



Accident Report
Collision
Te Kuia & Unnamed Vessel
30 July 2005
Class C





Te Kua



Small Vessel

NARRATIVE

On Saturday 30 July 2005, at 0900 hours New Zealand Standard Time (NZST), **Te Kuia** left Tauranga Harbour with a Skipper, one Deckhand and 7 passengers on board. After steaming clear of the Harbour entrance, the vessel headed in a northerly direction making a speed of about 8 knots.

The Skipper was stationed at the helm in the forepart of the wheelhouse. He was steering the vessel, keeping a visual lookout and observing the chart plotter and echo sounder.

The Deckhand was stationed on the starboard side, on the deck outside the wheelhouse, to keep a lookout. Passengers were in the accommodation and on the after deck.

At about 1000 hours, a small vessel, making a speed of about 20 knots, crossed **Te Kuia's** bow from port to starboard.

As **Te Kuia** approached an area known as Five Mile Reef, about 5 miles from Tauranga Harbour entrance, the Skipper reduced speed to about 7.5 knots. He was searching for a fishing spot. With the sun on **Te Kuia's** starboard bow, he had been wearing sunglasses but took them off to look at the echo sounder. Seeing two other vessels at anchor on Five Mile Reef, about 300 metres apart, he headed between them.

At about 1015 hours, the Skipper of **Te Kuia** heard raised voices. Looking in the direction the sound, he saw a small boat very close to the starboard side of his vessel. **Te Kuia** had made contact with the boat, which had two persons on board and was at anchor, with its anchor rope leading under his vessel. The other boat's bow roller lead was damaged as a result of the contact. The Deckhand, who was stationed on the starboard side to keep a lookout, had failed to warn him of the other vessel.

Seeing that **Te Kuia** was passing over the other vessel's anchor rope, the Skipper took the engine out of gear and maintained course.

Once clear of the anchored boat, **Te Kuia** turned and approached from its starboard quarter to check on the occupants. The people in the boat were shocked but uninjured and, after an exchange of views, **Te Kuia** moved away, keeping the other vessel under observation. The other vessel remained at anchor for the next 20 to 30 minutes. Then it moved to another position, where it remained for about an hour before heading towards Karewa Island.

The particulars of **Te Kuia** were:

Construction:	Wood
Overall Length:	15.16 m
Gross Tonnage:	43.63
Built:	1978
Engine Power:	126 kW
Propulsion:	Single Screw

Te Kuia was owned and operated by Blue Ocean Charters.

Te Kuia had a Safe Ship Management Certificate issued by SGS-M&I on 18 December 2002, which was valid until 31 December 2006. The Certificate permitted the vessel to operate within Bay of Plenty, Barrier, Auckland and Northland Inshore Limits while carrying 97 passengers in Enclosed Limits or 63 passengers in Inshore Limits.

The Skipper of **Te Kuia** held an Inshore Launchmaster's Certificate issued on 16 February 2004. He stated that he had been involved in the design, construction and operation of boats since 1991 and had worked for Blue Ocean Charters as Skipper of **Te Kuia** and **Ratahi** since 7 April 2004. There is no record of him having previously been involved in this kind of incident.

The weather on 30 July was south south west winds of – 5 knots, partly cloudy, fine and clear.

LESSONS LEARNT

Te Kuia's Skipper said he had been keeping a lookout but the sun's glare prevented them from seeing the vessel ahead. He had also instructed the Deckhand to keep a lookout but the Deckhand did not draw his attention to the other vessel.

Blue Ocean Charter's vessels head out into the Bay of Plenty from Tauranga Harbour on most mornings and conditions similar to those prevailing on Saturday 30 July are often encountered.

The Owner and Skipper of **Te Kuia** agreed that in future, in bright weather, while heading towards the sun, they would take the following precautions:

- Be particularly alert for vessels ahead.
- Use sunglasses, removing them only briefly to check instrumentation.
- Use the radar to assist with the lookout.
- Where necessary, vary the course from one side to the other of the intended route to avoid heading directly towards the sun.

In commenting on the draft report, the Skipper of **Te Kuia** advised that the deckhands are aware that they should keep a lookout for other vessels in the area, however on the day of the accident, no one aboard the vessel saw the dinghy.

The Skipper further noted that the radar aboard **Te Kuia** is now on at all times during operation and is set to a close working range as agreed by the Skipper and Owner.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that Maritime New Zealand censure the Skipper for not having taken all practicable measures to ensure that a proper lookout was maintained.