



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



Opal and your outboard

With the Top End fishing season in full swing, the fishing community will have noticed the addition of new and improved Opal fuel to service stations across Kakadu.

Opal fuel is a direct substitute for regular unleaded with an octane rating of 91 which fully conforms to the National Fuels Quality Standards Act 2000.

Independent laboratory and field testing have found that Opal fuel is safe for use in boats and cars where the manufacturer recommends regular unleaded 91.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Health and Ageing, is supporting the rollout of Opal fuel to the Kakadu National Park.

The cost of Opal fuel will be subsidised by the Government, meaning that it will not cost the consumer any more to fill up with Opal fuel than regular unleaded petrol.

Opal fuel was developed by BP Australia to help reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing in communities at risk. Petrol sniffing is a highly dangerous form of substance abuse and destroys lives and communities.

In March Opal fuel sponsored the invitational Barramundi competition Kakadu Klash '11, which was hosted at Aurora Kakadu. Most of the 105 competitors ran the new and improved Opal fuel through their outboards without any issues.

Alex Julius, Managing Director of the Arnhemland Barramundi Nature Lodge in Maningrida and respected Territory fisherman, was involved in the field testing of BP's new and improved Opal fuel in mid-2010.

Opal fuel was tested in an Evinrude 115HP E-TEC, a high performance two stroke outboard engine.

Alex has been using Opal fuel in his outboard engines for many years, and says that the new Opal fuel has the same storage properties of unleaded 91, with engine performance to match.

“Since the new and improved fuel has arrived in Maningrida I have been saving a bundle on fuel additives and the outboards have simply been purring,” he said.

Alex's endorsement of Opal fuel is backed by Chris Makepeace, Executive Officer of the Amateur Fishing Association of the Northern Territory.

“I have to admit that at first I was sceptical of Opal fuel,” Chis said. “However after seeing the warranty assurance statements from outboard manufacturers on the website, I am quite happy to run the new and improved Opal fuel in my boat.”

The Opal fuel field testing in Maningrida evaluated the engine's performance and smoke



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Throughout the testing the engine did not experience hard-starting or rough running when using new and improved Opal fuel.

The engine stability at the 2200rpm-2500rpm mode of operation appeared to improve whilst using new and improved Opal fuel.

Laboratory testing of Opal fuel was conducted on a new Yamaha 80 horsepower, four stroke outboard at Orbital's Perth laboratory to determine whether running Opal fuel had any detrimental effect on the engine.

The testing specifically looked for any noticeable fouling of the fuel injectors or spark plugs.

Prior to testing, the Yamaha engine was run in as per the user manual which involved eight hours of continuous running.

The test cycle then involved two hours of high load, high speed running followed by three hours of light load, low speed. This cycle was developed to replicate circumstances likely to create valve deposits and injector fouling.

After running new and improved Opal fuel for five hours per day over three consecutive days, there was no significant change seen in the condition of the inlet ports, valves, fuel injectors or spark plugs nor a significant reduction in flow rate which would indicate fouling.

The new and improved Opal fuel contains an advanced fuel formulation that is designed to clean and protect vital parts of the engine.

Vehicle testing has shown that the new and improved Opal fuel has the ability to keep a new engine in a clean condition, but also has the ability to remove existing engine deposits that ordinary fuels can leave behind.

Opal fuel has been available in some parts of the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia since 2005.

In towns where Opal fuel has replaced regular unleaded, research has found a reduction in petrol sniffing of up to 94%.

In Hermannsburg, NT, break-ins, vandalism, car thefts and sniffing related injuries fell significantly.

For more information on how Opal fuel is safer for the community and to see testimonials from outboard manufacturers visit www.health.gov.au/stoppetrolsniffing.

For Opal fuel technical information call the BP Fuel and Lubricants Technical Helpline on 1300 139 700.