

Volunteers saving lives on the water

SOUNDINGS



Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 26, Autumn 2016

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Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

Cover Image

The crew of *Port Macquarie 30*, joined on board by their colleagues from the Sancrox Rural Fire Brigade, put on a colourful show at the head of the flotilla in the second Port Macquarie Australia Day sailpast.

Photo: Lindsay Moller, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

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From the Commissioner

It's full steam ahead for another busy year of service and progress.



Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

We are now well into the new year and fast approaching the end of the boating season, when the covers will be pulled over boats and our volunteers can take a welcome breather.

The peak season was far from ideal for boaters. The weather that kept many ashore also posed a serious challenge for our crews, who battled relentless heat, difficult seas and high winds to reach those in trouble or assist in search operations.

The crew of *Port Stephens 40* endured three knockdowns in 8m seas and our other units were called to respond to a series of emergencies, sadly including a number of fatalities, along with medical incidents and run-of-the-mill breakdowns.

But as activity on the water slows, we are in full swing for another busy year. As always, we have a range of initiatives to improve our services, finances, internal processes, public profile and training planned or already under way.

Our newest campaign for 2016 is the release of personalised MRNSW-branded plates for trailers.

Many people have personalised number plates on their vehicles but now, by stamping your identity on your trailer too, you are actively supporting MRNSW.

All the proceeds from the sale of the new plates will come to MRNSW, thanks to NSW Roads and Maritime Services and myPlates, who have jointly developed this product for our benefit (see page 5).

Our successful relationship with popular fishing and boating program, Reel Action TV, continues in 2016.

Its producer and host, Michael Guest, will present new MRNSW-focused safety messages throughout the new season, which starts on June 11 on Network Ten's One HD station.

The Scheme R (Rescue) training arrangements flagged as part of the new National Domestic Commercial Vessel laws are yet to be finalised.

As I have continuously stressed, it is imperative that any new requirements do not impose an unattainable or unreasonable burden on the nation's volunteer marine rescue services as a sector or their individual members. I am hopeful remaining issues can be resolved soon.

Members will be aware that last year we commissioned a series of property audits for MRNSW premises and facilities. The audit reports, which have now been distributed to units, highlight a range of rectifications needed to meet Occupational Health and Safety and Building Code of Australia requirements. Units may be able to undertake some of the more minor repairs and upgrades using their members' impressive skills and expertise, while other matters will involve larger-scale works.

These and other funding

Now, by stamping your identity on your trailer too, you are actively supporting MRNSW.

investments required to ensure we can continue providing our world class services safely and efficiently are the centrepiece of a bid for additional State Government funding for our organisation. There is no guarantee of success but I believe we have presented a strong business case and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott has given an undertaking to champion our cause with Treasury.

Many members devote considerable time and effort to perform a range of roles necessary to the good functioning of their units. Some of the most hard-working are our Unit Treasurers.

Headquarters is currently embarking on a project to upgrade

our financial reporting systems.

Based on a recommendation from the company's auditors, we are moving to a more flexible and responsive system, the cloud-based NetSuite.

The MYOB accounting system was introduced when MRNSW was established. This was sufficient to meet the needs of the day but as the company has developed and we have introduced new financial mechanisms for units through annual budget allocations and fundraising initiatives and a new vessel contributory system, we now need a new reporting mechanism to provide additional layers of information.

Our 45 units currently have around 150 bank accounts so it is important that we are able to quickly and accurately consolidate the holdings across the organisation to report our overall financial position in each year's Annual Report.

All data on the MYOB system at both unit and Headquarters levels will be migrated from MYOB to

NetSuite. We are aiming to have this transition completed for the start of the new financial year but this will depend on the complexity of the data to be moved across.

This will obviously mean some changes for Treasurers. A series of regional training sessions is planned to introduce these office holders to the new system. I thank them all, in advance, for their cooperation with the transition.

In closing, thanks must go to all our members who worked valiantly to keep the boating community safe over summer. It is a difficult and demanding mission but it should never be one without thanks.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner

Summer marked by tragedies on the water

Crews turn out to help 1300 boats in trouble over the peak season.

A series of severe storms and frequent periods of sustained rainfall marred the summer boating season, which was marked by a number of fatalities and rescues in challenging conditions along the coastline and inland.

An East Coast Low off the Hunter-Central Coast on January 6 resulted in five Maydays and the death of a Sydney sailor washed off his racing yacht. Another yacht was beached and *Port Stephens 40* endured three knockdowns in the conditions.

Four metre swells whipped up by ex-cyclone Winston battered the Northern NSW coastline in late February, forcing a major search exercise to be postponed.

MRNSW crews responded to a series of tragic emergencies over summer, including those from MR

Forster-Tuncurry, Tuggerah Lakes, Moama and Trial Bay.

Despite the persistent rain, boaters got out on the water when they could and in all, our units responded to more than 1300 incidents, including 302 life-threatening emergencies, from October 1 to January 31.

Our radio operators handled more than 116,000 radio transmissions and Logged On over 32,000 boats.

Our crews again provided operational support for the start of the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, New Year's Eve fireworks and Australia Day on Sydney Harbour. About a third of the race fleet retired when hit by a strong southerly, with *Jervis Bay 40* transporting the owner of one yacht to shore for medical treatment for a broken leg.



A rocky end to a day on the water ... this power boat was grounded at Fig Tree Point on Middle Harbour in December. Photo: Dave Beeforth.

Sydney Region units responded to 187 incidents from December 20 to January 31. Of these, 96 were in the week from Christmas to New Year, 79 of which were during new mid-week patrols initiated during this period. Crews, including MR Port

Kembla, responded to 26 incidents on December 31 and January 1.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked all members for their additional efforts to meet the heavy workload in trying conditions and often traumatic circumstances.



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From the Chair

Members respond respectfully and professionally to fatalities on our waters.



Chair
James Glissan QC

It was a sombre start to 2016 with a number of tragedies on our State's waterways.

Despite unfavourable weather in many areas over summer, boaters were keen to take to the water when possible and our crews were kept busy responding to a series of emergencies and other incidents.

Fortunately, the majority involved breakdowns caused by the usual troublesome triple of mechanical, battery and fuel issues, requiring a tow to safety, but others were far more serious.

The severe conditions whipped up by an East Coast Low claimed the life of an experienced Sydney sailor on January 6 when he was washed off his racing yacht *Amante* by a freak wave. We were fortunate that the crew of *Port Stephens 40* survived multiple knockdowns in an operation to reach the yacht *M3* in the same conditions. (See page 25.)

MR Forster-Tunccurry joined a Christmas Day search for a boater found deceased on shore, two men lost their lives while prawning at night on the Central Coast, an Irish man perished when he fell overboard from a houseboat on the Murray River at Moama and an elderly man drowned when his small vessel overturned on the Macleay River bar at South West Rocks late in February.

Transport for NSW has urged boaters - especially men, who made up all the State's boat fatalities in 2014/15 - to brush up on maritime safety.

Without any doubt, these tragedies have taken a terrible toll on the victims' families and friends and carry a heavy cost for our community.

The cost to the members of the emergency services who respond to fatal accidents, whether on the water, roads, remote regions or elsewhere, is not as widely or readily acknowledged.

Training, knowledge and

preparation certainly assist but cannot always prevent the deeply personal, visceral trauma of responding to such emergencies.

Members of MRNSW have responded respectfully and professionally to assist with these and other drownings in recent times, frequently called upon to carefully retrieve the deceased and return them to the authorities and their loved ones.

I thank all those who have been involved for their sensitive efforts in difficult circumstances, often exacerbated by the need to operate in challenging sea and weather conditions.

These operations are not what you expect the day to deliver when you report for duty.

Confronting unexpected serious injury, death and sadness can be troubling and difficult to process.

I want to assure each of you that there is not a skerrick of shame in feeling unsettled or distressed in these circumstances.

MRNSW provides critical incident support for members as part of our debriefing procedures.

Additional support and counselling is always available, particularly through our mutual support arrangements with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

I encourage any member who feels it would be helpful to talk through their experience and reactions to seek this assistance through their Unit Commander, Regional Controller or Member Services Manager Mat Smith at Headquarters. If you are in any way uncomfortable with talking to someone in our organisation, you can contact the RFS directly on 1800 049 933. All matters are treated in the strictest confidence.

I am sure that the families of all the drowning victims who have been sensitively and thoughtfully brought home by our crews would agree with

me that these members certainly have provided the highest standard of service.

On this note, I remind you that the Rotary Clubs of NSW stage the annual Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Awards to recognise the outstanding contribution to the community of members of six emergency services: MRNSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance and the Volunteer Rescue Association. (See page 10.)

Rotary decided last year that funds raised through the awards would go towards research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among emergency services personnel.

This will continue this year. I commend Rotary on this far-sighted initiative and look forward to the advancement in our knowledge and recognition of the impact of PTSD among the extended emergency services family.

Nominations for the 2016 awards close on April 20 and I encourage you all to nominate a member of MRNSW who goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Our members are reluctant to seek any public spotlight for their service but it is always important that credit is paid where it is due - and the more so for people who volunteer their time and efforts.

We ask a great deal of our volunteers and they do not disappoint in answering the call to duty in the face of risk, trauma and calamity.

Those on the water can only perform their duties with the support of those meeting their responsibilities in parallel on shore, whether in the radio room, ensuring hungry crews are fed, providing essential training or ensuring the unit operates efficiently. As always, I thank each and every one of you.

Good sailing
Jim Glissan

Bling up your trailer to support MRNSW

Proceeds from new plate sales support volunteers' work to save lives.

The latest addition to the range of personalised plates available to NSW motorists is a trailer plate designed especially for Marine Rescue NSW.

The new myPlates design is in MRNSW's colours and incorporates our logo and mission statement, Volunteers saving lives on the water.

All proceeds from the sales are directed to MRNSW, thanks to the generous support of NSW Roads and Maritime Services and myPlates.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the plates were a great way for boat owners to show their support for the valuable work of MRNSW volunteers.

"We're sure boat owners will be keen to take this opportunity to stamp their personality on their trailers as well as their vehicles,

knowing they're supporting a worthwhile cause at the same time," he said. "The plates are a terrific new fundraising opportunity and we're grateful to RMS and myPlates for developing this product for us.

"MRNSW receives valuable financial support from the State Government and members of the boating community through their boat licences and registration but we still rely heavily on our fundraising to provide our world class rescue services. This is another way to help ensure we can continue our work to help boaters stay safe on the water."

RMS Director of Maritime Angus Mitchell said safety across the 32,000 square kilometres of NSW waterways would always be the highest maritime priority for the NSW Government.

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"This could not be achieved without the invaluable assistance from the thousands of Marine Rescue volunteers. I am very pleased to be able to assist MRNSW in this innovative fundraising opportunity and I encourage NSW

boat owners to show their support by purchasing MRNSW personalised plates," Mr Mitchell said.

The plates cost \$149 to swap old for new. Extra annual fees apply to personalise them with your own letter and number combinations.

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Gill comes on board Marine Rescue e-shop

Discounts on clothing and equipment for volunteers and Radio Club members.

Customers of the Marine Rescue NSW e-shop now can purchase a new range of high-performance boating apparel and equipment.

MRNSW has welcomed Gill Australia as the latest supplier to support our volunteers' vital work to save lives on the water by selling their merchandise on shopmrnsw.com.au

The company is the supplier for sailing teams competing in high-stake events around the globe - including *Balance*, the winner of the 2015 Sydney Hobart - providing lightweight, comfortable, waterproof and thermo-dynamic apparel to enable crews to tackle extreme conditions.

Thirteen items from Gill's range, including waterproof jackets and trousers, UV-protection shirts and

shorts, beanies, gloves, kit bags, sunglass retainers, quick-dry towels and marine knives and harness rescue tools, are now available on the online shop. Generous discounts are available to MRNSW members in recognition of their service, as well as to units' Radio Club members to thank them for their support.

IT and Business Development Director Florian Glajcar said Gill was a leading international technical clothing brand for sailors and boaters.

"It's a great advantage to be able to offer our volunteers and Radio Club members a range of such high-quality merchandise at more than competitive prices. We're grateful to Gill for coming on board to support us in our mission," Mr Glajcar said.

Gill Australia Director Paul Schulz



Keep dry and warm with Gill Australia jackets and other merchandise, now available on the MRNSW e-shop.

said Gill was delighted to come on board with the MRNSW e-shop.

"We have a strong history around the globe of helping rescue organisations such as this and when the opportunity arose, we could not say no," he said.

"MRNSW performs an invaluable task in helping keep our boats

safe. A quick look behind the scenes and you realise the amount of work that goes into running an organisation such as this with the many volunteers who are relied upon to keep the wheels turning.

"We look forward to supporting MRNSW and its volunteers and members."

Last chance in Outdoor Getaway Art Union

BCF supports rescue services in Easter lifejacket campaign.

Time is running out to snap up your chance to get away into the great outdoors.

Ticket sales in the MRNSW Great Outdoor Getaway Art Union close on Easter Monday, March 28.

After an intensive summer sales campaign, MRNSW units will be ramping up their efforts again over the Easter holidays as boaters enjoy

their last extended period on the water before the winter layoff.

The Art Union has a fantastic \$281,500 prize pool, including a choice of offroad caravans, cash, two boats, four wheel drives and other vehicles and a quad bike.

The top five units for online sales as at March 2 were MR Port Kembla, Terrey Hills, Port Stephens,

Ulladulla and Lake Macquarie.

The Art Union will be drawn on April 26, with the winners to be contacted directly and published on the MRNSW website and in the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph.

For full prize details and to buy your tickets online, visit the MRNSW website, mrnsw.com.au

- In another great fundraising initiative, leading Australian retail chain BCF will donate \$1 from each lifejacket sold between March 10 and Easter Monday to marine safety services around the country, including MRNSW. Boaters can also take their old lifejackets in to BCF stores to receive a 20 per cent discount on a new model.



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Andrew triumphs in 11th Sydney to Hobart

Balance battles through as third of race fleet retires in rugged conditions.

It was 11 times cold, wet and lucky for MRNSW Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb, a member of the victorious crew of 2015 Sydney Hobart Yacht Race winner, Paul Clitheroe's *Balance*.

A strong southerly change with winds of up to 48 knots hit the fleet's frontrunners along the South Coast, forcing about a third of the fleet to retire, including favourite *Wild Oats XI* and *Black Jack*, whose owner was transferred to *Jervis Bay 40* and transported to shore for medical treatment for a broken leg.

Competing in his 11th Sydney-Hobart, Andrew outstripped his previous bests of second and third in the race's Division 1.

He said the first night of the race had been tough, although nothing unexpected from the forecast and

strategy the *Balance* crew had been following.

"When we got hit with the second predicted front the morning of the 27th, it came through a lot harder than we thought and stayed in a little longer. Luckily, we had a good strategy in place, which is evident when you look at how many boats had to retire," he said. "We didn't get out completely unscathed; we had mainsail damage and our owner was nursing a very sore back from being thrown from one side of the boat to the other after going off a wave. It lightened off at the right time for us. We managed to do some urgent repairs to our mainsail and push for the next point vital to our race strategy. In the end our plan worked and we were lucky enough to walk away with the prize."



MRNSW Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb, a member of the victorious crew of Sydney Hobart Yacht Race winner, *Balance*.

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Lifejacket rule for risky rock fishing locations

More needs to be done to reduce fatalities on our coastline: Minister.

The State Government has announced compulsory lifejackets for rock fishers at high-risk locations and a major new education campaign to reduce the number of fatalities on the State's coastline.

In the past four years, 37 rock fishers have died in NSW and only one was wearing a lifejacket.

A working group of stakeholders, government agencies and experts - including MRNSW Commissioner and State Rescue Board Chair Stacey Tannos - will determine the number and location of high-risk areas. It will also determine how risk should be measured, which could include fatalities and near drownings, wave dynamics, usage and accessibility.

Emergency Services Minister

David Elliott said legislation would be introduced to the NSW Parliament this year, after which rock fishers would have a one-year grace period before it was enforced.

"The message to rock fishers continues to be that they should wear a lifejacket at all times, wear appropriate clothing and footwear, check conditions including the weather and never fish alone," Mr Elliott said. "However, it is clear that more needs to be done to get that message through because the number of rock fishers dying each year has remained unchanged."

Commissioner Tannos urged rock fishers to always wear lifejackets.

"Fishing is a popular pastime in our country but you shouldn't pay for your dinner with your life," he said. "We have seen a terrible



Don't pay for your dinner with your life ... new rules will require rock fishers to wear lifejackets in high-risk locations.

loss of life from people drowning while rock fishing. MRNSW always encourages anyone on or near the water to make safety their highest priority and that means wearing a lifejacket."

The education campaign will

target culturally and linguistically diverse communities, improve warning signs and include visits to rock fishing locations by the Old4New van that allows boaters to exchange old jackets for discounted new models.

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Ken Bambling

Unit Commander, Leading Crew member, Marine Rescue Moama.



Marine Rescue Moama Unit Commander Ken Bambling says that like other members, the “rescue gene” is the reason he joined MRNSW.

Ken Bambling is the Unit Commander of the most remote Marine Rescue NSW unit, at Moama, on the busy but hazardous Murray River. Narrow and winding in many places, the Murray is a popular destination for NSW and Victorian motor boats, waterskiers, paddle wheelers, houseboats, canoeists, fishers and swimmers. It was the second MRNSW unit established on inland waters.

■ **I’m originally from Stuarts Point on the NSW Mid North coast.** I went to Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield in Sydney, then Agricultural College at Yanco in the Riverina, where I met my partner, before moving back to Stuarts Point to work on my parents’ avocado and banana farm.

■ **While growing up and living at Stuarts Point I was always a keen fisherman, owning several recreational fishing boats and spending many weekends offshore from South West Rocks.** About 14 years ago I moved back to the Riverina for career opportunities

and settled in Echuca Moama. I now manage a grain storage facility at Moama.

■ **Five years ago I was asked if I would be interested in joining a new MRNSW unit at Moama.**

Upon seeing the statistics for deaths on our stretch of the Murray River, the offer to have an input into reducing the toll was difficult to refuse.

■ **At that stage we had nothing except a group of like-minded members.**

The vessel, base and everything else were still in the pipeline. Mention must go to original Unit Commander Glenn Carr and Deputy Unit Commander Roy Maiden, who were pivotal in getting the unit from having nothing to where we are today. After six months as Deputy Unit Commander, I was elected UC about 18 months ago.

■ **MR Moama is a very small unit of a few committed members, most of whom have young families and jobs.** Their commitment to MRNSW and the

job we do in between their work and family commitments cannot be overestimated. We are still a work in progress but with support from MRNSW Headquarters, Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert and Regional Training Manager Glenn Sullivan, we are moving in a positive direction, with our membership beginning to grow. We now have 22 members.

■ **I would also like to mention the support given to the Moama unit by MR Batemans Bay.**

Despite being located hours away on the coastline, over the years the unit has supplied vessels, crew and resources to Moama for training and support during large events such as the Southern 80 ski race and inland water Search and Rescue Exercises. This is an excellent example of inter-unit cooperation and the whole organisation working toward a common goal.

■ **Attending Regional Search and Rescue Exercises at Batemans Bay and Bermagui has really**

enforced my interest and passion for the work MRNSW performs.

During a SAREX at Batemans Bay I heard a member talking about the “rescue gene” that many members seem to possess. I thought about this comment for a long time and realised that although it may not be a scientifically identifiable human characteristic, there must be something in all MRNSW members’ make up that makes us go out in the middle of the night, in rough seas and dangerous conditions, putting our personal safety at risk, not for any reward or glory but for the benefit and safety of the community. I guess that “rescue gene” is the reason I joined MRNSW.

■ **I live, work and am a member of a MRNSW unit based in a town two to three hours’ drive from the nearest coast.** But I can never forget where I came from on the Mid North Coast and the hours spent at sea. I still love being on the water most when I can’t see the other bank.

Volunteers tasked to assist at police centre

Joint coordination role provides operational, leadership experience.

Volunteers were given the opportunity to gain first-hand operational experience in joint-agency tasking and cooperation over the summer boating season.

Members were rostered to accompany senior MRNSW personnel operating at the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command over the holiday period.

MAC is responsible for the coordination of marine rescue operations on all NSW waterways. MRNSW units are required to report all serious emergencies to MAC.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the volunteer rostering was an expansion of last year's successful initiative to base Regional Controllers at MAC's Sydney headquarters over summer.

"This proved of great value, with

our personnel assisting MAC's Search and Rescue Coordinators in tasking MRNSW crews and boosting the two agencies' mutual understanding of each other's operational capabilities and requirements," he said.

"This increased knowledge and experience is valuable at all levels of our organisation, helping us to continually improve our response to boating emergencies.

"We are also committed to supporting volunteer training and development opportunities such as this, which provide our members with the ability to acquire a range of new operational and leadership skills and experience."

Volunteers were rostered to 'shadow' their respective Regional Controllers or Acting RCs during



All aboard ... MR Camden Haven member Robert Sargent on NSW Police Marine Area Command vessel *Nemesis* with Constable Russell Bateman and Sergeant Martin Settree.

their shifts. Those taking part included John Hatton (MR Lake Macquarie), Glenn Evans (Botany Port Hacking), Stewart Masters (Tuggerah Lakes), Robert Sargent (Camden Haven), Vicki Buchanan (Tuggerah Lakes), Ray McLeod

(Bermagui), David Hand (Port Jackson) and Tony Whybrow (Middle Harbour).

Deputy Commissioner Storey said volunteers also would be rostered at MAC over the coming Easter holiday period.

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2016 Rotary Award nominations open

Valuable recognition for our members.

If you know a member of Marine Rescue NSW who goes above and beyond the call of duty to serve their community, you can nominate them for a Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Award.

The 2016 awards were launched on March 9 at NSW Parliament House.

The Rotary Clubs of NSW stage the annual awards to recognise the outstanding contribution to the community of members of six emergency services: MRNSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance and the Volunteer Rescue Association.

MR Port Stephens member Eryl Thomas was named the 2015 MRNSW Volunteer of the Year.

Our other finalists were Dennis

Travers, from MR Forster-Tuncurry, Derek Ford, from MR Port Macquarie and Illawarra Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the awards were a valuable opportunity to acknowledge MRNSW members for their commitment to saving lives on the water and assisting the boating community.

Both volunteer and paid members can be nominated by their colleagues or members of the public. Nominations close on April 20 and can be made at RotaryESCawards.org.au

The winners will be announced at a gala dinner in Sydney on July 23. Funds raised through the awards go towards research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among emergency services personnel.



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Steber celebrates 70 years of boat building

Company reflects on journey from a backyard dinghy to modern factory.

One of MRNSW's key rescue vessel suppliers, Steber International, is celebrating 70 years in business.

When company founder, Bruce Steber, began building boats seven decades ago, he could not have imagined where that would lead.

Steber has now sold more than 10,000 runabouts, built almost 500 larger craft and completed well over 1000 contract repairs/refits and insurance work.

Bruce's son and company general manager, Alan Steber, gave a summary of his father's career to assembled staff during an anniversary celebration at the company's Taree factory.

Alan said the timing of the celebrations could not have been better as staff levels had increased

dramatically in the past six months.

"There is an increase in demand for our vessels, both for recreational and commercial use. Three refit vessels, added to the new boat order, are ensuring all production hands are on deck," he said.

Bruce left school at 14, starting work at a timber boat factory in Dee Why in Sydney.

"Two and a quarter years later, Bruce built his first dinghy by himself in his backyard. He sold the dinghy for 14 pounds, seven and six, which gave him money to build two more dinghies and so the business started," Alan said.

He said major highlights included Bruce selling his first boat in 1946; the move from timber to fibreglass construction in 1961; the first factory and showroom in



Celebrating 70 years in business ... Steber International founder Bruce Steber with wife Beryl and two of their sons, Alan and Graham.

1962; the change from sole trader to a proprietary limited company in 1966; and the relocation to Taree in 1973-1974. The company moved from small runabouts to larger cruisers in 1976, built its first surveyed commercial boat in 1978

and expanded the factory twice.

Bruce puts much of his success down to his wife of 65 years, Beryl, his daughter and three sons.

"Our staff and management have been a major asset along the way," Alan said.

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What we've been up to



A proud half-century ... members of Marine Rescue Woolgoolga, joined by their emergency services colleagues, MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Controller Stephen Reading and Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray (front), celebrated the unit's 50th anniversary in December. *Photo: Robert Watkin.*



Safe travels ... Reverend John Reid, accompanied by MR Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby and dignitaries, blesses Point Danger 20 and its crew at the Naiaid's January commissioning.



Jolly Rogers ... MR Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer welcomes Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director Roger Evans to a meeting at the unit's Point Clare base.



Preparation the key ... members of the emergency services, including MRNSW Unit Commanders, attend a NSW Tsunami Plan desktop exercise organised by the SES at Port Macquarie on February 19.



Practice makes perfect ... Forster-Tuncurry members Trevor Brown and Tony Inglis take part in a man overboard training exercise on board Forster 30.

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Acting PM runs nation from rescue vessel

Work for local specialists in \$20,000 project to replace old radio mast.

Rescue vessel *Iluka Yamba 30* briefly became the centre of national power during a January visit by Acting Prime Minister and Infrastructure and Regional Development Minister Warren Truss.

Mr Truss joined Page MP Kevin Hogan to assess road bridges in the electorate. After announcing a \$1.7 million upgrade of the Romiaka Channel Bridge near Yamba, the pair boarded MR *Iluka/Yamba's* rescue vessel for a brief tour of the Lower Clarence River.

The unit has changed the local skyline, replacing its long-standing A-frame communications mast with a single stainless steel pole and modern dipole base station antennas. Rather than overhaul the corroded mast and rusting footings, the unit decided to replace the ageing infrastructure.



Step on board for a river tour ... Page MP Kevin Hogan, Acting Prime Minister Warren Truss and MR *Iluka/Yamba's* Bruce Bodsworth, Peter Richards, DUC Jeff Clout and UC Frank Bond.

Unit Commander Frank Bond said the unit had been keen to employ local firms on the \$20,000 project as the funds for the work had been raised from the local community.

The design for the new mast was developed with Yamba design

engineers Michael Samms and Associates before Andrew Harris Engineering was contracted to remove the old mast and fabricate and install the new tower.

The new mast is freestanding and pivots like a boom gate to enable

maintenance work to be carried out, avoiding the safety issues inherent in climbing the structure.

The mast was installed in November, with Grafton's Northern Rivers Communications then installing the antennas and wiring.

Swift response to capsized on Evans bar

Joint communications ability results in seamless rescue operation.

A recent joint agency communications initiative resulted in two men being swiftly rescued when their 4.1 metre tinnie overturned on the Evans River bar on Sunday, February 21.

MR Evans Head Unit Commander Karin Brown recently organised the installation of Surf Life Saving NSW radios in the MR Evans Head base and on board *Evans 30*.

This is in line with the recommendations of the 2014 MRNSW communications review.

The two local services can now communicate directly with each other to expedite their response to emergencies.

Deputy Unit Commander Kira Hartland was on duty in the radio tower when the tinnie's skipper called the Evans Head base at 8.25am to Log On, providing his vessel registration and size, time of

return and destination.

DUC Hartland Logged On the vessel but, given its small size, noted that she needed to pay close attention as it traversed the bar.

Ten minutes later, the tinnie came to the bar entrance, with the skipper and passenger both wearing lifejackets as they watched for their break in the 1-1.5 metre waves.

The skipper committed and took a small wave, which pushed the vessel side-on to the waves. The next set came through and, as the skipper attempted to straighten up his approach, within moments the vessel had overturned, tipping the pair into the water.

The Evans Head Casino Surf Life Saving Club sits just below the MRNSW radio tower across the river from the base and the two services work closely together, both in emergency operations and



Evans 30 retrieves the capsized tinnie from the Evans River after it capsized on the bar, sparking a joint MRNSW-SLS rescue operation.

at community events such as the town's annual Fishing Classic.

DUC Hartland said this cooperation had shown on the day.

She said the SLS radios had proven instrumental in a swift response to the capsized tinnie, as she had been able to contact Surf Com to directly to inform them that the vessel had overturned.

An SLS crew on an Inflatable Rubber Boat arrived within a few minutes to pluck the pair out of the water before *EH 30* was tasked to remove the vessel from the river channel, where it had been swept by the incoming tide.

DUC Hartland said the seamless operation had been testament to inter-agency preparedness.

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FURUNO

Pt Danger strikes up the band for new boat

Air Force and Navy join locals for commissioning ceremony on the Tweed.

The Royal Australian Air Force Band struck up a jaunty tune and a contingent of *TS Vampire* Naval cadets lined the jetty as the newest vessel in the MRNSW fleet glided up the Tweed River to its official commissioning ceremony.

A crowd of Marine Rescue Point Danger volunteers, sponsors, local residents and dignitaries from both sides of the NSW-Queensland border gathered at the Ivory Coast Marina on January 14 to welcome the \$277,000 7.5m Naiad RHIB, *Point Danger 20*, accompanied upstream by the unit's other vessels, *PD 30* and *PD 10*.

Richmond MP Justine Elliot, Tweed MP Geoff Provost, Tweed Shire Cr Barry Longland, Gold Coast City Cr Chris Robbins, Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings and MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Chair Jim Glissan and Northern Rivers Director Bernie Gabriel attended the event.



Members of Marine Rescue Point Danger and *TS Vampire* Naval cadets welcome *Point Danger 20* to its formal commissioning ceremony in January.

Unit Commander Glenda Ashby said the new vessel represented the commitment of MR Point Danger to the core MRNSW value of volunteers saving lives on the water.

Commissioner Tannos said the new vessel, able to travel up to 15 nautical miles offshore, represented a significant boost to the capability of marine search and rescue volunteers operating on the State's

northern border.

"It is the latest of 65 new and refurbished vessels delivered to date, at a cost of almost \$15 million, under our landmark fleet modernisation program," he said.

He acknowledged the vital financial support of the State Government and boating community for MRNSW's services, support from local organisations and equally, the

unit members' fundraising efforts.

Managing Director of the boat's builder, Yamba Welding & Engineering, Bill Collingburn, presented unit Operations Officer Kerry Kane with a commemorative ship's bell before the ceremony concluded with the vessel blessing by Reverend John Reid from the Tweed Heads Anglican Church.

Darcy Henriksen

Cruiser strays in Bay after Australia Day stay

While most people enjoyed the public holiday, volunteers from MR Brunswick were called out early on Australia Day to rescue a 28-foot cruiser that had suffered a mechanical failure of both engines in poor conditions off Cape Byron.

The boat's skipper called the unit's radio base just after 9am to report that he was stranded, with another passenger on board, in large swells and strong north-east winds blowing his vessel towards the coastline.

While conditions were poor on both the Brunswick and Ballina bars, *Brunswick 30* was deployed to locate the vessel.

MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Controller Stephen Reading said the

crew of *BR 30* had demonstrated outstanding seamanship in the conditions, crossing the bar and proceeding to the boat's last known position about 1nm east of the Cape.

The wind and swell made it too dangerous to cross the Brunswick Bar with a vessel under tow, so the cruiser was anchored off Byron Bay's Main Beach, before *BR 30* returned the two people on board to Brunswick.

"The following day, the cruiser left Byron Bay in an attempt to reach Ballina but one motor again failed and on advice that it was too risky to attempt the Ballina bar with only one motor, it returned to Byron Bay," Mr Reading said. "A couple of days



A different rescue operation for this 28-foot cruiser, which washed up on Main Beach at Byron Bay. Photo: taojonesphotographer.com

later *BR 30* supplied the vessel with fuel but attempts to start the motors failed due to a complete failure of its electrical power supplies and the vessel was again anchored in the

bay. Unfortunately, it subsequently slipped its anchor and was washed up on Main Beach. In a delicate operation, it was removed by crane and taken to Ballina for repairs."

Unit hopes new base will attract volunteers

'Leaning tower of Ballina' set for demolition as building work starts.

The Marine Rescue Ballina unit is hoping it will be able to attract more volunteers once its new, state-of-the-art tower is finished.

After years of lobbying all levels of government, work has finally started on the \$2.3 million building.

It is expected to be completed by October this year.

The tower, which was designed by Bangalow-based architect Dominic Finlay Jones, is being built by Woollam Constructions.

MR Ballina Unit Commander John Donoghue said the new air-conditioned search and rescue coordination centre would be much more comfortable for volunteers and would have a better view of the Richmond River, its bar and the ocean.

The new building will combine a Search and Rescue Coordination Centre, training/meeting facilities, office space and amenities.

Last year, MRNSW Commissioner

Stacey Tannos ordered the unit's old radio tower, which was on a lean, to be shut down. The tower is now due to be demolished.

At the moment, the volunteers are working out of their training room adjacent to the old tower, using cameras to view the river and ocean and monitor bar crossings.

The unit currently has 51 volunteers on its books but UC Donoghue said he expected the new facility would provide a much-needed boost to numbers.

The new asset is being funded by the State Government Public Reserves Management Fund, Ballina Shire Council, MRNSW, a State Community Building Partnership Program grant and a Federal Government National Stronger Regions Fund grant. The unit has raised \$150,000 for the technical fit-out of the radio room.

In mid-December, *Ballina 30* returned two men safely to shore



Work has begun on the new MR Ballina unit, with the 'Leaning tower of Ballina' (at right) now set to be demolished. Photo: Alf Boston.

after their 14m game fishing cruiser caught fire off Ballina.

The cruiser's crew issued a Mayday when the fire started in the engine room, activating the vessel's two fire suppression systems. The fire was brought under control but smoke remained a danger to those on board. *BA 30*, on the water for an

operational assessment, reached the stricken vessel in just five minutes.

The cruiser was taken under tow, with its crew remaining on board to monitor the situation.

NSW Fisheries assisted with river traffic as the boats crossed the bar, with Police and Fire & Rescue NSW meeting the vessel at the wharf.

Ex-cyclone keeps SAREX crews ashore

Rescue personnel meet on border to hone search, navigation skills.

Sixty members of Northern Rivers units assembled at MR Point Danger's Duranbah training centre for a condensed Regional Search and Rescue Exercise in late February.

The on-water search exercise planned for the second day of the event was postponed due to the rough conditions and 4m swell persisting from ex-cyclone Winston.

Members of the Point Danger, Brunswick, Cape Byron, Evans Head, Iluka-Yamba and Woolli units took part, along with their colleagues from Volunteer Marine Rescue Queensland and Surf Life Saving NSW and Queensland, undertaking intensive theoretical sessions to hone their search and rescue and navigation planning and skills.

Proceedings began with an overview by MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Controller Stephen Reading, followed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Mark Sedgeman and NSW Police Marine Area Command Search and Rescue Coordinator Sergeant Paul Farquharson.

Cross-border resources available in the State's north were highlighted in a presentation on the capabilities of and specialist equipment carried on the NSW and Queensland Westpac rescue helicopters.

MRNSW incident response reporting, tasking and recording processes also were highlighted.

On Sunday, Sgt Farquharson staged a tabletop exercise to give 30 volunteers the opportunity to put



Evans Head members Scott Mohr, Bill Bates Stephen Cooper take part in a tabletop exercise at the Northern Rivers SAREX.

into practice the skills learned the previous day.

Members from Woolli, Iluka/Yamba and Evans Head also attended a briefing by Point Danger Deputy Unit Commander Nick Wythe on the new

web-based radio communications systems, Reditalk and Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP). Point Danger members were thanked for the considerable effort that went into hosting the SAREX.

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Woolgoolga celebrates 50 years of rescue

Unit moving to new home but name and service will remain the same.

Founding and current members of MR Woolgoolga, Coffs Harbour MP Andrew Fraser, Mayor Denise Knight and local residents celebrated the unit's 50th anniversary in December.

In 1965, teacher John Small called a public meeting after a near drowning off Woolgoolga Headland. All local boat owners were invited and agreed on the need for a rescue organisation. John Small was elected President and three Vice-Presidents, a professional fisherman, an amateur fisherman and a skin diver, were selected to ensure even representation.

The meeting raised enough money to purchase a base station radio but instead the Civil Defence Organisation supplied a base radio with a range of 60 miles. Within

two weeks every boat owner in Woolgoolga, professional and amateur, was a financial member and 23 radios were in operation through the Civil Defence network, with a range of 16 miles over water.

The group had at least two fast boats and two skin divers and a first aid attendant on call.

The organisation's first rescue was in early 1966, when a freak wave overturned a vessel on a fishing trip from Arrawarra. John Small and Bill Prior, who had also been fishing in the area, noticed the boat had not returned. They went to Arrawarra Headland, where they heard faint calls for help coming in on the strong breeze and spotted the survivors clinging to the upturned hull. They raced back to their boat and retrieved the survivors.



MR Woolgoolga's Mitchell Harvey on board *Woolgoolga 30* with Coffs Harbour MP Andrew Fraser and Kerrie Fraser at the unit's 50th anniversary celebrations. Photo: Robert Watkin.

After forming as the Volunteer Rescue Organisation, a long association with the Volunteer Rescue Association and now as part of MRNSW, the unit has a new 9.5m boat and is looking forward to moving to Arrawarra Headland,

closer to the more protected beach where most recreational fishers launch their vessels. Although it will be based in a different location, the unit's name and service to the community will remain unchanged.

John Murray

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Tragedy follows warm welcome for yachties

Race competitor washed overboard and yacht beached on return journey.

The summer season at MR Coffs Harbour proved a mixture of very busy days and inevitably horrendous weather keeping fishermen at home and yachts in the marina.

When the unit has around 50 boats Logging On on a mid-week morning, you know their skippers have been experiencing cabin fever!

Coffs 30 had few call-outs except for the day it was slipped for maintenance, when our neighbours from MR Woolgoolga stepped in to assist a boat and search for an overdue vessel. With the exception of a few flat batteries and boats out of fuel, it seems that the boating public has heeded warnings about the need for good boat maintenance.

The unit's volunteers were on hand to provide competitors in the 35th Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Yacht Race with bacon and egg rolls and drinks on January 3. The bulk of the fleet of 41 yachts arrived in a 12-hour overnight period, with the



A warm and hearty welcome ... the crew of *Morticia* enjoys a MR Coffs Harbour bacon and egg roll after crossing the finish line second in the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Yacht Race.

barbecue tent cooks keeping the hotplate sizzling. The unit's overnight watchkeeper also was kept busy, taking radio calls from yachts vying for the Navigator's Prize, based on their ETA at Coffs.

Tragically, severe weather on the return voyage to Sydney saw a sailor

drown after being washed overboard from *Amante* and our colleagues at MR Port Stephens knocked down during an operation to rescue *M3*, which ended up beached.

The unit took the MRNSW promotional trailer to the Old4New lifejacket campaign and expired flare

collection days at Coffs Harbour, Sawtell and Mylestom boat ramps in mid-January. About 50 lifejackets were traded up and 407 flares handed in. Along with the continuing Art Union sales, next on the agenda is the annual Easter Fishing Classic.
Lindy Powells

Pt Macquarie flies the flag on national day

Don't pay the ferryman until the rescue vessel gets you to the other side.

Rescue vessel *Port Macquarie 30* was the proud head of the flotilla of tour boats and vintage vessels from the Maritime Museum for the city's second Australia Day sailpast.

Members of the Sancrox Rural Fire Brigade joined the crew on board to provide a water jet display.

On shore, MR Port Macquarie volunteers handed out boating safety information and sold tickets in the MRNSW Art Union. After the sailpast, *PM 30* was moored at the Town Green wharf, with inspections of the vessel proving popular.

A new boat owner was fortunate that a crew was nearby on clean-up duties at the unit's boat shed when he took on the Port Macquarie bar in conditions that would have led more experienced boaters to think twice.

The skipper took a very large swell head-on, with his catamaran becoming airborne before coming down backwards, resulting in the boat being swamped and a passenger injured.

PM 20 was under way in a few minutes while the radio base called for an ambulance.

Two of the busy summer season's more unusual operations occurred when the local car ferries broke their drive cables within four days of each other. Both were mid-river and fairly well loaded with assorted vehicles and passengers.

This seems to happen intermittently every couple of years. We use *PM 20* to raft alongside and move the stranded ferry to the preferred shore to offload and then



PM 20 muscled up to move one of two stranded car ferries to shore during a busy summer for MR Port Macquarie crews.

sometimes pick up the council repair crew and run out the new cable. It is always a source of amusement to our crew as passengers make comments such as "you guys are kidding yourselves, you're never going to move this with that toy

boat", closely followed by surprised exclamations when we do.

We hope to be in our new SARCC by mid-May and work is also under way on the boat shed to accommodate the new *PM 30*.
Neil Yates

Preventable breakdowns add to workload

Nature strikes back: lightning knocks out sailboat's navigation and radios.

Like most areas on the beautiful NSW coastline, it has been a busy summer in Camden Haven.

With many visitors and locals enjoying our waterways and venturing offshore, accidents are bound to happen but the number of call-outs for vessels with engine or mechanical failures and even running out of fuel is perplexing.

Sometimes, however, acts of nature can cause damage at sea. A sailing vessel travelling from Forster to the Camden Haven was struck by lightning during a violent storm.

Having lost all navigational and radio communications and with the use of only a mobile phone, the skipper called the MR Camden Haven base, alerting Radio Operator John Mason to the situation.

The skipper decided to come closer ashore, where he sighted North Brother Mountain, one of the impressive three "brothers" named by Captain Cook in 1770.



The crew of *Camden 30* flies the flag high and proud during the unit's patrols on Australia Day, as a busy summer holiday season draws to a close.

Recognising his location, the skipper entered Camden Haven under his vessel's own power with the unit's rescue crew on standby to assist if needed.

In December, a yacht en route

to Port Stephens contacted Radio Operator Michael Lill reporting engine trouble.

Camden 30, with duty skipper Ken Clancy and crew Ken Rutledge, Alan Malcolm, Ron Neville and

Robert Sargent on board, reached the yacht about three miles out.

After lowering its sails, the vessel was taken under tow and returned to a local wharf.

John Mountier

Crowds flock to water safety showcase

Award-winning Expo educates and enthralls local, visiting boaters.

The award-winning Marine Rescue Forster-Tuncurry Water Safety Expo - held at the pinnacle of the summer tourist season when thousands of holiday-makers, many towing boats, flock to the Great Lakes Region - drew big crowds again this year.

The popular event, staged in the shadow of the unit's radio tower on the Forster breakwall, is the perfect showcase for the vital work of MRNSW and its volunteers' commitment to saving lives on the water.

The Expo was named the Water Safety Event of the Year at the 2014 Water Safety Awards in recognition of its role in educating the community and raising awareness of water and boating safety.

While the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service was unable to take part this year, the unit's rescue vessels, *Forster 30* and *Forster 10*, capably demonstrated their prowess on the water, as well as the expertise of their crews, much to the enjoyment of the visiting public, especially the many children.

NSW Roads and Maritime Services, the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and Barclay's Marine also took part in this year's Expo.

Police took the opportunity to raise awareness of the safety precautions needed to ensure a safe return when putting out to sea, particularly in small boats,

Boaters were again urged to always Log On with the MR Forster-



Crowds enjoy the chance to inspect MR Forster-Tuncurry's rescue vessels at the 2016 Water Safety Expo.

Tuncurry base, giving details on their destination, number of people on board, their intended return time and contact details.

It is always important to Log Off when returning to harbour so we know you're back safely.

Overall, we had ofour assists in November, seven in December and eight in January, emphasising once again, the significance of the expertise and commitment of our volunteers.

Wendy Borchers

Trial Bay not daunted in tug boat challenge

Supply run helps out waiting crew.



Trial Bay 30 is dwarfed by the tug boat *Svitzer Olivia*, at anchor while avoiding the January East Coast Low.

A man died and another was rescued after their boat overturned and sank in rough conditions on the hazardous Macleay River bar at South West Rocks on February 24.

A nearby boater raised the alarm with MR Trial Bay radio operator Donna Polkinghorne about noon. *Trial Bay 30*, with skipper Jon Cragg and crew Rob Hose and Helen Fedoroff on board, and Rescue Water Craft *TB 11*, operated by Josh Woodhead, were deployed. The RWC located both men, who were then retrieved from the water by *TB 30*. Both had been wearing life jackets.

On January 5, *TB 30* saved three men stranded on a jet ski almost half a kilometre offshore.

Radio operator Chris Parkinson received a call from a member of the public about 1.50pm reporting a jet ski sinking half-way between Hat Head and Black Rock.

UC Chris Mainey and Mark Winn responded and after a fast and

bumpy ride in a 10-15 knot north-easterly wind and swells up to 2.5m, had located the men within half an hour of the call for help.

TB 30 was punching above its weight when it responded to a large-scale call for help on January 7. The tug *Svitzer Olivia* had anchored in Trial Bay to avoid the East Coast Low forming off the Hunter region but had only enough provisions on board for the direct trip from Brisbane to its home port in Melbourne, prompting its crew to make a request via radio for extra supplies.

Leading crewman Mark Winn was dispatched to the supermarket to purchase the supplies and ferry them to *TB 30* for the quick trip to the tug outside the river.

Coxswain Jon Cragg, Mark and crew members Helen Fedoroff and Fran Jones were invited on board to tour the tug's bridge, engine room and deck area as thanks for their help. The tug's crew also handed over a \$100 donation to the unit.

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Safety warning on shifting bar channel

Central Coast crews respond to 17 emergencies in just one month.

Recreational boaters have been urged to take extra care when entering or leaving the busy Brisbane Water via the Ocean Bar at Little Box Head.

Marine Rescue Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer said the channel at the exit to Brisbane Water had moved east and was now only about 8m wide.

"It also has reduced in depth. Roads and Maritime Services have added two new channel markers around Lobster Beach. I understand they are also planning a four knot speed restriction," he said.

"Vessels using the channel are advised to travel close to the eastern shore to avoid running aground."

The unit was busy throughout summer, with 17 operations during January alone.

About 3pm on January 30, Radio Operator Bill Schwartz received a phone call from Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club, reporting a capsized and sinking vessel on the offshore sandbar at the northern end of Ocean Beach. The Club had

saved one person and a dog, with three others still in the water.

Ian Radford and his crew on *Central Coast 22*, who were undertaking a navigation training exercise around Maitland Bay, were immediately diverted to Ocean Beach, taking the rescued person and dog aboard.

The crew then picked up the other three people, who had reached shore.

Only 10 minutes after this call, the radio base received a VHF marine radio call from a 9.5m yacht in Broken Bay with four people on board. The owner reported he had no forward gear and needed help to cross the hazardous Little Box Head bar to return to his mooring at Ettalong.

CC 21 was tasked to assist, with Bob Sullivan and crew meeting the yacht near Little Box Head and taking it in tow for the bar crossing.

On January 19, the skipper of a 9.6m motor cruiser with four people on board off Long Reef radioed the base for help. Its anchor line was



Back safely ... *Central Coast 21* returns a 9.6m cruiser disabled when its anchor line caught in its props to its Daleys Point jetty.

caught in its twin propellers and the vessel was drifting towards the shoreline at Dee Why. With the vessel likely to hit the shore before a Central Coast rescue vessel could reach it, the MR Terrey Hills radio base advised that *Middle Harbour 30* was on a training exercise on Sydney Harbor and could reach the cruiser within 30 minutes.

MH 30 reached the cruiser and took it under tow, before *CC 21*, with Gordon Ellis, Max Landells and Geoff Warr on board, took over and returned the cruiser to its berth at a

private jetty at Daleys Point.

Hunter/Central Coast Regional Controller Neil Grieves called the unit on January 13 to assist an 8m Wakeboard boat with four people on board.

The boat was damaged while crossing the Little Box Head bar about 7.30pm.

Norm Smith, Bob White and Bruce Lorking responded on *CC 21*, locating the vessel at the southern end of Lobster Beach and towing it Empire Bay.

Ron Cole

Norah Head celebrates first female coxswain

Ferry skipper earns praise after gaining new marine rescue qualification.

Members of Marine Rescue Norah Head are celebrating the success of their first female Coxswain, Fiona Perram.

Fiona, who has previous experience as a commercial ferry skipper on Sydney Harbour, has now been a member of the unit for almost two years.

Federal Member for Dobell, Karen McNamara, who is a strong supporter of our unit, presented Fiona with her Coxswain's Certificate at a special ceremony at the unit, praising her achievement.

Ms McNamara also presented Peter Langdon with his Leading Crew Certificate. Peter is a keen

fisherman and ventures out on Lake Macquarie on his sailboat when time allows.

Communications Room manager Bill Hignett also received his National Medal, recognising 15 years' service. Bill was a paramedic for many years and his skills are a valuable asset for the unit.

The unit provided a safety vessel for Redhead Beach Surf Club's annual ski race from Norah Head to Moon Island, Swansea, on January 16. A few competitors in the afternoon's two race events ended up in the water but no assistance was needed.

Lee Deacon



Top achievers ... Dobell MP Karen McNamara and Unit Commander Trevor Burkett (second from left) congratulate Fiona Perram and Peter Langdon for their new qualifications and Bill Hignett (right) for receiving the National Medal.

Our Mayday one of five in atrocious weather

Port Stephens crew emerges battered but safe from triple knockdown.

Wednesday, January 6 started with a gale warning for the Hunter Coast.

By the following day, five Mayday calls had been made, a sailor had drowned after being washed overboard from his racing yacht, another yacht had been beached and seven MR Port Stephens crew members had survived three knockdowns in atrocious conditions whipped up by an East Coast Low.

The Port Stephens unit's first job of the day was at 9am when *Port Stephens 30* assisted a vessel that had broken its mooring and was being bashed against a local wharf.

Just before noon, the 52 foot Arun class *PS 40 (Danial Thain)* was tasked to head north to help with the search for the missing yachtsman, knocked off his boat by a huge wave in the seas north of Broughton Island as it returned from the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Yacht Race.

Before it could reach the search zone, *PS 40* took over a tow from NSW Police vessel *WP 24* of a distressed yacht that had issued a Mayday, to allow the faster police boat to search for the sailor.

Our crew battled the seas at the port entrance to deliver the disabled yacht to a safe mooring within the bay. By 4.40pm, the wet and tired crew members were asked if they would join the search for the yachtsman.

Without hesitation, they headed out into the combined sea and swell of 4-7 metres and winds in excess of 50 knots.

The Police Marine Area Command then asked *PS 40* to tow or escort the missing sailor's yacht, *Amante*, back to port. Skipper David Jack decided it was too dangerous to take *Amante* under tow so the crew closely escorted the yacht back to port.

During this operation, MAC asked if *PS 40* could assist *M3*, a 15.8 metre sailboat being blown north-



Knocked around but safely home after the *M3* operation ... *Port Stephens 40* crew members Ron Lighton, Laurie Nolan, Mike Smith, Richard Pizzuto, Paul Sullivan, Ian Drummond and Tom Miller.

west up the coastline at a rapid 7-8 knots after losing its steerage and sails in the conditions on its return journey from Coffs Harbour.

Following a quick hand-over, a replacement crew left the dock at 8.20pm. After a long chase north, the rescue crew caught up to the yacht as it reached a beach just south of Seal Rocks.

Our crew was about to pass a tow line to the yacht when it hit the breakers and ended up on the beach, with its crew abandoning ship and making it to shore.

Just as that happened, an eight metre wave hit the *Danial Thain* and rolled it on its side. It was hit twice more and knocked flat so that the crew on the bridge of the self-righting vessel were under water.

Everyone had lifelines on, securing them to the vessel. Two crew members sustained injuries but thankfully all were still on board and safe.

Both *PS 40* and *M3* issued Mayday calls. The five *M3* crew members were retrieved from the beach by police, with *PS 40* making its way back down the coastline to its base, arriving about 5.30am.

The skipper of *M3* and two crew members later visited a formal



Washed up ... *M3* lies on the sand after being blown north up the coast without steerage or sails and beaching south of Seal Rocks.

debrief being held at the unit, thanking the rescue crew for their efforts.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey praised the enormous skill and courage of *PS 40* skipper Ron Lighton, engineer Mike Smith, navigator Richard Pizzuto and crew members Laurie Nolan, Tom Miller, Paul Sullivan and Ian Drummond.

"These crew members have put the safety of others ahead of their own to fulfil our mission of saving lives on the water," he said.

Our radio base that day also was a credit to MRNSW, with Mike Grover, Colin Cahill, John Vassallo and Peter Baldwin handling the five Maydays plus the emergency

involving our own crew.

Congratulations to both our radio and boat crews – you performed admirably.

Four of the crew members from this operation also were among the *PS 40* crew awarded the 2015 Australian Search and Rescue Award for their bravery and seamanship during a rescue operation to save two people from a yacht in similarly cyclonic conditions during the East Coast Low storms last April.

For the full story of the *M3* rescue operation, read Richard Pizzuto's account at <http://www.marinerescueportstephens.com.au/recent-rescues-assists>

Tony O'Donnell

Tragedy reinforces value of constant training

Police commend Tuggerah Lakes volunteers for expertise in trying operation.

Members of MR Tuggerah Lakes took part in an intensive sea and air search for two men who drowned while prawning overnight in late January.

The search, stretching over 12 hours, began at 5am on January 20, continuing in oppressive heat.

A report that a body had been sighted near Pelican Island was received soon after the search resumed at 7am the following day.

The body of one man was located on the eastern side of the island and the second on the western side. The crews of *TL 20* and *TL 21*, accompanied by police, returned the bodies to the unit's South Base.

All crews and radio teams worked as a professional, well-trained unit.

This professionalism was acknowledged by Police Local Area Commander Rod Peet, who was impressed by the members' dedication and expertise under

the emotional and physically trying circumstances. It was a sad way to reinforce the fact that constant training and repeated exercises on the water instill knowledge.

This tragedy was followed by an unfortunate incident on Australia Day that served as a reminder about the danger of fire on boats.

Three people were forced to jump into the water when their fibreglass boat was engulfed in flames, burning to the waterline within three to four minutes. All three were hospitalised with burns. People should evacuate fibreglass boats immediately should a fire erupt.

The commitment of our members was honoured at our December meeting, with Dobell MP Karen McNamara presenting three awards.

Godfrey (Goff) Morgan received the National Medal recognising 15 years' service in the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and MRNSW at both



Leap for your life ... the charred remains of a fibreglass boat that caught alight on Australia Day. Photo: Ian Hodge.

the Central Coast and Tuggerah Lakes. A much loved and respected member, at 80, Goff still attends most Saturdays to help out the duty watch and is an active fundraiser, always willing to sell raffle tickets wherever needed.

Goff's wife Ann received her MRNSW Long Service Medal for 10 years of invaluable service. Mrs McNamara also presented John

Adair with his 10-year Long Service Medal. A Skipper and Leading Crew member for many years, John now devotes his time to fundraising activities and unit maintenance.

Member Vicki Buchanan was nominated for a Wyong Shire Council Australia Day Award for Excellence in Training and the unit for an Environmental Award.

Suzanne Younglove

Upturned boat sparks joint search operation

Boaters safe but failed to report capsized in darkness on Swansea Bar.

Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie skippers have been polishing their skills in training exercises with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

This training aims to provide the paramedics on the helicopter with practice at being winched on to and off the rescue vessel.

Our skippers also gain valuable experience in maintaining a course and speed while operating the vessel with unfamiliar wind pressure from above.

These exercises followed the unit's work to assist the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. The Swansea radio base provided a radio checking service for competitors from mid-December through to the race start.

With each yacht required to call the radio base to check its HF radio's operation, the base managed

a total of 114 checks to ensure the yachts' radios were effectively transmitting and receiving on both 4483 and 6516 frequencies.

Over the Christmas holidays, a major search was sparked when the radio base received a call from a vessel to report an overturned boat just off Swansea Heads.

Three of the unit's rescue vessels, Roads and Maritime Services, Surf Life Saving, Police and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter joined forces in a major search operation while Police worked to determine whether any individual/s were missing.

It emerged that three men on board when the boat overturned on the Swansea Bar the previous night had swum to safety but failed to notify authorities of the incident.

Garry Sullivan



Steady as she goes ... MR Lake Macquarie skippers practice precision manoeuvres with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

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MAKING WAVES

Greater Sydney News

Swift response to medical emergencies

National honour for Hawkesbury padre.



Marine Rescue Hawkesbury member Fr Carmelo Sciberras, officiating at the blessing of *Cottage Point 30*, has been awarded an OAM.

Four medical assists were among 33 operations conducted by MR Hawkesbury over December and January, highlighting the training, skill and versatility of the unit's crews.

The unit responded to 15 calls for help in December, including 11 tows caused by mechanical problems and two medical calls, one of which was as first responders to a patient suffering from diabetic collapse.

Hawkesbury 21 was near Juno Point at the entrance to the Hawkesbury River, towing a broken-down vessel to safety, when a cruiser in nearby America Bay radioed for help for a woman on board who had collapsed and was unconscious.

The boat under tow was anchored as *HW 21* responded. On arrival, the crew found the woman unconscious but breathing. She was placed in the recovery position and oxygen was administered while *HW 22* transferred NSW Ambulance paramedics to the vessel at speed.

The patient had regained consciousness when the paramedics arrived and recovered on the scene.

In January, 12 tows as the result of mechanical issues further highlighted the need for regular maintenance on all boats.

Unit volunteers were engaged in maintenance on *HW 21* at our duty wharf when a tinnie with an agitated man and his two sons arrived seeking help. The man had been stung by a catfish and was suffering extreme pain. His arm had become numb, he was experiencing chest pains and the crew assessed that he was going into shock. Hot water therapy was applied to help reduce the pain and oxygen administered before paramedics transported the man to hospital.

Despite having only one rescue vessel on duty in January, the unit responded to every call for assistance. *HW 22* was on duty on Sydney Harbour on New Year's Eve and after the fireworks, was tasked to tow a 6m runabout to Gladesville.

As the crew connected the tow line, the starboard motor failed, restricting the vessel to 6-8 knots and taking out the power steering, which subsequently meant *HW 22* was out of action for two months.

In a well-deserved honour, respected member Fr Carmelo Sciberras was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the Catholic Church in Australia and to the Maltese community of NSW on Australia Day.

Ken McManus

Party early, work harder over festive season

Terrey Hills keeps watch over thousands of summer boaters.

More than 4400 boaters on board 1640 vessels had an experienced team looking out for them as they enjoyed their time on the water over summer.

The Radio Operators at Marine Rescue Terrey Hills were keeping watch over the Sydney region's waterways around the clock, Logging On and tracking 890 boats on local trips and another 750 vessels transiting along the coastline.

In December and January, the unit handled more than 6500 contacts, of which about 5500 were radio calls. The unit also managed overnight radio traffic for the Point Danger, Batemans Bay, Narooma and Eden units.

In January alone, the unit responded to calls for help with more than 125 incidents, ranging

from the usual engine, battery and fuel issues to the lost and aground.

The new owner of an old 50ft wooden boat got more than he bargained for when he took a wrong turn at dusk in the Hawkesbury River near the end of his delivery voyage from Sydney Harbour and put the vessel hard aground.

He departed in a leaking dinghy to get help, leaving a bemused delivery crew of two on board. More than two hours later they called MR Terrey Hills for help.

Broken Bay Police Marine Area Command responded and found the vessel taking water on the incoming tide but the crew and owner safe. One man's dream was about to turn in to an expensive salvage operation.

Thanks go to all our members who carried the 24x7 workload over the busy season and our



Members of Terrey Hills get to grips with the finer points of lawn bowls at their Christmas party ahead of the summer busy season.

colleagues from all the Sydney units whose rescue crews responded to incidents on the water.

It was just as well the unit had prepared for the busy season by holding an early Christmas party, with about 30 members and their partners enjoying a few games of barefoot bowls and a barbecue at

the Pittwater RSL. On average, the quality of their radio work was rated as much better than the quality of their lawn bowling.

The unit has also kept up its training regime, with members continuing to update their first aid and resuscitation certification.

Matt King

Crew triumphs in David and Goliath tow

New coxswain demonstrates deft handling in challenging conditions.

A crew from MR Cottage Point had the chance to put both their skills and their new rescue vessel to the test during a David and Goliath operation.

A 16m Riviera lost power to one of its engines and was experiencing difficulties with its second about a mile off Whale Beach.

Broken Bay 30 shadowed the stricken boat to Barrenjoey Headland to rendezvous with the 11.5m *Cottage Point 30*, which would tow the large boat to the Ku-ring-gai Motor Yacht Club wharf.

After securing the tow line in demanding conditions, the crew got the Riviera under their control, thanks to some deft handling by the unit's newest coxswain Luke Andrews and the coordination of the deck crew.

Taking the boat into a tug tow, Luke, assisted by Marcus Collignon

positioned on the power boat, skilfully brought both vessels to rest at the wharf, despite being blind to everything on the starboard side.

The skilful handling of a vessel can only come from quality training, so on a quiet Saturday the D1 team followed their standard 7am to 7pm duty shift with a night navigation exercise on *CP 30*.

The crew, Luke Andrews, Patrick O'Brien, Brigitte Pers, Simon Woodward, Tim Pike, Marcus Collignon and visiting MR Kioloa member John Stevenson, was led by MR Master David White.

Departing Cottage Point, they made their way up through Brisbane Waters to Woy Woy. Not only was this the starting point for the exercise but as luck would have it, also home to a fabulous fish and chip shop beside the wharf - an amazing coincidence!



Size doesn't matter ... *Cottage Point 30* returns the larger power cruiser to safety.

A hearty dinner was enjoyed and while the crew waited patiently for the sky to fully darken, some curious and fascinated locals were given an impromptu tour of the recently commissioned *CP 30*.

With the extensive cabin electronics suite set to night mode and the interior lights turned to red, the crew rotated through

various positions throughout the journey back, with all sharing time at the helm, navigation and communications stations and as lookout. Navigating a vessel at night, particularly in narrow channels, is a challenging activity, demanding a significant amount of planning, effort, concentration and team work.

Tim Pike

'Rules of the road' vital for boating safety

Crews on the scene as vessels come to grief on rocky point and bombora.

The need for a thorough knowledge of navigational markers and the correct side on which to pass them has been highlighted in two recent operations on Sydney Harbour.

In January, MR Middle Harbour went to the assistance of a power boat that had attempted to pass a green lateral marker on Fig Tree Point on the Starboard side while heading out to sea, resulting in the vessel running aground on the point.

By the time the rescue crew arrived, the ebbing tide had dropped to the point where the boat was stuck on the point until the next high tide, when it was able to float free.

Fig Tree Point is a rocky point in Middle Harbour with a shallow reef that juts out into the channel towards Quakers Hat Bay.

Although marked with a green

lateral channel mark, it occasionally traps an inexperienced or distracted skipper and this was not the first time a vessel had passed on the wrong side of the mark and run aground.

In February, the crew was called to assist a vessel that had gone inside the cardinal marks (western side of an eastern marker) that signify the Gowlland Bombora off Dobroyd Head.

The vessel, with one adult and two children on board, capsized in the swell breaking at the bombora.

A nearby yacht club boat was able to offer assistance and get the kids out the water.

Everyone on board was cleared by paramedics at the Middle Harbour unit's base at the Spit but during the tow the vessel sank and the tow line had to be cut.



MR Middle Harbour crew members training on board the unit's new Naiad, MH 20, and Steber, MH 30. Photo: Brian Roberts.

Another mark that is commonly ignored is the Safe Water Mark near Bradley's Head. The Harbour Master's Directions spell out that all vessels must pass with the mark to Port. Commercial vessels abide by this rule, however, recreational boaters not following the rule and cutting the corner at Bradleys Head

create the potential for a serious accident to occur.

The unit, meanwhile, also has been putting its new Naiad rescue vessel, *Middle Harbour 20*, through its paces. The boat, acquired from MR Nambucca, has been on the water since Christmas Eve.

Dave Beeforth

At the heart of NYE command and control

Keeping order in the Sydney Harbour Operations Centre and on the water.

Spent New Year's Eve in SHOC - the Sydney Harbour Operations Centre at the NSW Roads and Maritime Services base, at Rozelle - which controls all the water activity for major events on Sydney Harbour.

On such occasions, MRNSW vessels are under the control of the SHOC, unless there is a major incident, when the NSW Police Marine Area Command will step in.

The centre of the harbour becomes a marked exclusion zone for these events, primarily for protection from the fireworks fallout, as well as creating a stage for the various events that take place.

Many spectator craft seek their vantage spots outside the exclusion zone during daylight and their orderly anchoring is controlled by an RMS Zone Controller assisted by RMS and MRNSW patrolling vessels. A shift change takes place about

5pm when the evening crews who will end up working into the early hours of New Year's Day take over.

All vessel assist requests are directed to the SHOC for a decision on whether the situation is urgent or the vessel is safe and can wait until the show is over, when the MRNSW vessels will be released to assist.

An MRNSW liaison officer is based in the SHOC to coordinate between vessels in need, our duty vessels and MR Terrey Hills. I was asked to assist in the SHOC in 2014 and was glad to have the opportunity again in 2015.

All requests for assistance came into the SHOC to the telephone and radio operators.

The basic requests were passed to me and I contacted the vessels, discovered their needs and assured them they would be assisted after 1am. About 11.30pm a 'phone



MRNSW Sydney Regional Controller Chris Gillett briefs crew members on their role in the New Year's Eve operation.

around' confirmed how many boaters still needed help.

Depending on the vessel's destination, the home base of each MRNSW vessel and their patrolling location, each MRNSW crew was allocated a task to undertake as soon as they were released.

All the taskings were passed to

MR Terrey Hills so its radio operators knew to expect the MRNSW vessels to Log On when they began each assist.

All parties cooperated, those assisted were grateful and the SHOC Commander was happy with the result.

Tony Whybrow, Middle Harbour

Officer's lucky escape in vandalism attack

'It makes you wonder what these senseless individuals are out to prove.'

A crew from MR Jervis Bay was quick to respond when a competitor in the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race was forced to retire after its owner suffered a broken leg in turbulent conditions whipped up by a strong southerly change that struck the fleet off the South Coast.

Black Jack, a 21.5m Volvo 70 that finished fifth on line honours in 2014, was about 30nm off Narooma when it turned back up the coastline to transfer the 74-year-old sailor to shore for medical treatment.

The crew of *Jervis Bay 40*, Skipper Peter Kielar, Ross Harlen, Russell Pauley and Paul Haslam, with NSW Ambulance paramedics on board, met the yacht in the bay to transport the patient to HMAS Creswell.

As the smooth operation wound up about 10.30pm, *JB 40* was

tasked to a search for a reported man overboard off Collingwood Beach. A search by *JB 40* and onshore police failed to produce any result and was called off.

Watch Officer Lester Shute was then completing the unit's shut down procedures for the night at a computer beside a window in the base about 11.45pm when he was shaken by a loud noise.

"At first I thought it was a huge electrical short and I checked all the radio and computer equipment," he said. "I soon discovered that the window had been shattered from someone outside throwing a rock or other projectile at it.

"Luckily, I had just got up from the computer and the window wasn't penetrated. It certainly shook me up though and as I couldn't see into the dark outside I had no choice



Watch Officer Lester Shute back at work in front of the shattered window in the MR Jervis Bay base.

but to call Triple Zero. The Huskisson police arrived in very quick time.

"It could have been a very serious accident had I been in front of the computer and the projectile had smashed through the window.

"MRNSW volunteers put themselves at risk to help boaters at sea but a nasty incident such as

this on land makes you wonder what these senseless individuals are out to prove."

Anyone who witnessed the incident at 11.45pm on Sunday, December 27, at the MRNSW base in Voyager Park, Huskisson, should contact Huskisson police or Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.



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Crew's marathon operation to welcome 2016

Tows, breakdowns, pump-out and chaos: Pt Kembla joins New Year's Eve party.

New Year's Eve 2015 marked the first time MR Port Kembla had been tasked to take part in the end-of-year festivities on Sydney Harbour.

The crew of *Port Kembla 30* departed early, expecting a quick, smooth trip up the coast to provide crowd control and other operational support for the event.

Soon into our voyage we were tasked to assist a runabout suffering electrical difficulties off Wombarra. We took the vessel under tow before it regained power after about an hour.

Arriving in Sydney, we refuelled at Rozelle and were heading to the MR Middle Harbour base when we heard a radio call between MR Terrey Hills and a yacht in Farm Cove reporting a vessel dragging its anchor and requesting immediate assistance as a collision was imminent. *PK 30* had just passed Farm Cove, so the crew executed a tight U-turn and were able to prevent a collision, before being

tasked to assist a vessel in Store Bay suffering mechanical difficulties with 12 people on board, including eight young children. The boat was easily located, as everyone on board was waving frantically.

With some skilful manoeuvring by the helmsmen, the boat was retrieved from the tightly packed bay and taken under tow back to Hunters Hill.

No sooner had this operation been completed than the crew was dispatched to assist another vessel near Grotto Point. Arriving at the scene, we could not find any vessel matching the description provided and it was soon reported that another boater had assisted.

By 3pm we arrived at MR Middle Harbour, before heading for the 4pm event briefing. Once we were back on the water in our designated patrol zone, things quietened down until *PK 30* was released from its sector to attend a vessel taking on water off Garden Island.

PK 30 has a high capacity



A boat with a view ... *Port Kembla 30* arrives in Sydney Harbour to provide operational support for the New Year's Eve fireworks.

diesel pump on board and while the flooding was quickly being conquered, the source of the water could not be identified and the boat kept taking on water, resulting in a decision to beach it at Double Bay.

In an unusual approach, it was towed by *PK 30* on its starboard and an RMS vessel on its port in a dual tug-tow, escorted by another RMS vessel.

With the vessel safe, *PK 30* proceeded back to its designated patrol area, only to find two unlit

kayakers weaving their way through a high traffic area in pitch black.

PK 30 escorted the tourists back to shore, ensuring their safety and preventing an almost inevitable collision in the darkness.

After keeping order in the chaos that ensued with the lifting of the exclusion zone following the midnight fireworks, the crew was finally stood down at 2.30am on New Year's Day after more than 165 nautical miles on the water.

Tom Dragutinovich

Seven boaters rescued in a week at Ulladulla

The Marine Rescue Ulladulla unit has a new leader, following former Unit Commander Ken Lambert's decision to stand down due to ill health.

Operations Officer Dave Hall has stepped up to the role. Keven Marshall remains Deputy Unit Commander.

Mr Lambert had been Unit Commander for the past three and a half years.

The unit rescued seven people on board three boats stranded by engine and battery problems in one week at the start of February.

Early on February 7, a 5m runabout with two people on board called for help with an engine breakdown 1.2nm east of Lagoon Head. Skipper David Lindley and

crew Doug Musker, Rolf Zerbes, Brian Williamson and Lisa Hardwick responded on *Ulladulla 30* at 7.20am. The runabout was located quickly and towed to Ulladulla Harbour by 9.50am.

Three people were then stranded on a 5.3m vessel with two flat batteries near Crampton Island on February 10.

Peter White, Dave Hall and John Taber were deployed, managing to pass a battery booster pack to the boaters in choppy conditions. After the boat was successfully re-started, *UL 30* accompanied it back to Ulladulla Harbour.

An engine breakdown on a 5m runabout with two people on board less than a nautical mile east of Bannister Head on February 14 saw



Allan Brook and David Lindley playing out the towline on *UL 30* for a Valentine's Day assist off Bannister Head. Photo: Lisa Hardwick.

Skipper Dave Hall, David Lindley, Allan Brook and Lisa Hardwick depart Ulladulla Harbour at 7.46am. *UL 30* took the runabout under tow, returning just after 9am.

UL 30 also acted as a safety

vessel for the annual Makai Cup, anchoring a marker buoy east of Bandalong and then following the pack as the paddlers battled, then rode a brisk north easterly wind.

Lisa Hardwick

Houseboat fatality ends season on Murray

Moama volunteers instrumental in search to find missing man on river.

A fatality on the busy Murray River at Moama three days before Australia Day was a tragic end to the busy summer boating season on the NSW-Victorian border waterway.

A 25-year-old Irish man was reported missing from a houseboat downstream of the Victoria Park boat ramp in the early hours of Saturday, January 23.

Volunteers from MR Moama, on board *Moama 20*, joined Police and other local emergency services in the search for the missing man.

MO 20 was tasked with conducting search duties from the houseboat, moored close to the 1710 River Marker on the Victorian side of the border, to Morrisons Wharf about 200m downstream.

About 10.30am, the crew of *MO 20* located a possible image of the deceased on the Side Scan fitted to the vessel before activating the Down Vision to obtain a clearer



The crew of *Moama 20* took part in a large multi-agency search operation mounted after a man fell overboard from this houseboat on the Murray River at Moama in January.

image. The location was about 30m downstream from where the man had entered the water.

MO 20 was then tasked with river closure duties while Victorian Police divers conducted a grid search of the identified location

before retrieving the man's body, which was returned to shore aboard *MO 20*.

Unit Commander Ken Bambling said the crew believed the search equipment fitted to the vessel had been instrumental in assisting with

locating the deceased. He said the crew had appreciated the follow-up support and care for their welfare they had received from all levels of MRNSW after the incident.

"We were certainly not left to deal with things on our own," he said.

Eden base hearing boaters loud and clear

New communications infrastructure on Timbillica Hill was in full operation for the peak summer influx of visiting boaters to the Far South Coast and the annual Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

Coverage provided by the Channel 16 installation on the site is extensive and, given the right conditions, it is not unusual to hear transmissions from Hobart and as far north as Port Stephens.

Needless to say, we are thrilled with this new facility, which gives us coverage of some of the most inaccessible parts of the southern coast. Our HF coverage also was enhanced by a permanent installation to replace the temporary antenna on HF 2524, stabilising the operation of this frequency.

Quite a few yachts competing in the Sydney-Hobart sought refuge

in Eden on the way south after suffering damage during the early heavy weather. Some were assisted into port by the NSW Police launch *Nemesis*.

Our volunteers were rostered at the base 24 hours a day until the last southbound vessel passed Gabo Island. Some northbound yachts also pulled into Eden, most notably *Ichiban*, which damaged a rudder after striking a submerged shipping container south of Eden. The local Marine Area Command was on hand to help her tie up.

The holiday period saw large numbers of boats Logging On each day, with no major incidents to report. Members were on duty for extended hours to make sure all vessels were safely back at the ramp, before handing the radios over to MR Terrey Hills to monitor



The view south west from the MR Eden base, over the new rain gauge towards Mt Imlay, where a Channel 81 repeater is located.

via the RoIP system. We are looking forward to a busy period over Easter and the fishing competitions ahead of the relative calm of winter.

The base is now the Bureau of Meteorology's official rainfall measurement station in Eden, with a rain gauge mounted on our deck rail. The main role is to provide

official rainfall figures for the local mussel farm, whose operation can be affected by run-off caused by heavy rain.

Visitors to Eden are always welcome to pop in to have a look at our operations and enjoy one of the best views on the coast.

John McKinnon

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NSW Emergency Services Community Awards 2016

Recognising Community Service, Supporting PTSD Research



These awards acknowledge and celebrate outstanding Community Service of NSW Emergency Service Personnel while supporting Australian Rotary Health PhD Research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Emergency Services.

Show how much you appreciate Community Service provided by our local heroes - nominees must be appointed as paid or unpaid members one of the six NSW Emergency Service Organisations indicated below.

Nominate an Emergency Service Officer you think has provided outstanding Community Service above and beyond the call of their normal day-to-day duties - please nominate online at:

www.RotaryESCawards.org.au



Launch:
9 March 2016

Nominations Close:
20 April 2016

Finalists Announced:
8 June 2016

Presentation Dinner:
23 July 2016
Dockside Pavilion
Darling Harbour



Six keep watch at shipshape Bermagui

What's timber and floats? A boating hazard near harbour mouth.

The summer season was busy for members of Marine Rescue Bermagui, who wrapped up the holidays with three operations on January 29 alone.

Bermagui 30 had undertaken 17 assists by early March, many resulting from water in fuel.

The triple-mission Saturday began with the crew returning one boat to safety after it called for help when they spotted a disabled vessel that had not sought assistance.

This boater was rescued in a second trip, followed by a third journey to pick up a large piece of wood posing a boating hazard near the Bermagui Harbour mouth.

In early February, the unit was called to a vessel with a failed engine and a passenger suffering serious sea sickness. The skipper generously gave the unit a \$500 donation, for which Unit Commander Alec Percival expressed his thanks.

However, volunteering with



All hands on deck during a routine maintenance shift on board *Bermagui 30* ... Steve Angelo, Mark Donnelly, Di Manning, Denise Page, Peter Strain and Volker Aebischer.

MRNSW is not all about the time on the water helping boaters, picking up debris and whale watching. A training session every now and again also is devoted to general maintenance and a bit of spit and polish.

A total of 25 members are

currently undertaking training courses. The unit now has six Watch Officers, Lauren Lowder, Ray McLeod, Denise Page, Alec Percival, Steve Angelo and Lynda Bailey, with five more in training. Lauren did a great job as the unit's Watch Officer at the annual Monaro Regional

SAREX. All members, both radio and crew, enjoyed the event, which was a good opportunity for new rescue vessel crew and for Watch Officers to practice running a situation room and using the suite of incident documentation.

Denise Page

EPIRB alert signals Christmas Day capsizes

Boaters rescued from catamaran, runabout in festive season emergencies.

Volunteers from Marine Rescue Batemans Bay didn't even get to sit down to Christmas lunch before they were tasked to respond to an EPIRB emergency beacon activated off Batemans Bay.

The EPIRB was detected only for a short time but as it was registered, this provided authorities with family contact details for its owner.

MR units at Batemans Bay, Narooma and Bermagui tried to make contact with the registered vessel. Just before noon, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Lifesaver 23 located a 6m catamaran capsized about 3nm off Durras with five people sitting on the upturned hull.

The helicopter winched two of the survivors off the boat and took them to shore before returning to winch

off the remaining three, completing the operation just a few minutes before *Batemans 30* arrived.

With the capsized catamaran posing a serious hazard for coastal marine traffic, including the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race fleet, *BM 30* took it under tow. The 3m seas and 25 knot wind made for a slow return to Batemans Bay.

Unit members responded swiftly to save a man knocked overboard when the rear of his 5m runabout was tipped from behind by a wave while crossing the Batemans River bar on January 3. A member of the public alerted unit Radio Operator Peter Varkulevicius to the skipper's plight about 10.30am.

BM 21, on a training run nearby with Angelo Di Bella, Thomas



Ready to respond 365 days a year, even before Christmas lunch ... the Batemans Bay unit's rescue fleet.

Czarnick, Peter Elekessy and Robert Loftus on board, immediately sped to the scene, reaching the man within five minutes and plucking him from the water to safety.

Although he was wearing a lifejacket, he told the crew the life-

saving device had not inflated when he attempted to activate it.

Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert said the Batemans Bay crew members deserved congratulations for their speedy and professional response to both emergencies.

A cow of a day for Merimbula rescue crew

High profile Art Union campaign attracts funds and new members.

The inclement weather that was the dominant feature of the summer boating season fortunately did not result in increased emergency calls to MR Merimbula.

In one of their more unusual taskings, the crew of *Merimbula 30* towed ashore a floating mass of barnacle-encrusted hawser (a thick mooring rope or cable) that was posing a navigational hazard for boaters off the coastline just before Christmas.

And among the offshore debris from the January Bega floods, an obstacle reported to be an upturned hull turned out to be, on closer inspection, a dead black Angus cow.

Members' ticket selling in the MRNSW Art Union has continued apace in the New Year, with the increased presence of our volunteers at shopping centres and markets also generating a number of membership enquiries.

As a result, the unit will hold its

first information day for prospective members in March.

The Old4New Lifejacket van's visit to the Merimbula boat ramp provided another worthwhile opportunity for our volunteers to promote boating safety.

The end of school holidays has not diminished the steady stream of interstate boaters visiting the region.

The joint NSW Roads and Maritime Services and Maritime Safety Victoria publication, *Get to Know Your Interstate Boating Rules*, which highlights the differences in boating rules between NSW and Victoria, has proven a useful educational handout.

February's launch of our E-News publication for our Radio Club members was well received.

This is proving to be a cost effective way of communicating safety topics and events of local interest.

The unit has begun its annual



MR Merimbula volunteers participate in a joint safety promotion with the Old4New Lifejacket van at the Merimbula boat ramp.

training cycle, with a local Search and Rescue Exercise with the Eden Police Marine Area Command in March to be the first major test of our crew's skills.

Communications inter-operability with our local Surf Life Saving club will soon be significantly enhanced

with the installation of new digital UHF radios on board *MB 30* and in the base's radio room.

The installation, being carried out in conjunction with an upgrade of our radio antenna network, will be completed by mid-year.

Rod Studholme

Grant to help house Alpine Lakes vessel

Fishermen flag down volunteers after runabout capsizes on Jindabyne.

Helping hand from the State Government will help MR Alpine Lakes to develop a boat shed for its Jindabyne rescue vessel.

Monaro MP John Barilaro met Unit Commander Les Threlfo and unit members before Christmas to give them the good news.

"It is with such delight that I announce a \$40,000 grant through the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership Program to help this vital organisation to build their own base," Mr Barilaro said.

"This grant will help such a vital organisation to continue the fantastic work they do in our region."

He said the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership Program offered grant funding for

infrastructure-based projects that met a need in the local community.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey visited in January to inspect a potential site on the shore of Lake Jindabyne and meet with Snowy Rivers Shire Council and Snowy Hydro about requirements for the planned shed. Negotiations are continuing.

Two fishermen who were thrown into the water when their small runabout overturned on Lake Jindabyne on January 23 were fortunate the unit was on a training exercise nearby. Hypothermia can set in quickly in the Alpine Lakes, even in summer but the men - both wearing lifejackets - managed to reach the lake's western shore and hail the volunteer crew.



Snowy Rivers Cr John Shumack, MR Alpine Lakes member Tanya Casey, MRNSW Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert, Monaro MP John Barilaro, UC Les Threlfo and Cr Colin Stewart-Beardsley.

The saturated fishermen, who were suffering from the cold, were taken on board *Alpine Lakes 21*, telling the rescue crew their 3.4m runabout had overturned. The

rescue crew warmed the pair - a Queanbeyan local and his brother visiting from Spain - before locating their runabout, righting it and towing it back to the Jindabyne boat ramp.

What we've been up to



Nice to meet you ... Karen Larter, Bronwyn Daniels, Bob Wilson, Grahame Aulbury, from MR Botany Port Hacking, and Ben Crowther, from MR Middle Harbour, volunteered to spend time on the MRNSW stand at the Boating Industry Association's Sydney Trailer Boat Show at Sydney Olympic Park in late February. X Ray 22 featured prominently in our display.



Talking safety ... MR Merimbula's Alan Grange, Rod Studholme, Garry Baker and Stewart Dietrich provide safety advice to local boaters. *Photo: Merimbula News Weekly.*



Congratulations ... Commissioner Stacey Tannos presents Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert with clasps to the National Medal recognising 45 years' service in the Army, NSW Police and MRNSW.



A wizard on the water ... MR Port Jackson Unit Commander David Hand congratulates Jon Potter on gaining his Crew Member rating at the unit's February meeting.



Fine feathered friends ...the crew of Port Kembla 30 ferries National Parks and Wildlife Service officers and equipment to Big Island to undertake a seabird habitat rehabilitation project in February.

Scout troop brings 'vessels' home safely

Mini-SAREX game a hit with youngsters on tour of Headquarters.

A troop of Sydney scouts could become the volunteer recruits of the future following their introduction to the life-saving work of Marine Rescue NSW.

Five members of the 1st East Hills Scouts, accompanied by five of their leaders and three parents, visited the MRNSW State Headquarters at Cronulla on March 3.

Assistant Director Training and Education Chris Butler gave the scouts a full induction during a tour of the site, beginning with an inspection of *Port Hacking 30* and operational reserve vessels *X Ray 21* and *22*.

The group then moved to the State Operations Centre to learn about our communications systems

and marine radio protocols before taking part in a mini-SAREX game using handheld radios.

Mr Butler said he had been impressed with the scouts' quick grasp of radio protocols and professional "rescue" response.

"One scout acted as a radio base, another two were rescue vessels and the remaining two were boaters in distress situated at different locations around our site," he said.

"One boater called in to report that he had broken down in the top carpark, followed by the second, who was simply lost. The radio base efficiently tasked the rescue vessels to respond and sought situation reports throughout the exercise.

Both distressed vessels returned



Members of the 1st East Hills Scouts inspect MRNSW vessels during a tour of the State Headquarters.

safely."

The tour ended with the scouts dropping the Australian, Aboriginal and MRNSW flags as darkness fell.

"The scouts didn't know a great

deal about our work when they arrived but they certainly did by the time they left," he said. "They were keen to learn and interested in all aspects of our operations."

Mobile collections for out-of-date flares

Roads and Maritime Services has launched a program to help boaters dispose of expired flares, with mobile collections set up along the NSW coastline until the end of the boating season in May.

The collection program allows flares to be disposed of safely, conveniently and responsibly.

Marine flares can signal someone is in trouble and help provide a

location for searching aircraft or vessels.

An RMS spokesperson said a minimum of two red hand flares and two orange smoke flares were generally required on all vessels operating in open waters.

Most flares have a use-by-date of three years and must be replaced before expiry. Penalties apply for not carrying current flares on a

vessel, so it is vital boat owners regularly check and replace flares.

RMS hopes the collection days also will remind boaters to check their safety equipment regularly.

Where possible, collection days are held along with visits by the Old4New lifejackets van.

Flares handed in at collection points will be disposed of by an approved contractor.

Until the end of May, flares can be handed in between 7am and 10am at the following locations:

- Dolans Bay boat ramp, March 20
- Bonna Point boat ramp, Kurnell, March 25
- North Harbour boat ramp, Ulladulla, May 1 (6am-9am)
- Terrigal Haven boat ramp, May 22.

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Watch where you walk in shallow waters

Stingray wound is excruciatingly painful and sometimes fatal.

MRNSW Life Member, Dr Peter Taylor, from the Shoalhaven unit, continues his series of reports on first aid treatments for stings, bites or other painful encounters with venomous Australian sea creatures.

Although more plentiful in the tropical regions, stingrays can be found in waters virtually all around the Australia coastline.

They can range up to four metres in length and 1.8 metres in width.

Stingrays are common inshore and can be found on soft or sandy bottoms, in lagoons, estuaries and sandy bays and around reefs.

In Australia, they are reported to enter fresh water. They commonly lie in the sand in very shallow water but have been found at depths to 360m.

The dangerous part of the stingray is the spine (or spines) on the tail. In this photo, the spine is lying flat along the top of where



A stingray can move quickly to inflict a wound. Photo: Sally Reader, Australian Museum.

the tail starts to taper off into a thin whip. In defence mode, the spine is erected and the ray can manoeuvre extremely quickly to inflict a serious gash or deep penetrating wound.

Often the spine or part of it breaks off in the wound and the associated pain is said to be excruciating.

Medical attention is essential for pain relief, to remove any embedded parts of the stingray spine and to clean the wound. Antibiotic treatment may be necessary as infection is common.

The majority of stingray wounds

are inflicted on the extremities of those who step on or near them in shallow water or who handle them when they are caught on fishing lines or in nets. Fatalities are rare but possible, as with the death of the renowned naturalist Steve Irwin.

For full first aid treatment, see the Australian Resuscitation Council Guideline 9.4.7. Immediate steps:

- Call an ambulance.
- If the injury is to the trunk, assess the victim for bleeding and, if necessary, apply appropriate First Aid treatment

for bleeding (ARC Guideline 9.1.1).

- If the stingray barb is embedded, do not remove it. Place padding around or above and below the embedded barb and apply pressure over the pads.
- If the injury is to a limb it may be possible to place the injured hand or foot in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate).
- Transport the victim to a medical facility.

Eve keeps Jervis Bay members neat as a pin

Bouquet for seamstress who has donated her services to unit for decades.

The members of Marine Rescue Jervis Bay have come out of the closet and revealed the secret to their spick and span appearance.

Her name is Eve Vidoz and the local resident has been the unit's seamstress of choice for decades.

Eve is the one the members call when they need their trousers taken up, their waistbands altered or their shirts taken in - and anything else that requires a needle and thread.

Eve performs all this work for gratis on a volunteer basis as "my contribution", as she puts it.

Eve has been a Jervis Bay resident for 45 years, living in her present home for 35 of those.

Before Christmas, Unit Commander Allan Reidy and member Ross Harlen surprised Eve with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for her hard work.

"You boys shouldn't be spending your money on me," she said.

UC Reidy told Eve that it was important to all the unit's members that she knew how much they appreciated her support, wonderful seamstress work and welcome assistance.

Last year, Eve made up six barbecue aprons to stop Jervis Bay volunteers getting grease all over their uniforms when cooking.

Four aprons were expected but



Members of MR Jervis Bay surprised their "seamstress of choice" Eve Vidoz with flowers to thank her for her work for the unit.

from the material provided, Eve produced six, all with pockets and carrying the Marine Rescue logo.

What a wonderful job from a great supporter.

Lester Shute

FEEDBACK

Letters and correspondence

Heartfelt praise for Pt Stephens crew's skill

Yacht club grateful for rescue support.



Port Stephens 40 returns home at 5.30am after a harrowing night rescue operation that culminated in a triple knockdown.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos
Marine Rescue NSW

On behalf of the members of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club and the broader boating community, I would like to sincerely thank all of the Officers of Marine Rescue NSW involved in the search and rescue operation conducted off the coast of Port Stephens on 6 and 7 January, 2016.

The skill and bravery of your Officers in the search for vessels and yachtsmen, including some of the returning participants in the Club Marine Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Race, hosted by the RPAYC, was truly outstanding.

We are eternally grateful for the unwavering support of Marine Rescue NSW, working through the day and night providing assistance to the entire sailing and boating community.

Once again, thank you for your organisation's efforts in the most recent Port Stephens search and rescue operation and ongoing support.

Ian Audsley, Commodore
The Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club

To: Mr Stacey Tannos ESM, Commissioner
Marine Rescue NSW

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Management of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and the competitors in the 71st Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2015, I would like to thank you for your support of our great race. The 71st event was an outstanding success on all fronts, which would not have been achieved without your contribution.

I would like to congratulate Kristy Hinze-Clark, Jim Clark, Ken Read and the crew of *Comanche* on taking line honours after a race which saw them, along with many other competitors, sustain significant damage on the first night as the southerly change swept through the fleet off the NSW coast.

As a Club, we were also particularly delighted to see CYCA Director Paul Clitheroe and his TP52 *Balance* win the Tattersalls trophy after a tense wait as the Derwent River, once again, cruelly played havoc with the ambition of other competitors.

Finally, the Clipper fleet added such great colour and spectacle to the race with CYCA member Wendy Tuck, skippering *Da-nang Vietnam*, winning not only the Clipper race division but also the prize for the first lady skipper over the line.

The success of the event could not have been achieved without the cooperation and assistance provided by Marine Rescue NSW.

We unreservedly thank you and, as we will shortly be undertaking a review of the 2015 race, we would welcome your input into that review.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and ideas as to how we can continue to improve.

The Club and I look forward to enjoying your support once again for the 72nd race of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

John Cameron, Commodore
Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

To: Central Coast Marine Rescue volunteers

Gosford Gumnuts Playgroup would like to thank you for the wonderful excursion we had to the Central Coast Marine (Rescue) volunteers on Wednesday, 2nd December. It was really good for the children to see what work you do (and) to hear how important a lifejacket is.

We had lots of laughs, chatter and amazement. This morning will certainly be an experience all the children, parents and carers will remember. Your work and volunteering for the Central Coast and the community is invaluable.

Roxanne Young
Gosford Uniting Church Gosford Gumnuts Coordinator

Facebook comments on *Port Stephens 40's* rescue operation:

These volunteers are truly amazing and as part of the fraternity that goes to sea for pleasure we are eternally grateful for volunteers like these should the worst happen and we need assistance. *Andrew Poulton*

Well done to all the Crew carrying out a rescue in such treacherous conditions, special thanks should also go to the crew in the radio room. *Peter Miller*

These folk are all marvellous. High praise to their courage and professionalism. *Eva Oldfield*

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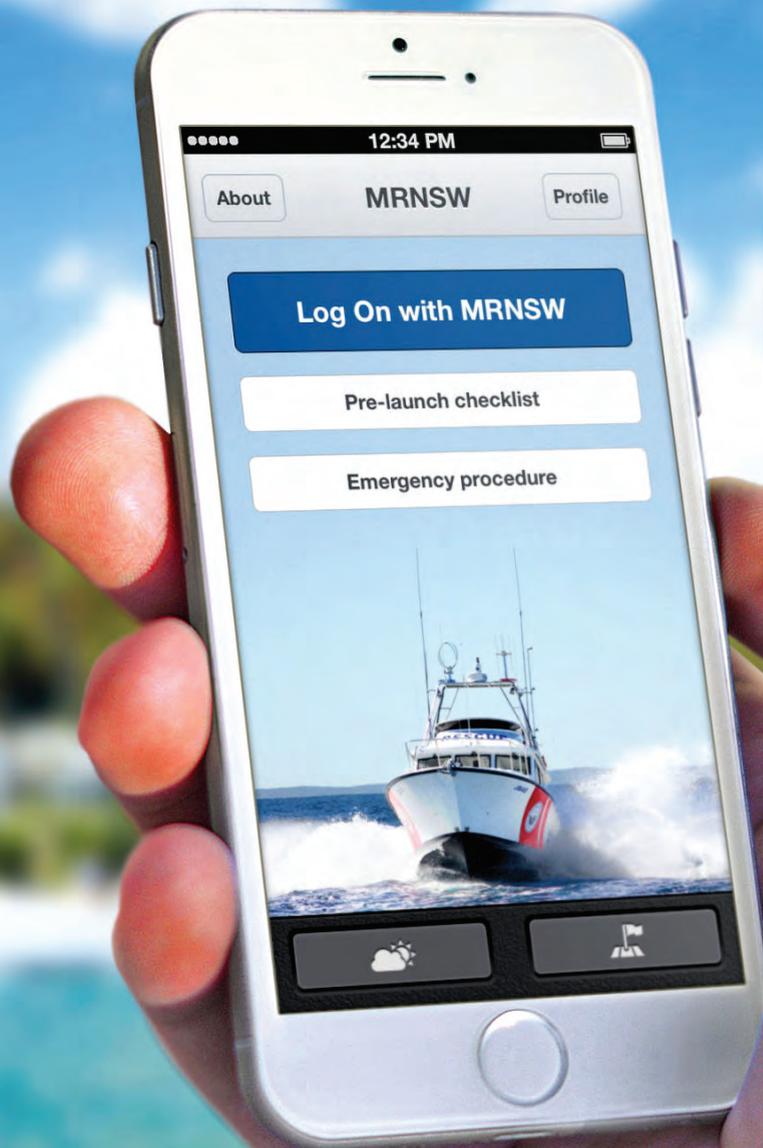
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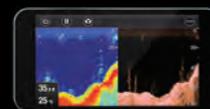
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