The Leader Group meeting which took place last night discussed a number of recent incidents which it was felt should be brought to members attention to observe for future paddles.
1. A number of incidents have occurred in recent weeks at the SW corner of Dalkey Island near the blockhouse on the island. There is a reef there running out from the area of the blockhouse (not the Martello Tower - further East) which at LW is visible just as the tide begins to flood. When conditions are right - soon after LW Springs as the tide begins to hammer Eastwards along the South of the Island and when the wind comes from the Eastern quadrant creating wind over tide conditions, the area in close to this reef presents serious challenges to the best paddlers. A spill here results in very difficult rescue conditions putting the swimmer, the boat and those trying to carry out the rescue in danger. In conditions such as outlined above it is recommended that leaders and peer groups ensure that this area is avoided by paddlers surfing in the overfalls by stationing a lookout kayaker in the safe area near the blockhouse so the paddlers can be monitored and warned if going too close to the reef corner.

2. The second area noted as presenting a danger to paddlers occurs at Wicklow Head. There is a gap in the rocks right at the start of the overfalls at Wicklow head - just at the reef where people can walk down from the lighthouse. During the ebb flow as you approach the overfalls there is an eddy where paddlers often regroup to observe and make last minute decisions on where to shoot the overfalls. The danger presents to any paddler who cuts too close to the gap in the rocks which at certain times of the ebb tide looks like a hole in the rocky reef as they try to paddle into the flow. If you go too close you will be sucked into this gap with the potential of being capsized upstream as your boat is jammed across the gap. The force of the water will hold you very firmly there and force you underwater. In a recent incident the unfortunate paddler spent a considerable time trapped by the force of the water until by sheer luck he managed to shake himself free and was blown through the gap - but not before his paddle and booties were pulled from his hands and feet and he had consumed sufficient seawater to last a considerable time. Paddle out upstream away from the reef and gap before you turn to shoot the overfalls well clear of the the reef and gap. Rescue from the water is difficult - so avoid the hazard.