often they cannot get out of the way in time, especially if the boats are travelling at high speeds. Boat strike is a significant issue in Townsville because turtles and dugong feed in the shallow water with seagrass beds in Cleveland Bay."

Ms Kragh continues, "There is a great deal the boating public can do to help protect turtles for the future. It is as simple as slowing down on the water and keeping an active look out for grazing turtles and dugongs popping up to the surface for a breath of fresh air. Prop guards can be put on boats and protect the prop as well as the turtles. People can also ensure that their bait bags, plastic bags and old fishing gear are stowed away safely and later disposed off in rubbish bins. And finally, if people do find injured or dead turtles, please report it to the Marine Stranding Hotline on 1300 137 372."

"Industry can help too", says Ms Kragh, "we commend the Australian Offshore Superboat Championship organisers for changing the race dates from last year to outside peak turtle nesting season this year. It is great when industry gets onside voluntarily and takes measures to help marine wildlife. We hope to continue working with the boating public and industry to create positive change for turtles and other marine wildlife species by taking action to reduce unnecessary mortality."

For further information about how you can help protect sea turtles, please visit the Sea Turtle Foundation website at www.seaturtlefoundation.org or contact the Sea Turtle Foundation on 4721 2699.

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Sea Turtle Foundation produced a 30 second Community Service Announcement about turtles and boat strike available from STF on request.