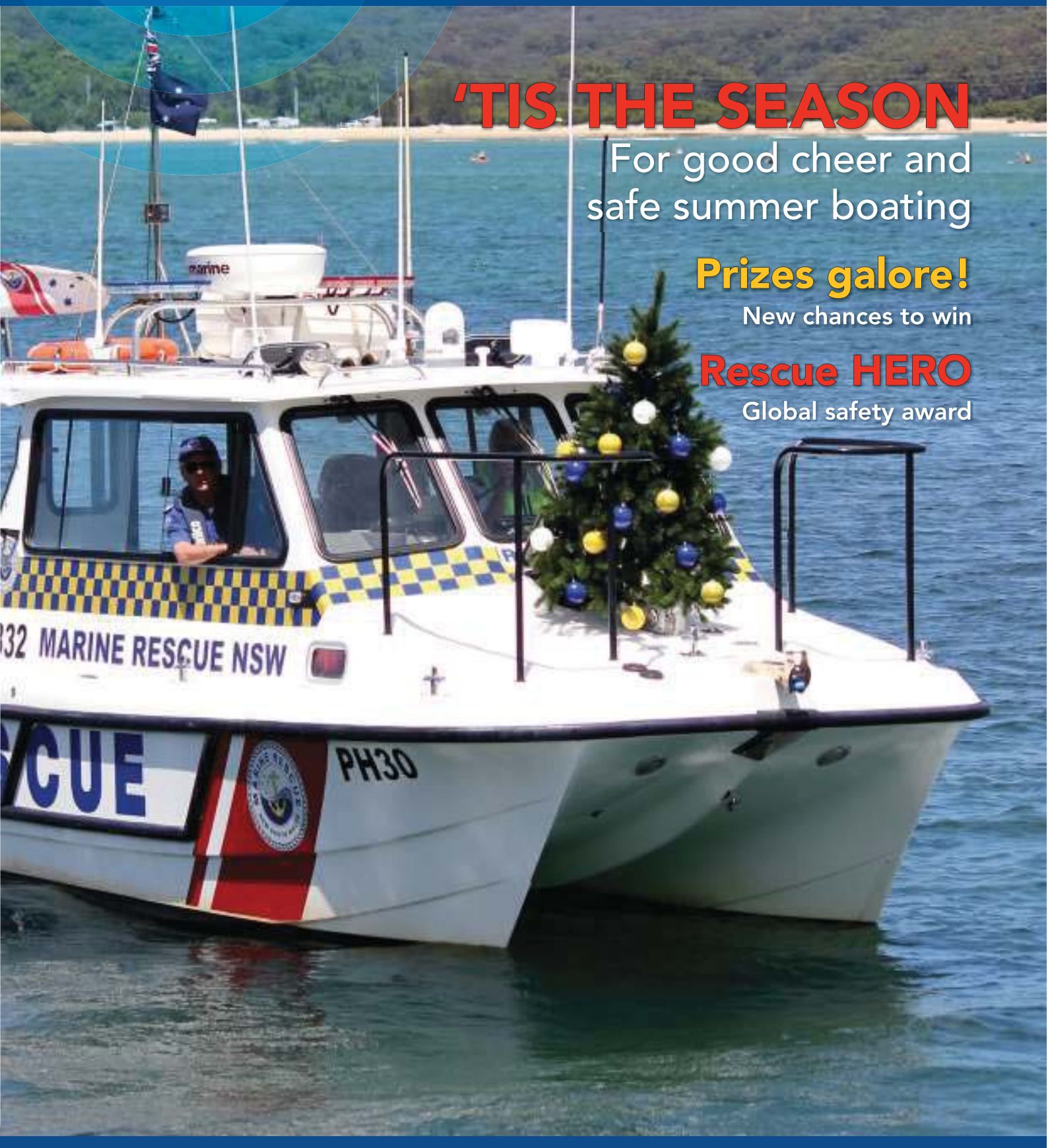
Volunteers saving lives on the water

SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 29, Summer 2016



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Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

Cover Image
Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year on the water from Marine Rescue NSW, particularly the festive season skipper of *Port Hacking 30*, MR Botany Port Hacking Unit Commander Frank Robards.

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From the Commissioner

Our safety technology wins international acclaim in new awards.

Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

Another busy year has ended on a high note with our online safety technology recognised in the inaugural International Maritime Rescue Federation HERO awards.

The Honouring Excellence in Rescue Operations awards were announced at the annual IMRF meeting in Portugal in November.

Our integrated boating safety system - comprising the Seahawk vessel tracking system, *MarineRescue* mobile App, Radio Club membership system and Automatic Identification System feed - was the runner-up in the Innovation and Technology in Maritime Search and Rescue category.

The Bottle Buoy, a humanitarian project providing a minimum-cost flotation device for communities without rescue resources, took out the Innovation award.

Our achievement represents valuable acclaim on an international stage of our ground-breaking use of technology to help keep boaters safe on the water. Credit is due to our IT and Business Development Director, Florian Glajcar and IT Support Officer Matt Sims, along with Alive Mobile, for the creativity and skill they have brought to this important safety project.

Just as importantly, thank you to all the MRNSW units and members who could see the benefits the technology had to offer and bravely stepped across the void from their familiar procedures to a new way of operating. The process was challenging at times but the change has been an important factor in our process of continuous improvement and modernisation. Our customised technology will again underpin our operations throughout the summer.

With the boating season now in full swing, members are seeing the dividends of their hard work over recent months. Units have again prepared meticulously for the seasonal peak, training throughout the cooler, quieter months, undertaking routine boat maintenance, upgrading their unit technology and preparing rosters to ensure they are keeping watch over their local and visiting boaters alike.

Our customised technology will again underpin our operations throughout the summer

Our Treasurers have also been working hard behind the scenes in preparation for the change-over to the new NetSuite financial system.

The majority of units were represented at a three-day training conference in Cronulla in early November, with localised training provided for those unable to attend the central session.

Thank you to all those who were able to join us. I trust you found the event as enjoyable as it was interesting and challenging.

The summer months, when our public profile rises with our workload, also present our greatest opportunity for fundraising.

Our second Art Union, launched on December 1, offers fantastic prizes: a 4WD and boat, holiday package, exclusive sporting tickets and six jet skis.

Units will keep all the funds they raise, both from their face-to-face ticket sales and those purchased online. Last year's inaugural Art Union inflated our units' coffers by a total of $408,000.

While we are always grateful for the financial support of the State Government and the boating community for our work to save lives on the water, we rely heavily on this additional funding to provide our world-class rescue service.

It is essential to thank the Board of Directors for their strategic direction and support throughout the year, along with all of our members and staff for their continuing hard work and commitment to our mission of saving lives on the water. Thank you, too, to our members' families and employers, without whose support they would be unable to commit to their volunteering duties.

On behalf of the organisation, I also thank our corporate partners and suppliers, *Soundings* advertisers and readers and our colleagues in the emergency services and many other agencies with whom we work.

In closing, I would like to wish you and your families a merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and safe 2017.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner

Commissioner Stacey Tannos (far right) and other HERO Award recipients at the International Maritime Rescue Federation meeting in Portugal.

No change at top after 2016 Board elections

Chair, Commissioner outline successful year's highlights at AGM.

Members voted for the status quo in the 2016 MRNSW elections, leaving the Board of Directors unchanged.

The election results were announced at the Annual General Meeting, attended by 30 volunteers, guests and staff, at the MRNSW Headquarters at Cronulla on November 26.

General Director Jim Glissan and Monaro Regional Director Glenn Felkin were elected unopposed for three and two-year terms, respectively.

David White was re-elected as the Greater Sydney Regional Director and Bill Carter as the Illawarra Regional Director for two-year terms.

The Directors subsequently re-elected Mr Glissan as Chair.

The Board also announced that it had conferred Life Membership of MRNSW on three members: Albert Morris, from MR Central Coast, Glenn McMahon, from MR Botany Port Hacking and Ken Fletcher, from MR Port Macquarie (see story Page 8).

The three men all expressed their surprise and delight at the honour as they were presented Life Membership pins and certificates.

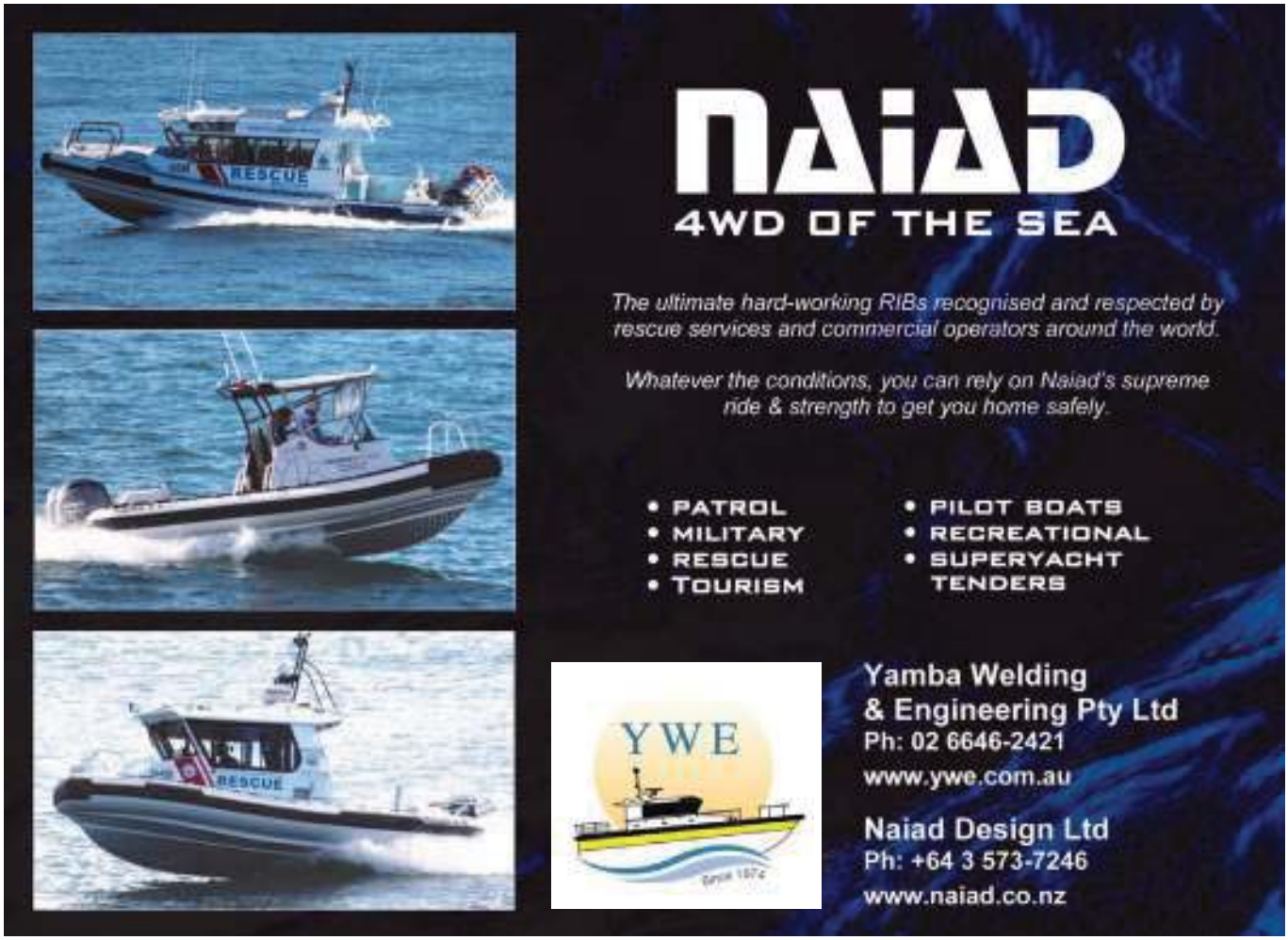
Mr Glissan said the highlights of the successful year had been the completion of phase one of the Fleet Modernisation program, delivering new and refurbished primary response vessels; the transition to the NetSuite accounting system; and reform to the MRNSW Constitution.

Grant Thornton Audit and Assurance Partner James Winter confirmed MRNSW was in a sound financial position, with a surplus allowing re-investment into the organisation, earning an unqualified audit report.

The 2016 Board: Bernie Gabriel, Mark McKenzie, Jim Glissan, Glenn Felkin, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Bill Carter, Pat Fayers, David White, John Lynch and Roger Evans.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos informed the meeting of the success of the safety tracking technology in the inaugural HERO awards (see P7).

Both Mr Glissan and the Commissioner thanked our 3100 volunteers for their commitment and work and their families for supporting their volunteering efforts.



From the Chair

It is important that members of experience and depth stand for election.

Chair
James Glissan ESM, QC

Recognising their people is one of the most important measures any leadership group can take for the wellbeing and morale of their organisation.

Life Membership of MRNSW is the highest accolade our organisation can bestow upon a Member, conferring rights beyond those enjoyed by our Regular members. It is awarded to acknowledge service above that which could be reasonably expected of our volunteers. Choosing those to be recognised is probably the most pleasurable decision taken by our Board each year but it is not one made lightly as we choose to honour those who stand tall among their peers, all of whom have made their own, significant contributions.

This year, the Board has determined to award this honour to Albert Morris, from MR Central Coast, Glenn McMahon, from MR Botany Port Hacking and Ken Fletcher, from MR Port Macquarie.

The Life Members were inducted at the Annual General Meeting on November 26, with members of their families watching proudly (see Page 8). All three were self-effacing, expressing their genuine surprise at being chosen for such an honour. Their humility in fact, affirmed the the Board's choices.

The AGM also saw the announcement of the results of our Board elections, which produced no change to our leadership body.

The Directors have continued to make a powerful, effective and positive contribution to the Board over the past year, energetically debating matters brought to us to reach a resolution everybody is happy to accept and work with.

Despite this strength, it is unfortunate, however, that there were so few nominations for election to the Board, with two of the four Directors who were up for election being returned unopposed. It is important for the organisation's health that members of depth and standing, experience and ability, run for directorships. The Board should not be a sinecure for its members.

This year's reforms to the Constitution were introduced in the hope of getting more people to run but in fear of what eventuated. Without the changes introduced to remove the time limit on Directors' terms, we would now have been faced with another election to fill a vacant General Director's seat at the table. I again plead with members to put up their hand when the call comes. We need members to be committed not just to their radio, boat and other duties but also to setting our strategic course.

That said, congratulations must go to Glenn Felkin, David White and Bill Carter, and to those who stood and were not elected: we need them to keep the process honest.

I would also like to thank my fellow Directors for again placing their trust in me by re-electing me as Chair. This is not a responsibility I treat casually or presumptuously.

I am proud to reflect on another year of accomplishment for our organisation. We have completed phase one of the Fleet Modernisation Program, focused on delivering new and refurbished primary response vessels, and now move on to upgrading our secondary fleet. We also are migrating to the new NetSuite accounting system.

And most importantly, we kept our mission of saving lives on the water at the heart of everything we did, front and centre of every decision we made.

On behalf of the Board, I thank all our volunteer members and staff for your continuing dedication to serving our community and to our life-saving work. Thank you to you all for the individual contributions you have made.

I wish all our personnel, our partners, our sponsors and supporters a merry Christmas and a safe and rewarding 2017.

Good sailing
Jim Glissan

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$229,600 prize haul in our second Art Union

Something for everyone, from the outdoors adventurer to the sports fanatic.

Welcome to the summer of the second annual Marine Rescue NSW Art Union, this year offering a spectacular array of prizes to attract the boater, outdoor adventurer, world traveller and sporting fanatic alike.

Ticket buyers are this year vying for their chance to win a share of a prize pool worth $229,600.

The organisation's largest single fundraising activity for the year was launched on December 1.

Last year's inaugural Art Union raised more than $408,000 for our units through their face-to-face and online ticket sales.

This year's first prize, worth $118,251, will get you on the road and water in a Toyota Prado GXL 2.8L T Diesel Auto, valued at $68,917, PLUS a Haines Signature 530SF(S) boat, valued at $49,334.

You're on holiday if you win the fantastic second prize, with a $25,000 Flight Centre gift card and an extra $5000 spending money in your pocket. You can choose to take one dream holiday visiting places you've always wanted to see or split it into several smaller trips.

Third, fourth, fifth and sixth prizes are for the keen sports fans. Four lucky winners will each win four tickets to a private suite at Allianz Stadium for the Wallabies v Scotland rugby union match on June 17, 2017. Private suite guests enjoy the game in VIP comfort with a dedicated attendant, gourmet buffet and premium beer, wine and soft drinks throughout the match, an official match program and merchandise. With $1000 towards travel/accommodation, each prize is valued at $4955.60.

As if that wasn't enough, every ticket purchased goes in the draw for six bonus regional prizes. Tickets will be entered in the bonus draw for the MRNSW region in which they were purchased or where the unit receiving online ticket funds is located. Each regional winner will take home a Sea-Doo Spark 2-seat 60HP jet ski and trailer valued at $10,261.60.

The chance to win big will cost just $5 for three tickets.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the Art Union was another valuable fundraising venture for MRNSW.

"We are very grateful for the support of the State Government and boating community, who provided our organisation with a total of $7.6 million in funding in 2015/16. We also rely heavily on our own fundraising activities, such as our Art Unions, to ensure we can continue providing a world-class rescue service," he said.

"Last year's Art Union generated a lot of buzz with our range of top prizes and this year's are just as exciting.

"People who enjoy getting into the great outdoors will be hoping to win first prize or one of the bonus regional prizes, which are a great addition this year.

"The flexibility of the holiday package means the winner can plan a trip that's perfect for them and have extra cash in their pocket when they arrive.

"Of course, sports and big events fans will enjoy the Wallabies private suite experience at Allianz Stadium."

The winners will be drawn electronically at Headquarters at noon on May 30.

The Art Union is organised and run by MRNSW, ensuring all proceeds stay with the organisation.

Units will again keep the funds they raise from all their ticket sales. Buyers snapping up their tickets online at artunion.mrnsw.com.au will need to enter a promotional code to ensure their funds are directed to their preferred unit.

Terms and conditions also are on the website.

Your holiday, your choice of destinations ... second prize in the Marine Rescue NSW Art Union is a $25,000 Flight Centre gift card plus $5000 spending money.

This Toyota Prado is just one half of first prize, accompanied by a Haines Signature boat, worth a total of $118,251.

Four lucky winners get four tickets each to a private suite at Allianz Stadium for the Wallabies v Scotland match next June.

MARINE RESCUE NSW
ART UNION

New regional operations team on board

Full-time staff expand support for units, public education and training.

Six full-time Regional Operations Managers have been appointed under a corporate restructure that took effect at the start of November.

The ROM team is John Murray (Northern Rivers), Randall Gawne (Mid North Coast), Steve Raymond (Hunter/Central Coast), Glenn Evans (Greater Sydney), Bruce Mitchell (Illawarra) and Glenn Sullivan (Monaro).

The full-time ROM positions replace the part-time Regional Controller roles, in recognition of the increasing demand for regional support and operational oversight.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the ROMs would provide units with an expanded level of operational, administrative, training and public education support.

Deputy Commissioner Storey praised the efforts of the Regional Controllers, whose roles had developed incrementally over the years from their earliest form as volunteer Regional Coordinators.

"I would like to place on the record our gratitude to Stephen Reading, Neil Grieves, Chris Gillett and Bob Herbert for their commitment to our members and hard work for our organisation," he said.

The new Regional Operations Managers will be responsible for incident management across their regions and liaison between units and Headquarters.

Five of the ROMs are internal appointments.

Mr Murray moves north from his former role as Mid North Coast Regional Controller and Mr Raymond from his role as Acting Training Manager for Hunter/Central Coast.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey with Regional Operations Managers Steve Raymond, Bruce Mitchell, Randall Gawne, Glenn Evans and John Murray. Glenn Sullivan was on leave.

Mr Evans is a former Unit Commander of MR Botany Port Hacking, Mr Mitchell was the incumbent Illawarra Regional Controller and Mr Sullivan transfers from his role as Regional Training Manager for the Illawarra and Monaro regions.

Mr Gawne is a new addition to the team, recently moving to Port Macquarie after 18 years in the Queensland Water Police.

Former foreign correspondent lands at HQ

Retiring Marketing Manager helped build recognition and respect for service.

Former ABC and Bloomberg Television foreign correspondent Brendan Trembath has joined MRNSW as the organisation's new Media and Marketing Manager.

Mr Trembath took up his role in late November, with the retirement of long-time Marketing and Media Manager Ken McManus.

After joining the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol's Hawkesbury Division in 2000, Mr McManus became one of the original staff members of the new MRNSW upon its establishment in 2009 and remains a volunteer member of MR Hawkesbury.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos wished Mr McManus and his wife Anne well in their retirement.

"Ken was instrumental in the work to establish the branding, livery and public recognition of the new MRNSW," he said.

"His commitment to the process of merging the three services into a single organisation and building our reputation as a professional rescue service has helped ensure MRNSW is today widely recognised and respected by the community, our emergency service partners and government."

Reflecting on his contribution to the new service in this edition's *In their own words*, Mr McManus said the ability to make a difference had been a privilege (see Page 9).

Commissioner Tannos welcomed Mr Trembath to his new role, which attracted great interest from a large field of impressive candidates.

Mr Trembath is a well-known name and voice on the airwaves, joining us after a lengthy and respected career as a senior radio and TV reporter. He has served as a foreign correspondent in Tokyo and Washington DC and has reported on numerous major news events closer to home, such as the Lindt Café Siege, Victoria's Black Saturday bushfires, a typhoon in the Philippines, the recent Dreamworld tragedy, war games off the NSW South Coast involving HMAS Canberra, the 20-20 Summit and the trial of Ivan Milat.

Changing of the guard ... new and retiring MRNSW Media Managers, Brendan Trembath and Ken McManus.

He also is a keen sea kayaker.

"I am thrilled to join Marine Rescue NSW," he said.

"It's an outstanding organisation with an impressive record for saving lives on the water. I often see some of the vessels from the fleet when I am out on my sea kayak. It's reassuring to know that help is not far away. I hope to use my media skills to increase community awareness of the fine work done by all our volunteers."

Safety technology an international HERO

Our system a leader in the global rescue sector: Commissioner.

Marine Rescue NSW has received international acknowledgment for its use of innovative technology to help keep boaters safe on the water.

The online integrated system, linking our Seahawk vessel tracking system, the *MarineRescue* App, Automatic Identification System feed and Radio Member management system, was recognised in the inaugural International Marine Rescue Federation's HERO (Honouring Execellence in Rescue Operations) Awards.

The system was named the runner-up in the Innovation and Technology in Maritime Search and Rescue category.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos and IT and Business Development Director Florian Glajcar attended the annual IMRF meeting in Cascais, Portugal, for the award announcement in late November.

The Innovation category award went to a project with a strong humanitarian focus, the Bottle Buoy, a minimum-cost flotation device for communities without rescue resources.

Commissioner Tannos said the HERO recognition confirmed that the purpose-designed MRNSW safety technology was a leader in the global rescue sector.

"The individual elements of the system were specifically designed to operate in conjunction with each other to consolidate information in an easily-accessible format," he said.

"By drawing data from the different facets of the system, we can build a holistic picture of an individual's boat, their contact details, their planned destination and time on the water and their last known position.

Acclaim for our technological innovation ... IT Director Florian Glajcar and Commissioner Stacey Tannos.

"In the event of an emergency, this is the information we need at our fingertips to mount a successful search and rescue mission."

Commissioner Tannos thanked Mr Glajcar, IT Support Officer Matt Sims and Alive Mobile for the creativity and safety focus they consistently brought to the system development.

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Life honour for trio's sustained contribution

Statistician, trainer and mentor reach the pinnacle in our organisation.

Three volunteers have been honoured with Life Membership of Marine Rescue NSW in recognition of their highly-valued and sustained contribution to the organisation.

Albert Morris, from MR Central Coast, Ken Fletcher ESM, from MR Port Macquarie and Glenn McMahon, from MR Botany Port Hacking, were inducted as Life Members at the Annual General Meeting on November 26.

Chair Jim Glissan commended the trio for their contribution to MRNSW, the boating public and the NSW community, presenting them with Life Member pins and certificates.

"Life Membership is the pinnacle in our organisation. There is no higher honour we can give to thank those who epitomise the finest service and commitment," he said.

Mr Morris joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 1989.

"The work Albert has undertaken as MRNSW Statistics Officer, collecting, collating and disseminating statistical information from all units, has enabled us to highlight the massive contribution our volunteers make to the safety and wellbeing of the NSW community each and every year," Mr Glissan said. "Without Albert's efforts, we wouldn't be able to tell our story so comprehensively."

Mr Morris said the honour had taken him completely by surprise.

"All the things I've achieved, I couldn't have done without the support of my wife," he said.

Mr McMahon's nomination recognises his contribution to the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and MRNSW over three decades, particularly the major effort required to introduce competency based training to the membership.

"Glenn's contribution to training not only members of MRNSW but also members of the public and promoting MRNSW have made him a giant in MRNSW," Mr Glissan said.

Mr McMahon said he was flabbergasted by the award, thanking the Board, his fellow members and family.

Members for life ... Ken Fletcher, Albert Morris and Glenn McMahon.

"Thank you all. It's been fun for 30-odd years and that's why we keep coming back. We all know the impact this has on our families but we keep doing it anyway," he said.

Mr Fletcher's Life Membership acknowledges his 32 years in roles including rescue crew member, trainer and unit executive and mirrors the status he also held with the Port Macquarie Sea Rescue.

"Ken continues to generously share his knowledge as a valued mentor," Mr Glissan said.

Mr Fletcher said it was a high honour to be made a Life Member.

"I thank the Board, I thank my unit in Port Macquarie and accentuate that what we've got in Marine Rescue attracts new members who see what we can do as a whole."

Grants a $340,000 helping hand for 16 units

Sixteen MRNSW units have received a total of $340,000 in grants this year.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked all the government agencies and funding organisations that had provided much-needed financial support to units.

"The $7.6 millon we received in 2015-16 from the NSW Government and boating community is essential to our operations but we still rely heavily on our fundraising activities and grants funding," he said.

"The bodies that have provided this support are contributing to our mission of saving lives on the water. Congratulations, too, to the units that have secured this funding."

Topping the 2016 list was MR Port Macquarie, which benefited from $150,000 from the Westport Club towards its new boat and $32,100 in Public Reserves Management Funding for an RWC shed and aerial work (see Page 25).

MR Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, Jervis Bay, Kioloa, Lake Macquarie and Ulladulla received $4,300, $25,683, $8000, $3850, $4300 and $2651 respectively in ClubGrants towards a navigation training simulator, training room upgrade, new rescue vessel, customised work station and desk, open day and ResQmax.

Five units benefited from this year's Stronger Communities Program: Norah Head ($7700 for a remote channel changer radio project), Lake Macquarie ($31,000 for a night vision camera and training vessel), Port Stephens ($8775 for a voice recording system), Woolgoolga ($7000 for a vessel trailer) and Terrey Hills ($8780 to upgrade its radio room).

MR Point Danger will receive $5000 a year over four years from the Gold Coast City Council Community Grants Program towards its operational expenses and another $1300 this year for a DCN radio.

Two units benefited from the Honda Foundation's generosity, with MR Camden Haven successfully applying for a $4500 grant to purchase a new winch to launch its vessel and MR Shoalhaven receiving $2695 for a defibrillator for the crew training room. Lake Macquarie received $5800 under the Australia Post Our Neighborhood Community grants for its open day.

MR Ballina received a new kitchen fit out valued at $1000 from the Good Guys Doing Good and $396 from the Gold Coast Airport Community Benefit Fund for a binocular stand. Brunswick-Mullumbimby Lions Club presented MR Brunswick with $1000 for an emergency fire ladder.

NSW Premier Mike Baird handed the Terrigal unit a $20,000 grant after damage to its base in the June storms and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott gave MR Batemans Bay $4000 for a base defibrillator and oxygen kit.

Ken McManus

Marketing & Media Manager, MR Hawkesbury member.

More commonly behind the camera ... MRNSW Marketing and Media Manager Ken McManus, third from left, with his fellow volunteers at the Sydney International Boat Show and on duty on board *Hawkesbury 22*.

Ken McManus has been the Marketing and Media Manager of Marine Rescue NSW from the outset of the new organisation in 2009. He will now be able to devote more time to his volunteer duties at Marine Rescue Hawkesbury following his decision to bid farewell to the nine to five workday routine.

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." I wonder how many people have been influenced by those words as they read Kenneth Graham's classic story, The Wind in the Willows. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions - especially considering that book was published more than a century ago.

In all honesty, 'messing about in boats' was more my motivation in early 2000 than 'making a difference' when I joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol. The first thing I discovered was that after decades of confidence in my boat handling skills, I really knew two-fifths of three-eighths of stuff all. For all those years I must have had sea angels on my shoulder. The training I received as a volunteer with a rescue organisation opened my eyes and I soon discovered that the more you know, the better the boating experience becomes.

'Making a difference' began to take on greater meaning as I had the opportunity to contribute my career skills of advertising and marketing to the organisation and its promotional materials. A few years on I stood for and was elected to the Board of the RVCP, which is where I took part in the greatest 'making a difference' it has been my privilege to experience. That Board took the steps and made the fundamental decisions that helped lead to the establishment of Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW. We told the NSW Government that the RVCP, the largest of the three existing volunteer marine rescue organisations in NSW, would put all of its considerable assets into a new organisation and would relinquish the RVCP name for a new, inclusive name that would not be a disincentive for any members of those three services to join for a brand new start.

To have been part of the team that established the new organisation has been a privilege and to have been instrumental in developing our brand and corporate image has brought great fulfilment and satisfaction. The Marine Rescue NSW brand has become more widely recognised and respected and will continue to do so as a core visual element of the strong base on which our reputation has grown.

Seven years later, just look at us. All the promise that was believed possible as a single organisation has come to fruition - and more. Much more. We have a structure that is the envy of other states. We have systems in place that are setting the standard for other states. We have led the development of training at a national standard. We have a marine radio network unlike any other in the world and our integrated safety technology, including the *MarineRescue* App, has just been recognised on the world stage in the inaugural HERO Awards for its innovation (see story, Page 7). It has been exhilarating and immensely rewarding to be a part of making the difference that has led to this.

So what now with this 'retirement'? If I don't have something relevant to do, I'll go barking mad. Climbing the skills ladder at MR Hawkesbury is definitely high on the list, as is resuscitation of the unit newsletter. Some serious home landscaping projects are ready to go and I'll be working on a website for a dormant business of mine that is crying out to be re-started. Watch out for The Speechwriters. Regaining more than two hours a day of travel time will give me an extra day a week to do everything I want to. What's not to like about that?

Treasurers calculate the system differences

NetSuite training a great networking opportunity for unit finance officers.

Volunteer Treasurers and a number of their colleagues from 32 MRNSW units gathered in Cronulla for a three-day training conference on the new NetSuite accounting system in November.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Chief Financial Officer Alan Skelley welcomed the members.

The training was led by Grant Thornton IT specialist James Sanderson, Mr Skelley and Assistant Accountant Jenny Zuo.

MRNSW has moved from the MYOB system to NetSuite, which offers the benefits of online access, simpler approval processes for unit expenditure and streamlined consolidation of the organisation's accounts for the annual audit.

As well as familiarising themselves with the features of NetSuite, the Treasurers welcomed the chance to meet so many of their counterparts from other units.

Mr Skelley thanked the group for its enthusiastic and constructive approach.

"The training went really well. Everyone enjoyed themselves and was very encouraging," he said.

Additional training is being staged for Treasurers unable to attend.

A number of "regional" trainers will be appointed to assist their colleagues with challenges they face as they transfer their accounts and start operating the new system.

MR Point Danger Treasurer Dianne Henriksen said she and UC Glenda Ashby had appreciated the chance to learn the new system and found the training well presented.

"It was great networking with the other Treasurers and very interesting to hear about how much time is spent on treasury duties," she said.

Unit Treasurers gather at Rydges Cronulla for their NetSuite training conference.

MR Port Macquarie and Cottage Point Treasurers, Richard Reichenbach and John Aitken, also committed additional time to the system testing process, helping ensure its robustness.

"It was wonderful that Richard and John were able to spend time with us on the detailed testing phase to help ensure the system meets our units' needs," Mr Skelley said.

Fleet Manager helps set safety standards

Vessel expertise recognised nationally.

Marine Rescue NSW vessel expertise is being tapped at a national level with the organisation's representation on the Australian Standards Committee for small boats up to 35 metres.

Fleet Manager Jody Hollow has been appointed to the Standards Committee CS-114, which contributes to the development and approval of Australian vessel build standards and regulations for recreational vessels.

The committee also includes other groups with relevant technical expertise, including government representatives, boat builders, Australian Maritime Safety Authority-accredited surveyors and related vessel industry groups, such as the Boating Industry of Australia.

Standards Australia chose Mr Hollow to represent Australia as a delegate on the International Standards Committe for small and inflatable pleasure craft at its 2016 meeting in London.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said Mr Hollow's position gave MRNSW significant input to the committee's work to set industry standards for the design and construction of safe, reliable and effective boats, whether for the recreational, commercial or rescue sectors.

"The work of this committee is directly relevant to MRNSW as all our vessels fall within its scope of responsibilities," he said. "The MRNSW fleet is designed by AMSA-accredited surveyors and built to rigorous 2C survey standards.

"The work of the Standards Committee to ensure boats are built to regulated standards is fundamental to the safety of the boating public and our members."

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Boaters urged to put safety first this summer

Simple steps will help ensure you'll make it home at the end of the day.

The State's on-water safety authorities have united in a push to make safety the highest priority this summer.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings, NSW Roads and Maritime Services Executive Director Angus Mitchell, NSW Life Saving Manager Andy Kent and Westpac Lifesaving Manager Steve Leahy marked the start of the boating season by appealing to boaters, fishers and everyone enjoying a day at the beach to do so safely.

Deputy Commissioner Storey urged boaters to take important but simple steps to help ensure they made it home at the end of the day.

"Make it a safety rule that everyone on board always wears their lifejacket. Emergencies can happen quickly on the water and you don't want to be scrambling to find your lifejacket if you're in trouble," he said.

He encouraged boaters to always Log On and Off with MRNSW via marine radio, phone or the *MarineRescue* mobile App.

"You should carry out a thorough maintenance check on your boat and always check the conditions before heading out," he said.

Det Supt Hutchings said police would be enforcing maritime laws, conducting safety checks, focusing on jet ski safety and doing random breath tests while conducting high-visibility patrols.

"The same drink-driving laws apply on the water as on land - the legal limit is 0.05 - but of course, it's better not to drink if you're getting behind the wheel," he said.

Joint agency focus on water safety ... Steve Leahy, Dean Storey, Mark Hutchings, Angus Mitchell and Andy Kent.

Mr Leahy said while accidents could happen, simple safety checks and exercising personal responsibility could go a long way to preventing incidents.

Mr Mitchell said RMS would work closely with NSW Police to ensure everyone could enjoy their time out on NSW waterways.

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Jammed radio a serious risk to all on water

Agencies in 13-hour detective operation to locate ship blocking airwaves.

A ship whose jammed marine radio blocked emergency radio Channel 16 for more than 13 hours overnight caused a major safety issue for all boaters on NSW waters on November 4.

The ship's radio was continually transmitting, unnoticed by its crew, preventing any other boaters and safety agencies from using VHF Channel 16, which is the standard channel used by all boaters to call for help in an emergency.

MRNSW Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb said the incident highlighted the need for boaters to be vigilant about their radio use and equipment maintenance.

"Three agencies - MRNSW and Sydney and Newcastle Ports - worked throughout the night until 7.25 the next morning to try to identify and make contact with this boat to alert its crew that their radio was transmitting, presumably from a faulty microphone," he said.

"This wasn't just annoying, it was a serious safety risk because no one else could use the channel, meaning any boater who was in trouble on the water would not have been able to call for help."

MR Terrey Hills raised the alarm about the problem about 6pm on November 4. A sleuthing operation then began to identify the vessel by a process of elimination.

"The Terrey Hills radio operators could hear people talking and noises in the background that indicated it was a large ship at fault," Mr Cribb said. "MR Middle Harbour then activated the Radio Direction Finder onboard *MH 30* and was able to give us the vessel's possible bearings - to their south-east - so Terrey Hills could identify vessels in the area the signal was coming from. Using the Automatic Identification System, they identified three large ships in the area.

"We then alerted Sydney Ports so they could try to make contact with the vessels, too. At odd intervals, the radio transmission would stop briefly, giving Terrey Hills and Sydney Ports the chance to call on the three vessels to check their radios. Only one didn't reply so we were pretty sure that was it."

The vessel was a 150m container ship registered in Hong Kong.

"Once it started moving north, MR Lake Macquarie helped confirm its identity using its RDF and Newcastle Ports also tried to make contact."

Overnight radio sleuth ... Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb urges boaters to be vigilant about their radio use and equipment.

Sydney Ports had emailed the vessel and just before 7.30am, MR Coffs Harbour radio operators heard a "tap, tap,tap" and someone blowing into the radio before it was switched off and normal transmission resumed.

Mr Cribb urged boaters to check their radios were in good order.

"If it's been some time since you used your radio or you haven't had a call for a while, you should get it checked as a matter of urgency," he said. "A marine radio is one of the most important safety tools on board your boat. You shouldn't rely on your mobile phone alone, especially if you're far offshore. If you use your phone to call for help, only one person hears you but if you use your radio, all vessels will hear you and one close by might be able to reach you before rescuers can deploy.

"Boaters also should be vigilant about their radio use and etiquette.

"As this incident showed, if you are blocking Channel 16 by leaving your radio on or continually chatting to your mates, you're putting the ability of all boaters to get help in an emergency at risk," he said.

Equipment not expensive if it saves your life

Stranded divers and rock fishing fatalities turn spotlight on beacons, lifejackets.

Recent emergencies on Australian waters have again highlighted the value of relatively inexpensive safety devices such as EPIRBs, Personal Locator Beacons and lifejackets for boaters, fishers and divers, especially those venturing out alone.

In an emergency, an EPIRB or PLB will transmit a distress signal to satellites, which will relay an alert to a ground station and safety authorities.

A 68-year-old scuba diver who spent 17 hours in the Coral Sea off Townsville before being rescued on November 7 said his ordeal would have been avoided if he'd put his PLB back in its case after cleaning it. A Geraldton diver who became lost at sea after his boat broke its anchor was found on a beach several kilometres away after spending eight hours in the water and swimming ashore.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said boating, fishing and diving alone was not recommended.

"Wearing a lifejacket is the most fundamental safety measure you can take to help keep you safe on and around the water," he said.

"Carrying an EPIRB or PLB can increase your chance of being found if you find yourself in trouble and alone. Safety devices such as these are inexpensive if you're relying on them to save your life."

A range of both PLBs and EPIRBs are available under $300.

Two rock fishermen drowned at Yamba and Kurnell in mid-November. Neither was reported to be wearing a lifejacket.

The State Government has introduced a 12-month trial of mandatory life jackets for rock fishers in the Randwick Council area, which has the State's highest rate of rock fishing drownings. There will be a 12-month grace period before the law is enforced with a $100 fine. The Government will review the trial after 12 months and consider adding other local government areas to the program.

Romance on board the Trial Bay love boat

Volunteer couple share their wedding joy with fellow unit members.

When romance blossomed at Marine Rescue Trial Bay, it was only a matter of time before more than maritime knots were being tied.

Unit members Holly Tunningley and Josh Woodhead celebrated their marriage on November 19.

The bride and her flowergirls, Josh's daughters Mackenzie and Elizabeth, arrived for the ceremony on board the love boat *Trial Bay 30*, adorned with traditional white wedding ribbons at the bow.

Holly and Josh were married beneath a MRNSW marquee beside the picture-perfect Macleay River, joined by 70 guests, including many of their fellow volunteers.

Josh said he and Holly had been introduced by Trial Bay member Jon Cragg, who played wedding chauffeur at the helm of *TB 30,* along with Deputy Unit Commander Mark Winn.

The love boat ... MR Trial Bay members Josh and Holly Woodhead tied the knot after Holly arrived for their wedding ceremony aboard *Trial Bay 30. Photo: Jon Cragg.*

"When I found out Holly was already a member of Marine Rescue, we really hit it off," Josh said.

He said the couple's membership of MRNSW was important to them and they had planned to involve the unit in their wedding from the moment they had set the date.

One of the unit's crew members and Rescue Water Craft operators, Josh said he had ruled out arriving at the ceremony on one of the unit's jet skis or wearing his RWC operator wetsuit.

Joint training takes flight in new partnership

Crews work together to ensure medical help arrives quickly on the water.

Toll and NSW Ambulance Aeromedical Helicopter crews are undertaking an intensive training program with MRNSW under a new partnership aimed at ensuring patients receive rapid treatment in medical emergencies on the water.

MRNSW crews in Sydney and the Illawarra are supporting winch training under a Memorandum of Understanding with Toll Helicopters, which will provide the NSW Ambulance helicopter service for the southern half of NSW and the ACT from early 2017.

The three organisations have already seized joint training opportunities, most recently with MR Middle Harbour and Cottage Point.

The new partnership sets out a formalised program of 15 initial winch training sessions for Ambulance medical teams and air crews on Pittwater, Broken Bay and Middle Harbour in Sydney and Wollongong between November and February, followed by another 11 sessions from April to June.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the valuable partnership would help ensure both agencies' crews maintained the skills necessary to provide swift, effective medical assistance to people on the water requiring urgent medical treatment and transfer.

The training involves the NSW Ambulance Paramedics winching down on to a moving vessel before being retrieved to the helicopter.

"This manoeuvre requires great skill and precision, not only from the Toll Helicopters Aircrewman on the winch but also the helicopter pilot and the vessel master," Deputy Commissioner Storey said. "The pilot and skipper need to maintain a constant heading and speed so the crew member can land safely."

A NSW Ambulance paramedic winches on to the deck of *Cottage Point 30* in a joint training session on Broken Bay.

Toll Helicopters Head of Check and Training, Graham Svenson said "we are very pleased to have entered into this training partnership with MRNSW and with continued close working ties we are able to provide NSW Ambulance with the critical training they require to prepare them for rescues at sea".

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What we've been up to

Counting the changes ... Treasurers and colleagues from 32 units gathered in Cronulla for a three-day training session on the new online accounting system during the second week of November. Staff from MRNSW Headquarters and Grant Thornton worked with the group on the switch-over from MYOB to NetSuite.

Stay safe ... MR Central Coast members at the Gosford Boating Safety Day, held in conjunction with the first national Gone Fishing Day. *Photo: Reel Action TV's Michael Guest.*

Governor's reception ... MR Hawkesbury UC Ken Edwards, MR Terrey Hills UC John Harris, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and MR Port Kembla PR Officer Tom Dragutinovich at Government House.

Shark patrol ... The crew of *EH 30* again provided a safety net for competitors in the Evans Head Malibu Classic, warning organisers of sharks lurking in the vicinity. *Photo: Ricky Forsyth.*

Success ... Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey was on hand at MR Lake Macquarie to congratulate our newest Crew member, Richard Chan, when he returned from his assessment with John Margrie.

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'Great day' as Ballina moves into new home

We've waited a long time and this is a spectacular result: Unit Commander.

Volunteers from MR Ballina moved into their new, purpose-built communications tower and unit base on Friday, October 7.

The volunteers officially began operations in the new base at 6am the following day, keeping watch over local boaters from the third floor radio room, which has uninterrupted views of the hazardous Richmond River bar and open waters.

Unit Commander John Donohue welcomed the move to the new $2.28 million building, the centrepiece of a $2.8 million project involving new landscaping, car parking and the demolition of the unit's former premises.

"This is a great day for our unit and our members," he said.

"We've waited a long time for a new facility and this is a spectacular result.

"We would like to thank everyone who has worked with us to reach this milestone, particularly Ballina Shire Council, the State and Federal Governments and MRNSW, who all contributed funding for the project.

"Ballina MP Tamara Smith, Page MP Kevin Hogan, Mayor David Wright and the Council personnel, particularly project coordinator Chris Allison, also deserve thanks for their ongoing support and contributions.

Come on in ... MR Ballina Unit Commander John Donohue speaks with local media as the unit moves into its spectacular new base overlooking the Richmond River bar.

"The Ballina community has always generously supported our fundraising activities and as a result, we were able to contribute up to $150,000 for our fit-out."

The building, further east on the breakwall than the old tower, has an array of the latest technology for the unit's work to help keep boaters safe on its local waterways and is perfectly located to provide its radio operators with a direct line of vision of boaters crossing the bar.

The tower was designed by architects Dominic Finlay Jones and built by Woollam Constructions in a project coordinated by Council.

It has dedicated training and administration areas and secure storage for rescue equipment.

With a suite of new radio, communications, computer and camera technology, the base is linked via the Radio over Internet Protocol (RoIP) system to the backbone MRNSW radio network.

Cape Byron re-fit doubles radio capacity

Marine Rescue Cape Byron is doubling its radio capacity with the installation of a new radio operator station as part of a significant internal re-fit.

The upgrade to the base will also improve members' working conditions with new ergonomic furniture.

We have already invested in an upgrade of our radio system this year, installing Reditalk and Radio over Internet Protocol technology to enable the unit to be linked to the central MRNSW hub in Sydney for overnight radio monitoring.

This work followed an extensive upgrade of the unit's aerials and towers at Coopers Shoot and St Helena, in a project completed by Karera and overseen by MRNSW Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb.

We also have prepared a proposal involving a more significant upgrade of our radio room. As the base is located at the foot of the iconic lighthouse in the Cape Byron State Conservation Area, this project would require approval from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the local Heritage Committee.

Twice the communication ... Watch Officer Rob Asquith and Unit Commander Terry Sandon in the MR Cape Byron radio room.

MR Cape Byron and our neighbours at MR Brunswick each gratefully recently received a $300 cheque at the Tweed Byron District Bowling Association charity day.

Terry Sandon

Crew rushes to injured trawler skipper's aid

Seamless operation shows benefits of professional training and resources.

A volunteer crew from MR Point Danger rushed to assist a trawler skipper who lost three fingers in an accident on board in early October.

The MR Point Danger radio base received a call for help from the trawler's crew about 9.15am on Tuesday, October 4.

Rescue crew members Kerry Kane, Chris Quinn and Gil Thomas, who were on maintenance duties at the unit's boat base, immediately responded on board rescue vessel *Point Danger 30.*

Crossing the Tweed River bar, the rescue crew had rendezvoused with the trawler by 10.10am, transferring the skipper on board *PD 30* and transporting him to a waiting NSW Ambulance at the Tweed Heads pump out jetty, arriving at 10.30am.

The crew provided first aid assistance and monitored the patient's vital signs throughout the journey to shore.

Ambulance paramedics boarded the rescue vessel to provide further treatment before transporting the trawler skipper to hospital.

MR Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby congratulated the unit's communications officers and rescue crew on their swift, coordinated response to the emergency.

"This operation demonstrated the benefits of Marine Rescue's professional training, vessels and equipment to the members of our boating community," UC Ashby said.

"This was a great team effort, with our volunteers working seamlessly to ensure this patient was ferried to shore safely and efficiently to receive medical treatment as quickly as possible.

"Congratulations to Watch Officer Graham Dutton, Radio Officers Jane Bladwell and Evelyn Partridge and trainee Darrell Todd, along with Coxswains Kerry Kane and Chris Quinn and Leading Crew Gil Thomas on a job well done."

The crew of *PD 30* and NSW Ambulance paramedics transfer the injured trawler skipper to land for transport to hospital.

Evans uses spotlight to attract new members

Unit provides safety net to protect Malibu Classic surfers from lurking sharks.

A new spate of shark sightings and a boat's disastrous run-in with a whale created a dark cloud on our summer horizon in early October but it had a silver lining for MR Evans Head.

A boat split in half and rapidly sank after striking a whale off Evans Head about 6am on October 2.

Fortunately, the passengers were wearing lifejackets and were quickly picked up by a nearby fisherman.

This incident was followed by a number of shark sightings during the Evans Head Malibu Classic on the long weekend.

After a series of shark attacks on the Northern NSW coastline in 2015, the unit's crews provided a safety watch for last year's Classic and returned this year, alerting organisers to a number of sharks lurking too close to competitors.

Both these events sparked enormous local media attention, with Deputy Unit Commander Kira Hartland seizing the opportunity to use the spotlight on our unit to raise awareness of our work and highlight the need for more recruits.

Reports on the Channel 7 and 9 news and a front page in the *Richmond River Examiner*, which arrived as we were towing in a broken down boat, sparked a rush of public interest in our unit and attracted a welcome number of new members. This a great step ahead of the upcoming holiday season that will bring an influx of visitors to town.

This year's Classic was staged in perfect weather but flat conditions.

A near-record field of competitors, including Evans' own Isaac Fields, entered the event, proving their calibre on tiny waves. Crews on board *Evans 30* patrolled from 6am to 9.30am on each day of the competition before handing over to Surf Life Saving members, in another example of local service co-operation.

The crew of *Evans 30* was fortunately able to warn the event organisers about the loitering sharks so they could delay the competition proceedings until the all clear was given. This was a great use of our valuable community asset to promote public safety.

Bill Bates

An eye in the sky pinpoints a shark loitering close to *Evans 30* on October 15. *Photo: Mark Flaherty, MJ Visual Media.*

Retiring staffer heads back on duty at Wooli

Members honoured for years of service.

Retiring Regional Controller Steve Reading with fellow Wooli members, Emilio Liquete, Kerry Purves, Marty Hutchings, Wayne Jubb and Dieter Meyering after their Long Service Medal presentation.

The final public duty for retiring MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Controller Stephen Reading was the presentation of medals to members of his home unit, MR Wooli.

Wooli is a small unit operating out of an even smaller village but thanks to its members' commitment, maintains radio coverage and a rescue service for our remote section of the NSW coastline.

Half its members each have committed more than a decade's service to our unit.

In recognition of this long and valued service, Mr Reading presented five members, Marty Hutchings, Dieter Meyering, Kerry Purves and Wayne Jubb, with their 10-year Long Service Medals.

Emilio Liquete also received his five year medal.

In return, the unit also made a presentation to Mr Reading as thanks for his support as Regional Controller.

Mr Reading joined the Wooli Unit in 2002 when it was affiliated with Volunteer Rescue Association Marine.

His administrative skills saw him smartly made unit secretary and then VRA Marine Secretary and appointed secretary of the Volunteer Marine Rescue Council at a State level.

This experience and knowledge would prove valuable in helping bring units from the three former volunteer marine rescue organisations together into the new Marine Rescue NSW, established in 2009.

Mr Reading was appointed as the inaugural Northern Rivers Regional Coordinator in 2010, when it was a volunteer position.

His primary task was to help facilitate a smooth transition to the new organisation, a process that was not without its challenges.

The voluntary Regional Coordinator's roles later evolved into paid Regional Controller positions.

We now have a marine rescue service that is more robust, better equipped and with a collegiate and cooperative spirit.

When he took on a regional role, Mr Reading was required to stand down from his unit executive positions.

With his retirement (his third, he tells us!) we are welcoming him back to the unit, with a more active unit role in mind.

Richard Taffs

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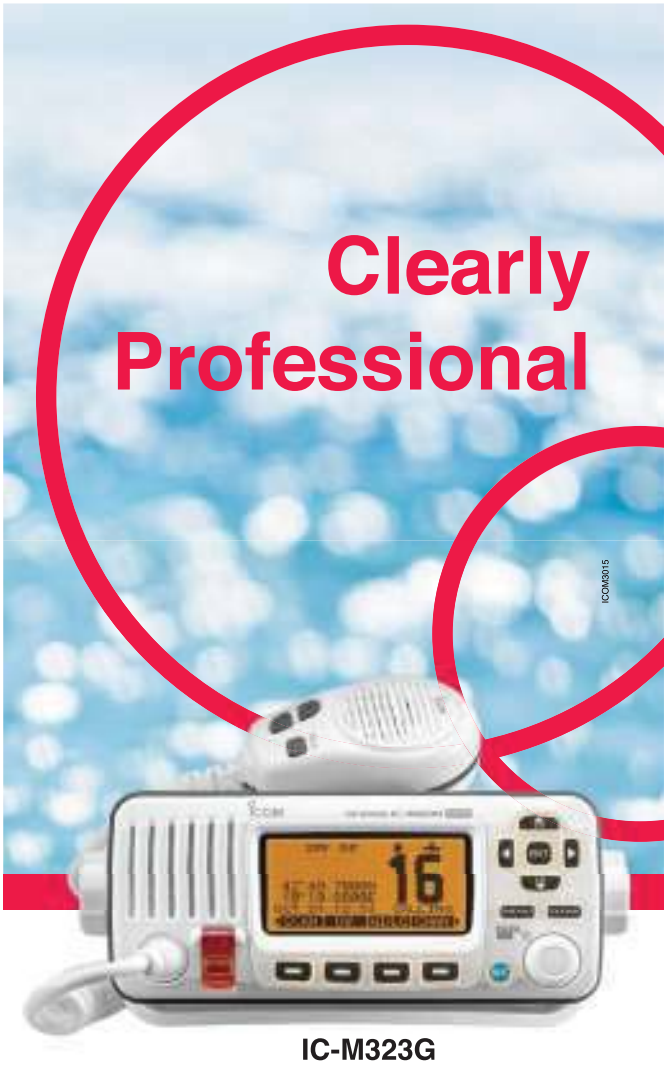

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Trainer sprints away with six gold medals

Athletics helps international master Bruce keep fit for MRNSW duties.

Marine Rescue Iluka Yamba trainer and assessor Bruce Bodsworth has set the fitness bar high for his MRNSW colleagues, sprinting away with a haul of six gold medals at the recent Pan Pacific Masters Athletics Games.

Bruce, 65, returned home from the three-day Gold Coast meet with victories in the 1500 metre, 100m and 400m hurdles, pole vault, javelin and 2km steeple events.

"Keeping fit for Marine Rescue is one of my priorities and to win six gold medals at this international event was a highlight of over 50 years of continuous competition," he said. "I have more than 300 medals but this was my greatest haul of gold at an international competition."

Not content to deliver MRNSW training to his unit colleagues, Bruce - who vows to still be competing past his 100th birthday and whose pet event is the decathlon - puts in five days of athletics training a week and competes every two weeks, as well as in state, national and international championships.

Sailing above his competition ... MR Iluka Yamba trainer and assessor Bruce Bodsworth on his way to winning six gold medals at the Pan Pacific Masters Athletics Games.

"Other members of MRNSW might be keen to improve the health and fitness levels they need to complete our volunteer tasks.

"The benefit of athletics is that it's the basis of all fitness, without gym costs, football injuries or stress.

"I live a very healthy lifestyle with the pyramid of good foods and, of course, I don't drink or smoke. I lecture in healthy lifestyles for people over 40, mainly to get them off their butts.

"As a coach for 30 years, I have gained practice running alongside, not from blowing a whistle on the sideline," he said.

Bruce said defeating a six-foot American champion in the 100m hurdles had been a Pan Pac buzz.

"On Friday, I threw the winning javelin on my second throw, then won the 2km steeple, only to return in time to the final throw at javelin and throw even further. On Saturday, I won the 1500m in between jumps at the pole vault. The Queensland State Decathlon record is my next goal and to move my world ranking to number one again."

Brunswick ready for summer holiday influx

Radio base upgrade to improve communications and operating conditions.

A project to upgrade the MR Brunswick radio base will provide new equipment and an improved operating environment.

The unit is currently gearing up for the installation of its Redi-Talk computerised radio system, as well as preparing for our busiest time of the year, when our small coastal town is inundated by holidaymakers.

The new radio room technology will be accompanied by upgraded ergonomic furniture for our radio operators.

Unit Commander Andrea Danvers has been liaising with the local State Emergency Service unit with regard to our unit providing radio communications support in future emergencies.

The Tweed Byron District Bowling Association recently held a Bowls Charity Day at the Byron Bay Bowling Club.

The proceeds were to be donated to our neighbours at MR Cape Byron, who instead asked that MR Brunswick share in the day's proceeds.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our colleagues and all the bowlers who took part.

A good day was had by all, with many prizes distributed to the successful players.

Association President Greg Daniels and Club Secretary Kim Quinell presented cheques to MR Cape Byron Unit Commander Terry Sandon and MR Brunswick Unit Commander Andrea Danvers.

Bowled over ... Greg Daniels and Kim Quinell present Andrea Danvers and Terry Sandon with a welcome donation. *Photo: Judith Tuckey, Tweed Byron District Bowling Association.*

Owen Danvers

Trial Bay hosts RWC weekend boot camp

Crew refresh skills in mixed conditions.

Excelling in lumpy conditions on the Macleay River bar ... Josh Woodhead and Will Smith, from MR Trial Bay.

Marine Rescue NSW continues to build its Rescue Water Craft capability to bolster its units' emergency response.

With qualified RWC operators required to refresh their skills on the nimble rescue resources every six months, operators in the Mid North Coast Region enjoy training as a group to ensure they are fully prepared to operate in any conditions to assist the community.

MR Trial Bay hosted the second regional RWC course, led by Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray and Regional Training Manager Rodney Page, on October 17 and 18.

The course attracted 12 participants and five RWCs from the Trial Bay, Nambucca and Port Macquarie units, supported by rescue vessel crew on board *Trial Bay 30*.

Day one saw the members complete required skills tests both in the Macleay River and the very lumpy river bar, excelling in the rough conditions. A cold and damp second day was spent building their skills in the team environment.

This type of refresher course will continue every six months as the members agree that this format is well worth the time to attend. As the number of qualified operators grows, the experienced crew will be passing their knowledge and skills along to the new recruits.

John Murray

A sparkling day on the water for MR Port Macquarie's Ben Leonard and Luke Allman, from MR Trial Bay. *Photos: Helen Fedoroff.*

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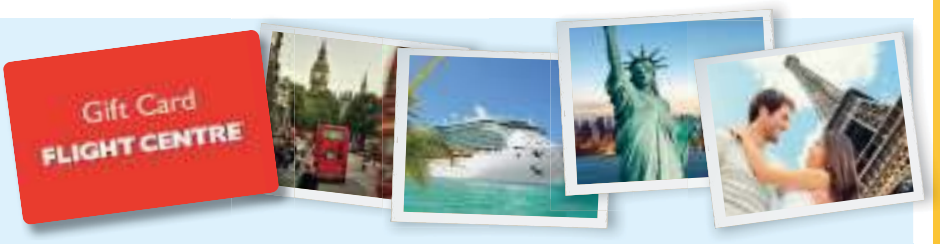

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Each Valued at $4,955.60

GO THE WALLABIES! Four lucky winners each win **four tickets** to a private suite at Allianz Stadium for the Wallabies v Scotland match on 17 June 2017, plus $1,000 cash towards travel/accommodation.

Private suite guests enjoy the game in VIP comfort with a dedicated attendant, gourmet buffet and premium beer, wine and soft drinks throughout the event, plus official match program and merchandise.

Plus, your chance to win one of 6 bonus prizes!

Every ticket holder is automatically entered in the extra draws for one of six regional prizes.

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6 Sea-Doo SPARK 2-seat, 60HP jet skis + trailers each valued at $10,261.60. Total value $61,569. The Sea-Doo SPARK makes your dreams of great days on the water come true. Cutting edge design, a joy to ride, responsive and precise with fly-by-wire throttle control. Easy to tow with a small car.

To be drawn at 12:00pm 30 May 2017 at Marine Rescue NSW HQ, 202 Nicholson Pde, Cronulla 2230. All proceeds of this Art Union go to Marine Rescue NSW. www.mrnsw.com.au

Training centre a boon for Crowdy unit

Two Ministers join members at opening of dedicated $215,000 facility.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott joined members of MR Crowdy Harrington to open the unit's new $215,000 training facility and boat shed on November 26.

Early Childhood Education and Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams, Lyne MP Dr David Gillespie and MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Property Officer David Lyall also attended.

"Members of the Crowdy Harrington unit now have the benefit of a dedicated facility for their training activities," Mr Elliott said.

"The training facility is equipped with integrated technology, a kitchen and amenities, as well as undercover protection for the unit's response vessel, *Crowdy 20*, fuel utility and other equipment."

Deputy Commissioner Storey congratulated the unit members, who worked tirelessly with their local community and supporters to bring the training centre project to fruition.

The unit received two Community Building Partnership grants worth $33,000 and a further $2,000 from Mid Coast Water towards the facility.

Unit Commander Karen Farrell also thanked the unit members.

"Ultimately, it is the community that benefits from the tenacity and hard work of these wonderful people," she said.

She also thanked Harrington Public School students and TS Manoora Naval Cadets for taking part in the opening celebrations.

The unit is trialling new operating hours over the busy summer period, opening 5am to 8pm Friday to Sunday and continuing from 6am to 6pm Monday to Thursday.

In one of his final roles as Mid North Coast Regional Controller, John Murray presented member Pat Carberry with the National Medal, recognising her 15 years' service.

Training centre open ... Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, Crowdy Harrington UC Karen Farrell, Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams.

On October 7, *Crowdy 30* helped honour the wishes of our late member, Fr David Simpson, by scattering his ashes off Crowdy Head. The service was conducted by Fr Stephen Niland and witnessed by David's sons Justin and Damien, along with his unit colleagues, John Peers, Keith Richardson and John Single. Other members gathered at Crowdy Wharf to bid farewell to a remarkable man missed by all.

Mary Thomas

Speedy move to new base for radio crew

Port Macquarie wins government grant for two urgent projects.

Marine Rescue Port Macquarie is on the air in its new Search and Rescue Coordination Centre.

The unit's radio operators began transmitting in the completely rebuilt base on Town Beach at 6pm on November 3, followed just over an hour later by their first emergency call-out.

The move to the new building came almost a month earlier than planned following a major outage on the radio and phone system at the unit's temporary radio base, set up at our boat shed, on November 3.

Luckily, the radio set-up at Town Beach had been commissioned the previous day and when it became obvious the outage was likely to take a number of days to fix, we decided to move to the new centre as soon as possible.

A major effort by Operations Officer John Pickett and some willing helpers completed the move within the day.

Work has since continued to complete the installation of floor coverings, cabinetry and the fit-out, with a number of our members "coming out of retirement" to carry out painting, tiling and carpentry. We are planning an official opening early in the New Year.

The unit has received a $32,100 Public Reserve Management Fund grant towards a new pontoon and storage space for its Rescue Water Craft and safety anchor points for the antenna on its boat shed roof.

Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams said the funding would enable the construction of a floating boat shed to provide access to the unit's rapid-response RWC.

"I'm delighted the NSW Government is supporting such a deserving local organisation," she said.

MR Port Macquarie radio operators Rees Andrews and Paul Moon on duty in the unit's new Search and Rescue Coordination Centre.

The new storage shed, with room for two jet skis, will help us cut up to 20 minutes off the launch time for the RWC, which could mean the difference between life and death in an emergency. We have designed a storage shed that fits in with the aesthetics and environment of the area.

We are extremely grateful that Ms Williams was able to have Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair provide us with the grant for these two urgent projects.

Neil Yates

Lakeside drawcard for future young recruits

Visiting boaters assured Forster-Tuncurry keeping watch over summer.

Rescue vessel *Forster-Tuncurry 30* proved a strong drawcard at the annual Lakeside Festival, staged in the midst of winds gusting to 43 knots, in early November.

Crew member John Imrie reported that the open-for-inspection vessel proved especially popular with school children, many of whom inquired when they would be able to join our service.

Our members also helped promote the unit at the event, welcoming vistors at the entry gates, selling raffle tickets, working on the craft stall run by our Breakwall Belles fundraising group and providing boating safety information at our unit stand.

The unit has been called out to assist only 12 boaters over the past three months and is hopeful that this quieter activity means the boating community has been paying heed to our safety advice and warnings.

A group of members who embarked on what was planned to be an enjoyable bus trip to the Maitland markets on Sunday, November 6, was caught in a bushfire emergency, with their vehicle diverted to Karuah to avoid a fire burning out of control.

Event organiser Carol Parker said the passengers had comfortably sheltered at the Karuah RSL, where staff had "turned themselves inside out" to ensure everyone was happy.

Two unit members have been commended for their service. Mid North Coast Director and former Unit Commander John Lynch was presented with the Emergency Service Medal and Milton Shaw was awarded a St John Ambulance Save a Life medal for saving the life of local fisherman, Henry Perram, who suffered a heart attack while fishing out at sea with his son, Hal.

Come on board ... *Forster Tuncurry 30,* open for inspection at the recent Lakeside Festival.

Thanks to Milton's quick thinking and skilled use of a unit defibrillator, Henry's family had the pleasure of his company for at least another two years before he passed away last year.

A recent proliferation of motor homes and caravans in town means our members are now on full alert as holiday-makers descend on the Great Lakes region in droves. Visiting boaters can feel secure in the knowledge that MR Forster-Tuncurry will be watching over them.

Wendy Borchers

Boaters stay safe on water at Camden Haven

Four months incident-free thanks to better maintenance and more awareness.

A 10m sailing vessel that suffered mechanical problems with its diesel motor as it travelled south to Camden Haven in mid-October ended a lengthy run of incident-free boating on our waters.

The skipper of the mono-hull boat telephoned the base for help, with radio operator Alan Malcolm alerting the rescue vessel crew.

Michael Lill took over radio duties, with the crew of *CH 30*, Ken Clancy, Ken Rutledge, Keith Charman and Alan Malcolm, taking the distressed vessel under tow at 8pm and bringing it to an emergency mooring opposite our base by 8.35pm.

This had been one of the quietest periods on the Camden Haven, with no other boaters needing assistance for four months.

Talking to other units, we came to the conclusion that boaters were becoming more aware of local conditions and vessel maintenance.

Two of our longest-serving members were recognised with Long Service Medals in September.

Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray presented Carole Dyson with her 15 year medal and certificate.

Actively involved in fundraising, catering and other duties as needed, Carole has become a familiar face at Laurieton United Services Club, where she has helped for 15 years with our unit's Sunday meat raffle.

Bruce Hall, who received his 10 year medal and certificate, was a marine radio operator for many years before also becoming involved in our fundraising activities.

He is a local institution on our meat raffles at Coles.

In an approach encouraged by MRNSW, our unit is very inclusive.

Debra Bennett, who has an intellectual disability, first came to our attention when she would help her mum and dad, Faye and Bob, with our meat raffles.

Unit Commander Ken Rutledge presents Debra Bennett with a Citation for her commitment to the unit and its fundraising activities.

When she was invited to become a member alongside her parents, she was over the moon.

Unit Commander Ken Rutledge recently presented Debra with a Unit Commander's Citation in recognition of her commitment

Debbie would be our most enthusiastic fundraising member, attends every unit meeting and is a true asset to our unit and MRNSW.

John Mountier

Unsung heroes keep Woolgoolga afloat

Beach launch demands skill and a close watch by tractor drivers and crew.

Members of MR Woolgoolga are frequently spotted heading to the beach.

But instead of a swim, they're set to leap on board our rescue vessel, which launches directly from the sand into the surf.

This method of launching can be somewhat daunting for our volunteers, not only for the vessel skipper but also our tractor drivers, Tony Skalla, Craig Dunbar, Scott Hodgkinson, John Murray and Greg McIntosh, who are the unsung heroes of the Woolgoolga unit. More often than not, they will get wet launching the vessel, depending on shifting sands on the beach.

With high tides and choppy surf adding to their discomfort, they manage both the launch and retrieval of *Woolgoolga 30* for every operation and training session. Without the tractor and driver, we would be unable to effectively respond to boaters in need or train.

MR Woolgoolga members could not respond to emergencies or train without the unit's tractor drivers to launch their rescue vessel. *Photo: Robert Watkin.*

Both the tractor driver and crew must keep a careful watch for surfers and swimmers, who sometimes fail to realise that they should give a wide berth to a 30ft rescue vessel.

As the tractor has to launch the boat stern-first into the surf, all crew must remain in the cabin, as waves can break over the stern. When reversing the vessel off the trailer, the helmsman must keep going straight into the waves and choose the correct time to turn short round in a trough between two breaking waves. Fortunately, our vessel is quite nimble. Once turned, it can then proceed with caution, in similar conditions to a bar crossing.

MR Woolgoolga is very thankful for our tractor drivers' valuable contribution to our unit.

Cherrill Powell

All creatures great and small causing chaos

It's not always boaters who need rescuing by Marine Rescue NSW.

On November 15, WIRES called MR Nambucca to rescue an injured goanna trying to climb from the water on to the breakwall at the Nambucca River bar.

The animal was a metre-and-a-half long and I knew this could end badly for me.

I managed to get the animal in a long box and take it to the vet, then myself to the doctor for a tetanus shot and treatment to the injuries caused by the goanna clinging on to my arm with its massive claws, drawing blood.

This followed an October incident in which were we called to help the driver of a vehicle that ended up in the river.

The van - which did not have a boat attached - ran down the boat ramp after the driver jumped out in fright at the sight of what she reported to be a "large and hairy" spider. Member Dale Edwards swam out to the van with a flat top operator's winch cable, attaching it to the top of the vehicle so it could be dragged back to land.

MR Nambucca has four new members training three times a week on our Rescue Water Craft after undertaking their initial RWC training with Mid North Coast Regional Controller John Murray.

Our training involves a circuit swim in the Nambucca River, followed by a rescue simulation one-up and two-up. The trainees' progress is outstanding and the improvement in their swimming fitness has been remarkable as a result of swimming in the river at least three times a week. The operators are accompanied on their training runs by *Nambucca 20*.

MR Nambucca RWC operator David Morris trains with Gary Nichols, Ken Brandli, Dale Edwards and John Murray on board *Nambucca 20*.

We have two more members almost ready to start training with this crew, which will give the unit a nice complement of RWC operators on whom we can call.

The unit recently attended a combined emergency services day at Macksville School. We had more than 100 children from kindy to year three sitting on our RWC and testing out our helmets and we also handed the teachers MRNSW colouring in sheets for the students.

Graham Horne

New MP praises volunteers' performance

Norah Head members recognised for lengthy and dedicated service.

New Federal Member for Dobell Emma McBride's first official function with MRNSW was the presentation of well-deserved medals and awards to five volunteers from the Norah Head unit.

A good crowd gathered at the unit base to witness the presentations.

Unit Commander Bill Hignett welcomed Ms McBride, who gave high praise to our volunteers.

Adrian Greenfield and Ian Mudge received Long Service Medals for 15 years' service and Trevor Burkett and Vic Winney for five years, with a certificate of appreciation presented to Bob Daley.

Adrian was a member of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association at Tuggerah Lakes before transferring to Search and Rescue Norah Head, now Marine Rescue. Adrian is indispensable to our unit, helping with the maintenance of both our vessel and the boat club building. He also drives our launch tractor and assists with administration and stores. He is expected to be back on deck soon after a recent Cochlear ear implant.

Dobell MP Emma McBride's first MRNSW function was to present medals and awards to MR Norah Head members Ian Mudge, Vic Winney, Adrian Greenfield, Trevor Burkett and Bob Daley. *Photo: Lee Deacon.*

Ian has been a member of MR Norah Head for more than 15 years. He was originally mentored by Len Hurley, after whom our rescue vessel is named.

A current Watch Officer in the unit's radio room, he also spent 30 years in Crash Rescue and Recovery for the Australian Racing Drivers' Club at circuits such as Bathurst, Katoomba, Amaroo and Oran Park.

Trevor Burkett first served as the unit's Treasurer, before becoming Unit Commander for two years, from 2014 to 2016. A Watch Officer, he was instrumental in helping to secure grants for equipment including a trailer and photocopier.

After joining the unit five years ago, Vic served as Welfare Officer for two years and is now also a Radio Operator and Communications Centre Manager.

The presentation also marked Bob's retirement from operational duty. Bob travelled from Balmain to Norah Head twice a month for duty and will be sorely missed, not only for his supplies of home-produced honey. We wish Bob all the best in his retirement.

Lee Deacon

Units make most of ideal training conditions

Two Central Coast units took advantage of fine weather and good conditions to stage a joint training weekend in mid-November.

Eleven members of MR Terrigal headed north over the two days to train with nine MR Tuggerah Lakes volunteers.

The units have an agreement to pool resources to train together.

The two teams, on board rescue vessels *TL 20* and *TL 21,* practised shallow water running and studied channel marker rules and other navigation symbols essential to safe boating on the lakes system.

All personnel who took part were pleased with the level of training undertaken and reported that they had an enjoyable weekend.

MR Tuggerah Lakes has also hosted a number of recent visits, including from 16 men and women, aged from 50 to 92, from Berkeley Village Indoor Bowls Group.

The group joined us for morning tea, a BBQ lunch and a trip around Budgewoi Lake. The village residents always enjoy their visits to the base and the peaceful view over the lake.

Author and photographer John R Christie also visited. Born at 22 weeks weighing just 530 grams, John spent his first six months in hospital and has since had a number of operations. Now 26, he has Cerebral Palsy and spends his life in a wheelchair but has not let that prevent him travelling the world, photographing nature.

Members of MR Tuggerah Lakes host their colleagues from MR Terrigal for a joint training exercise. *Photo: Shaun Smith.*

He has now written a book of poetry, accompanied by his photographs and paintings.

Suzanne Younglove

'Blue uniforms' wade into sea of yellow

Port Stephens members provide comms support to bushfire operation.

The blue uniforms of members of MR Port Stephens certainly stood out among the yellow kit of the Rural Fire Service personnel during one of the unit's more unusual assistance operations recently.

In addition to its marine rescue responsibilities, the 24x7 MR Port Stephens base acts as the Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre from 5pm to 9am every day when there is no large active fire.

This role involves handling calls from Fire & Rescue NSW Triple Zero operators, using the paging software to call out the relevant brigades and then handling the radio communications following RFS protocols.

The Lower Hunter RFS District covers the council areas of Cessnock, Maitland, Dungog and Port Stephens. Apart from structure, bush and grass fires, brigades can be called out to motor vehicle accidents, automatic fire alarms and an assortment of other tasks.

On Saturday, November 5, the RFS was faced with two bushfire emergencies; the first at Racecourse Road, Cessnock and the second, the Lone Pine fire, around Limeburners Creek, Karuah and Medowie. Several smaller fires also were burning in the area. More than 1000 RFS volunteer firefighters were on the ground as high temperatures and constant wind changes fuelled the fires and forced the closure of the Pacific Highway for several days.

MR Port Stephens and Rural Fire Service personnel at work in the Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre during the November bushfire operation.

Keen to provide additional support to the unit's emergency service colleagues, Unit Commander Lee Uebergang on November 7 offered communications assistance.

This was welcomed by the RFS Communications Manager and at 8am on November 8, the first "blue uniforms" waded into the sea of yellow at the Fire Control Centre in East Maitland to assist in the radio despatch area.

After a quick briefing from the RFS supervisors, radio operations continued seamlessly.

MRNSW Watch Officer Ross Debenham said at first there had been a few curious and bewildered looks from the yellow uniforms from out of town.

"These quickly turned to amazement as the realisation sank in that these interlopers in blue uniforms knew the radio protocols, the call signs, the forms and paperwork," he said.

> 'I was always confident the Marine Rescue volunteers were equipped to handle the work'

Over the next few days, seven MR Watch Officers completed 10 eight-hour shifts in the communications room: Ross Debenham, Iain Blackadder, Jenny Fitzsimons, Colin Couper, Mike Grover, Elizabeth Francis and Barney Pinney.

Lower Hunter RFS Inspector Ken Hepplewhite said the prompt flow of information was vital during major fire incidents like those in November.

"Our despatch people play an important role in getting messages to and from our fire fighting units on the ground," he said. "Radio activity is constant and relentless so after some very long shifts, our people were getting tired and we were pulling in resources from other areas to assist," he said.

"The offer from our Marine Rescue friends was timely and most welcome. As a Duty Officer working closely with the Port Stephens radio base after hours, I was always confident the Marine Rescue volunteers were equipped to handle the work and I had no hesitation in recommending the offer of assistance to our Communications Manager."

MR Watch Officer Colin Couper said he had thoroughly enjoyed helping the RFS, who had made the MRNSW volunteers most welcome.

"I also think it did not go unnoticed by others further up and down the command chain that we are capable of handling the comms after they saw us doing it first hand and their feedback allowed me to pick up quite few new tips," he said.

Inspector Hepplewhite and UC Uebergang will conduct a debrief with the unit Watch Officers to capture the important lessons learned for future reference in providing an even better service for the RFS when the need next arises.

UC Uebergang extended his thanks to the volunteers who took part at the unit's November meeting.

Lee Uebergang

Fire watch ... MR Port Stephens' Iain Blackadder, Colin Couper, Ross Debenham, Lee Uebergang, Jenny Fitzsimons and Barney Pinney.

Member takes off with amphibious visitor

Central Coast concentrates on filling coffers ahead of peak season.

Marine Rescue Central Coast encourages a range of visitors to its Point Clare base but one of our more unusual guests was a small amphibious aircraft that taxied in to the unit's boat ramp on October 24.

Much to the amazement of volunteers taking part in a Certificate IV training course at the base at the time, the craft dropped in to collect unit member Caitlin Tracey, a pilot who is planning to learn to fly the amphibians.

More terrestrial groups, including the Woy Woy Rotary, Ettalong and Baulkham Hills Probus Clubs and Penrith Arthritis Support Group also have been warmly welcomed recently.

The slower recreational boating activity throughout winter and early spring also enabled the unit to concentrate on fundraising activities, particularly its annual boat, outboard and trailer raffle, which this year made $21,270 in gross sales.

Every member was rostered on fundraising duties as the prize was transported to local shopping centres four days a week from July until November, ahead of the draw at the Oyster Festival at Ettalong on November 13.

About 10,000 people attend the Oyster Festival each year, providing an ideal opportunity to boost public awareness of MRNSW. The lucky winner of the boat and trailer was Deb Frack, who lives in Sydney and weekends at Booker Bay.

The unit also staged a display at the annual Davistown Putt Putt Regatta, where our sausage sandwiches proved popular, contributing $998 to our coffers, in addition to raffle sales of $921. Our sausage sangers also raised another $996 at Bunnings barbecues.

In November, we accepted an invitation to operate the Melbourne Cup Sweep for Gosford Sailing Club, which added a further $420 to our operational funds for the coming summer boating season.

MR Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer watches on as member Caitlin Tracey prepares to take flight in an amphibious craft.

Unit Public Relations Officer Ron Cole was named the winner of the Gosford Rotary Club's 2016 Emergency Service Award on October 12. Ron was presented with the award by Rotary District 9685 Assistant Governor Russell Grove and now goes on to be a finalist in the Rotary District Emergency Services Award in March.

Ron joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 1998, holding positions including *Beam Ends* editor, Division Secretary and Operations Officer, Division Commander, RVCP Board member and original *Soundings* editor upon the establishment of MRNSW.

A skipper, he is currently an operational member of the unit's mid-week watch.

Ron Cole & Shea Wicks

Disappointment as rain wrecks Open Day

Regional exercise proves valuable for Lake Macquarie boat, radio crew.

Poor weather forced the last-minute cancellation of this year's popular MR Lake Macquarie Open Day.

The annual October event, staged in the park next to the unit's Pelican base, features market stalls, entertainment, tours of the rescue vessel and radio bases and displays by other emergency services.

After months of diligent work by our Open Day committee to make sure the event would be a success, it was a huge disappointment to the unit to cancel this year's event. But we're positive and will work hard to organise another wonderful Open Day next year!

With fewer radio calls and assists over winter, we have had time to focus on training. Several Lake Macquarie Radio Operators, as well as boat crew members, attended the Hunter/Central Coast Search and Rescue Exercise in Newcastle in September.

The weekend proved a valuable educational exercise for participants.

Several members have been recognised for their service and attainment, with warm congratulations extended to our two new Coxswains, Howard Elsey and Darryl Scotman.

Federal Member for Shortland Pat Conroy attended a recent unit meeting to present the National Medal to John Ellis and Martin Palisi recognising their 15 years' service and the clasp to the National Medal to Margaret Teal for her 25-year commitment. Hunter/Central Coast Regional Controller Neil Grieves also presented Long Service Medals to well-deserving members, Nancy Adams (20 years) and Kevin Ableson (10 years).

Zoe Tylee

Water, water everywhere ... heavy rainfall forced the cancellation of this year's MR Lake Macquarie Open Day.

Rapid response to sailor washed overboard

Without a lifejacket, yachtsman lucky to be seen in rough conditions.

A yachtsman washed overboard in rough conditions off Macmasters Beach was swiftly rescued by a three-member crew from MR Broken Bay, who are now being awarded a Unit Commander's Citatation in recognition of their life-saving operation.

Unit Commander Vic Lawrence said the crew had demonstrated professionalism, skill and determination in finding the sailor in difficult conditions and returning him to safety.

The Unit Commander's Citation states that the successful outcome of the rescue is a point of pride for the crew and the Broken Bay unit.

Broken Bay 20 was on patrol near the entrance to Careel Bay in Pittwater about 12.30pm on Sunday, October 23, when the crew, John Sutton, John Weaver and Joe Ellams, heard a VHF radio call to MR Terrey Hills reporting a man overboard from a yacht.

With the call quickly escalating to a May Day, the crew proceeded at full safe speed on the 6.5m rigid hull inflatable boat to the broadcast position, about 1.5nm due east of Macmasters Beach, where it was thought the sailor had fallen overboard.

It was later discovered he had been washed off the yacht in the rough sea conditions, with a 4-5 metre swell and 20 knot winds gusting to 30 knots.

With the assistance of MR Terrey Hills, Greater Sydney Regional Controller Chris Gillett and the Police Marine Area Command, numerous rescue resources were dispatched to search for the boater, including two rescue helicopters.

BB 20 arrived in the vicinity about 12.55pm and immediately turned due east in order to cover the area in the yacht's wake.

The sailor was quickly sighted and safely recovered by the three rescue crew by 1pm.

MR Broken Bay's 'triple J' team, John Weaver, John Sutton and Joe Ellams, who are receiving a Citation for rescuing a man overboard.

Unit Commander Lawrence said the sailor was fortunate to have been swiftly located as he had been wearing dark clothes but not wearing a lifejacket.

"This helped explain why neither of two helicopters in the search area had been able to spot him," he said.

"The sailor was bruised and cold but otherwise unharmed. He was immediately wrapped in a space blanket for warmth.

"Due to the strong south-east swell and to avoid injury to the sailor, *BB 20* was forced to make a lengthy return passage, turning into Pittwater once abeam the Barrenjoey lighthouse.Once they had returned to Pittwater, the sailor was transferred to a NSW Police vessel and *BB 20* returned to the Broken Bay base at Bayview."

Vic Lawrence

Unit adds one Moore coxswain to its ranks

Hawkesbury celebrates members' service and achievements.

Marine Rescue Hawkesbury has congratulated its second member to qualify as a Coxswain.

Peter Moore achieved the senior rating after successfully completing a challenging assessment set by Ian Morrow and Ken Edwards.

Peter's assessment required him to locate a vessel missing on Broken Bay with three people on board.

This test involved plotting the boat's last known position and taking account of set, drift and the effect of a south west wind blowing at 15 knots. The chart work required close attention to the calculation of times, speed and distances, with Peter then inputing the data to the navigation computer.

The assessors complicated the assessment task with a series of simultaneous challenges, requiring Peter to respond to a fire on board, a medical emergency, a vessel requiring a tow and updates to the radio base on location, heading and speed.

These tests are designed to ensure a Coxswain can handle several difficult tasks while ensuring the safety of the crew and vessel and responding as quickly as possible to a vessel in distress.

The unit recently celebrated its members' achievements at a presentation night at Pennant Hills Golf Club.

Greater Sydney Regional Director David White presented Long Service Medals to several members, while Sydney Regional Controller Chris Gillett and Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff presented certificates to those who had successfully completed their Leading Crew, MR Crew and Advanced Resuscitation training.

Greater Sydney Regional Controller Chris Gillett presents Jamie Abnett Miller with his Leading Crew certificate.

While marking our successes, members also are mourning the loss of our former Unit Commander Merv Collins, who stood down at the June elections and sadly passed away in September (In Memoriam, Page 44).

Ken Edwards

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Cooperative effort to save lives on water

Crews work with police, chopper team.

Asher Katz at the end of the winch line on board *CP 30* during an exercise in adverse conditions with Toll and NSW Ambulance crews.

A crew from MR Cottage Point joined an operation to assist a disabled ocean-going cruiser to safety from five nautical miles off Barrenjoey on November 5.

The crew of *CP 30* assisted officers from the Broken Bay Police Marine Area Command as they towed the 65ft cruiser into Pittwater.

Skipper David White said police had called on the unit to provide a safety escort for the operation.

"The police boat had the disabled vessel in tow but this was a big ocean-going cruiser that weighed in at around 30 tonnes and our role was to provide assistance in the event of any further emergency," he said.

The cruiser, which is understood to have been on a delivery voyage when it experienced mechanical and steering problems, was secured to a police mooring.

CP 30 also has been taking part in Toll Helicopters training exercises with aircrew and NSW Ambulance paramedics (see story Page 10).

On approach, we agree the wind direction and speed to enable the pilot to fly into the wind. On confirmation to the pilot that the vessel is ready to receive a transfer with all gear secured and radar turned off, the boat proceeds at a speed of 10 knots, holding a straight course.

The Toll helicopter comes in at about 20m over our port quarter for the winch crew to send a paramedic down. *CP 30* is stable even in the huge down draft and the deck gives the pilot a large area over which to position the aircraft for the paramedic to winch down. We have conducted joint training with MR Hawkesbury and MR Middle Harbour aboard *CP 30* and plan for other Sydney units to visit and be signed off by Toll to conduct training exercises on their local waterways.

Paul Millar

Slam dunk for Kings of the Sydney airwaves

Terrey Hills accepts courtside award on behalf of all Marine Rescue members.

Marine Rescue Terrey Hills has been recognised as an "Unsung Hero" during a busy start to the summer boating season.

The acknowledgment, in front of a large crowd at the Sydney Kings' match at Qudos Bank Arena on October 30, was a most welcome show of public acclaim, coming on the same day as the unit played a major role in coordinating a critical rescue operation on Sydney's northern waterways.

That afternoon, our operators responded quickly and effectively to a call from a yacht off Macmasters Beach reporting that a crew member had fallen overboard and could not be retrieved.

Our operators worked with the Police Marine Area Command and Greater Sydney Regional Controller Chris Gillett to coordinate the deployment of multiple resources, including rescue vessels and helicopters, to the scene.

The crew of *Broken Bay 20* found the man in very tough sea conditions (see story Page 31).

On November 4, the base picked up a call from a vessel in Pittwater for urgent medical assistance for a man who had collapsed on board, suffering a major head wound.

Quick engagement with the Broken Bay police saw the man transferred to shore and then to hospital for treatment. In both instances, our operators responded professionally and provided the essential communications connection between the distressed vessel and responders.

In late October, the unit hosted 50 members of our Radio Club for lunch and a tour of the radio room.

This engagement is important, not only to thank our members for their support but also to maintain a dialogue with a serious and committed group in the boating community. They learned more about what we do and were impressed with the investment MRNSW is making in improved VHF radio coverage along the coast and the online Radio over Internet Protocol (RoIP) technology being progressively implemented to create a statewide network. Their feedback about the day was very positive and their word of mouth support for MRNSW among the boating community is invaluable.

Sydney Kings' Unsung Heroes ... Chris Allen (MR Middle Harbour and Terrey Hills), Peter Richards (MR Port Jackson), Matt King (MR Terrey Hills) and Robert Elvin (MR Terrey Hills).

> As we walked back through the crowd after the ceremony there was a lot of positive recognition

The Sydney Kings basketball team then kindly invited our members, their families and friends to celebrate our recognition as the team's weekly "Unsung Hero" at the October 30 home game against the Brisbane Bullets. The award celebrates volunteer and community groups that demonstrate high levels of community service but are under-recognised.

Terrey Hills provides 24x7 radio coverage for the Sydney Region and, increasingly, overnight coverage for other areas of the NSW coast through the RoIP network. The Kings award is great acknowledgment for our dedicated members. As the primary communications centre for the Sydney Region, Terrey Hills works very closely with the other units in the region and it was great to have members from MR Middle Harbour and Port Jackson join us at the game to share the applause.

The award was handed to us by Kings and basketball great, Steve Carfino and, in keeping with the Halloween theme, Beetlejuice, during a ceremony at half-time. It was a pleasure to host Robert Elvin's grandkids, who are big basketball fans and see them enjoy close contact with their basketball heroes and watch their grandfather get the recognition he and his fellow volunteers deserve. We are proud to have received the award on behalf of all members of MRNSW.

As we walked back through the crowd after the award ceremony there was a lot of positive recognition, so we can be assured that the general public appreciates what we do.

Matt King

Sydney Kings great Steve Carfino and Beetlejuice present MR Terrey Hills DUC Matt King with the team's Unsung Hero award for the unit.

Hectic day keeps Harbour crews on the hop

Boaters urged to check batteries, mechanics and electrics before heading out.

Two people were rescued from rocks when their small cruiser ran aground in choppy conditions at South Head on October 16.

Marine Rescue Middle Harbour, the NSW Police Marine Area Command and Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter responded.

No one was reported to be injured.

The grounding was one of a series of incidents that kept the crews of *MH 30* and *MH 20* fully occupied throughout a hectic Sunday on the water.

The unit also responded to assist a 6m runabout grounded at The Spit, a yacht that ran out of fuel off Seaforth Bluff and a vessel with a rope snagged around its propeller at its Rose Bay.

Three vessels were stranded after losing power: a Bayliner with four people on board off the Heads, a cruiser at Roseville and a 40-foot yacht at Grotto Point.

No one was injured when this runabout ran aground off South Head, sparking an emergency response by three rescue agencies. *Photo: Brian Roberts.*

Unit Commander Tony Whybrow told the *Manly Daily* most of the incidents had been due to mechanical or electrical faults or fuel-related.

He said this was common at the start of the boating season as boats were taken out for what might have been the first time since the winter layoff.

He reminded boaters to check their batteries, mechanics and electrical systems before heading out on the water.

"You can't leave boats parked for months and expect them to be in good mechanical condition," he said.

MARINE RESCUE NEW SOUTH WALES

Christmas value for you. Support for us.

Visit the Marine Rescue NSW e-shop this Christmas to show your support for our volunteers' work to save lives on the water.

MRNSW provides a vital safety net for our boating community but we need your help. When you shop with us, you'll not only get great value but you'll know you're also helping maintain our world-class emergency service.

You'll find a range of MRNSW merchandise - coffee mugs, water bottles, floating key rings, USB sticks and supporter caps and slouch hats - so you can join our life-saving mission.

You can shop for safety equipment and some useful boating and fishing gear, too. Discounts apply for MRNSW volunteers and Radio Club members. Show your support today!

Shop at the MRNSW e-shop
shopmrnsw.com.au

Rough conditions impact Gerroa rescue

Sailor plucked from overturned catamaran as mate swept towards shore.

A rescue crew from MR Shoalhaven was quickly activated when a catamaran capsized in difficult conditions off Seven Mile Beach, south of Gerroa, on October 16, washing away one sailor and leaving another clinging to the upturned hull.

Watchkeeper Terry Watson and Radio Operator Garth Buchanan at the unit's Pilot Station Search and Rescue Coordination Centre at Crookhaven Heads received a report that a vessel had capsized about 2nm out to sea and immediately deployed *Shoalhaven 30* to respond.

Illawarra Regional Controller Bruce Mitchell requested Police Marine Area Command to activate helicopter crews to support the search.

Duty crew David Knight, Danielle Carter, Michaela Anderson and Bill Carter left the vessel's mooring in Shaws Creek at Greenwell Point and once clearing the creek entrance made top speed down the Crookhaven River.

In a swell up to 4m and a strong north-easterly gusting up to 30 knots, the strong run out tide made conditions at the entrance to the river extremely rough, forcing the rescue vessel to slow to about 12 knots as it made its way out to sea.

The conditions made visibility difficult, with a lot of sea spray and the vessel pitching up and down, at times violently.

Two men, aged 29 and 30, were on board the small Hobiecat when it overturned.

The man holding on to the hull was able to speak to the Pilot Station operators on a handheld VHF radio.

Its low power, however, meant he was unable to communicate with the rescue vessel, which could not hear his transmissions on Channel 16.

Communications were instead relayed by the Pilot Station to *SA 30*.

The crew of *Shoalhaven 30* locates a sailor on the hull of his upturned catamaran offshore from Gerroa.

The man was asked to deploy a smoke flare, however, the *SA 30* crew could not sight it in the conditions.

A member of the public on land spotted it, with location details relayed to Mr Mitchell.

With the Westpac Rescue and NSW Air Ambulance helicopters joining the search, *SA 30* located the vessel and sailor closer to shore and in slightly calmer conditions.

The man was quickly taken on board the rescue vessel and determined to be safe and well, although shaken by his ordeal.

The search for the missing man continued until he was reported to have been located closer to the beach and returned to shore by a member of the public on a surf ski.

The catamaran was unable to be retrieved due to the conditions but washed ashore on Culburra Beach the following day.

Bill Carter

Emergency services shine at 10th Open Day

Boats, choppers, flares and a sky-high Bronto on show at Shoalhaven event.

The 10th annual MR Shoalhaven Emergency Services Open Day proved a captivating showcase of the members, work and equipment of 12 agencies.

This year's event, organised by unit member Danielle Carter, was staged on the Crookhaven River at Greenwell Point on November 13.

Government and independent organisations taking part were MRNSW, NSW Police, Fire & Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Surf Life Saving, St John Ambulance, Australian Border Force, NSW Maritime, TS Shoalhaven Navy Cadets, NSW Fisheries and 723 Squadron, from HMAS Albatross, who put on a winching display and Bell 429 Helicopter flypast.

One of the most popular attractions was Fire & Rescue's 37m Bronto Aerial Ladder Platform, with many of the hundreds of people visiting the event given the chance to ride in the Bronto's Skylift, some taken to dizzying heights for a bird's eye view of the event.

MR Shoalhaven staged a flare demonstration, followed by a combined emergency services exercise to rescue two people from a disabled tinnie. The couple were taken to the wharf by *SA 30* and then stretchered to shore by members of the SES for treatment by St John Ambulance personnel.

TS Shoalhaven cadets entertained visitors with drill and drum corps displays. NSW Parliamentary Speaker, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, drew the winning tickets in the unit's Open Day raffle.

He's got flare ... MR Shoalhaven's Bill Smith demonstrates the use of the emergency signals at the 2016 Emergency Services Open Day.

The winners of the MRNSW vessel colouring in competition, students from Greenwell Point, Culburra Beach and Callala public schools, also were announced.

The Open Day event and raffle raised more than $14,000 for the Shoalhaven unit.

Four operations cap busy weekend for crew

Port Kembla thanks departing Unit Commander for strong leadership.

Two major Illawarra community events ended in four rescue operations for members of MR Port Kembla in mid-October.

Port Kembla 20 was tasked with maintaining an exclusion zone on Kiama Harbour for simulated rescues and helicopter water bombing displays at the annual Rotary Emergency Services Expo at Black Beach, Kiama.

The event attracted thousands and was a great opportunity for all the services to demonstrate their skill and equipment. *PK 20's* crew had returned to base when they were called to assist a vessel half a nautical mile from the Ski Park where *PK 20* is stationed.

On the water in a matter of minutes, the crew had taken the vessel under tow for the short trip back to shore when another call for help came from a boat taking on water near Kanahooka.

The first boat was quickly returned to shore and *PK 20* began pounding into a 1.5m chop to locate the vessel, which was being helped by another boater. *PK 20* took over the tow and returned the vessel, the riveted hull of which was leaking like a sieve, safely to Berkley Harbour.

Next day, the unit took part in the well-attended Boating Safety Day at Reddall Reserve, Lake Illawarra. The *MarineRescue* App proved a popular talking point, however, the crew was called away to assist a vessel suffering electrical difficulties with four people, including two young children, on board. It was returned safely with all safe and sound. Not long after, a member of the public called the Hill 60 base to report a boat overturned near Haywards Bay on Lake Illawarra. *PK 20* arrived on the scene to find a trailer sailer capsized but being tended to by the local sailing club safety boat. The crew returned to base and signed off after a busy weekend.

Crowd pleaser ... *Port Kembla 20* on show at Kiama's Rotary Emergency Services Expo before being called to two emergencies.

Unit Commander Peter Purnell recently stood down after many years of service to the unit. Pete is moving out of the area with his family and will be sorely missed. The unit is only where it is today because of his countless hours of dedication and strong leadership and it will be hard to find someone of his calibre to lead us into the future. We wish you the best, Pete!

Tom Dragutinovich

Ulladulla fires up with new rescue gear

Unit calls for extra recruits to come out and enjoy the ocean.

Community supporters of MR Ulladulla have thrown the unit a financial lifeline to help with our operating expenses and provide a new piece of rescue equipment.

The unit has purchased a $5000 ResQmax line thrower with the aid of donations of $800 from the Ulladulla Tennis Club and $900 from the Conjola Long Neck Rally, along with a ClubGrant of $2,651 from Milton-Ulladulla Ex-Servos Club, Milton-Ulladulla Bowling Club and Mollymook Golf Club.

The ResQmax is powered by compressed air from a scuba tank and Ulladulla Dive Shop has offered to do the air refills at no cost.

The unit has also received generous donations of $1000 from the Ulladulla Milton Lions Club and $1135 from the Bendalong Boys Fishing Club.

Unit Commander Dave Hall thanked all the organisations that had provided financial assistance to the unit for their generous support.

Ulladulla 30 towed two vessels to safety on November 2 and 4: a 5.3m cabin runabout with two people on board experiencing engine failure south-east of Warden Head and a 14m yacht with a solo sailor that experienced engine and mainsail problems about 5nm east of Ulladulla Harbour.

Work will soon begin on a new floating pontoon to provide 21 berths in the harbour. A rock shelf will be removed and dredging undertaken for safe navigation.

The unit has undertaken a recruitment drive, encouraging more people to enjoy time on the ocean and take advantage of our training and soon-to-arrive new vessel.

UC Hall and Deputy UC Dave Lindley presented member William Glover with his National Medal at the unit's September meeting and member Keven Marshall laid a wreath on behalf of the unit at the Remembrance Day service at the Ulladulla War Memorial.

MR Ulladulla UC Dave Hall and DUC Dave Lindley load the unit's new ResQmax line thrower. *Photo: Milton Ulladulla Times.*

One of the unit's major fundraising activities is the Harbour Markets held on the second Sunday of every month. Extra markets have been scheduled to make the most of the busy summer season. Stalls can be booked at ullmarket@gmail.com

NSW Roads and Maritime Services will collect expired flares at the North Harbour Boat Ramp, off Crescent St, Ulladulla, from 8am to 11am on Sunday, January 15 as part of its safe disposal program.

Lisa Hardwick

Kioloa visit intriguing for overseas students

Group surprised volunteers give their time freely to perform vital service.

Members of MR Kioloa shared their volunteering experience with an international audience during a visit by a group of 25 overseas students.

The Australian National University Oceans Governance and Sustainable Fisheries program students toured the base in October. The group, from 11 African nations, including Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya and the islands of Madagascar, Comoros and the Seychelles, included public officials and government representatives.

Unit Commander Louise Andrews and Deputy Joan Noble welcomed the group, explaining the base's operations and members' duties.

The students were intrigued that people would give up their free time to perform such a vital service without payment and raise funds to help with the running of the unit.

With no similar organisations operating in their countries, they were keenly interested in understanding the roles of MRNSW in rescuing local fishermen.

Lee Kennedy fielded questions on *Kioloa 20* and its equipment, while Steve Morris and John Stevenson outlined the radio base operations.

Sharing our expertise ... a group of 25 international students from Australian National University visits MR Kioloa.

ANU Associate Professor David Letts thanked the MR Kioloa team for its hospitality and generosity, expressing the belief that the lessons the students learned would not only assist them in their studies but also serve to improve the safety and sustainability of their nations' fishing industries. Feedback from the students revealed their visit to MR Kioloa was one of the highlights of their visit to Australia.

• A 63-year-old fisherman told rescuers his lifejacket saved his life after his 4.5m runabout was swamped and overturned by a freak wave off Kioloa, forcing him to swim ashore to Brush Island. The man's family raised the alarm when he failed to return as expected by sunset on October 26. His car and boat trailer were located in the car park at the Kioloa boat ramp but the unit's attempts to contact him via radio and phone were unsuccessful.

Two crews from MR Ulladulla and Ambulance Rescue Helicopter 23 swiftly launched a search operation, with the chopper crew locating an overturned boat in rough conditions near the island just before 10pm.

Crew members were winched on to the island, where they found the man, suffering only minor injuries. He was transported to shore at Kioloa, where he was met by paramedics and his relieved family. Kioloa boaters recovered the boat two days later. The skipper thanked everyone involved in his rescue and the recovery of his vessel.

Mark McMullen

New boat ready for summer on Jervis Bay

The Jervis Bay unit has officially welcomed the newest vessel to the MRNSW fleet ahead of the peak holiday boating season.

Jervis Bay 20, a $300,000 7.5m Ocean Cylinder, was commissioned at Huskisson on December 3, with South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, Shoalhaven Mayor Amanda Findley, Cr Joanna Gash, MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Chair Jim Glissan and Directors Pat Fayers and Roger Evans joining unit members for the ceremony.

Commissioner Tannos said the delivery of *JB 20*, a sister to *BM 20*, meant the unit was well equipped to stand watch over the region's increased summer boating traffic.

The new vessel has been named *Wayne Walker II* in recognition of the late Jervis Bay Unit Commander, who was instrumental in securing the unit's major response vessel, *Jervis Bay 40 (Colin Woods)* and its second vessel, also named in his honour in 2014. Mr Walker's widow, Sandra, attended the ceremony.

Unit Commander Kevin Hill said *JB 20* could operate up to 15nm offshore in support of *JB 40*.

Jervis Bay 20, commissioned ahead of the peak boating season.

"This boat gives our crews valuable flexibility to respond to help boaters in areas not easily accessible by the larger *JB 40*, such as Currambene Creek," he said.

Exercise ensures crews at peak readiness

Monaro vessels on water at dusk and dawn to search for five targets.

This year's Monaro Regional Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) saw crews responding in the darkness and again at dawn to a real-time test activation tasking them to search for five people missing from a boat reported to have sunk north of Montague Island.

In a mass operation designed to ensure crews' readiness for the summer boating season, vessels and 50 members of the Narooma, Batemans Bay, Bermagui, Merimbula and Tuross units, NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and NSW Roads and Maritime Services took part.

The exercise began at 5.15pm on Friday with *Batemans 30* and *Narooma 30* searching the Tollgate and Montague Islands.

NA 30 located backpacks that were unelated to the exercise but from a penguin watching tour on Montague Island.

The main search began at 6am next day in a swell and wind from the north-east, with rain and a sea fog reducing visibility to less than 1km.

With Denise Page, from MR Bermagui, as the On Scene Controller, crews conducted a painstaking grid search over an area of 144 square nautical miles offshore from Narooma and two Rescue Water Craft and another boat searched the coastline to the north and south of Narooma.

Three mannequins were located in the water and two "missing" people on Montague Island, who needed to be extracted. Conditions improved as the search progressed, winding up at 1.30pm.

A debrief was held the next morning, discussing crew changes, fatigue management and the search tracks and results. Police declared the exercise an outstanding success.

MRNSW and Police personnel with Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert at the conclusion of his last SAREX before his retirement.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the exercise had been planned to ensure crews were response-ready for the summer boating season.

"These exercises are staged along the coastline each year as part our ongoing professional training program to hone our search and rescue skills and build agency inter-operability," he said.

"Ensuring our volunteers are well equipped and trained for their roles is integral to our mission to save lives on the water. The exercise has helped ensure the volunteers in our southern-most region are fully prepared for the summer."

Members thanked retiring Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert and Senior Constable Mick Morris from MAC for preparing and supporting the SAREX.

More whales than boats on Far South Coast

Merimbula unit focuses on crew and vessel preparations for summer season.

On-water training sessions for rescue crews on Merimbula Bay have involved more watching out for whales than whale watching of late.

In a slow start to the summer boating season on the Far South Coast, whales have so far outnumbered boats.

The annual southward migration of adult whales and newborn calves to the Antarctic has peaked, with a record number of 70 sightings on a single day.

In the absence of emergency call-outs since August, the unit's focus has been on equipment preparation, including retro-fitting rescue vessel *Merimbula 30* with the standard MRNSW fleet livery and training.

MA 30 crews have completed their First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation re-qualifications and newly-inducted members are progressively achieving their MR Radio ratings. Leading Crew and Coxswain testing is planned before the end of the year.

Crew skills were put to the test in the recent Monaro Regional SAREX held out of Narooma under the watchful eye of retiring Regional Controller Bob Herbert and incoming Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan. The scenario involved a search for five missing occupants of a boat that had reportedly sunk just north of Montague Island. In a stark dose of reality, the unfavourable weather and sea conditions challenged crews' endurance and vessel handling skills.

Together with the warmer weather, the ubiquitous barbeque is proving a valuable fundraiser and members have been encouraged by the community's positive response and generous impromptu donations.

Calm after the SAREX ... *MA 30* heads for home at the exercise's conclusion in more placid conditions than those offshore.

The unit is keenly awaiting the outcome of a grant application for our next major project, the replacement and upgrade of the unit's radio masts, scheduled for February.

Rod Studholme

New Batemans Bay vessel boosts flexibility

Volunteers' professional rescue response earns Commissioner's Citation.

Marine Rescue Batemans Bay has marked the commissioning of its new rescue vessel and the presentation of awards recognising its members' skill, professionalism and compassion in two traumatic operations.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Directors Glenn Felkin, Mark McKenzie and Pat Fayers and Eurobodalla Mayor Cr Liz Innes joined the unit's members to officially welcome *Batemans 20*, a $300,000 7.5m Ocean Cylinder, on October 22.

Commissioner Tannos said the vessel was an investment in boating safety and a significant boost to the capability of volunteers operating on the South Coast.

"This purpose-built state-of-the-art vessel will primarily be deployed to respond to emergencies and other incidents on inshore waterways but can also travel up to 15 nautical miles offshore in support of the unit's primary response vessel, *BM 30*," he said. "It is one of 70 new and refurbished vessels delivered, at a cost of more than $16.5 million, under our landmark Fleet Modernisation Program."

Commissioner Tannos paid tribute to the volunteers' efforts in raising more than $50,000 towards the cost of the new vessel and thanked the State Government and boating community for their ongoing financial support for MRNSW.

A bleak day for a warm welcome to *Batemans 20,* commissioned on October 22.

He presented the unit with Commissioner's Citations in recognition of its members' response to two fatal emergencies: the deaths of four family members when their boat overturned in rough seas off North Head in October, 2011 and the search for a plane that ditched into the ocean off Barling Beach in July 2014, killing the pilot and passenger on board.

"Our members are trained and equipped for their work to assist and protect the boating community," he said. "These were two particularly traumatic incidents and all the rescue crew members and radio operators involved in these operations are deserving of recognition and thanks for the manner in which they responded, demonstrating great navigational and search skill, professionalism and compassion."

Unit Commander Mick Syrek said *BM 20* was built and equipped to meet the unit's operational demands in a variety of conditions.

"It gives our crews additional capacity and flexibility to respond to help boaters in trouble quickly and efficiently," he said. "With a full suite of search and rescue, navigation and first aid equipment, it is powered by two 150HP Suzuki 4-stroke outboards, with a top speed of 35 knots."

• A crew from the unit rescued a 45 foot yacht with mechanical problems south east of Tollgate Islands on November 13.

The skipper, alone on board, called for help about 7pm as he was travelling south to Victoria.

UC Syrek, Richard Charles and Andrew Murn activated the radio base and Mark Bradley, David Murn and Terry Robinson responded on board *BM 30*, taking the vessel under tow by 9pm, returning to shore at about 4 knots in 15 knots westerly wind and 1.5-2 m seas.

Outstanding service by remarkable members

Eden presentations celebrate nine volunteers' dedication over 180 years.

The winter in Eden has been a mixture of generally bad weather and big seas, keeping fisherman and touring yachts at home.

Although it has been a quiet time for our watchkeepers, our base open days held as part of Eden's annual Whale Festival proved popular with visitors and locals.

No volunteer organisation can exist without people who are prepared to put in the effort and at Eden we are fortunate to have remarkable members, some of whom have been putting in that effort for a long time.

The unit marked the outstanding service of a number of these members with a lunch in October.

Retiring Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert and incoming Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan presented well-deserved awards to members at the function at the RSL Memorial Hall, which was attended by almost all of our active volunteers and their partners, along with Peter and Rob Whiter, who have played a significant part in maintaining our premises over the years.

Sergeant Steven Judd and Senior Constable Steve Winslow from the Police Marine Area Command Eden also attended, with Sgt Judd paying tribute to the important role of volunteers and the close relationship between Police and MR Eden.

Jenny Drenkhahn and Ian Whiter have been awarded the second clasp to the National Medal in recognition of 30 years' commitment and John Steele received the first clasp in recognition of his 25 year service in the Royal Australian Navy and volunteer marine rescue.

Jan and John Aveyard also will be awarded the first clasp at the unit's Christmas barbecue.

Nev Cowgill, too, has been awarded the Medal second clasp.

MR Eden Unit Commander John McKinnon wishes Monaro Regional Controller Bob Herbert well for his retirement. *Below:* Nev Cowgill.

As well as his volunteer duties for MR Eden, Nev is the State Emergency Service's go-to man for cliff rescues.

We are lucky to have a volunteer of his calibre.

Graeme McLaughlin, Douglas Davidson and Stuart Manson also have qualified for their MRNSW five-year Long Service Medals

John McKinnon

Double the honour for Alpine Lakes leader

Awards recognise Les' commitment above and beyond the call of duty.

Marine Rescue NSW Alpine Lakes Unit Commander Les Threlfo has recently been honoured for his volunteer service, receiving both national and Monaro regional awards.

Les was one of three MRNSW members recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours with the Emergency Service Medal, which recognises distinguished service by members of the emergency services and those involved in emergency management.

He was presented with his Medal at an investiture ceremony at Yarralumla on September 9.

In the absence of Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove, who was supporting the Australian team at the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Administrator of the Commonwealth, Governor of South Australia Hieu Van Le, conducted the ceremony.

A month later, Les also received a Monaro Services Award for his commitment to the emergency services sector in the Snowy-Mountains region over more than 15 years.

This was presented by Regional Development, Skills and Small Business Minister and now NSW Deputy Premier, Monaro MP John Barilaro and Parliamentary Secretary for Southern NSW and Regional Communication Bronnie Taylor MLC.

The Monaro award also recognises Les' commitment to his local community above and beyond the call of duty as the founding leader of our unit and assisting those caught in emergencies on Lakes Jindabyne and Eucumbene.

Karin Davies

It's an honour ... South Australian Governor Hieu Van Le presents MR Alpine Lakes Unit Commander Les Threlfo with his ESM.

What we've been up to

Sunday sailing at the end of a tow rope ... volunteers from MR Middle Harbour responded to eight incidents on October 16, including helping this yacht adrift on Middle Harbour and joining the Police Marine Area Command and Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter to rescue two people when their boat was grounded off South Head (see story Page 34). *Photo: Brian Roberts.*

Sitting pretty ... work under way on the installation of the new AirBerth Boat Lift for *Tuross 20*, replacing the older model destroyed in the June East Coast Low storms.

Congratulations ... Tony Drover, from MR Jervis Bay and Director John Lynch, from MR Forster-Tuncurry, with Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, at their Emergency Service Medal investiture.

There's a dragon behind you ... MR Port Jackson again promoted the work of MRNSW to the large crowds attending the Sydney 4WD and Adventure Show at Eastern Creek.

Better together ... MR Tuross and Narooma have continued their joint training, with Tuross RWC Operator Nathan Benbow and Narooma trainee Alison Philip practising manoeuvres off Narooma.

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What we've been up to in 2016

Safety in sight ... the crew of *Crowdy 30* returns a yacht that became becalmed and suffered engine failure to the shelter of Crowdy Harbour, in one of five successful emergency operations carried out by the members of MR Crowdy Harrington over the Anzac Day long weekend. *Photo: Keith Richardson.*

Because we're 'appy ... MR Middle Harbour member Chris Allen demonstrates the *MarineRescue* App to a visitor to the Sydney International Boat Show in late July.

Give us a smile ... MRNSW members continued their fundraising activities throughout the year, with MR Woolgoolga's Tamra Skalla and Judith Finlay on hand at their unit's monthly markets.

The massed fleet ... volunteers and vessels from units in the Hunter/Central Coast Region put their skills to the test in a Search and Rescue Exercise staged at Newcastle in September.

Dark and stormy ... members of MR Port Macquarie headed out early to help boaters in the aftermath of the East Coast Low storms on June 6 that caused serious damage along the coastline.

Merv's passion for Marine Rescue unfailing

Refurbished Hawkesbury vessel named after former Unit Commander.

When I first joined MR Hawkesbury six years ago, I was introduced to then Deputy Unit Commander Merv Collins: he said hello and immediately started telling me jokes.

Well known by all he met for his humour, Merv crossed the bar on September 15. I have worked closely with Merv over the years, eventually becoming his Deputy Unit Commander and then stepping into his shoes as Unit Commander when he stood down this year.

A man of many talents, Merv joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol at The Spit in 1993. He received a Meritorious Service Award in recognition of his role in rescuing a young girl who had fallen from a cliff at Mosman into Washaway Bay on Anzac Day in 1995. Without hesitation, Merv dived off the rescue boat and swam to the girl, who was eventually rescued by helicopter.

Merv gained his Red Coxswain, Crowd Control, Leadership Skills and Coastal Navigation qualifications. He transferred to RVCP Hawkesbury, where he continued his commitment to others and settled into operational and management roles as part of a duty team whose watch ran from a Friday to Sunday night. He was passionate about his team members and being out on the boat, doing what he liked best: talking to and helping people.

Merv was involved in many incidents, including fatalities, upturned vessels with people in the water, medical emergency calls to transport NSW Ambulance crews, boat assists and search operations.

He took all this in his stride, with plenty of energy to also conduct public boating licence courses, take part in fundraising activities and welcome local Scouts and Venturers to the base.

Merv guided us through a number of testing times, ensuring members received the support they needed.

He spent many hours ensuring the unit's boats were maintained, gear was up to date and his project, the refurbishment of *Hawkesbury 21,* was completed in a timely manner. The vessel has been named in his honour.

Even from his hospital bed as he became increasingly unwell, Merv remained part of the unit's new direction, eagerly awaiting the latest news from the base. On several occasions, ill but persistent, he visited us, regarding this as great therapy and enjoying every moment. Merv's commitment never faltered. His passion for Marine Rescue was unfailing to the end.

Former MR Hawkesbury Unit Commander Merv Collins.

Ken Edwards

Sydney unit farewells two valued shipmates

Tony Mills

Members of MR Botany Port Hacking are mourning the passing of two of the unit's veterans, who had given more than 50 years' service.

Tony Mills, 62, passed away from a heart attack on October 8, not long after completing his rostered radio shift from 6am to 1pm and making his 1.5 hour journey home.

With a love of the water, Tony enjoyed boating and water skiing in his spare time.

He joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol Botany Bay Division in June 1998 and subsequently continued with MRNSW, spending more than 18 years as an active member and holding a number of positions within the unit, including Deputy Unit Commander and Fundraising Officer (2013-2015).

Tony's passing was followed less than a fortnight later by Bob Burchill, 78, who died on October 20.

Bob had taken ill and was admitted to Nambour's Selangor Private Hospital after travelling to Queensland for his latest reunion with his Royal Australian Navy mates.

He joined the RVCP in 1981, transferring to MRNSW in 2010 and was an active member for more than 35 years. He was an MR Search and Rescue Officer, Certificate IV trainer and an enthusiastic training officer for many years.

Bob Burchill

Bob was registered to deliver boating and PWC courses and exams to the public and was a radio invigilator with ACMA, delivering many courses to MRNSW members and the public.

For more than 20 years, Bob would travel to Little Hartley near Lithgow, a five-hour return trip, to deliver Boating Safety seminars and licence exams.

We have many fond memories of our friends and colleagues, both of whom will be sadly missed.

John Kajdrys

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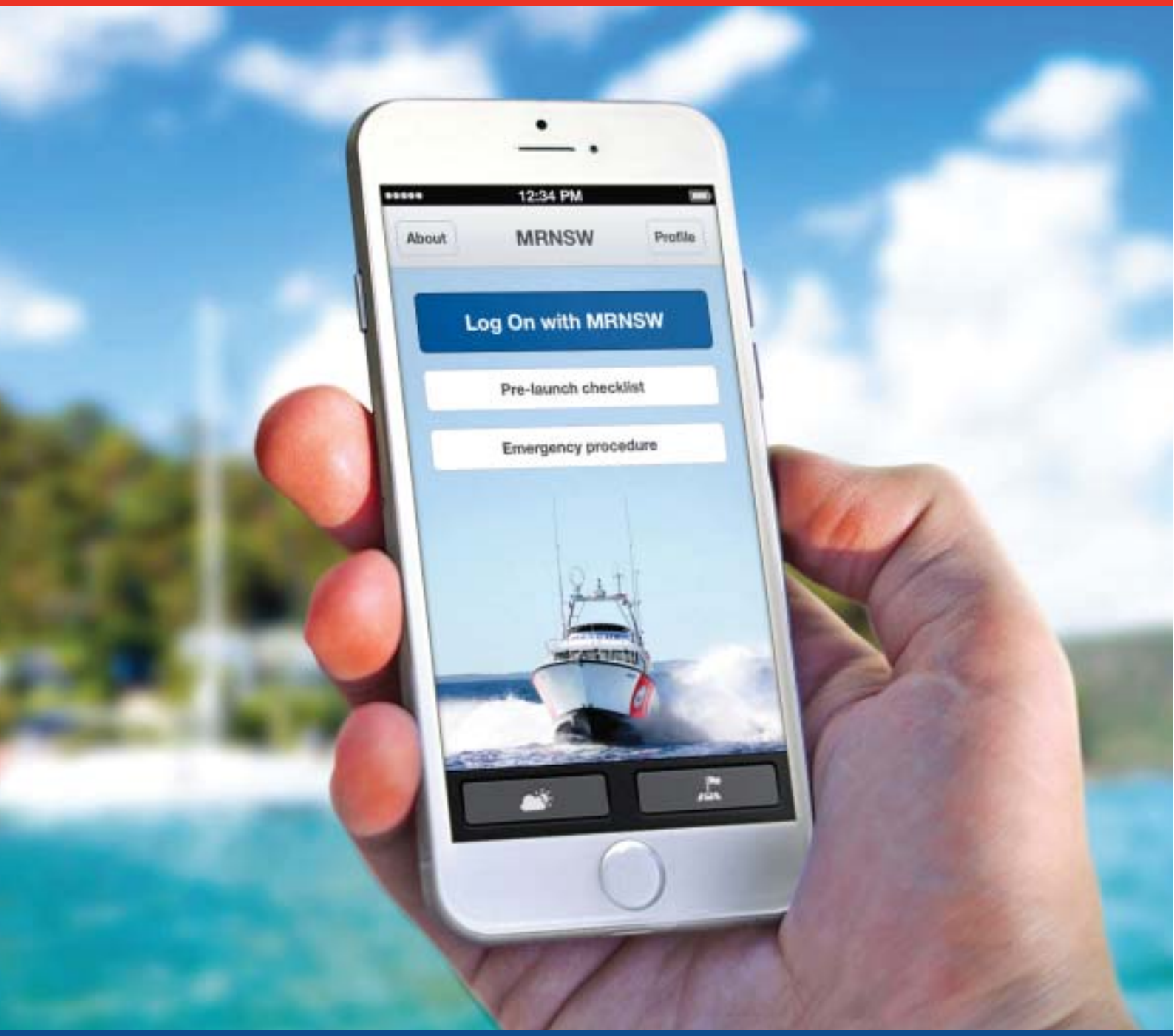

Volunteers saving lives on the water

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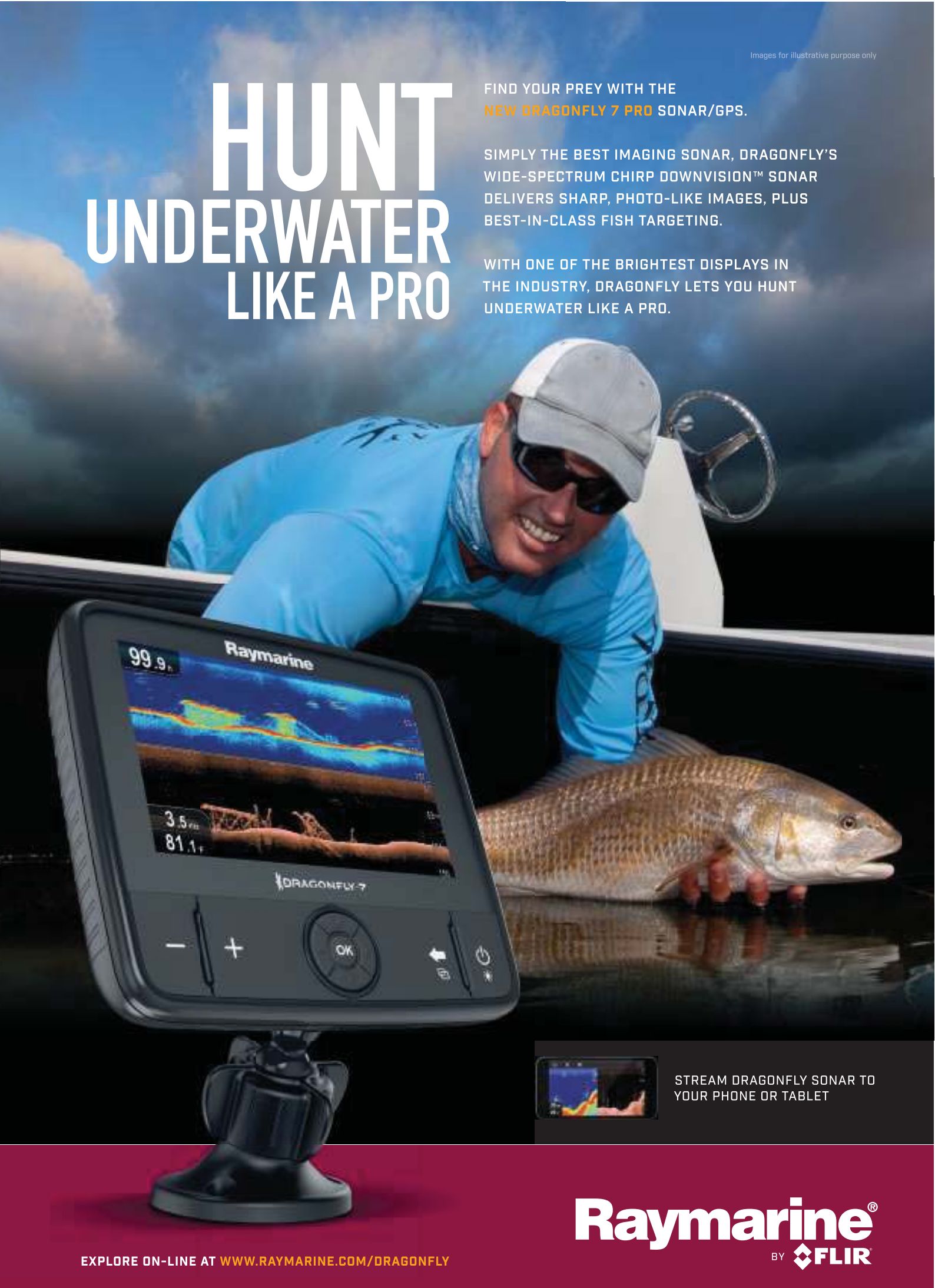

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