

Innovation

Science & Technology

## Unique Tassie dinghy making waves

The first Tasmanian-built and designed Guppy dinghy was purely an experiment, according to designer Kevin Argent.

It tested a theory long-held by Kevin, a man with 40 years' experience as a shipwright – that a boat with a concave bottom and almost tunnel hull would deliver exceptional stability and control. His theory proved to be spot on when the first prototype was tested.

“With 190kg on board and a 15hp outboard screwed to the transom, the little dinghy went straight up on the plane and proceeded to twist and turn easily and safely, and was just as easy to row,” Kevin said.

“The next year, someone asked us to build a tender with the same concave bottom that could be sailed by his grandchildren.”

The result was the Guppy, a pram dinghy that comes in two lengths (2.6 or 2 metres), has a 1.35-metre beam and is designed to accept a sailboard rig.

Argent Concave Boats Pty Ltd was formed in 2001 to commercialise the boat designs. It is a family affair, with Hobart-based Kevin and his Penguin-based son Andrew as principals, supported by Kevin's wife Marlene and other sons Brett and Craig.

The Guppy was shown at the 2001 Hobart Wooden Boat Show and generated interest amongst general punters and boat lovers.

“After doing some research, we recognised that there was a demand for a safe and versatile dinghy and we decide to make the hulls from fibreglass,” Kevin said.

Confidence in the market was not a concern.

“When we started, about 5.2 million Australians took part in recreational boating and owned more than 1.2 million recreational boats, including almost 200,000 rowboats, dinghies and canoes,” Kevin said.

“So we know there are plenty of boat lovers to target, we just had to make sure that we had the right product and now work out the smartest way to let our potential customers know about our product.”

BELIEVE IN YOUR IDEAS



### Innovation, Science & Technology

Department of Economic Development  
GPO Box 846, Hobart Tasmania,  
AUSTRALIA 7001

Phone: +61 3 6233 5888  
Email: [info@development.tas.gov.au](mailto:info@development.tas.gov.au)

[www.development.tas.gov.au](http://www.development.tas.gov.au)

Department of Economic Development



# Innovation

## Science & Technology

The company took part in the Department of Economic Development's Commercialisation Ready Program, which helps Tasmanians commercialise products and services that have the potential to generate employment, investment and exports.

"The department is providing ongoing advice and feedback and is a good sounding board for our ideas as we progress," Kevin said.

"The courses and programs gave us access to advice from professional people in the fields of marketing, accounting, patenting, business strategising and management.

"And along with events like the Tasmanian Manufacturing Conference, the training helps you meet people who are, or were, also starting a new business based on new innovations."

The company is about to step up its marketing, both in Tasmania and interstate, and its production, with the boats to be manufactured by North-West Coast company Penguin Fibreglass.

Most of the company's sales to date have been in Tasmania, but there is strong interest from interstate, particularly Victoria.

Kevin said that it was vital that customers were made aware of the Guppy's advantages over its competitors.

"Small boats have been around for centuries so there are lots on the market – inflatables, aluminium, fibreglass, wooden and plastic boats – that all have strengths and weaknesses in their designs.

"The biggest hurdle with boat design is finding a hull shape that sails and motors well, without compromise; most boats will perform better as a sailing or motoring boat. We've solved this problem with the unique hull design of our boats.

"The Guppy is versatile, safe, stable and user friendly – easy to handle, sail, set up, pack up and maintain. It's also easy to transport, being the right size and weight to carry on top of a car. It outperforms the competition in every way.

"The Guppy hull shape could be used in any size boat and for any use. We have plans and models for other boats but at the moment our focus is on making the Guppy a success."

### Argent Concave Boats Pty Ltd

Ph: 0417 536 182

Email: [info@concaveboats.com](mailto:info@concaveboats.com)

Visit: [www.concaveboats.com](http://www.concaveboats.com)

### Innovation, Science & Technology

Department of Economic Development  
GPO Box 646, Hobart Tasmania,  
AUSTRALIA 7001

Phone: +61 3 6233 5888  
Email: [info@development.tas.gov.au](mailto:info@development.tas.gov.au)

[www.development.tas.gov.au](http://www.development.tas.gov.au)

Department of **Economic Development**



BELIEVE IN YOUR IDEAS