



Best Small Craft Boarding Solution 2017 - Australia

Dicks Dinghy Ladders is a specialist marine provider dedicated to offering a practical solution to the inflatable dinghy boarding problem. We invited Founder Richard to tell us more about the firm and the innovative products it offers.

 Dicks Dinghy Ladders draws on Richard's passion for boats and knowledge of seafaring vessels. He discusses how he created the firm and how he came to create his unique product.

"Personally, boats have always been a part of my life. My father was a passionate sailor and sailed from England to Australia on a 10-meter yacht in the 1940s. I inherited my love of the sea and interest in boats from him. My passion is sailing. Racing: - 3 Peaks, 2 handed and shorthanded. Cruising: - extensive live aboard cruising both in Australia & Asia. I've turned my connection to the water into a career working as a professional skipper in Asia and Australia, and in the marine maintenance industry. These days I run a company that designs and develops products to improve the boating experience."

"Sixteen months ago we launched our first product - Dick's Dinghy Ladders. The product solves a problem familiar to many: how to safely and comfortably get in and out of an inflatable dinghy. Without a reliable ladder, it's difficult, tiring and dangerous. There's the risk of injury from dragging others or being dragged in over the side, or from climbing up the outboard motor. Being dragged up the side of a dinghy can be quite a painful experience especially for women. We wanted to take out



the struggle and worry and put the ease and fun back into days on the water."

"While there are other ladders available, they tend to be unreliable and difficult to use such as rope ladders, or heavy, cumbersome metal ladders that require on-board assembly. We wanted to create something strong enough for constant use in tough marine conditions, light enough to be portable, and simple enough to set up and use with ease. Getting to this point took five prototypes developed and tested over the course of a year. We particularly focused on finessing ways of attaching the ladder, simplifying manufacture, and finding materials that would endure wear and tear."

As such, Richard is understandably very proud of

the final product. The ladder uses Roto moulded plastic and 316 marine grade stainless steel, ensuring a long life under the most rugged conditions. Weighing only 4 kilograms, it is easy to move around and retracts for easy storage. It can be moved from dinghy to dinghy and will not damage the dinghy or the pontoon. There is no need for installation either: the ladder simply clips on and off the dinghy and it works on both soft bottom and rigid inflatable boats. Most importantly, it is safe and comfortable to use. The offset handle provides for a comfortable secure grip whilst boarding the dinghy and the moulded curves protect the dinghy and users. Moving forward, Richard is keen to continue developing this creative product and supporting his valued clients.

"Ultimately, our philosophy is to offer a personal service and whatever is required to keep our customers happy. Being a small business that developed its own product gives us the flexibility to adapt to any changes in the industry. Going forward, I will continue to develop products where necessary and have a few other products in the pipeline for dinghy uses and kayakers and am excited for the opportunities this will bring for both myself and my business."

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