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SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 18, Autumn 2014

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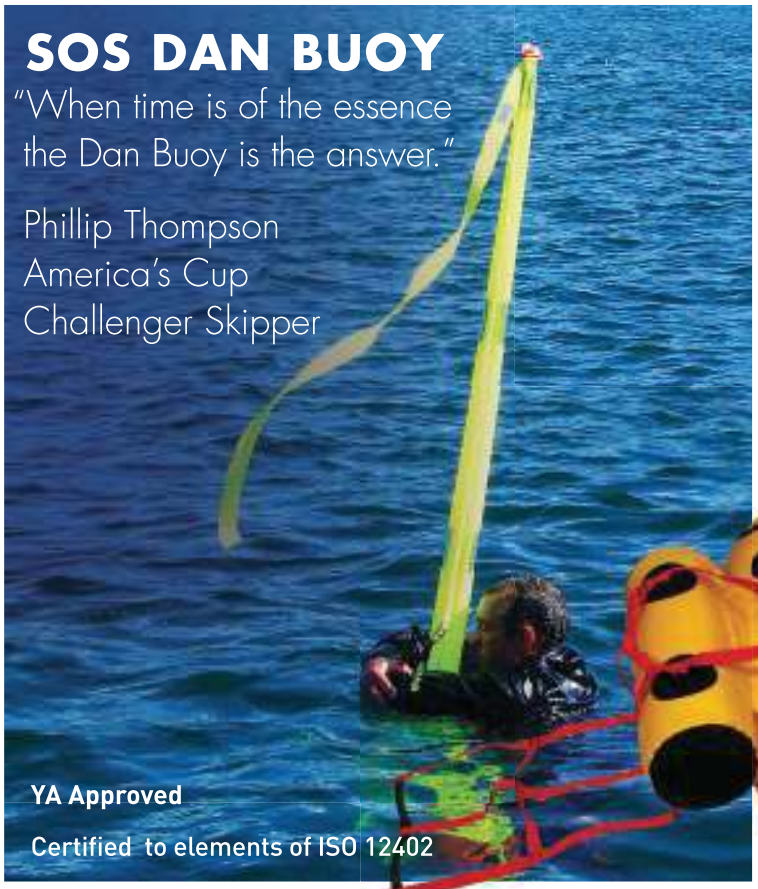

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SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

Cover Image

Westpac Helicopter and Marine Rescue Forster-Tuncurry crews wow crowds at the unit's Water Expo with a demonstration of the precision required in emergency operations. *Photo: MR Forster-Tuncurry member, Ray Mazurek.*

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Volunteers saving lives on the water

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From the Commissioner

Our members demonstrate the power of volunteering.

Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

This year marks the 25th anniversary of National Volunteers Week, a time to celebrate the immense contribution six million volunteers around Australia make to our community.

Volunteering Australia has announced that the theme for this silver anniversary week, from May 12 to 18, will be Celebrate the Power of Volunteering.

Looking back over the busy boating season now behind us, the power of volunteering was clear to see. As holiday makers flocked to the water, our members gave their time to stand watch, protecting our community.

Congratulations to all for your hard work, especially your timely and efficient response to a range of incidents and life-threatening emergencies.

A major coordinated rescue operation was mounted just days before Christmas to locate two fishermen who survived in the ocean overnight by clinging to an esky after their boat capsized on the North Coast. MR Ballina received the men's MAYDAY call, with the new *Ballina 30* and crews from MR Evans Head, Iluka-Yamba and Wooli responding with a range of our emergency services colleagues.

Two young fishermen's boat came to grief at Moon Island, off Lake Macquarie at Swansea, sparking an international response. See their story on Page 10.

In this edition of *Soundings* we also report on boats that struck reefs, ran ashore on rocky outcrops, needed a long tow home when they ran out of fuel and those who could not make it over a tricky bar.

The thing all these incidents have in common is that Marine Rescue NSW crews were on the scene to help people who found themselves in strife in an environment that is never without risk: powerful volunteering in action.

Unfortunately, a number of people also drowned on NSW waters this summer.

Tragedies such as these are traumatic for all concerned, including the emergency services, and I extend my particular thanks to those of our members who were involved in troubling operations. Should you feel the need to speak to someone about your experience, please do not hesitate to make contact with the support services we have available.

As well as responding to incidents on the water, our units also seized the opportunity to promote boating safety to their large summer "audience". The Forster-Tuncurry unit's Water Expo, pictured on our cover, drew a large crowd.

Day by day our members were a high-visibility presence on the water, reminding boaters of the need to wear lifejackets, Log On and Off with their nearest unit and generally take responsibility for their safety.

We can only take this message directly to our constituency if we ourselves have safe, reliable and task-appropriate vessels. In recent weeks, we have commissioned four new boats, worth a total of $1.4 million, for the Lake Macquarie, Sussex Inlet, Ballina and Hawkesbury units.

New boats also have been delivered to our Moama unit on the Murray River and Camden Haven on the Mid North Coast. More units are due to receive new boats soon, including Forster-Tuncurry, Crowdy Harrington, Nambucca, Narooma, Shellharbour and Cottage Point.

This ongoing, appreciable improvement in our most fundamental equipment is driven by our commitment to our members' safety. It is a pleasure to attend the commissioning ceremonies to join our members in welcoming the vessels and acknowledging this investment in our people.

The community also has continued to demonstrate the value it places on our volunteers and their services, generously supporting our unit raffles and other fundraisers and contributing more than $100,000 to our organisation over the past year via the cash registers at their local BCF stores (see story, page 3). Thank you to BCF for its support through this partnership and its customers for their donations.

We also are looking forward to continuing to build our profile through an exciting opportunity to work with popular fishing and boating personality, Michael Guest.

Michael is the host of *Reel Action*, a TV show dedicated to the art and thrills of fishing, to screen on the Ten Network's One HD channel. Watch out for our 'infomercials' during the series.

The Boating Industry Association's Rosehill Trailer Boat Show has been a popular fixture on the calendar for Sydney boating enthusiasts. This year, the show has moved to Sydney Olympic Park and we look forward to meeting many existing and prospective boaters at our stand at the newly-named Sydney Trailerboat and Outdoor Leisure Show.

Volunteers from across Sydney will be on hand to provide safety advice and information about our services. As always, we'll have a great raffle to raise funds for our ongoing program to roll out automatic defibrillators across our fleet. Our trained volunteers have used these devices to save lives. Now that's powerful.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner

MRNSW crews were on the scene to help people in strife in an environment that is never without risk.

BCF partnership reaps $100,00 for units

Generous customers value our volunteers' essential service.

More than $100,000 has been donated to Marine Rescue NSW over the past year thanks to our partnership with leading boating goods retailer BCF and its generous customers.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos has thanked BCF and its customers for their support.

Under the partnership established in December 2012, people shopping at the company's 31 NSW stores can donate to MRNSW simply by rounding up the price of their purchases.

The additional amount is then directed to MRNSW, providing much-needed funding to support our local units' work.

"Over the past year, BCF customers have generously donated a total of $101,560, showing the value they place on our volunteers and the essential service they provide to assist and protect the boating community," Commissioner Tannos said.

"This funding has been shared among our units and is a welcome helping hand with meeting the cost of their day-to-day operations."

MRNSW units also have benefited directly from their participation in the chain's regular Club BCF events, which feature guest speakers, a BBQ and the chance to check out new gear on the market.

Commissioner Tannos said the Club BCF events were a great chance for volunteers to speak directly to boaters in an informal atmosphere about safety on the water and the services our units provide.

MR Terrey Hills Unit Commander Andrew Topp said 12 of the unit's members had last month taken part in BCF Belrose's first Club BCF event.

Happy to round up for a great cause ... Margaret and Rick Learmonth at the Club BCF event at Belrose with team member Tony Simons.

"We cooked a BBQ, gave a presentation and our members were out talking to people," he said. "The reception was very, very positive. We sold eight books of raffle tickets and gave out 90 bags of information, so we got a good message out to the general public about Marine Rescue."

Margaret and Rick Learmonth, of Belrose, were happy to make a donation to MRNSW while they were buying fishing gear for their holiday home on Burrill Lake, where they know and support Marine Rescue Ulladulla.

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From the Chairman

The high cost of drownings reflects the value of our work to save lives.

Chair
James Glissan QC

It is not a comfortable equation to try to put an economic cost on an accidental death. It is instinctive that we respond more compassionately, weighing up the human cost: cherished family members and friends lost, workplaces, social groups and sports teams disrupted and lives impacted.

But while it may seem flinty, calculated, hard-hearted even, the cost - for the emergency services and medical system and in lost productivity, among many factors - is a quantum worth considering.

In its NSW Drowning Report 2011, the Royal Life Saving Society Australia pointed to a number of studies examining the lifetime cost of a drowning death. These showed a death due to drowning came at a cost to the community ranging from $370,000 to $610,000. For the sake of simplicity, let's consider the average of $490,000.

Transport for NSW reports that in the 10 years from 2003 to 2012, a total of 103 people on NSW waters died by drowning in boating accidents. More than 90 per cent of these victims were not wearing lifejackets.

Using the average figure, that's a shocking cost to NSW of $50.47 million over a decade.

The more optimistic – although still somehow counter-intuitive - calculation is the value of those lives saved.

Our operational statistics for 2013 show that throughout the year Marine Rescue NSW volunteers responded to assist 3302 vessels, including 979 caught in life-threatening emergencies. Even if there were only one person on board each of these boats - and we know from experience that there would have been more - that would be 979 lives saved. Lives that, if lost, would have carried a community cost of $479.7 million: almost half a billion dollars.

Of course, there are additional, unquantifiable savings from the 2323 other assists, which prevented routine incidents escalating to life-endangering emergencies requiring the investment of many more rescue resources and potentially a vessel's destruction rather than a minor fault.

A cost:benefit analysis is thus an enlightening exercise. In 2012/13, MRNSW received a total of $7.4 million from the State Government and the boating community via a levy on boat registrations and licences. Our fundraising target is another $6.6 million on top of this, aiming for a total budget of $14 million to operate our units, continue upgrading our fleet with new and refurbished vessels, provide training, uniforms, vehicles and yes, pay our staff. That would be a $14 million investment to produce savings of at least $479.7 million: undeniable value for money.

The Board and Commissioner will always continue to search for new funding sources to ease the fundraising load on our members, extend our services and upgrade the resources and support we provide our units and, in turn, the boating community. We are currently exploring a number of possibilities and while we are hopeful of success, we are also realistic in acknowledging that there are many other organisations and needy individuals competing for support in the straitened financial environment.

But this financial analysis is not how the Board, the staff or indeed our members, value and assess our organisation. To us, our value is in the service we provide our community, the human value of the lives we save, the camaraderie on the boats, in the radio rooms and over the BBQ, in the thanks of those we assist on both water and land.

But occasionally, looking at the world through an economist's eyes can be instructive, can it not?

Good sailing
Jim Glissan

Film showcases rescue fleet in action

The 2013 Northern Rivers Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) at Yamba provided MRNSW with the chance to capture quality footage of its range of rescue vessels, including some of the newest designs in the fleet.

With the support of our partners at Yamba Welding and Engineering and Suzuki Marine, commercial cinematography company Coastalmedia and a helicopter were contracted to film the search action.

The footage has been packaged into a short video that units can use for presentations, recruitment and induction activities.

A DVD of the footage will be sent to all units in the near future for these activities and to upload onto USBs if desired.

You can find the video, Marine Rescue NSW: Join the Crew, on You Tube at http://youtu.be/QZmtqfJxycU

Reeling them in: Guesty talks safety on water

Marine Rescue on board with popular TV fishing personality.

Marine Rescue NSW will this year be taking its boating safety messages to a bigger audience than ever before through an exciting new opportunity to work with popular fishing and boating personality, Michael Guest.

Michael is the host and producer of Reel Action TV, a fun, adrenalin-filled and information-packed series screening from May on Network Ten's One HD channel.

With decades of experience, Michael also co-hosts Radio 2GB's Outdoor and Fishing Show and Australia's biggest fishing competition, the Pirtek Fishing Challenge, raising funds for prostate cancer.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said MRNSW would feature in a number of of 'infomercials' on the coming Reel Action series.

"These will feature Michael talking directly to his audience, the fishing and boating public, who are the very people we want to reach," he said.

"They also will include footage of members of our Lake Macquarie unit."

The infomercials will encourage boaters to Log On and Off with their nearest MRNSW unit, always wear a lifejacket when on board and use their marine radios.

Michael said Marine Rescue's work with the boating community was in keeping with his commitment to safety.

"I radio in to the guys at Marine Rescue when I'm heading out," he said.

"I'm experienced and I know what I'm doing out there but it's good to know they're watching out for you.

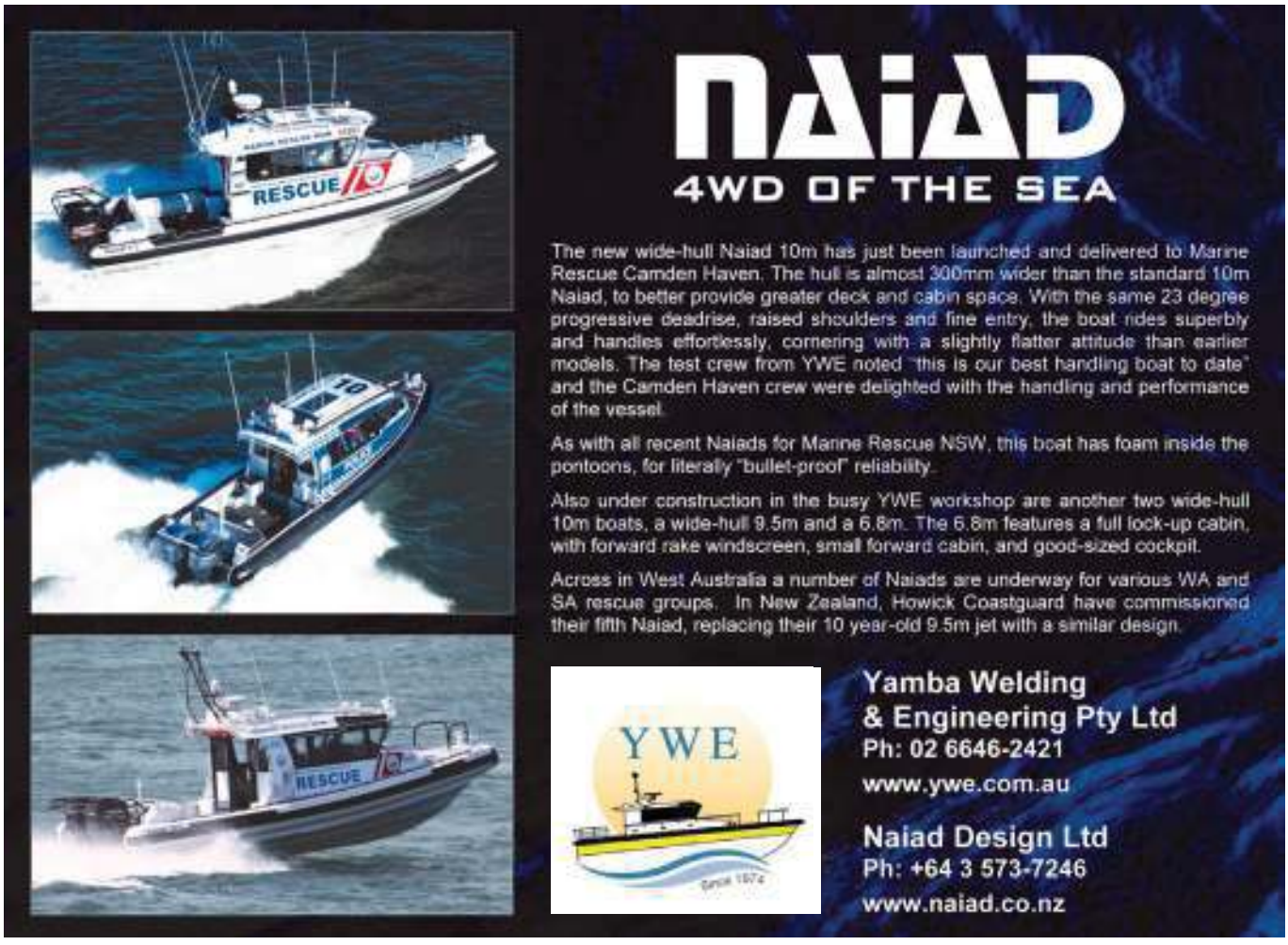
"I always encourage people to be safe on the water and that's just what Marine Rescue volunteers do as well.

"Reel Action TV will take your message straight to my – and your - audience.

"It's great to have Marine Rescue on board the show."

Reel Action TV will screen on One HD on Saturdays and be repeated the following morning.

Guesty reels in another one ... fishing personality Michael Guest, host of Reel Action TV, which will feature MRNSW safety messages.



Positive response to Seahawk tracking system

Units Log On 14,440 vessels in first three months of operation.

Marine Rescue NSW units switched to a new generation of safety monitoring when the Seahawk vessel tracking system went live on December 1.

Seahawk is designed to support the organisation's pivotal boating safety services and emergency response by making it easier for units to keep track of boats on or passing through their local waters.

In the first three months of operation, units have Logged On 14,440 boats, with 42,500 people on board, via the system.

IT and Business Director Florian Glajcar paid tribute to units' Radio Operators for their constructive approach to the web-based system.

"This has significantly changed the way they go about their duties but the vast majority has responded positively to the shift," he said.

MR Terrey Hills Operations Officer John Harris said the system offered stability and simplicity.

Unit Commander Terry Watson said MR Shoalhaven had at first concentrated on offshore tracking over the busy summer season so its radio operators could become familiar with the new system.

"As the holidays progressed, with confidence in the system we began Logging On and Off local boaters. It became obvious just how effective this application will be," he said.

"There are still some areas that need to be addressed but our unit is confident that as the system is used on a more regular basis these will be overcome."

Illawarra Director and MR Ulladulla member Doug Musker said judging by his unit's feedback, there was 100 per cent acceptance of Seahawk and he had found it easy and quick to use.

MR Botany Port Hacking UC Glenn Evans operates Seahawk.

Botany Port Hacking Unit Commander Glenn Evans said the system provided a more efficient reporting process to the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, with data being automatically populated into the MAC database, reducing work required by radio bases.

Mr Glajcar said a number of bugs in the system had been addressed by developers Alive Mobile.

He thanked the members who had given their time to train units in the system's operation: Don Kaiser, Austin Grice, Bill Johnston, John McEwan and Glenn Felkin.

Spotlight on leadership at national course

Professional development opportunity for two senior unit executives.

Two senior Marine Rescue NSW unit executives have attended a national course for leaders in volunteer emergency management organisations.

Merimbula Unit Commander Barry Harrison and Terrigal Deputy Unit Commander Cameron Sloey attended the December course, run by the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) and Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum (AEMVF).

Other participants in the four-day course at the Institute's campus at Mt Macedon, outside Melbourne, included members of Rural Fire Services, Surf Life Saving, Coast Guard and recovery groups such as Anglicare from around the country.

MRNSW State Training Manager Regina Dunlea said MRNSW had been fortunate to have two candidates accepted into the national course, which provided the knowledge and skills to enhance the practice of leadership in a volunteer organisation.

She said unit leaders needed strategic vision, creativity and strong people skills to ensure their unit worked cohesively and effectively to provide a quality marine rescue service to the boating community.

UC Harrison and DUC Sloey agreed the course had been a valuable professional development opportunity in their leadership roles.

UC Harrison said the course had focused heavily on leadership and management styles, with the most useful topics conflict resolution, self management and leading and advocating change.

"The group explored the key differences of leadership and management in a volunteer setting (and) the leadership styles in a number of different volunteer agencies," he said.

MR Merimbula UC Barry Harrison (left) and Terrigal DUC Cameron Sloey (right) with AEMI Education Manager Jason Males.

Other topics included volunteer recruitment and retention and building public awareness of an agency's roles.

"We are up against it when it comes to recruitment and retention as we don't have that visible presence like a fire truck does on the 6pm news. Moving to new modern vessels will help, however, we need our upcoming UCs and DUCs to be more proactive in recruitment and we also need to provide more recognition to our members for the time they contribute," UC Harrison said.

DUC Sloey said a course focusing on the leadership skills needed in a volunteer organisation would be beneficial for unit executives.

He said the course had confirmed his belief in setting realistic goals and working with unit members to achieve these.

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Plans for better boating on key waterways

Government calls for input from boaters, marine groups in 11 regions.

The State Government has called for input from recreational boaters and maritime groups, including Marine Rescue NSW, to help shape plans to improve 11 major waterways along the coast and the Murray-Riverina.

The Maritime Management Centre (MMC) within Transport for NSW, together with Roads and Maritime Services, is seeking feedback on boating facilities, infrastructure and safety measures.

MMC General Manager Howard Glenn said this work was about identifying the priority projects and actions over coming years in order to keep the state's waterways safe and accessible for everyone to enjoy.

"We need to hear from the people who use these waterways the most. This includes our everyday recreational boaters, members of the maritime industry and anyone else with an interest in the state's waterways," he said.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, who represented MRNSW at a recent key stakeholders forum for the project, said public safety had been a strong focus of discussions.

"We welcome the opportunity to have input to the process of planning future boating facilities and infrastructure," he said.

"We are keen to work with the Government agencies to help achieve the best result for the boating community.

"It's important that rescue service facilities and access keep pace with the needs of the boating community."

Mr Glenn said consultation was taking place in 11 regions: Tweed-Clarence Valley; Mid North Coast; Taree-Great Lakes; Port Stephens and Hunter; Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah Lakes; Hawkesbury River, Pittwater and Brisbane Water; Sydney Harbour; Botany Bay and Georges River; Shoalhaven and Illawarra; Far South Coast and Murray-Riverina.

Have your say on existing and future boating facilities on 11 major waterways.

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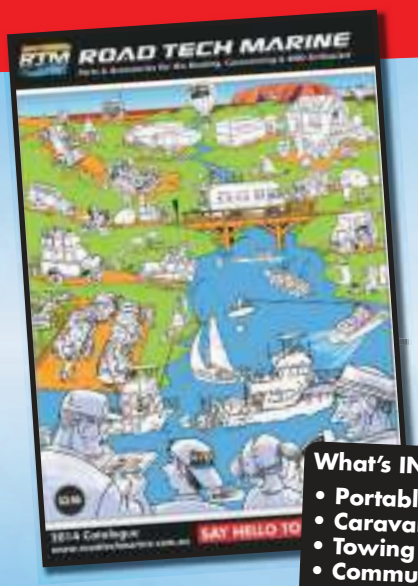

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Karen Farrell

Boat crew member, Crowdy Harrington

MR Crowdy Harrington Operations Officer Karen Farrell takes the helm of *Crowdy 20* during her training as the first woman to join the unit's boat crew.

Karen Farrell is the Operations Officer at Marine Rescue Crowdy Harrington, on the Mid North Coast. She has become the first woman to join the unit's rescue vessel crew and currently is undertaking her training on the water on board *Crowdy 20*.

Many years ago, my husband's boat broke down while he was fishing off the coast south of this area. At that time there was no rescue service close by and the whole episode was rather traumatic.

Upon returning to Harrington a couple of years ago, I saw the Marine Rescue building. I thought volunteering there would fill in some of my retirement time and give me the ability to be able to be at the other end of a radio if my husband was fishing of the coast.

Since joining in 2012, I have gained my Marine Radio Operator's certificate, started my Watch Officer training and now Boat Crew training. I guess I would have to be a good example of the fact that you don't need a lot of prerequisite skills to be a member of Marine Rescue.

My whole journey has been thoroughly rewarding. I have been given the opportunity to learn new skills every step of the way.
It is nice not to have daily deadlines or be forced to follow other people's agendas as I had to before retiring from my work as a Deputy Principal at a country school. All of the training here at MR Crowdy Harrington has been at the pace I have set and I have even managed an overseas trip and some travel within Australia along the way.

Boat Crew training is now presenting my next challenge. I didn't even have a boat licence let alone experience 'driving' a boat. The skippers and other crew members at our unit have been great! They have been very understanding and given me nothing but encouragement to become a Crew Member. I have also been appointed Operations Officer for our base and I am looking forward to a long "career" with Marine Rescue.

Help just a phone call and 10,000 miles away

Are you in Wales or New South Wales? UK Coastguard responds to brothers' SOS.

Two young fishermen who made an SOS call when their small runabout sank during a late afternoon jaunt to Moon Island off Lake Macquarie found help was near but yet so far … on the other side of the globe.

The two brothers, Malcolm and Ian Hancock, were visiting the Lake from their home in Sydney's Richmond, when they decided to cross the Swansea Bar late on December 19 to fish off the rocky island, never dreaming their trip would make international headlines.

Finding the sea state too rough, the pair, in their early 20s, turned back but in the process their small 5m runabout capsized. Wearing lifejackets and with a mobile phone to hand, they managed to swim to the island and call for help.

Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie Deputy Unit Commander Roger Evans said the boys could see the unit's Swansea Heads radio base on the hill overlooking the bar.

"They could not read our sign and did not have our phone number, so they Googled Coast Guard Swansea and hit dial," DUC Evans said.

"The Coast Guard operator was having great trouble understanding their location, especially as the distressed caller said 'but I can see your base'. Out of desperation, the operator finally asked 'what country are you in?'."

It was then that Steve Yates, the 13-year veteran operator taking the call at 7.15am in the Coastguard Swansea Rescue Coordination Centre in Wales in the United Kingdom, realised the boys' location and put a call through to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority 10,000 miles away.

"While this was going on, our radio base Duty Officer Jim Stringfellow had seen the incident and had the rescue team on its way to assist on board *Lake Macquarie 30*," DUC Evans said.

Moon Island, where the two fishermen's boat capsized … off Swansea in NSW, not Swansea in Wales.

"The Swansea Bridge operator assisted with an emergency opening so no time was lost getting to the young men.

"The crew, UC John Hatton, Barry Bonning and Zoe Tylee, carefully negotiated their way through the rocky outcrops surrounding the island.

"The rescue vessel got as close as safety allowed and the boys swam out 30 metres to be retrieved, still wearing their lifejackets.

"The crew also managed to get a line on to the upturned boat and slowly returned to Blacksmiths ramp."

Regional Controller Neil Grieves met the vessel at the ramp, helping the men get their boat out of the water and on to their trailer.

HM Coastguard Swansea Rescue Coordination Centre Manager Steve Jones expressed his surprise at the case of international mistaken identity.

"I have been involved with HM Coastguard for over 40 years and had never heard of a call like this being received at Swansea," he wrote in an email to MR Lake Macquarie Unit Commander John Hatton.

"I was pleased that my operators did not dismiss this call as a hoax, however, you guys did a brilliant job.

"It was pleasing the crew had lifejackets on and their boat was so well equipped, something which sadly does not happen in the UK too often."

Malcolm later emailed the base to thank the rescuers: "I'd like to thank everyone who was involved with our rescue … as I didn't get the chance to thank everyone personally. Even though my boat is destroyed and wasn't insured I am so glad we escaped unscathed."

This sentiment was echoed by the boys' grateful parents, Tom and Claire Hancock, who also wrote to the unit to express their thanks to the crew for saving their sons.

"We can only imagine just how difficult a rescue it must have been, with Moon Island surrounded by rocks and reef which prevented the rescue boat from coming in too close, and presented an enormous hazard. The rescue crew did a brilliant job to get as close to the island as they could whilst dodging the rocks in the surging current.

"As your rescue crew would know, the boat has significant structural damage; the outboard motor is wrecked from being dragged upside down by the current through the rocks and reefs; and all the electrics … are ruined. But as much as Malcolm loved his boat, they are only mere material losses.

"The important thing is our sons are alive, safe, and back home with us for Christmas, for which we are extremely grateful."

See letters, page 40.

Took the call for help … Steve Yates from Coastguard Swansea in the UK.

Recreational fishing worth $3.5b to NSW

But university study shows most anglers rarely get to wet a line.

Recreational fishing contributes about $3.5 billion to the NSW economy each year, a recently-released study has found.

NSW Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson said the survey, conducted by the University of Wollongong, found anglers spent more than $1.5 billion on fishing-related expenses in NSW in 2012, including travel, fishing tackle and boat-related items.

The survey was commissioned by the State Government and funded by the NSW Recreational Fishing Licence Trust.

It found 14,254 full-time jobs in the sector, contributing household income of $877.3 million. Interstate visitors contributed $186 million.

"Recreational fishing is a vibrant and important part of both coastal and inland communities and it's important we have a clear understanding of the benefits it provides our regional areas," Ms Hodgkinson said.

The study found there were about 905,000 anglers in NSW, of whom 773,000 were aged over 18 years.

Based on the survey data, anglers spent $511 million in the Sydney region; $502 million on the North Coast; $360 million on the South Coast; and $251 million inland.

Survey questions about anglers' fishing habits indicated that while an avid three per cent of anglers headed out on more than 40 fishing trips a year, 54 per cent of saltwater fishers and 67 per cent of freshwater fishers took fewer than five fishing trips a year.

Recreational fishing is a $3.5 billion pastime for 905,000 of us in NSW.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos said recreational fishing and boating were closely aligned as popular pastimes for NSW residents.

"Many of these fishers would be likely to be heading out in their boats," he said.

"With the majority of fishers heading out on fewer than five trips a year, boaters should make sure they have carried out their maintenance and done a safety check on their vessel before launching so they can avoid the kinds of fuel, electrical and maintenance problems that can arise if you don't use your boat regularly."

Find the study at dpi.nsw.gov.au

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FURUNO

What we've been up to

Dad and daughter ready to hit the water ... winners of the Marine Rescue Coffs Harbour Quintrex boat raffle, Beth and John Simmon, collect their prize from the unit's gun ticket seller, Lawrie Hansen, who sold the winning ticket, and Unit Commander Graeme King.

UC John Hatton, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, DUC Roger Evans, Shortland MP Jill Hall, Swansea MP Garry Edwards and Yamba Welding & Engineering's Bill Collingburn with *Lake Macquarie 30*.

They did survive ... members of MR Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga take part in a joint sea survival training course in January. *Photo: Trevor Veale, Coffs Coast Advocate.*

Kyle Seymour is congratulated by MR Forster-Tuncurry administration officer Peter Page (left) and Unit Commander Dennis Travers after winning the unit's summer raffle.

Port Macquarie 30 and local paddlers escort Tony Miller-Greenman and Michael Leith (right) over the bar on their journey from Brisbane to Sydney, raising $30,000 for Beyond Blue. *Photo: Facebook.*

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PROUD TO SUPPORT MARINE RESCUE NEW SOUTH WALES

Commissioning a proud day for Ballina

New rescue vessel named after foundation member lost on duty.

Marine Rescue Ballina proudly commissioned its new rescue vessel on February 19 with a special ceremony that also honoured foundation unit member David Waddell.

The $428,000 10m Naiad, built by Yamba Welding and Engineering, has been fitted with high-tech communications and radar equipment.

It was named after Mr Waddell, who drowned during a rescue on the Ballina bar in 1983.

The commissioning was attended by many members of Marine Rescue, including Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Director Bob Wilson, along with dignitaries, Ballina Mayor David Wright, Local Government Minister and Ballina MP Don Page, Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services Geoff Provest and Page MP Kevin Hogan.

Mr Waddell's family was also present and his son, Robert, said his dad had loved Marine Rescue.

"To think that 30 years down the track, they're (Marine Rescue) still remembering him - we're totally and truly honoured," he told *The Northern Star.*

BA 30 was blessed by Fr Tom Chapman, while Robert Waddell had the honour of pouring the champagne over the bow.

Mr Provest said *BA 30* could be deployed up to 30nm offshore, making it a valuable new search and rescue resource in the Northern Rivers region.

MR Ballina Unit Commander John Donoghue agreed the new boat was a great asset for the unit.

Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services Geoff Provest, MR Ballina Unit Commander John Donoghue, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Ballina MP Don Page with *BA 30*.

"It's a faster response vessel with more sophisticated radar, navigation and radio equipment, making us more effective than before," he said.

The boat replaces the vessel that capsized during a rescue in turbulent conditions on the notorious Ballina bar on April 15, 2013.

Commissioner Tannos presented Commendations to the three crew, Tony Handcock, David Nockolds and Rodney Guest, who had gone to the rescue of two men on a disabled motor cruiser.

Commendations also will go to the Ballina Jet Rescue members who rescued the MRNSW crew and two boaters from the water.

Point Danger unit heads back to base

Extensive storm damage, vandalism repaired in major project.

A major project to repair and refurbish Marine Rescue Point Danger's Duranbah base, uninhabitable after severe damage from storms and vandalism, is nearing completion.

We have used alternative accommodation at South Tweed Sports Club for the past five months while repairs were under way at the Duranbah building, which houses our training and meeting rooms.

It has been a huge project to replace the roof and internal ceilings and repair extensive internal water damage. The builders, painters and plasterers have been hard at work and we hope to move back in by the end of the month.

With a few hours' work by our volunteers to make the finishing touches, we will have a renewed training and meeting venue, which will be greatly appreciated. We would like to thank Member for Tweed Geoff Provest for a $20,000 grant towards this project.

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate visited the unit in January, touring our radio room and administration area in the Captain Cook Lighthouse at Point Danger before inspecting our boat shed at River Terrace.

Gold Coast City Council has provided us with much-appreciated financial support towards our operating costs over the years.

Cr Tate commented that there were no borders when it came to emergency volunteer organisations.

On a beautiful day, a run on the Tweed River on board *PD 30* seemed the perfect ending to the Mayor's "border crossing".

We were thrilled to be selected as an entrant in a fundraising event by Grill'd, which makes the best burgers in Coolangatta and raises funds through its monthly Local Matters community donation program. We have twice been the lucky recipients of the winner's $300 donation. Thank you to all who donated.

Blake Austen, from Grill'd in Coolangatta, presents MR Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby with a $300 donation.

Thanks, too, to the public who supported us and the volunteers who gave their time at our BBQ at Bunnings on the Australia Day weekend. Our boat raffle is now under way and we're looking forward to another successful campaign.

Our first MRNSW Coxswain, Mal Owen, has a busy training schedule for our new recruits, with 10 undertaking training including radio operations and survival at sea.

Mary Green

Holiday crowds flock to rescue spectacular

Forster-Tuncurry Water Expo demonstrates crews' skill and precision.

Hundreds of locals and holiday makers crowded on to the Forster-Tuncurry breakwalls on January 15 for a mass demonstration of search and rescue skill on the water and in the air.

Marine Rescue Forster-Tuncurry's Water Expo, filled with exercises displaying crews' professionalism and the precision required in emergency operations, proved a popular holiday attraction.

The unit's vessels, *Forster-Tuncurry 30* and *Forster-Tuncurry 10*, NSW Police vessel *Intrepid* and the Westpac Helicopter practised winching crew members on to and off the police boat and search manoeuvres in the harbour.

The helicopter was a highlight when it landed at the Marine Rescue base to give the crowds a close look at the high-tech aircraft.

Displays by Australian Customs and Border Protection Services, NSW Fisheries, Surf Life Saving and Roads and Maritime Services were well patronised. The unit sold more than 500 tickets in its boat raffle, raising funds for its new offshore rescue vessel, due soon.

Unit Commander Dennis Travers said it had been a busy season for the unit, with close to 500 vessel Log Ons, representing more than 1000 people on boats.

"There have not been any serious injuries so far this year although there were still people who for some reason put their children at risk by over-crowding small boats, not putting lifejackets on and allowing children to do things like bow riding at speed," he said. "We ask everyone to please put safety first."

The crew of *FT 30* faced a challenge when the engine of a 15.2m 20-tonne ketch died as the yacht was approaching Cape Hawke Harbour. After working on it without success, the skipper was becoming affected by the fumes in the engine bay and called for help.

It's a big job ... *Forster-Tuncurry 30* tows a 20-tonne ketch to safety after its engine died on approach to Cape Hawke Harbour.

Watch Officer Barry Edmunds took the call, responding skipper Peter Nash, Paul Miller, Gerard Crowe and Mike Thomas on *FT 30.*

"At nearly three times the weight of the rescue vessel the yacht was hard to get moving and slow to stop. Towing her in through the Cape Hawke entrance at the bottom of the tide and 2m pressure waves in near darkness was a challenge," Mr Nash said.

FT 30 also towed a 4.3m boat to safety after its engine failed and it was being swept out to sea. Two other boats tried to assist, with one woman sustaining a hand injury from a tow rope in the process.

Grant Maxwell

New generation on the air at Woolgoolga

Mitch qualifies as a Radio Operator ... now for that double degree.

One of Woolgoolga's younger members has reached his goal to become a Marine Rescue Radio Operator.

Mitchell Harvey, who has just turned 18, joined the Woolgoolga Unit in March 2011.

He has always been an avid fisherman, joining the local fishing club at the age of 10, and saw Marine Rescue as being complementary to this interest.

After completing his provisional membership, Mitchell quickly decided he would pursue his interest in the unit's radio operations.

After passing his MROCP (Marine Radio Operators Certificate of Proficiency) some 18 months ago, he has gained numerous hours' radio experience, assisting with many vessel assists and searches.

In late 2013 he completed his study to attain the Marine Rescue Radio Operator certification and is now well on track to gain his Crew status in the short term.

Completing his HSC at the end of 2013, Mitch is now undertaking a double degree of a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Teaching at the University of New England in Armidale.

He has taken leave of absence in order to study but we will welcome him back during his holidays and he will perform radio duties when home.

Mitch said Marine Rescue Woolgoolga was like family to him.

"The members have treated me as somewhat of a son. They have shown me what it is like to become a team player," he said.

Mitchell Harvey in the radio room at MR Woolgoolga with his mentor Terry Powell.

A number of Woolgoolga members have recently undertaken sea survival training, along with members of the neighbouring Coffs Harbour unit (see photo, page 13).

A 6.15am call on January 19 to help a boat having trouble getting its motor started at South Solitary Island was our first emergency operation involving the 4WD launch tractor purchased late last year. Good work by the tractor, boat and communications crews.

Cherrill Powell

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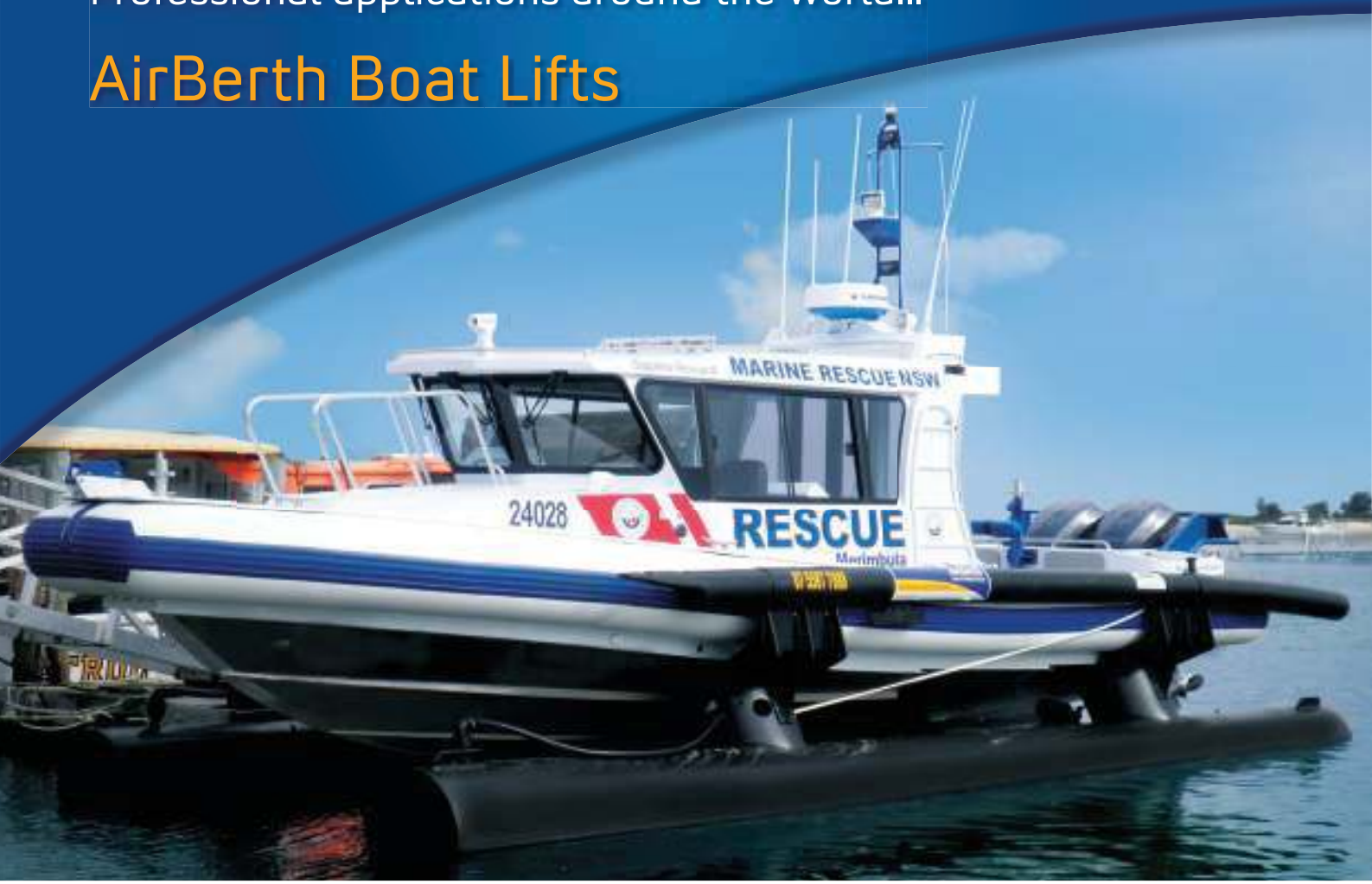

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Camden Haven buzzing through season

Radio operators take 600 calls but many boaters still not Logging On.

The holiday season proved to be one of the busiest ever in the Camden Haven, with great weather and predominantly good boating conditions.

The radio room at Marine Rescue Camden Haven was buzzing, with the radio operators answering more than 600 radio calls and Logging On 230 local boats heading out to the local fishing spots off the coast in January alone.

We also had many visitors calling in to enjoy the delights of the area.

These Log Ons represent the sensible boaties who keep us informed of where they are going and when they are due back but by the number of trailers at the local boat ramps, it is obvious there is a large and concerning number of boaters who still don't inform us of their intentions.

The boat crews were involved in a number of rescues and towing operations, including a jet ski with two people on board that broke down off North Haven beach and two small runabouts several nautical miles out to sea with a total of seven passengers.

Roads and Maritime Services also asked us to retrieve buoys and markers which had broken free in high tides, becoming potential dangers for boaters.

In November, Unit Commander Ken Clancy sustained a serious leg injury, slipping near the water line and falling heavily on his leg.

We wish him well with his recovery.

Deputy Unit Commander Ken Rutledge is Acting Unit Commander, with the members rallying to ensure the unit continues to run smoothly.

The arrival of our new rescue vessel, *Camden Haven 30*, a 10m Naiad RHIB, late last month had been keenly anticipated by unit members. The new boat arrived in choppy seas under lights and sirens after a four-hour trip from the Yamba Welding and Engineeering factory on February 26. We successfully sold our Noosa Cat, *Camden Haven 20*, which had served us well.

She's all yours now ... MR Camden Haven Acting Unit Commander Ken Rutledge hands over *CH 20* to its new owner, Jason Coplin.

The new owner, Jason Coplin, from Port Stephens, intends to use the boat for charters and whale watching tours.

John Mountier

Hot winds hamper Pittwater race up coast

Delays make for heavy workload for Coffs Harbour volunteers.

Members of Marine Rescue Coffs Harbour marked the start of 2014 by welcoming the fleet of competitors in the annual Pittwater to Coffs Harbour yacht race across the finish line.

Members were busy over a 30 hour period as the vessels arrived, providing hot bacon and egg rolls and cold drinks to the hungry crew members.

Unfortunately, the weather was not cooperative, with hot north westerly winds delaying the fleet's arrival and forcing the cancellation of one of the rostered shifts as none of the boats was expected during the four hours on duty.

A subsequent compression of the yachts' arrival times resulted in very busy shifts for volunteers on later rosters.

The base dealt with 22 incidents in December and January, 11 of which involved *Coffs 20*, even though it was off the water for 14 days for major repairs to its tow post footings.

The unit was called to assist the NSW Police Marine Area Command following a fatal shark attack north of Coffs Harbour.

Then, on the Australia Day weekend, MAC tasked us to retrieve a dive boat wrecked on the breakwater at the boat ramp, creating a possible hazard for other boats entering the ramp in the tricky, extremely low tide and strong swell.

The boat's propeller hit the sea bed twice as the vessel tried to navigate the shallow entrance to the ramp. The boat was then driven sideways by the wind and swell on to the rocks and holed in several places. Fortunately, no-one was injured.

Coffs 20 prepares to tow a holed dive boat off the rocks on Australia Day. *Photo: Trevor Veale, Coffs Coast Advocate.*

The crew of *Coffs 20* refloated the boat with some difficulty and towed it to jetty beach to be retrieved.

Our tinnie raffle, drawn on Australia Day, raised just under $10,000 after four months of hard work selling tickets. Members of MR Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga attended a successful joint sea survival/ firefighting training exercise (see photos, page 13).

Alison Bowling

Crews work together in challenging rescue

Long tow safer than crossing risky bar.

Trial Bay 30 tows the stricken vessel to safety at South West Rocks rather than risk crossing the Nambucca Bar at low tide.

Volunteers from Marine Rescue Trial Bay and Nambucca worked together in challenging conditions in a joint operation to rescue a boat with engine trouble off Shelly Beach at Nambucca in mid-February.

The members of MR Trial Bay have been on standby to respond to any offshore emergencies since *Nambucca 20* overturned during an operation off the hazardous Nambucca bar last October.

After a calm boating summer, the first offshore incident occurred on February 15.

While *Trial Bay 30* was deployed to assist the stricken boat, Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray tasked MR Nambucca to assist by sending its jet ski, *NH 11*, to provide directions in getting both the rescue vessel and broken down boat into Shelly Beach or over the bar if necessary.

Returning the crippled boat to shore near the bottom of the tide on a shallow bar posed a serious challenge for the crews.

A Nambucca crew member was ferried out to *TB 30* on board the jet ski to provide local knowledge in the event of a bar crossing but given the conditions, there was only one real option.

NH 11 ferried one of the boat's occupants to shore to retrieve his vehicle and in the meantime, *TB 30* set course for South West Rocks with the broken down vessel in tow.

While a little inconvenient for the owner, taking the vessel to South West Rocks was the best option, considering the dangers of towing a vessel over the Nambucca Bar or into Shelly Beach at low tide.

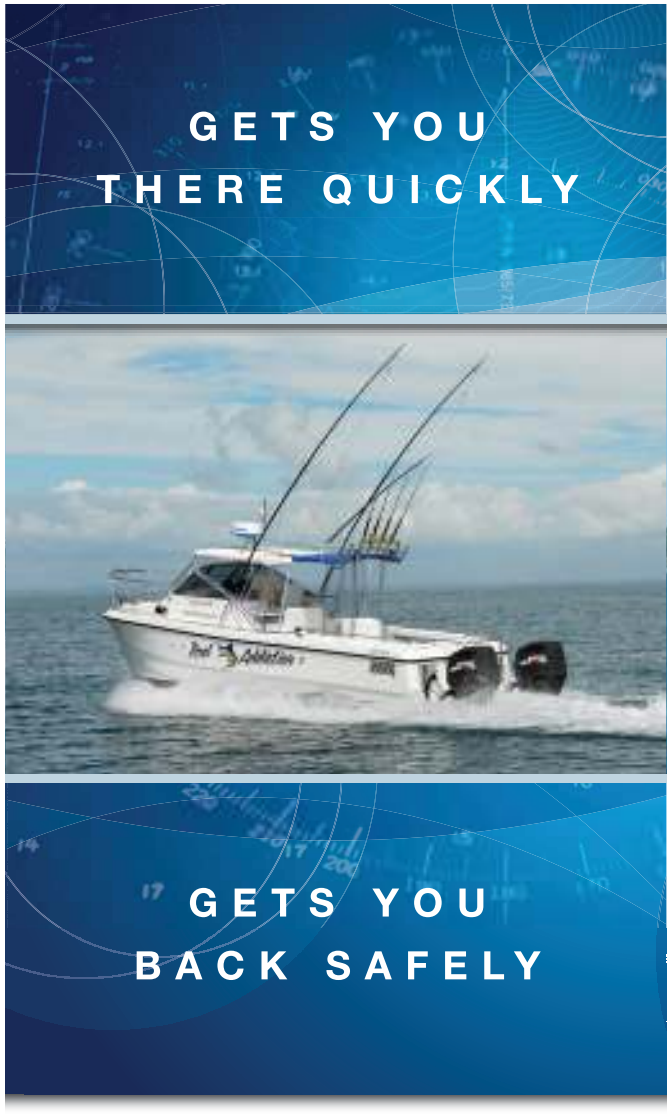
It's reassuring to know that Marine Rescue NSW has the capability to cover the coastline when required.

The members of MR Nambucca are looking forward to receiving our new vessel, sceheduled for next month.

We will receive a 6.8 metre Naiad built by Yamba Welding and Engineering to replace *NH 20*.

Congratulations to the crews of *TB 30* and *NH 11* in assessing the risks and taking action to ensure the safety of all involved in this challenging incident.

Owen Rushton



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Community recognises new unit's deputy

Ken's outstanding fundraising earns Australia Day volunteering award.

Marine Rescue NSW member Ken Lawry was named Wyong Shire's 2014 Community Volunteer of the Year at its Australia Day celebrations.

The award follows Ken's election less than a week earlier as inaugural Deputy Unit Commander of the new MR Tuggerah Lakes unit, established when the former Toukley and The Entrance units joined forces.

The Volunteer of the Year award recognises Ken's outstanding efforts in fundraising for the former MR The Entrance, with the aid of his wife Lorraine and a fine team of fundraisers.

While Ken said he was humbled by the award, his colleagues consider the recognition richly deserved.

The process of amalgamating the two units has been under way since November, when the members of the two units voted to merge.

Elections held at the new unit's inaugural meeting on January 20 saw The Entrance's former leadership team installed in office, with Unit Commander Stewart Masters elected alongside his Deputy.

The new unit's radio call sign is Marine Rescue Tuggerah Lakes.

UC Masters encouraged local boaters to practise good boating safety by Logging On with MR Tuggerah Lakes when heading out for a day's boating and Logging Off when they returned.

The Entrance and Toukley units were located only three kilometres apart on the lakes system.

Bringing together the members and assets of the two units will create a stronger operation, providing more efficient use of our resources and volunteer effort and even greater coordination of emergency response on the lakes.

MR Tuggerah Lakes DUC Ken Lawry receives his Community Volunteer of the Year award from Wyong Shire Councillor Luke Nayna (left) and Wyong MP Darren Webber. *Photo: Hilda Bezuidenhout.*

The unit has thanked the owner of Ideal Furniture at Castle Hill, Mark Costello, for donating a dozen leather chairs for use in the unit's two radio rooms.

"This is a great opportunity for a business to donate to and support a totally volunteer emergency service," Mark said.

Denis O'Mara

Ministers set course through choked channel

Visit follows commissioning of Lake Macquarie's vessel and berthing facility.

Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and Roads and Ports Minister Duncan Gay hitched a ride with Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie as they visited the region to announce a $2.5 million project to improve boating safety by dredging the choked Swansea Channel.

The Cabinet Ministers, accompanied by Swansea MP Garry Edwards, inspected the channel from on board *Lake Macquarie 30*.

Mr Stoner said the large dredging campaign was set to establish a stable navigation channel between the lake and open waters.

"This project is an important investment by the Government due to the channel's regional significance as the entrance to Lake Macquarie, which is currently used by 18,000 boats. Over 25,000 boats are expected to use the lake by 2020, resulting in a potential increased value to the local economy of up to $3.7 million a year," he said.

The Ministers' visit was followed by a presentation by Mr Edwards of the unit's two new GoPro cameras, funded by the State Government to support MRNSW volunteers' training and operations.

"$30,000 in funding is being used to roll out 70 Go Pro cameras to Marine Rescue crews across the state and I was pleased to present (these) cameras to Lake Macquarie Marine Rescue," Mr Edwards said.

The commissioning of *LM 30*, the unit's $410,000 10m Naiad, and new berthing facility at the Pelican base took place before Christmas.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Directors Tony Long and Bob Wilson, Mr Edwards, Shortland MP Jill Hall, Naiad builder Bill Collingburn and Reverend Richard Wrightson joined our members for the event. Ms Hall presented a National Medal to respected member Warren Eades. Thanks to Belmont Rotary for a wonderful catering job.

A $50,000 State Government grant, secured with Mr Edwards' support, assisted with the $90,000 cost of the new berthing facility.

We were so pleased with *LM 30*'s Airberth that we also purchased one for *LM 21*. *LM 11* remains in the water to allow a rapid response.

Roger Evans

Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, Roads and Ports Minister Duncan Gay and Swansea MP Garry Edwards inspect Swansea Channel from *Lake Macquarie 30.*

Mechanical troubles plague summer boaters

Rescue crews turn out to 40 incidents on Central Coast waters.

Forty incidents on the water and more than 2300 calls to the radio room kept the volunteers at Marine Rescue Central Coast busy over the peak boating season.

The radio room handled 1416 marine radio calls and 950 phone calls over December and January, with the introduction of the Seahawk vessel tracking system successful thanks to the training program run by Geoff Hawes and Penny Booth.

The unit's boat crews responded to 19 incidents in December and 21 in January. These were generally routine in nature, with a high level of mechanical failures.

On New Year's Eve, MR Central Coast provided the safety boat for the Gosford fireworks and hosted a fundraising dinner at our base.

We ended the month by taking part in the Australia Day Parade of Boats organised by Gosford Sailing Club and again provided a safety boat for the Woy Woy fireworks.

Nine provisional members will soon begin their training after attending their induction course.

The unit has been working with Gosford City Council to address a number of issues. Council has agreed to investigate solutions to the serious siltation of the foreshore adjoining our Point Clare base and determine if its water safety levy could be increased to include the unit as an annual beneficiary.

Member for Robertson Lucy Wicks has presented Unit Commander Patricia Fayers with her National Medal, recognising her ongoing community service.

"For more than 15 years of faithful service, Pat completely deserves to receive this distinguished civilian medal," Ms Wicks told Federal Parliament.

"Thank you to the hard-working team at MR Central Coast. We are all safer (on) the water because of your tireless and selfless work."

The unit hosted a ceremony attended by more than 20 visitors to present retired Water Police Sergeant and MR Broken Bay member 'Buster' Brown with his National Medal and MRNSW Life Membership (see story, page 24).

Ron Cole

'Richly deserved' ... Member for Robertson Lucy Wicks presents the National Medal to MR Central Coast Unit Commander Pat Fayers.

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Terrigal doubles its hours on watch

Unit looking to future development.

A fireworks show, broken down vessels, a sunken dive boat and rough conditions made for an eventful holiday period for members of Marine Rescue Terrigal.

The 2013 year ended with *Terrigal 30* acting as a safety vessel for the New Year's Eve fireworks at Dee Why, with Unit Commander Deane Scadding, Chris Thamm and Justin Norval giving up their celebrations for the task.

The next day, the duty crew, under skipper Greg Berrington, was placed on standby for several hours to support other units assisting a 45 foot cruiser with 13 people on board drifting off Long Reef.

We woke on Sunday, December 29, to a 25 to 30 knot stiff southerly that kept all but the brave and foolhardy out of the water but unit members still spent time convincing people not to head out and risk getting into trouble.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, Fleet Officer Jody Hollow and Regional Controller Neil Grieves visited the unit to discuss our future development plans, including a new vessel and hopefully expanded operating space. The Deputy Commissioner also presented UC Scadding with his 20 year Long Service Medal.

The duty crew quickly responded after we received a call about 7.40am on January 19 from a six metre vessel stranded with three people on board in 2.5-3 metre seas some 10 nautical miles offshore.

With no functional radio and little battery power left on the skipper's mobile phone, *TG 30* quickly located the vessel and helped restart its engine before shadowing it back to Terrigal Haven.

Later that day, stories of a runabout lost off Copacabana started to filter through. It emerged that a 17 foot dive boat had been left unoccupied while the skipper and two others were diving in the area below Captain Cook's Lookout. While at anchor, the boat was swamped by several large waves and began to sink.

Two of the divers returned and began bailing, with little effect. The skipper returned as the vessel dipped below the surface. Some minor items were retrieved and its position marked.

With other vessels reporting debris in the area and parts of the sunken vessel on and around the rocks, police tasked *TG 30* to investigate to ensure there was no further danger to shipping.

TG 30 set off with the lost vessel's skipper on board. He entered the water to check the anchor and marker were holding and, satisfied that the vessel was still intact and secure, albeit 17 metres down, *TG 30* returned to base.

On Australia Day, *TG 30* headed south with UC Scadding, Deputy Unit Commander Cameron Sloey, Geoff Solomon, Darren Wright and Bob Raison as crew, to act as a standby rescue vessel for the Palm Beach-Whale Beach swim. In the face of 2.5 to 3m waves and a stiff 15 to 20 knot southerly breeze, the trip south was a bit rough but the return journey fairly quick.

We ended the holidays by helping a local fishing boat that had run out of fuel about five nautical miles off Terrigal Haven back to shore.

MR Terrigal base is now open from noon to 6pm each Saturday and 6am to 6pm each Sunday, a major extension from our previous hours of 9.30am to 5pm on Sundays only. The duty crew remains on call 24/7.

Geoff Solomon

New vessel on patrol on Hawkesbury waters

$211,000 Ocean Cylinder meets every challenge: Unit Commander.

A crowd of more than 100 gathered at the commissioning of *Hawkesbury 22 'Jill McGrath'* at Mooney Mooney on February 8.

This new $211,000 vessel for the busy Hawkesbury waters is a 7.5m Ocean Cylinder from Yamba Welding & Engineering (see story, page 36).

The vessel was named in memory of the late Jill McGrath, a foundation member of the unit, who served for 26 years from 1985, when it was established as part of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, until 2011.

The vessel replaces *HW 10*, which capsized on its way to provide operational support at the start of the 2012 Sydney to Hobart yacht race. The three crew were rescued by a passing yacht, *Raimondo.*

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Board Director Bob Wilson joined Hornsby MP and unit patron Matt Kean, Gosford MP Chris Holstein, Hornsby Mayor Cr Steve Russell and volunteers from the Hawkesbury and other Sydney units for the commisssioning ceremony.

Unit Commander Merv Collins said the vessel had already shown its exceptional capabilities during its first outings at some of the major events on the Hawkesbury, for which the unit provides safety and event control.

MR Hawkesbury also regularly transports NSW Ambulance crews to reaches of the river that are inaccessible by road and the new boat also carries first aid support, including an automatic cardiac defibrillator and oxygen therapy.

"Our annual calendar is a full one, with many day and night events including the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic and the Bridge-to-Bridge Water Ski and Power Boat races," UC Collins said. "With its advanced communications and navigation equipment, thermal vision camera and AIS, the vessel has met every challenge we've given it.

The late Jill McGrath's grand niece Mikayla Jedrzejczyk and Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey at the commissioning of Jill's namesake.

"In the 2013 Canoe Classic we were using the iSmart thermal camera to follow at a distance of 400m one group of canoeists who had gone well off track. But before we had to warn them, they realised this and corrected their course."

Hawkesbury Canoe Classic Association president Kent Heazlett presented the unit with $7,000 to acknowledge its support in helping raise $213,272 for the Arrow Bone Marrow Foundation from the 2013 event and more than $3 million over 25 years. The 2013 event attracted 471 paddlers and 322 canoes.

Narooma members visit northern colleagues

Shared marine radio monitoring builds camaraderie across regions.

Marine Recue Terrey Hills welcomed four of our radio partners from the Narooma unit to Sydney in late January.

Unit Commander John Young, Ronja Young and watch officers Clive and Brenda Cavey visited our base, which acts as Marine Rescue's central communications hub.

Terrey Hills supports the Eden, Narooma and Batemans Bay units by using the Radio over Internet Protcol (RoIP) system to monitor overnight marine radio communications to their bases.

Our Deputy Unit Commander Roger Holt and watch officer Patrick Kearney organised the visit, with radio operators Margaret Chu, Paul Kerr and trainee Ben Drake demonstrating the change-over procedures to switch from the three southern units to Terrey Hills at sundown and back in the mornings.

We are constantly monitoring how the RoIP system works and finetuning where necessary. We appreciate the camaraderie with our South Coast colleagues and would love to have their views of the ocean.

Our unit currently has 85 volunteers and we really appreciate the commitment from our members, especially those rostered on the midnight shift. There is a real connection with people from all walks of life who give up their time for this worthy cause.

MR Port Jackson deserves thanks for helping with Log Ons recently during building works to upgrade the facilities of the other services with whom we share our premises.

Thanks also to our out-going Roster Officer, Merrilyn Little. This is not an easy role to manage but Mel has been a legend in keeping the troops in order, ably supported by Marguerite Mason, who also is finishing in her assisting role.

Listening in ... members of MR Narooma visit MR Terrey Hills, whose members monitor overnight radio calls to three Monaro region units.

Following our successful event late last year, we will hold another golf day at Bayview Golf Club on April 29 and invite any interested parties to join us. Contact Alison Glover on 0404 866 013.

We are continuing to operate our monthly BBQ at Bunnings Belrose, which has so far this financial year raised $14,000, and are working towards our $12,000 fundraising target from this year's boat raffle.

Alison Glover

Broken Bay legend honoured at presentation

'Buster' Brown adds National Medal to Queen's Commendation for bravery.

Retired Water Police Sergeant and Broken Bay legend Roper 'Buster' Brown was formally presented with the National Medal and his Life Membership of Marine Rescue NSW at a gathering of friends and former colleagues last month.

In 1974, Buster, along with then constables Brian Friend and the late Gordon Wellings, on board the Police launch *Falcon*, rescued the crew of the stricken yacht, *Voltan*, in mountainous seas off Norah Head on the Central Coast.

All three were subsequently awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct, which was presented by NSW Governor Sir Roden Cutler at Government House in 1975.

On his retirement from the Water Police, Buster joined Marine Rescue Broken Bay, then part of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, and served with distinction for the next 25 years.

The well-deserved awards were presented at a morning tea after

Congratulations ... Broken Bay legend, 'Buster' Brown, following the presentation of his National Medal and MRNSW Life Membership with Brian Friend, John Dunbar, Jeff Gilchrist and Lindsay Dive.

Buster called his friend, MR Broken Bay member Peter Woods, asking for his National Medal to be posted to him as he did not drive anymore and could no longer get around very easily.

Feeling this should be an important event, Peter instead arranged to visit Buster at his retirement home on the Central Coast, with three of Buster's other friends, including MRNSW Director Mike Stringer, who would make the presentations in his official capacity.

A day later, word had spread, with more than 20 people wanting to attend, including Buster's now-retired Water Police colleagues, Brian Friend, John Dunbar, Lindsay Dive, Jeff Gilchrist and Jim Williams.

A phone call to Ron Cole from MR Central Coast addressed the need for a larger venue, with Unit Commander Pat Fayers immediately extending a much-appreciated invitation to hold the ceremony and morning tea at the unit's base.

Peter Woods welcomed those present and Brian Friend introduced Buster. Mike Stringer then made the formal presentation before Vic McCutcheon, of MR Central Coast, added his memories of working with Buster. Three other MR Broken Bay members, David Harrison, Don Southwell and Geoff Wilson, were then presented with their Life Membership pins.

Peter Woods

Port Jackson helps clean up its 'back yard'

Unit joins community event after another summer of harbour festivities.

The first Sunday of autumn dawned wet and miserable over Sydney but that did not prevent the members of MR Port Jackson from joining their local community for the annual Clean Up Australia Day.

The Ryde Concord Sailing Club on the Parramatta River at Putney has been a long-time supporter of our unit, so when a request for "all hands on deck" was put out, our volunteers turned up in force to help clean up our "back yard".

The unit's BBQ trailer was towed to the club house, with Gary Boylett, Brett McIntyre, Neil Mould and Taji Sala ensuring the Clean Up volunteers were kept well fed.

D Team members Bryan Jephtha, Greg Shapiro, Paul Houseman, Alex McPherson, Carmen Walker and Philip Chen berthed *Port Jackson 30* adjacent to the clean up site to ensure a prompt response to any emergency.

This event followed the unit's participation in the Sydney Harbour summer spectaculars. *PJ 30* and *PJ 20* were again among MRNSW vessels providing operational support for the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race, as well as the New Year's Eve fireworks.

On Australia Day, we cooked a sausage sizzle on a barbecue barge on the harbour as part of the

MR Port Jackson clean ups with community members, including Ryde Mayor Roy Maggio and Clean Up Together's Austin Kim.

inaugural Tinnie Muster. *PJ 30* later served as the safety boat for the tall ships spectacular on Cockle Bay.

The unit's training and meeting facilities are moving to the Gladesville Sports and Bowling Club. We'd like to extend our gratitute to the Putney Tennyson Bowling Club for its support over the past decade.

Phillip Chen

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Communication and Media 2013

PAN PAN peril plugged, sick sailors saved

Cottage Point on the scene when disabled vessels' skippers call for help.

An emergency PAN PAN call for urgent help from a yacht in danger of sinking off West Head in Broken Bay sparked a rapid response from four Marine Rescue NSW vessels on February 22.

The call came across emergency VHF Channel 16: "PAN PAN. We are taking water and need immediate assistance. We are at West Head, can anyone help?"

Patrolling its local waters, *Cottage Point 20* was just rounding Lion Island at the time, a little more than a nautical mile from West Head, and immediately responded.

Vessels from Marine Rescue Hawkesbury, Broken Bay and Central Coast had also heard the call and were quickly converging.

The 52 foot Beneteau yacht had been sailing in Broken Bay when the master heard a loud noise below and discovered the propeller shaft had come loose of the engine coupling and slipped out of the stern gland, leaving a large hole below the waterline, through which water was pouring at great pressure.

Stemming the flow was no simple task but he managed to insert a soft wooden wedge into the stern gland, reducing it significantly.

The skipper then remembered he had purchased a Forespar Emergency Plug at the Sydney International Boat Show a couple of years ago.

The plug completely stemmed the water flow and his bilge pump quickly drained the water in his engine room.

CP 20 then was able to take the 18 tonne yacht under tow, returning it to its mooring in Salt Pan Cove in Pittwater.

Unit Commander Chris Perdue lauded his crew's response.

"The crew responded in very quick time to a sinking vessel and ensured that all were safe onboard, before towing them back to safety," he said.

"This shows that proactively patrolling our waterways with well trained crews provides an excellent service to the boating public."

This response followed a six-hour, 49 nautical mile operation on New Year's Day to assist a vessel that had run out of fuel and was drifting dangerously towards Long Reef with 13 people on board, many of whom were seasick.

Safe passage ... *Cottage Point 20* tows a Beneteau back to Pittwater after a PAN PAN emergency was averted.

CP 30, skippered by Chris Perdue, and crewed by Michael Kielty, Peter Iles and Leanne Chandler, took the Jackson 45 foot flybridge cruiser under tow for the 18nm passage to its mooring at Woy Woy.

The long rolling 2m southerly sea was exacerbated by the north easterly afternoon sea breeze chop.

The passage to Woy Woy also traverses the narrow and dangerous Gosford Channel, which needed to be carefully navigated at low tide, with little water under the keel and little scope for movement from track.

The cruiser's skipper then advised the *CP 30* crew that he had been able to restart his engines after discovering he hadn't run out of fuel at all, but had accidentally kicked shut the fuel transfer valve and had only drained his ready use fuel tank.

He was able to transfer fuel from his aft tanks and continue homeward under his own power, with *CP 30* accompanying the boat until it was safely moored in Woy Woy. The skipper made a generous donation towards the rescuers' fuel costs.

David White

New unit closes door on its Kurnell past

Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking met another milestone last month when Unit Commander Glenn Evans handed back the Kurnell radio base to Sutherland Shire Council after 13 years.

The Australian Volunteer Coast Guard moved into the premises on January 13, 2001.The radio base was opened by the then Assistant Secretary of the State Rescue Board, Heinz Mueller, who went on to be become the inaugural MRNSW Deputy Commissioner.

The base was operational until last year, when the radio operation moved to the State Headquarters at Cronulla's Hungry Point Reserve.

"A lot of work was carried out from the Kurnell base, including hundreds of assists, many training sessions and many hundreds of hours committed to the volunteer organisations that we all love," UC Evans said. "It was certainly a sad time when I handed over the keys but also came the realisation that Hungry Point is our home. Thanks to all who have unselfishly committed their time and sweat to the Kurnell base. May the next occupiers enjoy it as much as we did."

Botany Port Hacking Unit Commander Glenn Evans and radio operator Brendan Haynes take the last shift at the Kurnell base.

Services work together to sharpen response

Illawarra crews search for five capsize 'victims' in year's first regional SAREX.

Shoalhaven 31 heads out in the search for five missing 'victims' in the Illawarra Regional SAREX. *Photo: Lisa Hardwick, on board Ulladulla 30.*

Crew members, radio operators and watch officers representing Marine Rescue NSW units from Port Kembla to Kioloa worked together to test and sharpen their operational coordination in the first regional Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) for 2014.

Up to 90 volunteers from the Port Kembla, Shellharbour, Kioloa, Ulladulla, Jervis Bay and Shoalhaven units gathered at Greenwell Point for the Illawarra region SAREX, hosted by MR Shoalhaven, on February 15 and 16.

They were joined by members of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Surf Life Saving, Roads and Maritime Services and the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the exercises were a key component of Marine Rescue's emergency response training.

"The opportunity to conduct practical on-water exercises with multiple MRNSW assets and alongside our SAR partners at NSW Police and Surf Life Saving is invaluable," he said. "These training events also provide a positive and enjoyable networking and learning opportunity between units and agencies, strengthening trust and awareness between the men and women who are constantly called upon to head out to sea when everyone else is heading for shelter."

The weekend began with a series of information sessions and planning for the search and rescue exercise.

AMSA's Senior Search and Rescue Coordinator, Emergency Response Division, Greg Walsh, described the agency's role and where and how MRNSW fitted in to the national maritime search and rescue network.

It was interesting to hear about the range of facilities and assets AMSA can call on in an emergency and the monitoring of and response to EPIRB transmissions.

Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter's General Manager of Operations, Craig Roberts, gave an overview of the service's role, operations and aircraft specifications, detailing rescue and winching equipment, radio capabilities and technology.

The remainder of the day was spent on search theory and planning, led by Marine Area Command Search and Rescue Coordinator Sergeant Paul Farquharson. He also demonstrated the new software SARMAP, which designs search patterns by integrating information about an incident with climatic, weather and sea data.

> 'These training events provide a positive and enjoyable networking and learning opportunity.'

The exercise on the following morning was staged in heavily overcast and cool conditions with light drizzle and a south westerly swinging to southerly light wind and a one to two-metre swell.

The SAR was based on a scenario in which a poor quality and limited MAYDAY transmission had been received, stating that a vessel with five people on board was sinking in the Crookhaven Bight. Three search areas were identified, with the majority of the parallel track search completed within three hours.

The weekend was a great success, with opportunities identified for further training and improvement, which will ultimately benefit units' operational efficiency and boating safety.

Illawarra Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell said as it had been the first SAREX for 90 per cent of those who attended, another exercise would be held so members could put what they had learned over the weekend into practice.

Sincere thanks for the hospitality of the Greenwell Point Bowling and Sports Club and Angler's Rest accommodation and to MR Shoalhaven for hosting the event.

Jeff Peterson

Cobia shines in first operation at night

Huge strides at Port Kembla in 2013.

Port Kembla 20 heads across Lake Illawarra on its first night operation to help a boater who had run out of fuel.

Marine Rescue Port Kembla has lauded the performance of its new Cobia rescue vessel during its first after-dark operation.

When a call for help came in the middle of the unit's Christmas party, a crew was called away from the festivities and was on the water in the RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat) 15 minutes later to help a vessel that had run out of fuel on Lake Illawarra.

While en route, the crew made contact with the vessel to determine its location. The information provided by the skipper proved incorrect but the boat was soon found, with three people on board, and towed back to Berkley Harbour.

After a seamless performance, *Port Kembla 20* powered back to its Oaks Flat base, where it was recovered by its tow vehicle, *PK 50*.

This operation highlighted the need for boaters to be able to accurately determine their location so rescue crews can reach them as quickly as possible and also to ensure they have adequate fuel for their planned journey.

The unit wrapped up the year when it recovered a boat that had collided with a reef and overturned off Bulli Beach on December 31.

Bulli and Woonona Surf Lifesavers rescued a man who was thrown overboard and a woman who leapt on to the reef. *PK 30* dragged the boat clear of the reef and towed it to Bellambi boat ramp, where it was retrieved by its owners.

The unit made great strides in 2013, taking delivery of *PK 20* and *PK 50*, opening a new base at Port Kembla Harbour for our offshore group and training rooms, fostering stronger relationships with our fellow agencies in the region, continuing to upgrade Hill 60, our 24 hour Search and Rescue Coordination Centre, and never missing a rescue call.

Our crews conducted 75 rescue operations throughout the year, saving the lives of 146 people and vessels worth $2.3 million.

Our radio operators Logged On 5531 vessels with 14,389 people on board and handled 18,246 radio calls and 6368 phone calls.

Several unit members have undertaken their Advanced Resuscitation Training under the guidance of our Regional Training Manager Glenn Sullivan.

The training was well received and our crew members are now even better prepared for emergencies, with another valuable rescue tool at their disposal.

Tom Dragutinovitch

Rain christens new boat in damp ceremony

Jetty extension improves Sussex Inlet's emergency response in all tides.

The weather was far from kind but hardy members and supporters of Marine Rescue Sussex Inlet were not deterred as they celebrated the commissioning of the unit's new $356,000 vessel and redeveloped wharf last month.

Parliamentary Speaker and South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, Gilmore MP Ann Sudmalis, Shoalhaven Mayor Joanna Gash and Veolia Mulwaree Trust Chairman Paul Stephenson joined unit volunteers at the ceremony.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Directors Doug Musker, Howard Staples, Tony Drover, Bob Wilson, John Lynch and Mike Stringer also attended.

Built by Phoenix boats of South Nowra, the 10.9m jet-powered *Sussex Inlet 30 'Community Spirit'* provides the manoeuverability, power and speed to respond rapidly in an emergency.

A generous grant of $36,420 from the Veolia Mulwaree Trust and dedicated fundraising by the members enabled the unit to extend its wharf and reposition its boat lift into deeper water, allowing it to easily launch and retrieve the vessel in all tidal and weather conditions.

This also provides safer and more convenient access from the rescue vessel to the wharf for people rescued in an emergency, especially those suffering an injury. In all, more than $53,000 was raised for the project, which took more than two years from start to finish.

Deputy Commissioner Storey said together, the new vessel and wharf had boosted the unit's emergency response capability, ensuring it was well equipped to serve the large local and visiting boating community.

Raindrops keep falling on my boat ... VIPs on the unit's newly-extended wharf toast *Sussex Inlet 30* with watery champagne.

"*SI 30* can be deployed up to 30 nautical miles offshore, with a top speed of 28 knots, making it a valuable marine search and rescue resource in this region," he said. "It is one of 36 new and refurbished boats delivered at a cost of more than $10 million as part of Marine Rescue's ongoing project to upgrade its rescue fleet through the financial support of the State Government and boating community."

The boat is equipped with advanced navigation and first aid equipment and the power plant is a Cummins QSB Turbo 425HP.

John Lang

Shoalhaven thanks 'incredible' couple

Skilled crew members commended for rescue in hazardous conditions.

Members of Marine Rescue Shoalhaven have paid tribute to two "incredible individuals" for their outstanding contribution to the unit's success.

More than 50 members and their partners and families, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell attended a function at the Pilot House on February 8 to recognise former Deputy Unit Commander Charlie Yates and his wife Annette.

Unit Commander Terry Watson said: "Charlie and Annette are incredible individuals and two of the nicest people I have ever met.

"Everything Charlie and Annette did in their time as part of the unit, both before and after Marine Rescue began, was for the unit. Their first consideration in all the roles and responsibilities they accepted was 'what can I do to make our unit a more professional and people friendly organisation?'. They then set about turning these thoughts into successful outcomes."

UC Watson singled out the pair's success in establishing the unit's markets.

In reply, Charlie said: "I believe the Shoalhaven unit is just beginning the journey into the future. I would, for Annette and myself, like to thank each and every one of you for your friendship, your support in what we tried to achieve and the camaraderie that I believe is the heart of our successful projects."

Along with Skipper Mark Dolence, Charlie also received a Commissioner's Commendation for Service for the rescue of the *Malagari* in hazardous conditions in 2011. In two-three metre swells and 20-25 knot winds, the pair found the disabled vessel in a dangerous position at risk of going aground on the beach or rocks at Penguin Head.

Grateful thanks ... MR Shoalhaven UC Terry Watson, Charlie and Annette Yates, DUC Kevin King and Commissioner Stacey Tannos.

Skipper Dolence was able to guide the skipper to enable him to bring the vessel under control and manoeuvre away from danger. The Commendation says the rescue was an outstanding success due to the experience and competence of two skilled members working together.

Congratulations to Rob Gelok and Paul Poulsen, who have achieved their coxswain ratings.

The first fortnight of February proved busy, with crews responding to seven incidents, towing five vessels to safety and searching for a houseboat reported drifting under Nowra Bridge and another vessel off Culburra Beach.

Jervis Bay crews called out night and day

More boaters asking for help to shore rather than toughing it out alone.

After an extraordinary summer season, the members of Marine Rescue Jervis Bay were unflappable in the face of some rubber duckie high jinks on the water on the Australia Day long weekend.

The unit received an unusually high number of calls for help over the peak holiday period, with crews responding to 17 incidents in the week between Christmas and New Year alone. As well as many daylight assists, we also received numerous calls after dark.

It seems boaters have taken on board the need for responsibility and duty of care for their crew and to make radio calls for help instead of trying to tough it out and get back to shore on their own.

As a result, not a day seemed to go by without some sort of rescue, with the inevitable engine failure the main occurrence, along with general searches for missing or overdue vessels. All of our operations ended successfully.

Many thanks to the watch keepers and radio operators at the 24-hour Shoalhaven unit, who organise the deployment of our vessels and personnel for after-hours operations in our area.

The Australia Day long weekend was a busy time, with our members out in force and various stallholders setting up early for one of our major fundraisers, the Annual Duck Derby, at Moona Moona Creek, near Huskisson.

Five hundred little yellow ducks were purchased and released into the creek, pushed along by the tide and wind (and sometimes by eager kids in the water) until they reached the finish line. The owner of the winning duck walked away, extremely happy, $500 richer.

Keely Hill, 8, quacks a smile at MR Jervis Bay's Annual Duck Derby fundraiser on Australia Day. *Photo: Lester Shute.*

Eight-year-old Keely Hill joined new MR Jervis Bay members, her dad Kevin Hill and his partner Leona Curran, to sell tickets for the Duck Derby, which must make her the youngest volunteer in MRNSW.

She also was one of the winners in the hat parade with an impressive recreation of the Sydney Opera House. Thanks to all the public who turned up for this event and supported our rescue unit.

The unit's new vessel, *Jervis Bay 20*, was commissioned on March 16 at our Huskisson base.

Lester Shute

New training support scheme in the south

More opportunities for volunteers to skill up in the Illawarra and Monaro regions.

Volunteers in the Illawarra and Monaro regions are gaining new skills as they undertake more training courses thanks to the introduction of an innovative trainer support program.

Regional Training Manager South Glenn Sullivan has introduced a new training mentoring scheme, aimed at helping develop and support new training personnel, providing a panel of available trainers for the regions.

Mr Sullivan said there had been one qualified first aid trainer in each of the two regions in 2012 but this had now increased to 21 - eight in the Monaro region and 13 in the Illawarra, with another three taking part in the mentoring program.

He said the "pool" of trainers meant that in addition to units' own training activities, more courses could be organised on a regional basis, providing more opportunities for members to participate so they could gain new skills and qualifications.

The mentoring scheme pairs new trainers or those still undertaking their Certificate 4 studies with qualified, experienced trainers.

"It's giving these new trainers experience in learning from more experienced personnel, especially in first aid. They're presenting sections of courses and assisting the main trainers," he said.

"They're learning as they go and being supervised. The people who are enrolled in their TAE (Training and Education) are using this for their assignments and it means we get to teach people how we want subjects taught.

"We have more trainers, so the workload can then be spread around and more training delivered."

Mr Sullivan thanked Senior Mentors, General Practitioner Dr Peter Taylor in the Illawarra region and former paramedic Mark Jolly in the Monaro region, for their enthusiastic contribution to the program, along with Illawarra Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell.

Courses in the Illawarra so far this year have included a train the trainer session for fire and sea survival courses as part of the crew member training curriculum. Attended by 10 participants with a Certificate 4, this was followed by the first regional fire and sea survival training course, led by volunteer trainers Geoff Troth and Gerard Kelly.

A total of 26 Illawarra candidates and a Monaro region member who drove for four hours from Bermagui completed the series of fire, flares and water activities.

A first aid train the trainer session was held in January, with the region's first aid course to be staged in late March, to be delivered by the regional training team and members from the mentoring program.

All aboard ... members right a life raft in the Bomaderry pool during the Illawarra region's sea survival training last month.

Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray recently visited the Illawarra to conduct operational assessments.

Congratulations to Phil Hansen, from MR Shoalhaven, who passed his assessment and will now be able to help develop more Search and Rescue Support Officers.

In the Monaro region, a first aid trainer session was held on March 8 at the new training room at MRNSW Merimbula, with the region's first aid course on April 26. Fire and sea survival is to be held at Batemans Bay on April 5, with another session planned further south.

"MR Moama has received its new Ocean Cylinder vessel, so Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert and I trekked over the mountains down to the Murray River for a training and assessment session for members working to gain the unit's State Rescue Board accreditation," Mr Sullivan said.

"The work of the volunteers doesn't stop; the training continues all year long, with regional training events taking place twice a year in each region, as well as training inside the individual units. I would like to say a huge thank you for the time our trainers and trainees give up from their own personal lives to devote to Marine Rescue and for making training so interesting, fun and beneficial to all involved."

Rescuers bring 28 people home to safety

Less summer ramp rage, more lifejackets seen at Batemans Bay.

Members of Marine Rescue Batemans Bay responded to 15 emergency call-outs over Christmas-New Year as our region attracted many visitors.

Our involvement ranged from assisting with the consequences of personal accidents and disputes, returning wayward jet skis and helping boats with fuel, battery, mechanical and steering problems.

Encouragingly, we observed a welcome decrease in boat ramp rage at crowded launch areas and a substantial increase in lifejacket use.

The increased holiday workload intensifies the usual cooperation between the rescue services and in all, 28 people were brought safely home in operations involving rescue resources including a helicopter, four vehicles, four boats and 90 expensively-equipped individuals.

A bushwalker in the Murramarang National Park was wading in shallow water at a beach with no vehicle access when he suffered two severe puncture wounds to the top of his foot on December 27.

NSW Ambulance and Fire and Rescue NSW officers walked in to the beach, with *Batemans Bay 20* then transporting the patient and rescue crews to the nearest access point at Maloneys Beach so the man could be transferred to hospital.

Eight people, including a baby, were rescued from a stranded catamaran that ran aground on a headland near Batemans Bay late in the afternoon of January 27.

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter, a Surf Life Saving crew and both *BM 20* and *BM 30* responded. The passengers were rescued by the Surf Life Saving crew, with *BM 20* then towing the cat off the rocks before *BM 30* took over.

MR Batemans Bay and Surf Life Savers rescued eight people from this catamaran after it ran aground on a rocky headland. *Photo: Sam Strong, Bay Post/Moruya Examiner.*

The damaged and leaking vessel was taken over the bar and back to the marina where the owner was able to survey the damage.

The coordination and close cooperation between all rescue services proved critical in ensuring successful outcomes in both these incidents.

Doug Wilson

Crews watch over gruelling event on lake

First inland unit achieves rescue accreditation, plans new boat shed.

Marine Rescue Alpine Lakes Unit Commander Les Threlfo was the ideal marine safety controller for the annual Sri Chinmoy Multi-Sports Classic earlier this month.

UC Threlfo helped the Sri Chinmoy committee design the course, over 116km and mountains up to 1200m in height six years ago, with the event continuing to grow each year since.

The unit provided two safety vessels, skippered by Kyle Shadlow and Ann Foster, under UC Threlfo's command, for competitors in this year's swim and paddle legs on Lake Jindabyne.

A total of 52 teams, each of up to eight members, came from across NSW and the ACT. A UK man on his gap year also took part, with two competitors completing the course individually.

The event began at 6.45am with a 1.5km swim, followed by a 9km paddle, 7km run, 9km mountain bike ride, 2.5km swim, 5.5km paddle, 11km mountain bike ride, 12.5km run, another 42.5km mountain bike ride, 1.2km swim, 9.5km paddle and final 5km run to the finish. Competitors took part for glory, not prizes.

Three competitors needed the Marine Rescue crews' help due to either fatigue or cramps. Events like this provide the unit with valuable experience.

MR Alpine Lakes notched up two major achievements over the summer.

Police and Emergency Services Minister Michael Gallacher approved the unit's rescue accreditation.

This was followed by Snowy River Shire Council's agreement for the unit to lease land at the top of the boat ramp on Lake Jindabyne for a boat shed.

Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert said site earthworks, the preparation of a shed design and specifications for a Development Application, including wind and snow loadings, and ongoing fundraising were now needed ahead of the boat shed's construction.

Karin Davies

Site earthworks, shed design and specifications and ongoing fundraising are now needed.

Swim competitors wait to enter the water in the remote Horseshoe Bay in the Sri Chinmoy Multi-Sports Classic.

Search finds kayaker washed on to rocks

Missed 'sked' sparks major emergency operation south of Eden.

The summer holidays brought to Eden the expected rush of interstate visitors with their boats in tow and an increase in the number of transiting vessels.

Mild temperatures and weather made for very pleasant conditions on the water, however, MR Eden had its fair share of incidents with a number of assists.

Christmas would not be the same for the unit without the staging of the Sydney Hobart yacht race. As always, the volunteers manned the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre around the clock with a team from the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, providing HF communications for the fleet as it sailed down the NSW coast.

The weather was quite favourable until the yachts entered Bass Strait, when large swells rather than heavy winds caused a number to retire with gear failure. Several yachts returned to Eden to effect repairs.

This summer saw an increase in the number of small pleasure craft on Twofold Bay, including four adventure kayaks that set out on journeys south down the coast to areas with poor radio or mobile telephone coverage.

Two quickly turned back in unsuitable conditions, one managed a shortened voyage and the failure of the last to make his "skeds" with MR Eden sparked an intense search involving MRNSW and NSW Police on land and water.

The kayak had capsized in large seas south of Eden, in an area known for its poor radio coverage.

The man spent 40 minutes in the water struggling to stay afloat before he was washed ashore on to a rock platform without any radios, mobiles or emergency equipment. The search, successfully coordinated by our operator, led to the survivor being located some four hours later.

He has since contacted the unit and is working with us to enhance the safety of those taking to sea in such small craft.

MR Eden again played a crucial role in monitoring the Sydney to Hobart race fleet. *Photo: Roads and Maritime Services.*

As January drew to a close, we helped coordinate the rescue of a transiting foreign yacht whose engine mountings had broken, jamming its rudder and resulting in the prevailing south easterlies driving it towards the rocky coastline just north of Merimbula.

The MR Eden operator took the emergency call from the yacht three nautical miles off the coast and drifting at three knots. The Police Marine Area Command at Eden was alerted and MR Merimbula tasked to respond to hold the yacht clear of rocks. The yacht was eventually towed to Eden for repairs.

While the number of visiting vessels has now fallen, not so the vigilance of the MR Eden members.

John Steele

Dynamic leader built a strong foundation

Improved facilities and new vessel Merimbula Unit Commander's legacy.

Upgraded facilities and a new rescue vessel are among former Merimbula Unit Commander Barry Harrison's legacy following his recent retirement due to ill health.

Barry joined the organisation in 2005 and had held the Unit Commander's position for the past five and a half years.

Acting Unit Commander Bill Blakeman said Barry had overseen a period of substantial growth and development for the unit.

This had included membership doubling to more than 40 and the introduction of a more efficient and cost effective Naiad RHIB to replace the unit's old jet boat, before culminating in the relocation of the unit's operations to a new-purpose built radio room and training facility.

"Barry was a dynamic UC who displayed foresight, initiative and professionalism in his efforts to develop and improve MR Merimbula into a highly efficient and effective marine rescue unit," Bill said. "He oversaw the introduction of the unit's first Strategic Plan, providing direction and a path for future development. We are currently updating the Strategic Plan to ensure we maintain the momentum.

"The members have thanked Barry for his tireless commitment and hard work, leaving us a superb foundation on which to build."

The construction of the unit's first dedicated training and meeting room and relocated radio room was completed by Rankin Builders Pty Ltd in December, with the first radio shift on January 24. Costing about $150,000, the purpose-designed facility now contains a well-equipped training room, including an area for committee and mess meetings, a much larger radio room and additional storage.

MR Merimbula's Bill Blakeman, Ted Young, Rod Studholme and Lisa Wallace with the spill kit funded by a Bega Valley Shire grant.

The unit has received a $500 Bega Valley Shire Council grant to purchase an environmental spill kit, to help protect the pristine waters of Lake Merimbula.

Council Environmental Management Officer Daniel Murphy said council was thrilled to be able to help MRNSW purchase the kit.

Moama unit races ahead in its first year

Arrival of new rescue vessel increases visibility and community interest.

The organisation's newest unit, Marine Rescue Moama has set a blistering pace in its first year, with the construction of its base beside the busy Murray River, the delivery of its new rescue vessel and growing membership.

Moama 20, a $222,000 Ocean Cylinder, was delivered in January, increasing the unit's exposure.

Unit Commander Glenn Carr said membership had grown and the unit's activity had been increasing as the community's awareness of MRNSW grew.

"The arrival of *Moama 20* has increased both our visibility and interest in the unit," he said.

"Membership is growing steadily, which is indicative of the interest in the unit. When we started planning for the unit, there were four committed members. We officially opened last year with 12 and we now have 23.

"There is heightened interest among members in training on our new vessel. Its high standard of handling and equipment is evident to all who see it and there is no shortage of keen volunteers for training activities."

The unit took part in two joint-agency search operations during February, with each involving lengthy day and night searches stretching to a total of 24 hours on the water.

"The searches were significantly assisted with the night vision equipment on board. We have also been called out to several minor incidents where local boaters have required a tow."

The unit's base, at the Five Mile Boat Ramp, was used as the staging and briefing post for the recent Southern 80 ski race. "Its location was convenient for both competitors and officials," UC Carr said. "Unfortunately, the day before the event, the shed was covered in graffiti. It took three members half a day to clean the damage.

MR Moama's new base was used as the staging point for the recent Southern 80 ski race.

"*Moama 20* was on standby as a rescue vessel for the race, however, no major incidents occurred and any minor assistance required was handled by the resources provided by the race organisers." *Meet the Ocean Cylinder, page 36.*

What we've been up to

Among the 90 volunteers at last month's Illawarra SAREX ... MR Ulladulla members Terry Campion, skipper Jeff Peterson, Brian Thurecht, radio operator George Cross, Lisa Hardwick, navigator Brian Clayton, Kel Greathead, Richard Hargrave and David Lindley (see story Page 27).

Finance Minister and Bega MP Andrew Constance draws the lucky winning ticket in the MR Narooma boat raffle, along with the unit's raffle coordinator, Gail Cox. The winner was Brendon Crawford.

Police and Emergency Services Minister Michael Gallacher presents the first of 70 government-funded GoPro cameras to MR Shoalhaven Unit Commander Terry Watson. *Photo: South Coast Register.*

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey presents MR Sussex Inlet Unit Commander John Lang with the official commissioning certificate for *Sussex Inlet 30* (see story page 29). *Photo: Bob Wilson.*

What could be more patriotic than a lamington on Australia Day? MR Jervis Bay's Geoff Barlow enjoys a well-earned break from ticket sales at the Annual Duck Derby (see page 30). *Photo: Lester Shute.*

Hawkesbury 22 ... a fast, nimble platform that can be deployed 100km upstream on one of the State's most popular boating waterways.

New model sturdy and reliable for river work

Ocean Cylinder the latest vessel introduced to the rescue fleet.

The Ocean Cylinder is the newest model rescue vessel to join the Marine Rescue NSW fleet, selected for its sturdy reliability, which makes it ideal for work on two of the state's busiest - and most challenging - waterways for recreational boating, the Hawkesbury and Murray rivers.

With the organisation already familiar with the excellent build quality of the new Naiad Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) delivered by Yamba Welding and Engineering, MRNSW chose the North Coast builder to manufacture the new model.

'The trailer launch and retrieval is first class. I've actually done a one-man launch in 60 seconds.'

The robust build of the Ocean Cylinders gives the MR Hawkesbury and Moama units the confident handling characteristics and speed of a traditional RHIB but with the toughness and durability of puncture-proof, foam-filled aluminium sponsons that can stand up to the rigours of the river environments, such as on the Hawkesbury with its oyster shell-encrusted rocky foreshores.

The first Ocean Cylinder into the water for MRNSW was Hawkesbury's $211,000 7.5m model. Powered by a pair of 112kW 4-stroke outboards, *Hawkesbury 22*, also known as *Jill McGrath* in memory of one of the unit's foundation members, delivers a top speed of 35 knots and cruises at 28 knots.

MR Hawkesbury Unit Commander Merv Collins said the Ocean Cylinder was an ideal rescue vessel for the unit's operating area, extending from the mouth of the Hawkesbury at Broken Bay as far west as Windsor.

"Our vessel is the wide body variant. It was chosen to meet the demanding and varying roles routinely facing our unit," he said.

"The vessel has to provide a fast, nimble platform capable of deployments up to 100km up river (a 200 km round trip) with sufficient fuel endurance (480 litres) to provide a safety watch for river events or conduct Search and Rescue (SAR) activities in conjunction with other emergency services.

"It is also required to handle the often large swell and steep seas thrown up in Broken Bay when we are needed to support our colleagues on that open waterway."

Joint Boat Master David Stocks said: "Our operating environment routinely includes heavy fog and near zero temperatures in shallow, narrow and heavily trafficked sections of Sydney's longest waterway so crew comfort, spatial and situational awareness are very important.

"The cabin configuration allows for first aid treatment of multiple persons if required and for the crew to remain sheltered while conducting most phases of an overnight or SAR operation."

Communications equipment on the vessel comprises a Raymarine Class A AIS, Icom M505 Marine VHF, Tait 8200 DCN, GME 27 MHz and a NSW Ambulance Service GRN radio. The electronic navigation suite comprises a Raymarine E127 toggle and touch screen controlled multi-function display and a Raymarine A5 at the helm station.

UC Collins said that as electronic cartography (GPS charts) finished near Spencer, the Hawkesbury crew needed to be able to navigate visually, via radar, low light camera or thermal imagery for long periods at night or in fog.

"To aid with navigating in these conditions *Hawkesbury 22* is fitted with both HD colour radar and an iSmart low light and high sensitivity thermal camera. The iSmart camera supplied to the unit through the generosity of the local community is a true thermal camera with digital stabilisation and allows *HW 22* to manoeuvre around objects and locate people on very dark waters with many obstructions."

The Hawkesbury River is home to many events, ranging from the high octane Bridge to Bridge powerboats to the overnight Hawkesbury Canoe Classic paddle and many Duke

of Edinburgh Award expeditions. Uncountable pleasure craft use the river all year round and many properties are accessible only but water. MR Hawkesbury provides transport to these properties for NSW Ambulance officers in medical emergencies. All of these require different handling tactics and while the rounded gunwales can at times pose challenges when carrying a stretcher patient, *Hawkesbury 22* has completed each task successfully.

In the south-west of the state, in the busy port of Moama on Australia's longest river, the Murray, Marine Rescue Moama operates *Moama 20*, the second Ocean Cylinder introduced to the MRNSW fleet.

The $222,000 6.8m vessel was delivered in January.

Unit Commander Glenn Carr said the boat had proven popular with members, who were keen to train on their first operational vessel.

A key requirement of the boat was trailerability, allowing it to be tasked for operations distant from its base. Despite its considerable on-water speed and fuel capacity of 300 litres, giving the vessel considerable range, covering large distances by road will reduce these response times.

"The trailer launch and retrieval is first class. I've actually done a one-man launch in 60 seconds and the same for a retrieval, so we know we can be on the water fast when needed," UC Carr said.

The 6.8m model has an enclosed wheelhouse with double rear doors, a welcome feature in the cold inland winter environment. With a forward raked windscreen, a pair of roof hatches and sliding side glass, the boat also adapts to high daytime temperatures.

UC Carr said members especially liked the forward-raked windscreen that gave more room in the cabin, making it very comfortable for a crew of four.

"All the instruments and electronics are within easy reach and view," he said.

"The vessel is excellent for night work as the raked windscreen does not reflect the instrument lights, a common issue on a rear-sloping windscreen. We have also found there is no glare on the windscreen from external spotlights at night."

The electronics fit-out is to the same standard as on board the MRNSW Naiads. This includes a comprehensive radio suite, the latest Raymarine navionics package and thermal imaging camera for rapid navigation and searching, particularly useful in the mists common on inland waters.

"The infra-red night vision has been excellent. We've been on two night searches and it gave us good clear images so we could be confident we had done a thorough search," UC Carr said.

The cockpit size provides for recovery of casualties and the carrying out of towing operations for which there is the choice of a central tow post or a bridle on quarter mounted bitts.

Tailored to riverine use, *MO 20* has rails forward to allow over-bow boarding. It is fitted with side access doors on the rear working deck area, providing safe access for passengers and when assisting people from the water.

Moama 20 in operation on the Murray River.

"The bow and hull characteristics enable a smooth passage through the wake of vessels, even those towing wake boarders, which is popular here on the Murray," UC Carr said. "Sometimes these wakes can be up to a metre high but the Ocean Cylinder maintains good control, with no slapping of the waves at the bow or on the sponsons as it passes through the wake.

"The river has some tight turns in some areas and *MO 20* takes these with ease, even at faster speeds. With a draft of only 450mm, we can get in close to the banks when needed and the tough aluminium hull can handle the occasional contact without any trouble in waters with snags, which are common here."

MO 20 is powered by a pair of 86kW four-stroke outboards with performance comfortably into the 30 knots and more. Both vessels are in full 2C survey and capable of coastal as well as inland operations. They feature a vinyl wrap coating from Orca Marine Wrap.

TECH SPECS	Moama 20 Ocean Cylinder 6.8m	Hawkesbury 22 Ocean Cylinder 7.5m
Survey Class	2C	2C
Survey Length	6.5m	7.2m
Beam	2.45m	3.05m
Draft	450mm	550mm
WOT (Wide Open Throttle) speed	35.9 knots	35 knots
Cruising speed	28 knots	28 knots
Fuel capacity	2 x 150 L (total 300 L)	450 L
Operational range	179 nm @ 90%	189 nm @ 90%
Engines	2 x 86 kW 4 stroke 115 hp	2 x 112 kW 4 stroke 150 hp
Survey Passenger Capacity	6	6
Electronics	Raymarine package with E125 12" and 7"colour touch screens interfaced with Dragonfly Sonar; HD colour radome	Raymarine package with E127 and A5 touch screens; colour radar
Radios	Icom VHF, Icom handheld UHF (CB), GME 27 MHz	Icom VHF and DSC, GME 27MHz, Tait DCN
AIS	N/A	Raymarine Class A
Night vision	Raymarine T300 flir thermal imaging camera	iSmart low-light thermal imaging camera

What we've been up to

Police and Emergency Services Minister Michael Gallacher (fourth from right) and Parliamentary Speaker, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, inspect the site of the burnt-out MR Ulladulla base with the unit's Training Officer Keven Marshall, MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Illawarra Director Doug Musker, Unit Commander Ken Lambert and Illawarra Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell.

You couldn't say they lack flair ... Illawarra members practice lighting flares during the region's fire training staged at the Greenwell Point Rural Fire Service last month. *Photo: Glenn Sullivan.*

MR Newcastle supported Australia Day events, patrolling exclusion zones during activities on the harbour and a flypast by this Mustang and a Catalina. *Photo: Sven Johnson.*

Port Hacking 30 among the pleasure craft taking in the spectacle of the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race on Boxing Day. *Photo: Roads and Maritime Services.*

Commissioner Stacey Tannos, MR Ballina UC John Donoghue and the late David Waddell's children, Carol Youngberry, Robert Waddell and Kay Buckley. *Photo: Mireille Merlet-Shaw, The Northern Star.*

Community loses a committed volunteer

Doug known as the ABC's voice of local fishing and boating for 20 years.

Doug Dufty

The Evans Head community has lost one of its most dedicated volunteers with the death in January of Doug Dufty, aged 87.

Doug was one of three foundation members of the Evans Head Coast Guard, which was formed in 1976, becoming one of the first units to operate north of Newcastle on the NSW coastline.

He was one of the first coxswains appointed and later became Flotilla Commander from 1988 to 1996 and again in 2000.

With the changeover from the Coast Guard to Marine Rescue NSW, Doug joined the new organisation and was subsequently awarded Life Membership.

As well as his service to marine rescue, Doug was actively involved in other community organisations. He was elected as Secretary of the RSL Sub Branch and was a long-serving member of the Woodburn Evans Head RSL Club Board, of which he also was made a Life Member.

During World War II, he served in the Royal Australian Air Force.

On completing his service, he became a professional fisherman in Evans Head.

Doug was the proud recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia and the National Medal for his service to the community.

He was also well known in the district as the voice of local fishing, boating and weather conditions on ABC radio each morning for more than 20 years.

Doug retired from Marine Rescue in 2012 due to ill health and his knowledge and professionalism is sorely missed.

His funeral was held on January 15, with volunteers from MR Evans Head attending in uniform to pay their respects.

Ron Follers

Albert's hard work 'a gift' to Woolgoolga

Life Membership recognised his contribution to operations and fundraising.

Albert Day

The passing of another Life Member of Marine Rescue NSW was marked with the loss of MR Woolgoolga's Albert Day on January 12, at the age of 83.

Albert joined the unit, then known as Volunteer Marine Rescue, in November 1996.

He was a rescue boat skipper until 2001 and an active radio operator,.

Albert was still undertaking watches until last year, when poor health prevented him scaling the steep staircase to the radio room.

His wife, Kath, also a Life Member, was involved in fundraising for many years with the unit.

Albert and Kath were awarded Life Membership of the Volunteer Rescue Association in 2006, in recognition of their hard work in both operations and fundraising,

Their efforts were very much appreciated.

They were subsequently awarded Life Membership of MRNSW.

Members of MR Woolgoolga have passed on their condolences to the Day family.

Albert was a true gentleman.

We will look back on the part that he played with us as a gift to our unit.

We wish him smooth sailing.

Cherrill Powell

Alan became Nambucca's 'Mr Dependable'

Always the first to the boat shed, unflappable and generous.

Alan Smith

Members of Marine Rescue Nambucca are struggling with the loss of one of our most valued members.

Alan Smith passed away at the age of 79.

He had lived and breathed Marine Rescue since joining the then Volunteer Rescue Association in 2004.

He came to us in his later years and was keen to learn how to drive our rescue craft and do anything possible to help.

Alan became our unit's "Mr Dependable".

He was always the first to the shed.

He would open the doors and even launch the rescue vessel while waiting for the crew to arrive.

Once he had handed over the vessel, he would retire to the radios and then inform the appropriate agencies that were needed to complete the job.

Unflappable, he would monitor the welfare of all those at sea and keep an eye on what was going on around the shed.

Cups of coffee were waiting when you returned and even the occasional meal.

Alan's generosity was one of his strongest attributes.

He would often duck home and bring a tool or something that was needed in the shed.

Owen Rushton

Parents thank crew for a brilliant job

'Important thing is our sons are alive.'

We are the parents of the two young recreational fishermen, Malcolm and Ian Hancock, whom the Swansea [Lake Macquarie] Marine Rescue crew rescued from Moon Island late in the afternoon (of) 19 December 2013, after their 5m boat capsized. (See story, page 10.)

We can only imagine just how difficult a rescue it must have been, with Moon Island surrounded by rocks and reef which prevented the rescue boat from coming in too close, and presented an enormous hazard. The rescue crew did a brilliant job to get as close to the island as they could whilst dodging the rocks in the surging current.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the salvage of our son Malcolm's vessel which was towed back to the Blacksmiths boat ramp, and the prolonged and arduous effort put in by the rescue crew to get the submerged boat out of the water and back onto our son's boat trailer.

As your rescue crew would know, the boat has significant structural damage; the outboard motor is wrecked from being dragged upside down by the current through the rocks and reefs; and all the electrics - two way radio, lights, fish-finder etc - are ruined. Plus all of their fishing gear lost as well. But as much as Malcolm loved his boat, they are only mere material losses. The important thing is that our two sons are alive, safe, and back home with us for Christmas, for which we are extremely grateful. As the situation unfolded in a matter of just a few seconds, all their emergency gear of two-way radio, emergency flares and EPIRB could do nothing to help them, as they had no time to even reach that gear. It is a lesson in just how pear-shaped a situation can become before you can even draw a deep breath!

The outcome could have been total disaster if they had not had their lifejackets on, or if the current had been against them rather than aiding them in their swim to Moon Island. Amazingly, they only suffered a couple of small grazes and bruises from their ordeal, but we are sure the memory of it will be with them for the rest of their lives. No doubt, they have both learned a valuable lesson that they are not invincible.

So we would be very appreciative if you could pass on to all the crew at Swansea Marine Rescue our heartfelt thanks for coming to the assistance of our sons, and also our acknowledgement of the brilliant level of skill and ability that they displayed.

Tom and Claire Hancock

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To: lakemacquarie@marinerescuensw.com.au

Hi Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie,
I am the owner/skipper of the vessel that capsized off the coast of Moon Island yesterday evening. I'd like to thank everyone who was involved with our rescue and the salvage of the boat, as I didn't get a chance to thank everyone personally. Even though my boat is destroyed and wasn't insured I am so glad we escaped unscathed. We towed the boat home that night and arrived home about 4am.

I am sure by now you have seen the numerous UK newspaper articles detailing the event to varying degrees of accuracy.

I managed to salvage this photo from the SD card on my phone, taken at Blacksmiths ramp prior to launch.

Merry Christmas to all.

Malcolm Hancock

CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA
Home of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

Mr Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner

17 January 2014

Dear Stacey

On behalf of the Board of Directors and management of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and the competitors in the 2013 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race and the CYCA Trophy Series, we would like to thank you for your support of our events during December.

The race was a great success with only a very small portion of the fleet retiring from the race. The addition of the Clipper Round the World yachts added to the spectacle and boosted international participation in the race. We congratulate those skippers that received trophies at the conclusion of the event.

The success of the event could not have been achieved without the assistance provided by our supporters and specialist organisations. We appreciate the contribution made by the Marine Rescue divisions down the NSW South Coast.

We look forward to working in conjunction with you again on the 70th anniversary race during 2014.

Yours sincerely

Howard Piggott
Commodore

Mark Woolf
Chief Executive Officer

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