Safety checklist for kayaks and canoes

Inspect for damage

- O Regularly inspect for cracks or damage, including the hull, rudder, spray skirt and steering
- O Rinse after every use to prevent damage
- O For inflatables, inspect for leaks and ensure proper inflation

Rescue and essential gear

- O Keep a 15m tow rope on board and practice rescue skills regularly
- O Equip your vessel with hand toggles, a pump, deck lines, a snug spray skirt, manual bilge pumps, and sponges

Lifejacket

- O Wear a properly fitted lifejacket at all times; a Level 50/50s is recommended
- O Regularly inspect your lifejacket for any signs of wear or damage

Steering and controls

- O If your vessel has a rudder or skeg, ensure they are functioning smoothly

Torch and navigational lights

- O Carry a waterproof torch and ensure your navigational lights are operational, especially in low visibility conditions like fog or night

Whistle

- O Carry a whistle to assist in attracting attention if needed

Communication device

- O Carry your mobile phone in a waterproof pouch
- O Consider having a handheld VHF marine radio for added safety in case of emergencies

Storage

- O Store it in a dry, cool area away from direct sunlight.