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SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 33, Summer 2017

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Summer boating

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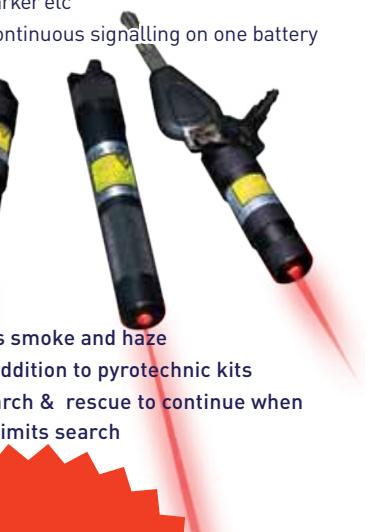
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Cover Image

Jervis Bay 40 punches through rough seas that endangered three men stranded on a yacht drifting north-west of Bowen Island and derailed a sea evacuation exercise. Story Page 33. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

Publisher

Marine Rescue NSW
202 Nicholson Parade
Cronulla NSW 2230

Contact

Kate Woods
Phone: 02 8071 4848
Email: soundings@marinerescuensw.com.au

Design and Layout

Nicole Brown

Advertising

Graham Joss
Email: graham.joss@marinerescuensw.com.au
Phone: 0419 492 836

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MARINE RESCUE NSW

Volunteers saving lives on the water

Volunteer Marine Rescue New South Wales
ABN 98 138 078 092
PO Box 579
Cronulla NSW 2230
Phone: 02 8071 4848 Fax: 02 9969 5214
Email: info@marinerescuensw.com.au

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From the Commissioner

We are better prepared than ever for the rigours of the peak boating season.



Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

For most people, Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year's Eve represent down time on the calendar but for members of MRSW, they are the year's red-letter days when the action really heats up on the water.

As summer boaters flock to our waterways, the fleet sets sail in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and fireworks explode to herald 2018, our members will be standing watch over the water and the airwaves.

We are better prepared than ever for the rigorous workload of the peak boating season this year.

Our members continue to achieve new qualifications, new vessels have been delivered to units along the coastline and on the Alpine Lakes and we have comprehensively tested our operational procedures with our boating safety partners in readiness for emergency activation.

Boaters took to the water with gusto at the traditional start of the boating season, the October long weekend, but unfortunately for many, their day on the water finished at the end of a tow rope.

The value of our units' preparations for the busy summer ahead was evident, with crews, particularly in the southern Monaro Region, kept busy responding to boaters and jet ski riders who found themselves stranded.

As always, we urge any



SES Commissioner Mark Smethurst, VRA Commissioner Mark Gibson and MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos pay their respects at the 17th Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service.

boaters planning to head out over summer who haven't yet had a full maintenance check on their boats to make this a priority. It's too late to discover your fuel has gone off once you're broken down 5nm offshore.

If you are not confident in your abilities, a registered marine mechanic can help you avoid easily-preventable problems.

Also make it a priority to check your safety equipment is in good operational condition, including your lifejackets, marine radio, flares, EPIRB, torch and V-sheet.

In addition to our focus on operational response, education, resourcing and funding, we have turned our minds to leadership in

Our members will be standing watch over the water and the airwaves.

recent months.

Our biennial Leadership Conference in September brought together our leadership group, including our Unit Commanders and Deputy Unit Commanders, staff and Board members. We crammed a lot of information into the weekend, discussing our activities, achievements and challenges and posing some often-confronting questions about leadership and volunteer management that I know gave delegates pause for thought.

Our line up of guest speakers gave us new perspectives and insight.

Penny York painted a detailed picture of the modern volunteer.

Brigadier Georgeina Whelan proved an inspiring speaker with her frank reflections on her own leadership successes and failures and former Wallaby turned top-selling author, Peter FitzSimons, entertained us at the official Conference Dinner.

Our Unit Commanders and Deputies expressed a strong desire for leadership training and we

are now working on initiatives to address this need in 2018. Read more about the conference on Pages 6, 7 and 8.

The strategic leadership of MRNSW rests with the Board of Directors. Congratulations to our newly-elected Directors, Keven Marshall, Bill Wardrobe and Jim Wright and to Pat Fayers and John Lynch, who were re-elected. I thank the current and departing Directors for their support and anticipate a constructive year ahead with the new Board.

As this year draws to a close, I want to place on the record my appreciation to our 3,000-plus volunteers for continuing to dedicate

countless hours of their time to serving their community. Neither this organisation nor the safety services we provide would be possible without each and every one of our members.

I also thank our staff, who are 100 per cent committed to supporting our volunteers in their work. I could not ask for a finer team.

I also express my appreciation to Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and his staff, the Office of Emergency Management and our boating safety partners, particularly the Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings and his staff.

My best wishes to you and your families for a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Please travel safely, whether on the road or the water. I look forward to continuing to work together throughout 2018 as we fulfil our mission to save lives on the water.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner

Three new Directors elected to our Board

New corporate leaders announced at eighth Annual General Meeting.

A field of 11 candidates stood in this year's MRNSW Board elections, resulting in three new Directors joining our corporate leadership.

In the eighth Board elections since the formation of MRNSW, held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting on November 25, members voted for a General Director and the Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, Hunter/Central Coast and Illawarra Regional Directors.

Returning Officer Noel Parkinson said the voter turn-out had been the highest for any MRNSW election, with 881 of 2,254 eligible members participating.

Pat Fayers was returned as a General Director and John Lynch as Mid North Coast Regional Director.

Northern Rivers Regional Director Bernie Gabriel retired from the Board after four years. His replacement, Bill Wardrobe, from MR Evans Head, was elected unopposed.

Jim Wright, from MR Lake Macquarie, was elected as Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director.

The Illawarra election was a result of a casual vacancy created by the resignation of Bill Carter in May this year.

His successor, Keven Marshall, from MR Ulladulla, has been elected for the remaining year of Mr Carter's original two-year term.

The other three Regional Directors are elected for two years and the General Director for three.

Chair Jim Glissan welcomed the new Directors to the Board and congratulated those re-elected to



Members of the MRNSW Board following the 2017 Director elections.
Inset: Keven Marshall.

their positions. He paid tribute to Mr Gabriel, Mr Carter and General Director Mark McKenzie, who has resigned for family reasons, for their service to the Board, the organisation and its members.

Commissioner Tannos addressed

the meeting on fleet, training, communications and facilities advances and priorities, as well as initiatives including electronic training platforms and the development of leadership training for unit executives and members.

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From the Chair

Record election turn-out shows strength of members' engagement.



Chair
James Glissan ESM, QC

In a strong demonstration of their commitment to having a voice in the leadership of our organisation, members turned out in record numbers to vote in the 2017 Board elections.

Announcing the election results at the Annual General Meeting on November 25, Returning Officer Noel Parkinson, from MR Botany Port Hacking, said 35 per cent of eligible members had voted in the poll - the largest number in any election since the formation of MRNSW.

This is a welcome sign of our members' engagement with our organisation, interest in its strategic direction and democratic commitment to ours being an organisation of the members and for the members.

The AGM is our official forum to focus on our leadership and achievements over the past year and to say welcome, farewell and above all, thank you for your contribution.

At this year's AGM, we welcomed three new and two re-elected Directors, farewelled those who had ended their tenure and on behalf of the organisation, thanked our newest Life Member.

It is with great affection that we farewell Northern Rivers Regional Director Bernie Gabriel from the Board. Bernie stood down after two terms, during which he was always a forceful advocate for his region and the welfare of our volunteers.



Chair Jim Glissan, with Commissioner Stacey Tannos, addresses the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

In his place, we welcome Bill Wardrobe, from MR Evans Head. Foundation Board member Bill Carter stood down as Illawarra Regional Director this year to again successfully stand for election as the Unit Commander of MR Shoalhaven and we thank him for his service. In turn, we congratulate Keven Marshall, from MR Ulladulla, who has capped a great year, during which he also was awarded the Emergency Services Medal, with his election to the Board.

A former Unit Commander of MR Lake Macquarie, Jim Wright is the new Hunter/Central Coast Director, replacing Roger Evans, who had resigned in January to move interstate.

Mark McKenzie joined the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association in 2004, served as MR Botany Bay Unit Commander for four years and was elected to the Board as a General Director in 2015.

Along with his marine rescue experience, Mark brought valuable professional skills to the Board. He has now resigned for pressing family reasons and we wish both him and his family all the very best.

Congratulations, too, to re-elected General Director Pat Fayers and Mid North Coast Director John Lynch.

I thank the Directors for their confidence in again electing me as the Chair of our leadership body.

One of the Board's most satisfying roles at the AGM was to confer Life Membership of MRNSW on a member who has made a sustained and most valuable contribution across our organisation.

Life Membership is the highest accolade we can bestow and this year the Board has recognised the meritorious service of long-standing MR Wooli Unit Commander Richard Taffs, who has served his unit, community and MRNSW with great diligence and commitment.

Modest and self-effacing, Richard

was keen to point out that MRNSW is about teamwork and to share credit with the team of colleagues who support him in his roles.

In this spirit, on behalf of the Board, I extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all of our volunteers, staff and boating safety partners. Saving lives is indeed a team effort, one in which every individual plays a vital role.

As you will read on the following pages, the 2017 Leadership Conference was another successful forum.

The event was again characterised by the enormous amount of information and experience shared for the benefit of all.

The Board was keen to hear from our Unit Commanders and Deputies about what they needed to support them in their roles. It was clear that they were in favour of leadership training to assist them to meet their operational, financial, personnel and other responsibilities.

This will not only support our current leadership but also assist with succession planning and the long-term sustainability of our service to assist and protect the boating community.

For a boater, there is nothing like a long, warm day on the water but that perfect day can take a serious turn for the worse in the blink of an eye. This summer, remember to make sure you Log On and Log Off with MRNSW, always wear a lifejacket and have the required safety equipment on board and easily accessible. Rest assured, our members will be standing watch, ready to respond if trouble strikes.

On behalf of the Directors, I extend the compliments of the season and our best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer of boating to you all.

*Good sailing
Jim Glissan*

Ready for spike in summer emergencies

Strategic approach to ensure peak season capability and responsiveness.

Marine Rescue NSW will have high visibility on the State's waterways in coming months, with units geared up for an influx of boating traffic and a spike in emergency incidents.

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant joined Commissioner Stacey Tannos and the heads of other emergency services to appeal to people to stay safe on both land and water over the summer holidays.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said MRNSW had taken a strategic approach to its organisational preparation to ensure its capability and responsiveness for the peak boating season.

"Units have focused on training and vessel maintenance throughout the cooler months in readiness and we will boost our

presence on the water to provide maximum protection for the boating community," he said. "We urge the thousands of boaters who will be heading out over summer to wear a lifejacket, check their marine radio is in good operating condition and always Log On and Log Off with MRNSW via their radio, phone or the free *MarineRescue* app."

Deputy Commissioner Storey said units would increase patrols of their local waters, particularly during the Christmas-mid January peak.

"For instance, in the Sydney region, we will have crews on the water every day ready to respond rapidly to emergencies. Units have also stepped up their radio watch for the season," he said.

MRNSW has been involved in safety planning for the big Sydney



Broken Bay 30 passes crowds lining the Barrangaroo shoreline during the 2017 Australia Day celebrations on Sydney Harbour.

Harbour events: the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, the New Year's Eve fireworks and Australia Day celebrations.

"Our crews will again be maintaining exclusion zones to ensure that boaters enjoy these spectacular events safely and

responsibly and assisting those who run into trouble," he said.

Regional Operations Managers and volunteers will again be based in the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command base at Balmain to act as liaison officers and help coordinate rescue operations.

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Conference spotlight on volunteer leadership

More than 100 delegates focus on challenges, celebrate achievements.

Port Macquarie turned on a sparkling weekend to welcome the senior ranks of Marine Rescue NSW to our 2017 Leadership Conference in mid-September.

More than 100 delegates attended the biennial conference, which focused on contemporary volunteer leadership and management and the organisation's operations and achievements.

After dinner at the Westport Club on Friday night, unit leaders, Board Directors, staff and guest speakers assembled at the Rydges Port Macquarie for the event, staged for the first time outside Sydney.

Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams gave the official opening address, relaying the best wishes of Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant, who was unable to attend, and welcoming delegates to the city.

"The NSW Government is really proud to support our emergency services volunteers; we know what incredible assets you are for us," she said. "When conditions are not so great out there, it is your members who go out to keep people out of danger. This is the essence of the Australian volunteer ethos."

Mrs Williams said the State Government had directed more than \$45 million to MRNSW over the past six years and was also pleased to support the conference with a joint State/Commonwealth Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant for more than \$40,000.

The weekend's agenda was packed with informative sessions on MRNSW initiatives and challenges, along with perspectives on volunteering and leadership from expert speakers, Useability Principal Penny York and Head of Corps of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, Brigadier Georgeina Whelan.

New corporate resources were launched, including a Risk Assessment App and Media and Grants guides. Delegates left



Conference Dinner guest speaker Peter FitzSimons with Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings and Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

equipped with a new iPad for each rescue vessel to facilitate the use of the app.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the work of our volunteers and the hours they contributed never failed to astound him.

He detailed developments and achievements since the 2015 conference, including the transition to Exemption 24 under the new national maritime law, the move to the NetSuite financial management system and development of high quality training materials.

"Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia have all asked for our training materials and we should be extremely proud of that," he said.

"If we can get everyone working together across the country on a standardised training system, the next step is to get everyone on to our Seahawk tracking system, which other States also are interested in.

"It's about having a consistent and seamless platform around the country."

The Commissioner said the expectation from the community was that MRNSW provided an



Commissioner Stacey Tannos greets Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams as she arrives to officially open the 2017 Leadership Conference.

emergency service around the clock.

"We don't have to be on the water 24/7 but we should be available for call outs. We need to strive to achieve that in the best way possible," he said.

He thanked Yamba Welding and Engineering, Webbe Marine, Raymarine, Suzuki Marine, Rydges, Pelican, Bisley, Harvey Norman, Eventhouse Cronulla, Sutherland & Rockdale Toyota, Annexa, Aquanaut, Signal One, Shimano, Gill, Lowes and Officeworks for supporting the Conference.

Commander of the NSW Police

Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings, said the relationship between MAC and MRNSW had never been stronger.

"On behalf of the NSW Police Force and in particular the Marine Area Command, can I say to your leadership group and your volunteers who work out there, a sincere thank you for the relationship we have and the work you do," he said.

"I believe the system we have in NSW is the best Search and Rescue system in the world and something



The class of 2017 ... more than 100 Unit Commanders, Deputy Unit Commanders and members, Board Directors and staff assemble at the Rydges Port Macquarie before the start of proceedings on the second day of the biennial MRNSW Leadership Conference, the first staged outside Sydney.

we should be proud of."

Chair Jim Glissan outlined the findings of the recent Volunteer Engagement Survey and foreshadowed the introduction of leadership training for Unit Commanders and Deputy Unit Commanders.

"One of the challenges facing any organisation is maintaining the involvement and enjoyment of its people in their work; making sure people are satisfied and each doing their best all the time," he said.

Mr Glissan said the recent member survey showed the overall level of engagement was high but there was room for improvement.

"We want to seriously invest in you, the Unit Commanders and Deputy Unit Commanders so you are able to get the results you want from your members and provide you with assistance to make your units operate at the best level," he said.

Ms York painted delegates a detailed picture of contemporary volunteer motivations, needs and commitment.

She said the national trend was for a decline in volunteering because of a disconnect between the roles

people were interested in and those organisations were offering, a lack of flexibility, personal expense and administrative requirements.

"The traditional volunteer models aren't hitting the mark," she said.

"The challenge is to look at changes in society and how to apply that to volunteer management. There is a shift in expectations from civic mindedness to mutual benefit."

The challenges of recruitment and retention were reinforced by Member Services Manager Mat Smith, who highlighted the findings of the recent volunteer exit survey.

Brigadier Whelan inspired the room with her story of success and failure in her shining military career.

"You can be sure the next generation is not walking through that door any time soon. You'll have to go out and recruit and retain them and ensure they're ready and capable to lead the organisation when you move on," she said.

"Leadership, underpinned by good management, saves lives. It doesn't come naturally, most of us have to work really hard at it. As leaders, you're not just responsible, but you're also accountable. You



Wooli DUC Marten Hutchings, Ballina DUC Phil Causley, Northern Rivers ROM John Murray, Ballina UC Doug Hunter and Wooli UC Richard Taffs at the Leadership Conference.

can share responsibility but you can't share accountability. Your accountability and responsibility is to deliver the capability to save lives. It requires governance, training, assuredness and discipline. You have to make it easy for people to do the right thing."

Guest speaker Peter FitzSimons entertained delegates with a rollicking speech at the Conference Dinner about his life as a Wallaby, author and journalist, answering questions about how he selected the subjects of his numerous books and his upcoming subjects.

Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb, Assistant Director Training and Education Chris Butler, IT Director Florian Glajcar, Grants Manager Siobhán Moran-McFarlane, and Media and Marketing Manager Brendan Trembath addressed the event and Chief Financial Officer Alan Skelley and Administrative Support Officer Marree Doherty led workshops. Deputy Unit Commanders contributed innovative ideas, from fishing and golf competitions to a major arena concert featuring an international star, at a fundraising workshop.

What we've been up to



Leaders assemble ... more than 100 delegates from the senior ranks of MRNSW gathered at Port Macquarie for the 2017 Leadership Conference, including MR Cape Byron's Unit Commander Terry Sandon and Rob Asquith and MR Brunswick's Deputy Unit Commander Owen Danvers and Unit Commander Andrea Danvers. Photos: Brendan Trembath.



Mid North Coast neighbours ... MR Camden Haven DUC Alan Malcolm and UC Ken Rutledge (left and right) with Crowdy Harrington's Ray Mazurek and UC Karen Farrell.



Inspirational... Brigadier Georgeina Whelan's reflections on her own leadership successes and failures raised challenging questions for MRNSW leaders to consider.



Meeting their colleagues... Director Pat Fayers, MR Nambucca DUC Anna McKay and Ulladulla's Jackie Hall and UC Dave Hall share common experience along the coastline.



Sydney turns out ... MR Hawkesbury DUC Derek Whorlow and UC Ken Edwards with Botany Port Hacking DUC Craig Horner and Board Director Mark McKenzie.

Bernie Gabriel

Retiring Northern Rivers Regional Director.



Farewell from the helm ... former Northern Rivers Regional Director Bernie Gabriel, on board Point Danger 30 and crashing through waves on a past rescue mission, has stepped down from the MRNSW Board.

A foundation member of Marine Rescue Point Danger, Bernie Gabriel retired at the 2017 MRNSW Board elections after a four-year term as the Northern Rivers Regional Director.

Motivated by near tragedy on the Tweed Bar involving one of my hire boats, I convinced the Twin Towns Jaycees to make forming and financing a Rescue Unit a project. The first committee came into existence in 1964. The first boat, a 16ft Seafarer, was financed by the Murwillumbah, Twin Towns and Southport Jaycees and skippered by several boating enthusiasts, including me. The system of call outs left a lot to be desired.

1968 saw the organisation completely reformed and constituted. A friend of mine, John Haines, of Haines Hunter Boats, agreed to sell us his Racing Formula Boat that had just won the Sydney-Newcastle race. This boat was one of the best that we ever had for bar crossings and outside rescue work.

As the boat was kept at my marina, I found I was doing many of the call outs, which I enjoyed.

I have driven every boat the unit has had from the outset and I have been involved in executive positions for 50 years. These have included Chief Skipper, President, Vice President, 10 year Chief of Operations and Training Officer, Communications Officer, Liaison Officer between VMR Queensland and the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association, Unit Commander and Northern Rivers Regional Director.

For many years our unit was a combined Queensland and NSW unit, responsible for rescues on both sides of the border under the sanction of both Queensland and NSW Water Police. I have been involved in a large number of rescues, all of them giving that satisfaction we all feel at being there when needed. My most memorable rescues include a man and his wife and their three children four miles off the Tweed Coast in a sinking yacht in heavy seas; three

men on a sinking boat six miles out to sea; the crew of a boat on fire off Burleigh Heads; and four trawler fishermen, whose boat was wrecked off the Tweed Bar, caught without life jackets.

These rescues stand out in my memory because they were at night and the bar was very dangerous. I have been fortunate to have always had good, experienced crew members with me on these rescues. Bar crossings on the Tweed Bar, both night and day in bad conditions, are always hazardous and we were constantly on call over the holiday times.

I am more at home in a rescue boat than I am in an office. During the years before our change to Marine Rescue NSW, I liaised with two Prime Ministers, three Premiers and numerous State politicians, mayors and councillors on both sides of the border, to ensure that Point Danger, originally Tweed Coolangatta Air Sea Rescue, was a strong and efficient unit, well-equipped with boats and

communications systems. The unit continues to receive support from both sides of the border.

I cannot count the rescues the unit has been involved in but it is these incidents, with the heartfelt thanks of those who have been assisted, that make us all take pride in what we do.

I have received Marine Rescue Meritorious, Outstanding Service, Local Bravery and Dedicated Service awards. I am the proud recipient of the ESM, Centenary Medal, Australian Defence Medal, National Medal, National Service Medal 1951-1972, VRA and VMR Long Service Medal and Bars and MRNSW Life Membership.

I have enjoyed my time as a Director and I have respect for the way the Board handles its responsibilities. I regret that it is no longer possible for me to continue as the Director for the Northern Rivers units. To my fellow Directors, whom I hope consider me a member worth knowing, it is now time to "sling me hook".

Wooli Commander inducted as Life Member

The blueprint for someone entitled to be recognised with this honour: Chair.

Marine Rescue Wooli Unit Commander Richard Taffs has been honoured with Life Membership of MRNSW in recognition of his long-standing and valuable contribution to the organisation.

Mr Taffs was inducted as a Life Member at the MRNSW Annual General Meeting at State Headquarters on November 25.

Chair Jim Glissan said the Board had recognised the contribution Mr Taffs had made beyond his own unit.

"If you ever needed a blueprint for somebody ... entitled to be recognised and given the honour of being appointed a Life Member, Richard is such a person," he said.

"I've always been impressed by – and somewhat in awe of – his skill, experience and capacity for work."

Mr Taffs said he wanted to acknowledge what MRNSW had done for him, rather than what he had done for the organisation.

"It's given me purpose, it's given

me identify, it's given me skills, it's given me knowledge, it's given me friends," he said. "The trouble with individual awards is that we don't work as individuals, we work as teams and I must recognise the teams who have worked with me."

He first acknowledged his "main team member", his wife Jackie.

"We joined at the same time as partners and when we're activated, we're both out the door together."

Mr Taffs paid tribute to the members of MR Wooli, former Northern Rivers Regional Controller Stephen Reading, Regional Operations Manager John Murray, Mr Glissan, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and MRNSW staff.

Mr Taffs joined the Wooli Volunteer Rescue Association in 2002 and has served as Unit Commander since 2009.

A member of the facilitation committee tasked by the State Government with helping establish MRNSW, he was subsequently



New MRNSW Life Member Richard Taffs with his wife Jackie and Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey at State Headquarters.

appointed to the foundation board.

Mr Taffs has since lent his knowledge and skill to organisational bodies including the State Training Committee; the design committee for MRNSW Naiad rescue vessels; the Master/Coxswain training and assessment resource group; the Fleet Advisory Committee and the Training Advisory Group.

A qualified Master, he has clocked up more than 3,000 rescue vessel

hours, conducting 150 rescues. To ensure maximum radio coverage on the isolated coastline, the Taffs have maintained an after-hours radio watch from home.

Mr Taffs has worked to support other Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast units' training activities and the couple conducts monthly boat licence courses and tests that have been attended by more than 2,000 people.

Digital learning on training manager's radar

Experienced volunteer applauds our dedicated and diligent members.

Newly appointed MRNSW State Training Manager David Brown brings hefty experience working with volunteers to his new role.

As a training officer with the Victoria State Emergency Service, Mr Brown was heavily involved with volunteers, helping teach skills such as search and rescue and boat handling during floods and storms.

He also served as a volunteer.

"It ranged from rescuing birds trapped in roofs to assisting in Queensland with Cyclone Yasi," he said. "Essentially, all round Australia when there were major disasters."

He is keen to work closely with MRNSW members.

"The service our volunteers provide is first class," he said.

"Obviously, people work very hard and have worked very hard to get where they are."

Mr Brown is enthusiastic about digital learning systems.

"One of the new techniques in learning is called blended learning where you are able to do some of your course work on your tablet or computer," he said. "Within MRNSW, we've started that with first aid."

Before gaining practical experience in the classroom, participants read a workbook then complete an online multiple choice quiz.

Replacing Kate Christensen, who returned to her previous career in the meat and livestock industry, Mr Brown attended the Leadership



New MRNSW State Training Manager, David Brown.

Conference two weeks after joining MRNSW.

"For me it was a really good opportunity to absorb myself into the culture of the organisation," he said.

"It's pretty clear we've got some really dedicated and very diligent volunteers and they are doing a fantastic job."

Brendan Trembath

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Fallen colleagues honoured in annual service

'The price of saving a life on the water is sometimes incredibly high.'

Three marine rescue volunteers were among those honoured at the 17th annual Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service remembering the men and women who have given their lives while serving the community.

The names of Edward Bristow, Dennis Matthews and David Waddell are inscribed on the Honour Roll on the stone memorial at Mrs Macquaries Chair in the Domain.

MRNSW Chaplain Richard Wrightson led this year's service of remembrance and recognition of the contribution of all emergency services volunteers.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Greater Sydney Director David White and about 30 MRNSW personnel joined commissioners, other senior representatives and members of

the NSW emergency services at the event, while vessels from MR Port Jackson and Middle Harbour stood by on Sydney Harbour.

Chaplain Wrightson spoke of the paradox of 'good' grief for those who had died on duty.

"Their sacrifice was ultimate. But it is not just 'grief' which remains; it is 'good' grief because it is not grief without hope or recognition of their goodness," he said.

"The folk we remember today were typical Australians - good people of whom we are proud. They are the individuals who mould the community's spirit and life to more wholesome and nobler levels of existence."

He said greatness emerged in the Aussie psyche, "when a bloke sees your predicament and casually



Solemn ceremony for those lost ... MRNSW volunteers at the 2017 Emergency Services Volunteer Memorial Service.

strolls over and says 'Can I give you a hand, mate?'. No big deal or fuss, just quiet, humble service".

Commissioner Tannos laid a wreath on the memorial to remember the three volunteers who had lost their lives on the water.

"These men's sacrifice reminds us that the price of saving a life on the water is sometimes incredibly high. Today, as always, we thank all our volunteers for their courage, commitment and service to the NSW community," he said.

National recognition for police crew heroism

Officers relentless in effort to save sailors stranded in giant seas far offshore.

The crew of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command patrol boat *Nemesis* has been recognised in the 2017 Australian Search and Rescue Awards.

The crew has been presented with the Professional Search and Rescue Award for rescuing two sailors whose yacht capsized far off Sydney in March.

Presented by the National Search and Rescue Council, the awards recognise outstanding contributions by individuals and groups to search and rescue in Australia.

Australian Maritime Safety Authority Chief Executive and Council Chair Mick Kinley said the courage shown by this year's recipients was worthy of national recognition.

"These brave men came to the rescue of strangers without hesitation," Mr Kinley said.

"They were willing to place their lives on the line to ensure the safety

of others, which is the very definition of heroism."

Two sailors, Irishman Nick Dwyer and Frenchwoman Barbara Heftman, were rescued from their stricken yacht 220nm north-east of Sydney in a joint operation between MAC and AMSA.

The sailors contacted AMSA on March 4 to report a broken rudder on their 40 foot yacht *Val*.

They made makeshift steering arrangements but conditions worsened and at 3pm on March 7, *Val* capsized in waves the size of buildings.

Nick and Barbara activated their distress beacon and a search and rescue operation was launched within minutes.

An AMSA Challenger search and rescue jet arrived on scene at 7pm and made contact with the sailors via marine radio.

AMSA requested assistance from



Winners of a National Search and Rescue Council Award, the crew of the NSW Police Marine Area Command vessel *Nemesis*.

MAC and *Nemesis* was launched with seven officers on board to rescue the sailors.

In 6m swells and gale force winds, the *Nemesis* crew was relentless in their efforts to reach Nick and Barbara before the *Val* capsized again.

At 8.30 am on March 9, a fast rescue boat from *Nemesis* recovered

the sailors, who were not injured, from their yacht.

Nick and Barbara recently visited the Marine Area Command base to thank the crew before resuming their journey around the world.

A crew from Marine Rescue Port Stephens received a NATSAR award in 2015 for saving two sailors in cyclonic conditions in Fame Cove.

Artificial reefs a win for recreational fishers

Largest structure sunk off Port Hacking, four more to come along coastline.

The largest offshore artificial reef in Australia has been sunk off Port Hacking, much to the delight of recreational fishers hoping to hook a big one off Sydney's southern coastline.

The reef, named after fishing industry pioneer and Cronulla business identity John Dunphy, is located in 25-35m of water off Jibbon Beach in the Royal National Park at the entrance to Port Hacking.

It is the fourth artificial offshore reef built by the NSW Government since 2011, following those off Sydney's South Head, Port Macquarie and Shoalhaven.

Others are planned at Merimbula, Jervis Bay, Wollongong and Newcastle.

Inshore reefs are located in Lake Macquarie and Botany Bay.



The John Dunphy artificial reef is sunk off Port Hacking in October. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

The John Dunphy reef structure consists of 36 concrete modules, each weighing 25 tonnes and measuring about 5m high by 4m wide. Steel towers will be added to some of the modules.

Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair said the new reef would be a major attraction for the State's million recreational fishers, who generated more than \$3.4 billion a year for the NSW economy and

created about 14,000 full-time jobs. "Everyone is hooked on our reefs," Mr Blair said. "Our current reefs have over 50 species of fish and we expect this reef to attract even more."

Christmas bargains on MRNSW e-shop

If you're searching for the perfect Christmas present for the boater in your life, look no further than the MRNSW e-shop.

The online store carries a range of safety equipment, boating and fishing gear and MRNSW-branded merchandise, with great discounts on offer.

IT and Business Development Director Florian Glajcar said there was no better time to shop for the equipment a boater needed and wanted on board.

"You can keep safe with new lifejackets for both adults and children, flashlights and emergency lighting stations," Mr Glajcar said.

"One of the best-selling items on the store is always the Mini Jump Starter, a multi-function jumpstarter and power bank. It can restart your car, bike or boat, repower your phone, camera or tablet and even

fire up your portable fridge when you're camping.

"We also have a range of coolers and waterproof cases, boating and protective clothing, filleting knives, burley bombs and tackle boxes that any boater or fisher would be happy to find under the Christmas tree."

The shop also sells MRNSW merchandise for shoppers to show their support for our volunteers.

Mr Glajcar said MRNSW members and Radio Club members received valuable discounts on the shop.

"It's our way of thanking not only our volunteers for their work to save lives but also our Radio Club members, whose support for their local units is vital to helping to fund their operations."

All proceeds from the e-shop are pumped back into volunteer resources and support.

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Hill 60 extends safety watch across Illawarra

New university tech project monitors landslides, flooding and cups of tea.

Hill 60, overlooking Port Kembla, has played a prime safety role for the surrounding community for decades, serving as a gun battery in World War II and a marine radio base today.

MR Port Kembla Unit Commander Graeme McCrudden said a new aerial attached to the base's radio tower meant the site now was supporting a series of innovative safety projects across the Illawarra.

The University of Wollongong has installed aerials around the district to help monitor a network of low-powered remote sensors.

Some remotely monitor landslide locations, providing real time information that potentially could save lives. Other sensors monitor stormwater drains and channels, with the aim of improving

emergency response times to flooding.

Mr McCrudden said it was a smart use of technology, with the new aerials also providing a link to motion sensors for seniors who lived independently in their own homes.

"They know that every day at seven o'clock a person gets up and makes a cup of tea," he said. "If they don't, it sounds an alarm."

Mr McCrudden said the new "little low key antenna" installed at the base did not interfere with marine radio communications.

The university has partnered with NSW Roads and Maritime Services, Wollongong City Council and Sydney Trains on the projects.

The university's Internet of Things Initiatives Coordinator Benoit Passot said thanks to the support



Hill 60 ... playing a vital safety role for the Illawarra since WWII.

of MR Port Kembla, a low power aerial had been installed on Hill 60 in early November as one of five gateways providing coverage around Wollongong.

Mr Passot said the university used technology well designed

for cases where a sensor communicated small amounts of data a few times a day.

"It is well suited for low power battery operated devices that monitor things," he said

Brendan Trembath

More boaters taking to app to Log On

Logging On with MRNSW by smartphone is catching on quickly in the State's boating community.

The free Log On service enables boaters to let MRNSW know where they are going, when they are due back and their contact details.

They can use their marine radio or phone to speak directly to their local radio operators on duty in their nearest Marine Rescue base or use the free *MarineRescue* smartphone app.

IT and Business Development Florian Glajcar said 25,219 Log Ons had been recorded from the start of July to November 23.

"Eighteen per cent of those Log Ons were by smartphone. During the same period two years earlier, it was 12 per cent," he said.

Mr Glajcar said it was satisfying to see that the *MarineRescue* app was proving so popular with boaters

"It's free, fast and includes a pre-launch check list," he said.

"Boaters tick off that their vessel is seaworthy, all safety equipment is on board and that they've checked the weather forecast. They are also reminded they need to have a lifejacket for everyone on board."

In 2016-17, 256,911 people on board 74,299 boats Logged On.

The benefit is that the boater knows a responsible agency is watching for them to return safely.

"The reason we ask you for your contact numbers and your car and boat trailer model and registration is that this gives us several means to try to find you if you're not back when scheduled," Mr Glajcar said.

"If you don't answer your phone and your car and trailer are still at the boat ramp, we know you haven't just forgotten to Log Off and we can quickly escalate our search procedures."



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Drowning victims not wearing lifejackets

Study of boating deaths points to need for greater safety awareness.

Men, alcohol, drugs and boats: it can be a lethal combination but a new analysis of boating and watercraft drowning fatalities in Australia has shown that above all else, failure to wear a lifejacket was the common factor in nearly every one of 473 deaths over a decade.

The 10-year analysis, contained in the 2017 Royal Life Saving (RLS) National Drowning Report, reveals that 92 per cent of the 473 victims who drowned while engaged in boating or watercraft activities from 2005/06 to 2014/15 were men and the same percentage were not wearing a lifejacket.

The analysis showed 19 per cent were aged over 65; 26 per cent had alcohol in their system, of whom 59 per cent were over the 0.05 per cent limit; and 31 per cent had drugs in their system, of which 32 per cent were illegal substances.

Seventy two per cent of the

wearing a lifejacket, not drink and drive on the water, keep a good watch and avoid going out alone, especially in isolated areas.

The 2017 RLS National Drowning Report, released in September, reveals 291 people drowned in Australia in 2016/17 - an increase of nine over the previous year - with NSW recording the highest toll with 93 fatalities (32 per cent). Thirteen per cent of those who lost their lives were boating at the time and 74 per cent were male.

Rivers, creeks and streams were the locations with the highest number of drownings in the year (68), followed by beaches (50) and ocean/harbour locations (46). Boating accounted for more than half of all the ocean/harbour deaths at 59 per cent and almost all of the 46 who died in these locations were men (85 per cent).

Drowning deaths in areas

'If they had taken the step of wearing lifejackets, some of these victims could still be alive today'

deaths occurred when using powered boats and 28 per cent while fishing. Half occurred in the summer and spring and 63 per cent of the victims were considered local to where they drowned.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the report highlighted the need for boaters, especially men, to be more conscious of the need to make safety their highest priority.

"These are deeply troubling figures," he said. "It's terrible to think that if they had taken the simplest safety step of wearing their lifejackets, some of these victims could still be alive today. It's easy to slip into bad habits but accidents can happen in an instant and simple oversights or a few silly mistakes could cost you your life."

He said boaters should always ensure everyone on board was

deemed remote or very remote accounted for 10 per cent of fatalities. Thirty-one per cent of these victims were boating.

Access to timely medical assistance in remote and very remote areas is made all the more difficult due to isolation from major services. Therefore, promoting an increased awareness of the risk of undertaking aquatic recreation alone in isolated areas and the importance of first aid and CPR skills for first responders is vital for reducing drowning deaths in these locations," the report says.

It reflected the concerns of the Unit Commander of the remote MR Moama unit, Ken Bambling.

"Much too often, the volunteers here are called on to assist in the search for people presumed to have drowned in the Murray," he said. 'It's a real tragedy and we'll do anything



Long, winding, shallow in parts with hidden snags and hazards ... the isolated Murray River is an identified drowning blackspot.

to prevent drownings."

Mr Bambling said people needed to be aware of the risks and hazards on the Murray River.

"A Royal Life Saving Report in 2014 identified the Murray as a drowning blackspot, with 43 people

drowning between 2002 and 2012. The river is long, winding, shallow in parts and can have hidden snags and hazards. It is also used by a variety of vessels ranging from houseboats and water skiers to recreational fishers and kayakers."



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What we've been up to



Rapid responders ... 20 volunteers from five units took part in the first combined Mid North Coast and Hunter/Central Coast Regional Rescue Water Craft operators training camp at Trial Bay in November. They tested their skills and knowledge in a series of drills offshore and on the choppy Macleay River and bar (see story Page 26). Photo: Chris Butler.



United in prayer ... MRNSW Chaplain Richard Wrightson with his counterparts from the SES, RFS and VRA at the Emergency Services Volunteer Memorial Service in October (see story Page 12).



Awards presentation ... NSW Governor, General David Hurley, with ESM recipients Keven Marshall and John Murray, Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Commissioner Stacey Tannos.



High-octane operations ... Lynette Van Homrigh, Stuart Lawson and Steve Randell on board Newcastle 20 to provide operational support and maintain the exclusion zone for the Newcastle 500 Supercars.



Wildlife warriors ... the crew of Port Macquarie 30 and NPWS personnel on a mission to untangle a humpback whale that had dragged a fishing trap and ropes 1,700km up the coastline.



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SAREX puts base and equipment to the test

Live activation challenge for five units.



Target successfully located ... Senior Constable Heida Simon and MR Ballina Deputy Unit Commander Phil Causley recover an exercise mannequin during the Northern Rivers SAREX.

Alive activation Search and Rescue Exercise off Ballina tested the operational readiness of units in the Northern Rivers Region in October.

Under the exercise scenario, a vessel was Logged On to Seahawk via the *MarineRescue* app at noon on Friday, October 13, launching from the River Street boat ramp at Ballina for a fishing trip to Julian Rocks off Cape Byron.

The vessel was overdue for its scheduled Log Off at 2pm.

With MR Ballina Radio Operator Leon Coventry on duty at the base, repeated calls were made to the boat and the boat ramp was checked before the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray were alerted at 3pm.

Ballina 30 was tasked to conduct a river and coastal search until the operation was suspended at 6pm.

The ROM then provided the Point Danger, Brunswick, Iluka-Yamba and Evans Head units with the search parameters and target information for a search in two separate locations starting at 8am next day.

Point Danger 30 was assigned to manage the Cape Byron search area, assisted by *Brunswick 30*.

Ballina 30 was to search the coastline north of the Richmond

River, along with *Evans 30* and *Iluka Yamba 30*, which travelled north from their bases.

Two targets deployed by the Police launch *Fearless* were retrieved later in the morning.

Mr Murray said the vessel skippers and crews had performed admirably in the not-so-perfect conditions.

"The exercise also provided a good opportunity to test the new Ballina radio base, remote communications equipment and the RediTalk system, in preparation for the upcoming boating season season, when a multi-vessel search in the area is a real possibility," he said.

"As the search areas were in two different locations, the ability to communicate directly with the search vessels from the Ballina base through the MRNSW repeaters at St Helena and Coopers Shoot, above Byron Bay, gave the incident controller and control room personnel the real-time information needed to monitor, amend or change the search areas as required."

A debrief and barbecue were held at the Ballina unit on the Sunday morning to give all participants the chance to discuss the lessons from the exercise.

John Murray

Shark alarm sounds again over surf classic

Evans Head crew keeps Malibu competitors safe from predators.

For the second year in a row, MR Evans Head was forced to sound the shark alarm to clear competitors from the water in the annual Malibu Classic surf competition.

The event, on the October long weekend, is always a highlight for the unit, which keeps a safety watch from *Evans 30*.

Our crew was on the water each day from 6.30am to 9am, when Surf Life Saving took over the watch. Our Friday shift was extended a little and after a crew change, *EH 30* headed back out just as an overhead drone spotted a bronze whaler near surfers around Half Tide Beach.

Our radio base was notified and Frank Skaines sounded the shark alarm, clearing the water to ensure all competitors were safe. *EH 30* patrolled the area until the all clear was sounded.

The competition continued in conditions that were ordinary for surfers but good for participants in a fishing competition also running out of Evans Head, keeping our radio operators busy. One fishing boat needed assistance on Sunday



Evans 30 watches over surfers in flat conditions during this year's Malibu Classic in October. Photo: Ricky Forsyth, rickyluvphotography.com.au

morning. *EH 30* moved from Malibu duty, took the boat under tow back to the boat ramp and returned to watch within half an hour.

A pair of sea kayakers Logged On with the unit on a quiet day in October. We ended up doing a few distance and bearing exercises with the couple, who stayed off Evans for about six hours, enjoying the

transiting whales. Roy and Bronwyn Davies, who always Log On with MRNSW via their handheld VHF radios, are well known adventurers who caravan, cycle and kayak all over Australia. Bronwyn has been blind since she was 15 and the pair have an inspirational blog.

Members have been focused on training, with Lance Fountain

recently gaining his Crew qualification. We benefited greatly from working with four neighbouring units and the Police Marine Area Command in the regional SAREX held off Ballina in October. We have since completed a joint towing exercise with *Ballina 30* on our regular Saturday training.

Bill Bates

Wooli members recognised for service

Unit Commander to join Commonwealth Games Baton relay.

Members of MR Wooli have been presented with the National Medal, recognising their service to the community.

Northern Rivers Regional Director Bernie Gabriel presented Unit Commander Richard Taffs, Jackie Taffs and Stephen Reading with their medals at a unit function with members and guests.

All three played a role in the Wooli unit's transition from the Volunteer Rescue Association to the new MRNSW.

The National Medal recognises long and diligent service by members of recognised government

and voluntary organisations who risk their lives or safety to protect or assist the community in times of emergency or natural disaster.

Page MP Kevin Hogan recently visited the unit to inspect facilities and present Long Service Medals and member qualifications.

"Dropped in to see some of the team and present certificates and medallions over the weekend. Wonderful volunteers helping keep our community safe. Thank you," he later posted on Facebook.

In further acknowledgement of his community service and determination to maintain his



Page MP Kevin Hogan with Kath Farrar, Rodney May, UC Richard Taffs and Jackie Taffs during a visit to MR Wooli.

physical fitness for active duty as a rescue vessel skipper, UC Taffs also will carry the Commonwealth Games

Baton on one of the legs of the relay as it passes through Coffs Harbour on February 1.

Solo rower puts down his oars in Ballina

Simpson's Donkey battles 'merciless' Tasman for 24 days before rescue.

A solo adventurer aiming to row from Coffs Harbour to New Zealand instead ended his journey in Ballina with his boat at the end of a tow rope.

Grant 'Axe' Rawlinson and his small boat, *Simpson's Donkey*, had been pushed around by high winds and seas, capsized and battled their way through busy shipping channels in the 24 days and 1,100nm since he left Coffs Harbour to cross the Tasman Sea, "a merciless bully", on the third leg of his journey.

The crew of *Ballina 30* had just completed a sail past on the Richmond River as part of the Ballina Prawn Festival on November 11 when they were called to rescue the exhausted skipper from North Riordan reef.

Mr Rawlinson had travelled 147 days and almost 10,000km completely by human power since departing Singapore on January 3.

In his *Rowing from Home to Home* blog, he said: "The last 6nm I was grateful to receive a tow in from the Ballina Marine Rescue team.

"Ballina port has a bar with breaking surf to negotiate so I



Solo adventurer Grant 'Axe' Rawlinson has thanked the crew of *Ballina 30*, who returned him safely to shore. Photo: Alistair Harding.

would not have liked to have rowed in myself. I would like to extend a massive thank you to the wonderful support of Ballina Marine Rescue, (especially) to the crew on duty yesterday in the command centre and the boat crew: Tony Handcock (skipper), Brooke Butler (coxswain), Rodney Guest (crewman), Bill Ewen (trainee) and Gary Baker (crewman).

"These guys are all volunteers and do a wonderful job protecting

the people in the water 24 hours per day/7 days a week."

Mr Rawlinson and visitors to the Prawn Festival were greeted by leaden skies. Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray led the festival sail past flotilla on a Rescue Water Craft, followed by *Ballina 30*, local prawn trawlers, the Ballina Jet Boat and a Surf Life Saving crew. The unit's sausage sizzle was a crowd-pleaser

with the funds raised contributing to the cost of two new motors for *BA 30*. Thanks to all members who took part, particularly our social coordinator Blue Skimmings.

On November 5, World Tsunami Day, our volunteers and the Ballina State Emergency Service unit joined forces at our Ballina base to help raise awareness about the risk of and response to tsunami.

Leon Coventry

First aid on training agenda at Brunswick

Two MR Brunswick Radio Operators are transferring their skills and training to volunteer roles at the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in April.

Gabrielle and Michael Karkkainen have been chosen for communications roles in the Event Control Room at the Games, running from April 4 to 15.

The unit recently held a successful two-day First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation course for new unit members and rescue vessel crew.

The course was run by two of the Northern Rivers Region's validated

first aid trainers, Nicole Lockie, from MR Point Danger and our own Unit Commander Andrea Danvers.

They were pleased with both the course attendance and results.

Thanks to the Mullumbimby State Emergency Service unit for allowing us to use its facilities to hold this training.

As the year draws to a close, we would like to thank the members of our local community and many visitors for supporting our fundraising and the unit members who have devoted many days and hours to fundraising activities.

Owen Danvers



MR Brunswick Training Officer Des Wright on Watch Officer duty in the unit's radio tower.

Coffs Harbour thanks emergency services

Unit raises safety awareness at community, fishing and boating events.

The Coffs Harbour community took a day out to thank its emergency services on November 12.

The inaugural Gratitude Day was staged to enable members of the public to interact with and thank their region's emergency services personnel.

The day involved displays by services including MR Coffs Harbour, the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force, Westpac Life Saver Rescue and NSW Ambulance.

Interactive demonstrations included unit members setting off flares from land and our rescue vessel, *Coffs 30*.

We had an enjoyable time engaging with the community and discussing the role MRNSW plays in keeping the boating community safe.

We received several enquiries regarding volunteer opportunities with MRNSW and our mascot, Walker the Collie, even rounded up some new members. It was a very successful and fun day.

The unit took part in this year's 'RyMarine' program run by the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour Day Break for students in Years 9, 10 and 11 who have an interest in



Showing the way ... MR Coffs Harbour member Tod Sheaves gives a flare demonstration at the inaugural Gratitude Day. Photo: Russell Shelton.

marine science and the maritime industry.

This popular weekend is designed to offer the students a hands-on experience dealing with marine animals and plants, an introduction to rewarding careers, an insight to the diversity and incredible beauty of the fragile marine environment and an opportunity to develop a special interest in marine biology and related science technologies.

The RyMarine students visited our base for an introduction to the role MRNSW volunteers play in keeping the boating community safe on the water. The visit was a positive interaction, with the students asking questions about the formal qualifications required for a professional career in maritime and the role that MRNSW can play in helping them achieve that goal.

The unit also participated in the

local Gone Fishing and Boating Safety Day at Jetty Foreshore Park on Sunday, October 15. Along with boating safety advice, we dispensed barbecued sausages to the hungry crowds.

Watch Officer Symon Filet, who administers our unit Radio Club in addition to his radio duties, has received his five year long service medal.

Russell Shelton

Appreciation for Keith's 11-year contribution

Marine Rescue Woolgoolga has recently farewelled Keith Minchinnett, who has been a committed and hard-working member since 2006.

Keith previously had been a member of the Volunteer Rescue Association in Woolgoolga.

He qualified as a Master 5 and served as Deputy Unit Commander for a number of years.

Keith was instrumental in training new members and very proactive in

raising funds for the unit through its Woolgoolga Beach Markets.

Unit members gathered for a farewell lunch for Keith at the Seaview Tavern in Woolgoolga.

Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne attended to thank Keith for his service over many years. Keith has moved to live with his family in Sydney and every member of MR Woolgoolga wishes him all the best.

Cherrill Powell



Unit Commander Tony Skalla farewells Keith Minchinnett, thanking him for his years of service to MR Woolgoolga.

New radio technology supports volunteers

Boost in communications and membership for Forster-Tuncurry.

While the number of rescue operations has remained static over spring for the past couple of years, the seasonal communications traffic to the MR Forster-Tuncurry radio base has risen by more than 50 per cent in 2017.

We received 2,645 radio calls between September and the second week of November in 2016, rising to 4,334 for the same period this year.

The unit has averaged five operations a month from August to November. Most of these involved standard tows due to mechanical issues, however, we were recently called to assist a vessel taking on water through a stern flange and another fisherman who had gearbox issues on his 45 foot fishing vessel.

Our membership is slowly increasing, helping fill the rosters for both our boat crews and radio room.

The unit has recently undertaken a major overhaul of its communications and IT systems.

The installation of Radio over Internet Protocol technology enables MR Terrey Hills to monitor our overnight communications. We thank the Terrey Hills members for their support. A new RediTalk system was introduced to the base in the first week of November and we also upgraded our IT systems with new touch screen technology.

Our training team has been busy this quarter, undertaking assessments in both the radio room and on board our rescue vessels, as well as supporting Regional Training Manager Rodney Page with First Aid training in the region.

Training was also in focus at an annual multi-agency incident management exercise with members of the NSW Police Local Area Command and Port Stephens Marine Area Command, DPI Fisheries and NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

The exercise involved a search



Crew member Keith Herdon keeps watch as Forster 30 tows a 45 foot fishing boat into harbour.

for two people missing from an unattended runabout found drifting on Wallis Lake. One was found adrift in the lake and the second on an island suffering minor injuries.

Our fundraising has continued to prove successful. Along with our monthly Tuncurry Markets, race days and petrol raffles, we again provided personnel for the gates for the local wine and food festival in November.

The long awaited repairs to damage caused to our breakwall by the East Coast Low storms of June 2016 are set to begin early in the New Year with Crown Lands finalising a contract to install more than 100 Hanbars (13 tonne blocks of concrete) on the breakwall and rearrange a number of others that were dislodged during the storm.

Michael Thomas

Sand Maniacs conquer obstacles for charity

Port Macquarie unit benefits from 4km trial of fitness and agility.

Hundreds of fit and hardy competitors tackled 27 obstacles over a 4km course in the inaugural Sand Mania event to raise funds for local charities, including MR Port Macquarie.

The event, on November 12, was a family fun day to test agility and fitness over a course from Town Beach to Rocky Point Lookout and back.

Activities included a mini mania course for young children and a Corporate Cup challenge. Prizes were awarded for fancy dress in the main event.

More than 70 members of MR Port Macquarie worked with the event organisers, the Tacking Point Lions Club, on the course set up, registration, first aid, marshalling

and the pull down and clean up.

The weather for the day was perfect, with about 350 entrants tackling climbing walls, net climbs, a skip bin full of iced water, pole dancing and a leap of faith, among other challenges.

The course took the really keen and fit around 40-45 minutes to complete.

Some 30 sponsors supported the event in cash and kind to help make it a fun-filled day for all.

The event raised funds for Lions, Headspace and our unit.

Crews from the unit joined a major search operation for a man feared missing on October 9. Police held concerns for his welfare after he left his home and was unable to be located.



Members of MR Port Macquarie turn out to support the inaugural Sand Mania event in November.

Port Macquarie Police, the State Emergency Service, Surf Life Saving and the Westpac helicopter also took part, with MR Camden Haven

bolstering efforts on the second day. The man, 34, was located on October 21.
Neil Yates

Nambucca team hops to it in 'roo rescue

Swimming Skippy saved from surf after public and WIRES raise alarm.



No need to tie this kangaroo down ... MR Nambucca and WIRES members carry the exhausted marsupial to shore wrapped in a blanket.

A quick response by members of MR Nambucca saved a floundering swimmer in trouble just off South Beach at the mouth of the Nambucca River on October 10.

Proving yet again that it's not only people who need the help of MRNSW, the swimmer in this case was a kangaroo.

An early morning walker reported the kangaroo in some strife off the beach about 6am, calling WIRES, who in turn called us for help.

We were on the scene within 20

minutes. Dale Edwards on Rescue Water Craft NH 11, Gary Nichols, Graham Horne, Ken Brandli and Tracey from WIRES responded, with the exhausted 'roo wrapped in a blanket, loaded on to the RWC sled and brought to shore.

He seemed to know he was being helped. He was given a clean bill of health from a vet and has since recovered and been relocated to his home habitat.

The unit has replaced the boat launching rails to enable rescue

vessel NH 20 to be launched and retrieved at low tide. The rails and joiners were donated by State Rail and installed by a local contractor with many hours of help from Nambucca members.

The rails were cut and fitted on a closed section of road and then moved into place after the old rails were removed. Sandbags donated by the SES and filled with concrete were placed under one section of the tracks to give additional support.

Graham Horne



The 'roo has recovered and been relocated to its habitat.

Versatile Zodiac an asset for Camden Haven

Marine Rescue Camden Haven has bolstered its response capabilities with the delivery of a versatile new rescue vessel.

Camden Haven 10 is a 4.2m Zodiac RHIB, powered by a 40hp 4-stroke outboard.

Unit Commander Ken Rutledge said the new addition would be able to respond to incidents on the Camden River or lakes area that the larger *CH 30* Naiad could not reach.

"This is a great asset for our rescue crews," he said. "It will be able to easily access shallow and confined areas of our waterways where we cannot take *CH 30*. We will be able to transport it by trailer to nearby launching areas."

"Our crews have been inducted on the new vessel before the peak of the summer boating season."

The Camden Haven and Crowdy Harrington units spent two days in late October working on boat towing and CPR drills. The exercises also involved watch officers and radio operators in the two radio bases following the required procedures in response to the test scenarios. It is hoped to make this an annual event.

A series of incidents in October kept the unit's crews busy. On October 9, the unit was tasked to rescue a local professional fishing vessel with two people on board stranded by water pump problems 18.5nm out from Diamond Head.

The job was well outside the main shipping lanes, requiring a couple of slight detours to pass two ships on the way out to retrieve the 7m Yellowfin stern-drive half cabin boat.

Our crew of five included



Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne delivers *CH 10* to UC Ken Rutledge (right) and Ron Neville.

two crew members in training, Roxford Bree and Karl Krieter, who performed admirably, along with new Radio Operator Carolyn Dobson.

The next day we joined the search for a missing person off Lighthouse Beach at Port Macquarie.

On October 26, a yacht with two people on board a vessel with

engine trouble requested a tow into the Camden Haven for repairs. The couple later called into the base to say thank you with a generous donation as well as two plates of fresh scones before heading south.

On November 12, we towed a 7m fishing boat back into the river.

Ken Rutledge

Choppy river and bar test RWC operators

Twenty volunteers take to water at first joint regional training camp.

The historic Trial Bay Gaol provided an imposing backdrop for 20 volunteers taking part in the first joint Mid North Coast and Hunter/Central Coast Regional Rescue Water Craft training camp in November.

The RWC operators from the Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Port Macquarie, Trial Bay and Nambucca units spent two days honing operational procedures and practising drills on the Macleay River and bar and offshore.

The training event, based at the Trial Bay unit, was led by Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray and Regional Training Manager North Rodney Page, with support from Assistant Director Training and Education Chris Butler, Regional Training Manager South



Mark Sheehan and Paul Hanlon pass Trial Bay Gaol on board Central Coast 11 during an offshore run as part of a joint regional RWC training exercise. Photo: Chris Butler.

Stuart Massey and State Training Manager Dave Brown.

Mr Murray said five RWC operators had completed operational assessments on the first day.

"We spent time refreshing

Standard Operating Procedures and Risk Management before the team completed their first drills in the river and on the bar in choppy conditions," he said. "On Sunday we returned to the bar and then

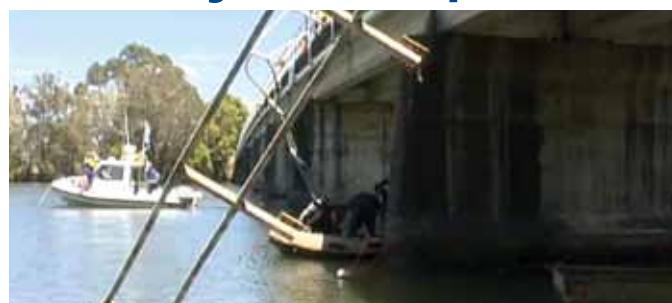
crossed to Liggers Point to practice beaching and relaunching and operations with a passenger or patient. The event was a success, with the operators all completing their six monthly drills."

Marmong Point Marina offers a lifestyle like no other. Located on the scenic shores of Lake Macquarie, it features 110sq km of pristine waterway and Australia's largest coastal saltwater lake. The marina provides 245 berths for vessels up to 30m and dry storage facilities up to 30' all with power and water. It also has a full service boatyard and large landbased areas. The slogan 'Love the Lake' is prominently displayed at the bottom.

Discover the tropical waters of Lake Macquarie's most scenic and protected bays from Marmong Point Marina. The lake offers 110sq km of pristine waterway and is Australia's largest coastal saltwater lake. There is 178km of unspoiled shoreline with vast expanses of bush land, beaches and sandy islands waiting to explore. 245 berths for vessels up to 30m and dry storage facilities up to 30' all with power and water. Full service boatyard and large landbased areas. Love the Lake.

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Radio work eliminates Crowdy blackspot



The installation of new communications technology at MR Crowdy Harrington is being carried out in conjunction with an upgrade to the radio tower at Middle Brother, eliminating a persistent blackspot on Crowdy Harbour.

DUC Kevin Nicholls, Kevin Bailey and Ray Mazurek, on board *Crowdy 20*, assisted NSW Police divers investigating a car that had plunged into the Manning River from the Scotts Creek Bridge south of Harrington on November 3. A man's body was recovered (above).

A week later, *Crowdy 30*, with crew of Keith Richardson, Kevin Nicholls, Kevin Bailey and Aaron Orton, shadowed a 35 foot lobster boat experiencing gearbox problems back to Crowdy Harbour, manoeuvring it to safety.

Jim Fulton, Leon Eleman and Cheryl Rowe have recently passed their Radio Operator's assessments, Kevin Nicholls has gained his Coxswain certification and former Treasurer Pam Fisher has received her five-year Long Service Pin.

Mary Thomas

Search exercise crews have a whale of a time

Lemon Tree Passage takes lead in successful joint-agency operation.

Five rescue vessels were quick to respond when a 5.5m white runabout drifting in an area between Broughton Island and the entrance to Port Stephens, with two people overboard, made a distress call to MR Lemon Tree Passage.

Fortunately, it was a practice call staged for a local Search and Rescue Exercise and the "people" overboard were actually two rescue mannequins dropped offshore by a NSW Maritime vessel.

MR Lemon Tree Passage Deputy Unit Commander Rick Tyler was appointed On Scene Commander in charge of the response by rescue vessels *Lemon Tree 30, Tuggerah Lakes 20, Port Stephens 30, Port Stephens 31* and a Police Marine Area Command Port Stephens vessel.

Three radio operators, under the

supervision of a watchkeeper and assistant, were based at Lemon Tree Passage and another watchkeeper at MR Norah Head, maintaining communications support.

DUC Tyler gave a full operational briefing at the Lemon Tree boat ramp before the vessels proceeded on to the water. With crews undertaking a parallel search pattern at a spacing of 0.2nm, a whale on its return journey to Antarctica became an avid spectator between two rescue vessels for a short time.

Neither of the "survivors" drifting in the sea were disturbed by the denizen of the deep and both were successfully recovered.

After an in-depth debrief, the vessel and radio crews enjoyed lunch while the radio base resumed normal duties.

The successful event was the first



Mission accomplished ... personnel at the conclusion of a successful local SAREX based at MR Lemon Tree Passage. Photo: Geoff Walker.

SAREX initiated by MR Lemon Tree Passage for some time.

September was a busy month for members' accreditation and awards.

Rick Tyler completed a TAFE Master 5 course and was rated as a MRNSW Master. Two *LT 30* crew members, Clem Doyle and Dennis

Smith, were rated as Leading Crew.

Skipper Al Ford received a 15 year long-service award and announced his retirement from volunteer duties, before being farewelled with a barbecue at the unit base.

Gary Bow

Crowds flock to Lake Macquarie Open Day

Popular event gives public the chance to learn more about our work.

After poor weather washed out last year's event, MR Lake Macquarie held its popular annual Open Day under bright blue skies on November 26.

Several hundred people attended the event on the waterfront beside the unit's Pelican base, enjoying market stalls, entertainment, emergency services displays, all day breakfast and a jumping castle.

Swansea MP Yasmin Catley, Shortland MP Pat Conroy and Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser joined new Hunter/Central Coast Director Jim Wright, Regional Operations Manager Steve Raymond and Unit Commander Chris Parkinson for the official opening and welcome.

A highlight of the day was a sail past of our unit's four vessels, two Rural Fire Service fireboats, an RMS vessel and Surf Life Saving RIB and jet ski, with a low flyover from the

Westpac Rescue Helicopter. UC Parkinson took the salute.

The Pelican boat base and Swansea Heads radio tower were open for inspection to help the public understand more about our work. Thank you to the committee, led by Malcolm Druce, who worked hard to organise the Open Day.

Our fundraisers have been busy selling raffle tickets at many events around Lake Macquarie, including PWC races on the lake. Peter Sun and Veronica Roxby also spent a weekend helping with marshalling and first aid duties for the event.

We held a successful BBQ at Bunnings in Morisset, with a large team of our volunteers collecting record earnings.

Unit members enjoyed the regional Radio Operator Professional Development Day on October 18 at Swansea RSL. It was a great



Breakfast as long as you want it ... MR Lake Macquarie members Peter Sun and Graeme Hesketh on the BBQ at the unit's Open Day.

experience to meet Radio Operators and Watch Officers from different units in the region.

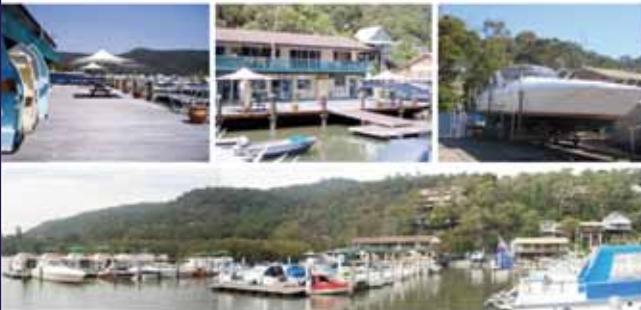
Emergency Systems Manager Andrew Cribb's update on the expansion of VHF coverage was greatly appreciated and practical exercises using new training radios were both fun and educational.

Long Service awards have been presented to Sally Smith (five year pin), John Ellis (10 year medal), Glenn Dowey (10 year clasp for 20 years' service) and Neil Grieves (35 years medal). Tom Case, Bill Valent and David Baldwin have been presented the National Medal.

Zoe Tylee

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MAKING WAVES
Hunter/Central Coast News

Search for kayaker ends in tragedy

Tuggerah Lakes base battered in storm.



Powerful winds blew out roller doors and damaged trees at the Toukley base of MR Tuggerah Lakes on November 6.

A multi-agency search for a kayaker missing on Tuggerah Lakes had a tragic conclusion on November 15.

The 44-year-old man had failed to return home from an afternoon paddle in the Ourimbah Creek area.

Crews from MR Tuggerah Lakes were tasked to join NSW Police and the NSW Ambulance helicopter in the search operation just before 9pm, with skippers John Girling and Ian Likely and crew members Anne Girling, Bob Sutton, John Sheehan and Graeme Cartwright heading out on board *TL 20* and *TL 21*. Ben Hogan was the Watch Officer.

After scouring Ourimbah Creek as far as they could, our boats began a parallel search of the lake area near the creek entrance until the search was suspended at 1am.

Skipper Steve Corbett and Bob Cox on *TL 20* resumed the search about 7.30am but found no sign of the man. Police Marine Area Command and an RMS inspector later located the deceased man in Tumbi Creek. He is thought to have fallen from his kayak in a strong

north-easterly and drowned.

On October 5, UC Tony Younglove and John Sheehan, with Steve Corbett on radio duty at the base, responded to a 5m Bayliner with three adults and three children on board stranded between three cardinal markers at Buff Point that needed to be towed to freedom.

The Tuggerah Lakes unit did not escape unscathed when a vicious storm cell hit Toukley on November 6. Our base lost the weather station from the roof and three roller doors on our sheds were damaged, forcing one to be replaced.

Several trees around the base needed to be removed.

Our members attended the popular ChromeFest, a tribute to classic American cars, hot rods and rock and roll at The Entrance, selling tickets in our unit raffle of a 375 Snipe Aluminium runabout, trailer, 15hp motor and safety pack.

Our vessels patrolled the safety zone for the first fireworks of the season at the Lakes Festival on November 11.

Suzanne Younglove

Unit hits dance floor for anniversary party

Official guests praise volunteers' service to community over 35 years.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens celebrated the 35th anniversary of its foundation at a dinner dance in November.

The unit was established in 1982 when Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol Captain North John Thompson placed an advertisement in the *Port Stephens Examiner* inviting people with an interest in boating to attend a meeting to canvass the formation of a local RVCP Division. More than 20 people signed up as foundation members, with Kevin Clark being "volunteered" as the first Divisional Commander.

Almost 100 unit members and guests joined the anniversary festivities, including three unit patrons, Paterson MP Meryl Swanson, Port Stephens MP Kate Washington and Myall Lakes MP Stephen Bromhead; Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, the Central Coast and Hunter Scot MacDonald; Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command

Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings; Senior ADF Officer at RAAF Williamtown Air Commodore Craig Heap and the evening's MC, Port Stephens Cr Jaimie Abbott.

Unit Commander Lee Uebergang said the event recognised 35 years' community service by the unit and its predecessor organisation.

"Everyone involved in this unit since 1982 should feel proud of their selfless volunteering because our work saves lives, which makes a huge difference to everyday Australians," he said.

Mr MacDonald praised the unit's operational record and the fact it had been operating 24/7 since 1988.

Detective Superintendent Hutchings said NSW boasted the most professional and effective maritime search and rescue service in the world, which the NSW Police could not provide without MRNSW as its partner.

"Marine Rescue Port Stephens



Members of MR Port Stephens celebrate their 35th anniversary with Port Stephens MP Kate Washington (fourth from left) and Paralympian and Gosford MP Liesl Tesch (front).

is a prime example of professional men and women, both retired and some still working, coming together as volunteers to perform their duties in a professional and exemplary manner," he said.

The event's guest speaker was Paralympian and Gosford MP Liesl Tesch, who became an incomplete paraplegic after a mountain bike accident at the age of 19.

Not to be deterred, she went

on to compete in the Australian wheelchair basketball team at five Paralympics, winning three medals, and was the first woman to play wheelchair basketball professionally.

She took up sailing in 2010, winning gold at the 2012 London and 2016 Rio Paralympics.

She has also competed in two Sydney to Hobart Yacht Races and was elected to Parliament in April.

Liesl Tesch

Joint operation fails to locate missing man

Thieves thwarted in bid to break into Central Coast unit, vessels.

Vessels from MR Central Coast and Cottage Point joined a multi-agency search for a man presumed missing after his car was located at The Skillion at Terrigal in October.

The NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and PolAir launched a search on October 19, with the two MRNSW vessels, Surf Life Saving and Westpac Rescue Helicopter joining the following day.

The crews of *Central Coast 21* and *Cottage Point 30* met off Barrenjoey, searching north to Terrigal and back to Broken Bay before the search was scaled back in unfavourable conditions. *CC 22* was tasked to search from Wamberal to Third Point on October 21, again finding no sign of the man.

Three people were caught on security camera unsuccessfully trying to break in to the MR Central Coast unit and neighbouring Naval Cadet base, along with one of our rescue vessels and a NSW Roads and Maritime Services boat tied up alongside our wharf on October 19. Fortunately, both vessels were secure and no damage was done.

After also attempting to open one of the roller doors on our shed, the trio stole a dinghy owned by a member of the public whose boat is moored just off our base.

Nine Rescue Water Craft operators and trainees from the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie units prepared for the peak boating season at a joint training session at



Training for a busy summer boating season ... MR Central Coast RWC operators Bruce Lorking, Mark Sheehan and Kevin Sullivan.

Point Clare on November 11.

The unit has raised about \$25,000 from its most recent raffle, which was drawn by Robertson MP Lucy Wicks at the Ettalong Beach

Oyster Festival on November 12.

First prize, a Quintrex 350 Explorer, outboard, trailer and safety package was won by a local resident.

Mitch Giles

His shout: solo schooner sailor calls for help

Hawkesbury volunteers save boat from rocks and watch overnight paddlers.

An urgent call for help from a 70 foot schooner at risk of running aground on rocks on Lion Island saw both MR Hawkesbury rescue vessels quickly under way on October 23.

The schooner was in trouble off the island and being pushed towards the rocks in a heavy sea and southerly winds.

Hawkesbury 21, crewed by David Stocks, Wendy Mitchell, Mark Neller and Ken Edwards, arrived within eight minutes. With *HW 22* standing off to keep watch in the poor conditions, *HW 21* was able to carefully manoeuvre close to the stricken boat and grab a tow rope thrown by its lone skipper.

Taking the boat in tow, *HW 21* proceeded at a slow five knots. The crew radioed MR Broken Bay, whose vessel *Broken Bay 30* took over the tow from Pittwater, returning the vessel to safety at its mooring in Morning Bay near Scotland Island in a successful joint operation.

The annual Hawkesbury River Canoe Classic was staged on the weekend of October 28 and 29. The event is just a short paddle down the river from Windsor to Brooklyn - an easy 111 kilometres.

The paddlers started at 4pm on Saturday, travelling all night and finishing about 11am on Sunday.

One team put in an extraordinary effort to reach our checkpoint at the 106km mark at Bar Point at midnight, continuing on to become the first to arrive at Brooklyn.

MR Hawkesbury has been associated with this event for many years, providing a safety net for the paddlers from the far side of Spencer to Brooklyn with eight on-water checkpoints using MRNSW and private vessels and the main checkpoint at the land finish.

With 28 unit members involved, we arrived early to set up equipment including tents, portable toilets, lighting, noticeboards, generators



Return to safety ... *Hawkesbury 21* takes a 70 foot schooner under tow after preventing it from grounding on Lion Island.

and the MRNSW communications van as the primary source of on-river communications.

Crews then took up their allocated checkpoint locations for communication checks, an early dinner and a few hours' sleep before the customary "time to wake up" radio call from land finish.

The checking system ensures all

paddlers are accounted for. While a few went astray, a quick response by our chase boats ensured they were soon back on track.

The event raises funds for the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation and we are proud to be associated with such a fantastic cause.

Ken Edwards

Fresh training focus at Terrey Hills radio base

Revamped program caters for new and more experienced members.

A revamp of MR Terrey Hills' training programs has seen the introduction of a suite of new and revised training activities.

Incorporating the high-quality MRNSW training course resources and developed in consultation with Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff, the refreshed program covers provisional member, Radio Operator, Watch Officer and first aid training and marine radio licence courses.

A new program for provisional members, encompassing classroom and on-the-job training, has the benefit of enabling our trainees to network with other members through their placements on various watches. The classroom sessions incorporate practice on our

training radios as well as navigation exercises using electronic chart plotting technology and charts.

New training sessions based on case study scenarios for handling vessel assists and vessels in distress will start in early 2018.

With increasing numbers of Radio Operators keen to progress their qualifications, we are developing new Watch Officer training sessions based on our provisional member class structure and incorporating group exercises, workshops and mentoring. Professional development sessions also are being held for existing Watch Officers.

The unit's radio training team also has revised our presentations for our volunteers and members of the public undertaking our short



Training for newest members ... Watch Officer Roger Holt in a class with provisional member David Ward.

and long range marine radio licence courses. To date, more than 100 boaters have qualified this year.

Members of surrounding units are welcome to attend our quarterly first aid courses.

Community groups continue to learn more about our work through visits to our radio base. We have recently hosted the Bayview Cubs and St Ives Lions Club.

Denis Comber

Crew sees flipside of tacking on the Hacking

Rescue vessel on scene in minutes after sailors come to grief in twilight race.

It took a volunteer crew from MR Botany Port Hacking just six minutes to reach a 52 foot sailing catamaran that flipped in strong wind east of Bundeena.

Wild Goose was taking part in a weekly twilight sailing race organised by the Royal Motor Yacht Club Port Hacking.

Skipper Adam Lewis had just tacked when a 30 knot wind gust picked the boat up.

"For a large cat it's quite light," he said. "By the time we got a chance to release the sails it was too late."

He and a crewmate hung on tight as the boat overturned off Jibbon Beach, close to a motor cruiser that had run aground three days earlier.

The crew of *Port Hacking 30* was on the water for a familiarisation and training session.

Skipper Graham Clarke said fortunately no one had been injured.

Crew member Diane Castro said the crew had been quickly activated when *Wild Goose* blew over.



Boating casualty ward ... an overturned cruiser lies on Jibbon Beach as *Wild Goose* flips during twilight racing, prompting *Port Hacking 30* to rush to the scene.

"We got the call and went straight there to help," she said.

Mr Lewis praised the crew's quick response to the incident.

"As a boat owner, having the rescue boat there within 10 minutes certainly gave you peace of mind that there were people to help you straight away," he said.

The catamaran could not be easily righted and was blowing

towards the rocks on Jibbon Point, with control of the incident handed to Police Marine Area Command.

The unit has completed the construction of a floating pontoon berth for *PH 30*, removing significant risk factors and hazards for the crew, who previously accessed the boat via a ladder.

This also has reduced the operational readiness time for

the vessel and made deployment under harsher than normal weather conditions more feasible as the risk of injury to crew and damage to the boat is now considerably lower.

In preparation for the summer boating season the unit has undertaken night familiarisation operations on its local waters.

Brendan Trembath & Craig Horner

Look out below before dropping anchor

Two boaters on Sydney's northern waters have been forced to call for help recently after their anchors jammed, prompting warnings from MR Cottage Point for skippers to familiarise themselves with the bottom conditions before dropping anchor.

On November 11, following a few hours' fishing off Newport reef south of Barrenjoey Lighthouse, the two-man crew of a 9m cruiser was unable to clear their anchor.

They were anchored in 15m of water on a rocky bottom and the conditions had worsened through the afternoon with a 15 to 20 knot E/ NE wind and a 1.5m swell with a half-metre cross swell. The skipper motored up on the tightening line and using the engines and winch, tried to dislodge the anchor by force.

Not only did the anchor remain fixed to the bottom but the bowsprit snapped off and sank.

The manoeuvre also damaged the windlass, jamming the anchor chain and making recovery of the anchor and taut chain impossible without causing further damage.

CP 30 was quickly on the scene, dispatching a crew member to board the vessel to assess the situation. Bolt cutters and a ball-peen hammer were used to cut the chain away and free the vessel from its tether, enabling it to return under its own steam to Broken Bay.

Six days later, the anchor of a large houseboat got badly jammed in Jerusalem Bay in strong winds.

The houseboat was only metres from the rocks when *CP 30* arrived and towed it to safety.



Cottage Point 30 approaches a cruiser stranded by a jammed anchor south of Barrenjoey Lighthouse.

These were good reminders to make yourself familiar with the bottom conditions when choosing an anchorage and ensure you use the correct anchor for the job.

On November 12, the unit farewelled rescue vessel *CP 20*

(*Les Dennis*) after 12 years' service, well over 4,000 hours under way and hundreds of rescues. *CP 20* has been sold and is relocating to Brisbane, with our replacement vessel *CP 31* due in early December.

Tony Gordon

Port Kembla boosts training for peak season

Members achieve new vessel, communications and first aid qualifications.

The Port Kembla unit has taken advantage of a quiet spring by focusing on training and community engagement in preparation for the busy months ahead.

Trevor Brownlee has achieved his MR Leading Crew rating and Rowena Morris has attained her MR Crew qualification. Well deserved success for these excellent operators.

At the Hill 60 Search and Rescue Coordination Centre, Douglas Cooper has achieved his MR Watch Officer rating and Neil Lovett is trained and ready for the summer as our newest Radio Operator.

The unit's regular First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation training has resulted in accreditation for 26 members.

With all this training activity

together, Regional Training Manager South Stuart Massey initiated inter-agency training with North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club's Emergency Call Out Team.

Personnel from the two organisations came together for joint training in on-scene communications and search patterns.

The training was well received and enabled the crews to be exposed to each agency's procedures and operations going into the peak period on the water.

MR Port Kembla has also initiated a series of community engagement and fundraising activities.

The unit recently made its first foray to the Southern Highlands Recreation and Adventure Show at the Moss Vale Showground.



On the scene in an emergency ... members of MR Port Kembla and North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club on a joint training exercise.

Members were on site for the event's full three days, along with our inshore rescue vessel *Port Kembla 20*, promoting safe boating and the work of MRNSW to serve and protect the community.

A recent BBQ at Bunnings

Warrawong was well received by the public, with the unit making nearly \$850 for the day's work, which will go straight into keeping our boats on the water and the airwaves monitored.

Tom Dragutinovich



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Visit the Marine Rescue NSW online store this Christmas for great discounts on a range of gifts for the boater in your life. You'll find essential safety equipment and top boating and fishing gear including Marlin PFDs for adults and children, Mini Jump Starters and Gill marine tools and clothing. And you can show your support with our Marine Rescue NSW merchandise. Remember, discounts apply for Marine Rescue NSW volunteers and Radio Club members. It's just one way for us to say thanks. When you shop with us this Christmas, you'll join us in our mission to save lives on the water.

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Swift response to save sailors in dire straits

Jervis Bay crew ploughs through extreme conditions to reach drifting yacht.

Three sailors adrift on a disabled yacht in churning seas and strong winds were saved when a planned evacuation exercise for MR Jervis Bay crews swiftly turned into a real-life rescue mission.

As the crews of *Jervis Bay 40* and *Jervis Bay 20* prepared to leave their berth at the Navy base HMAS Creswell to join the exercise with the Army off Point Perpendicular, the unit's radio base received a distress call from the yacht, stranded northwest of Bowen Island with engine trouble and a jammed headsail.

Unit Commander Kevin Hill said *JB 20* had quickly diverted from the exercise to rescue the three men in the choppy conditions.

"They were very fortunate we were doing that training because we responded within minutes," he said.

"They were in dire straits."

He steered *JB 20* through the rough seas as crew member Ronald Hanson maintained radio contact with the distressed vessel and Paul Haslam on the stern deck prepared a tow line. The tow across Jervis Bay to a mooring at Callala was slow



Jervis Bay 40 ploughs through the rough seas that endangered three sailors adrift on a disabled yacht and derailed a planned sea evacuation exercise. Photo: Brendan Trembath on board *Jervis Bay 20*.

going through white capped waves, with dolphins escorting the vessels part of the way. The men were grateful for the fast and efficient response.

The rescue crew headed back out into the swell to a small cove near

the Point Perpendicular Lightstation where a group of soldiers with two mock casualties was waiting to be picked up by *JB 20* and transferred to the larger *JB 40* but the seas proved too heavy for the rescue boat to safely approach.

Mr Hill said the conditions lent a realistic edge to the exercise.

"A couple of our members had not been in sea conditions like that. It was a great experience for them to see how extreme it can be."

Brendan Trembath

Ferryman locates 'missing' boater on board

Creative thinking by MR Jervis Bay watch officer Jurgen Kiaupa and community spirit by Huskisson Ferry Captain Dave McDonald prevented an unnecessary and lengthy search during spring.

Jurgen managed to track down an overdue vessel by calling the ferry to see if Captain McDonald had seen the missing boat during his trips up and down Currambene Creek.

As luck would have it, the overdue skipper was on board the ferry and had simply forgotten to Log Off with our unit. This was duly corrected and our rescue boat crews were stood down.

Shoalhaven Council has approved

an upgrade of Admiralty Wharf in Huskisson. Council provided its expertise in the approval process and project management, along with a grant towards the improvements. Civil engineer Greg Westlake kindly donated his time to develop the plans for new piles to be placed in the creek and minor changes to the existing wharf, while South Coast MP Shelley Hancock secured \$8,000 in funding from the NSW Premier's Department. Once completed, the new berth will allow *JB 20* to be permanently moored in Currambene Creek, enabling faster responses to incidents in the northern end of Jervis Bay.

The unit has boosted its funds



Jervis Bay's Jurgen Kiaupa thanks Huskisson Ferry owner/operator Captain Dave McDonald for helping locate a "missing" boater.

through the innovative creation and sale of Boating Safety Buckets.

The buckets, containing safety items including rope, a waterproof torch, safety blanket, floating key ring, signaling device and safety

information, are being sold at all fundraising events, including the upcoming classic Duck Derby at Moona Moona Creek on Australia Day.

Jeff Choat

Batteries, fuel, motors a trifecta for trouble

Boater clings to upturned tinnie after capsizement in St Georges Basin.

The tempo of activities at MR Sussex Inlet has increased after a quiet winter, with crews responding to several recent calls for assistance, mostly in St Georges Basin.

The two main problems have been motors failing to restart and total battery/electrical failure.

Stale fuel after a long break since a boat's last sortie on the water is often the culprit for motor problems.

A new boat that suffered gearbox failure and could only run in reverse required a tow from just off our base in the Sussex Inlet River to the Basin View boat landing in the north-west corner of the basin.

On November 5, *Sussex Inlet 10* responded to a vessel reported to have capsized near Kangaroo Point.

When *SI 10* arrived on the scene the upturned vessel could not be located, however, several items of flotsam, including a fuel caddy, esky and fishing line, were recovered in Jewfish Bay.

Nearby boaters advised another vessel had picked up a man clinging

to the hull of the boat before towing it into the river.

The crew spotted an upturned vessel on moorings and located the owner, Matthew Lenam, who said he had shifted his weight on the 3.1m tinnie with a low freeboard, causing it to roll and be swamped.

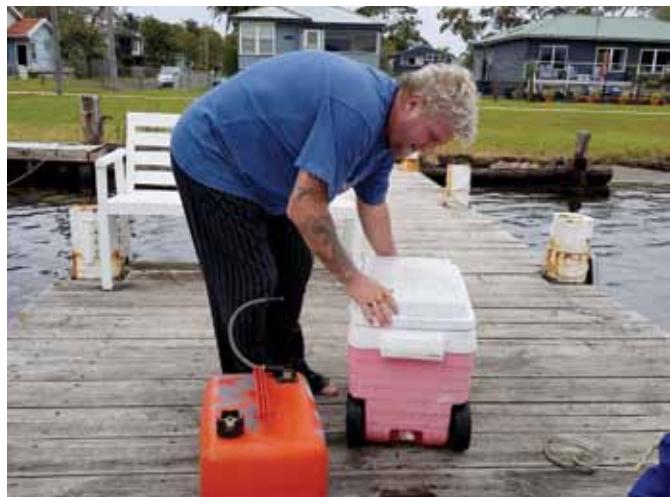
His phone had been lost when the boat capsized and so, unable to call for help, he had clung to the hull for two-and-a-half hours before managing to flag down a passing vessel.

This incident was a good reminder of the need for caution in small boats, even on benign waterways such as St Georges Basin.

It was also a positive example of members of the boating community supporting each other, particularly when lives were at risk.

Mr Lenam said he would seal his phone in a buoyant waterproof bag in future.

The unit's boat crews took part in a training session in Wreck Bay on October 24 ahead of a planned



Boater Matthew Lenam collects the gear recovered by the crew of *Sussex 10* after his tinnie capsized on November 5.

regional Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX).

The training provided members with the opportunity to experience the challenges of crew resource management in a complex search and rescue scenario, simulating the command and control of a number of rescue vessels implementing a range of search patterns.

The session also included man

overboard and fire fighting drills.

Poor conditions over the Sussex Inlet Bar prevented the crew of *SI 30* from joining the SAREX near Beecroft Head on October 28.

While this was disappointing, the previous week's training had been invaluable in building understanding and consolidation of the teamwork necessary for SAR operations.

Les Pataky

Unit contributes to safety of isolated village

Members of MR Sussex Inlet have made an important contribution to the safety of their local community, helping develop a Strategic Action Plan that has now been commended in the 2017 Resilient Australia Awards.

The overall aim of the plan is to improve the resilience of the Sussex Inlet community and improve its ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards and disasters.

MR Sussex Inlet was one of the local groups to join a working party that contributed its experience and knowledge to the development of the plan for the isolated village 50km south of Nowra.

Attorney General Mark Speakman

announced the plan had been highly commended in the NSW Community Award category of the Resilient Australia Awards at a function at NSW Parliament House on October 19 also attended by South Coast MP Shelley Hancock and MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos.

Developed in a collaborative process led by the Sussex Inlet and Districts Community Forum in conjunction with a team from Griffith University, the plan can be best described as an initiative "of the community, by the community, for the community".

As well as disaster management, it covers economic and community development, tourism, environment



MR Sussex Inlet's John Lang (fourth from left) and Community Forum members with South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Attorney General Mark Speakman.

and infrastructure. Previous bushfire and flood emergencies were taken into consideration when developing

long term strategies to build resilience for the future.

John Lang

Volunteer resources stolen and vandalised

Shoalhaven puts attacks behind it for 12th Emergency Services Open Day.

Large crowds flocked to Greenwell Point for the 12th annual Marine Rescue Shoalhaven Emergency Services Open Day on November 12.

The unit put a string of thefts and vandalism behind it to stage another successful event, bringing together local services including the NSW Police Force, Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance and St John Ambulance.

The public grabbed the chance to get up close to a Royal Australian Navy Squirrel helicopter from 723 Squadron and took in flare demonstrations, a mock rescue exercise and displays by the Australian Border Force dog unit, NSW Roads and Maritime, NSW Fisheries and TS Shoalhaven Navy Cadets.

The unit has been subjected to a series of mindless attacks this year. On Halloween, thieves stole three flags from the volunteers memorial at our base. This followed an earlier attack when a window was smashed. In September,



Mike Boddle and Bob Fleck, on board Shoalhaven 20, stage a mock rescue during the Marine Rescue Shoalhaven Emergency Services Open Day.

troublemakers shot out one of the back windows on SA 20 with a slingshot or similar while it was moored at our Greenwell Point jetty.

In January, thieves broke into SA 30 and stole two fire extinguishers and in May the boat's mooring lines were released during the night, resulting in the vessel drifting across the creek and on to mud.

No damage was caused and the vessel was salvaged with the help of local trawler owners.

On November 23, the Culburra and Districts Community Health Service presented the unit with \$10,680 in funds to boost our security with a CCTV system and armoured gate on our jetty.

Our crews recently took part

in a winch training exercise with CHC Helicopters, which provides search and rescue services for HMAS Albatross. Three CHC pilots took part, each undertaking a 20 to 30 minute run before landing on the field beside the Pilot House at Crookhaven Heads, swapping pilots and returning to sea for a new run.

Bill Carter

Kioloa welcomes recruits ahead of summer

Grant provides for security upgrade and new signage at beachfront base.

As the weather and ocean temperatures warm up for summer, larger numbers of holidaymakers are beginning to arrive in the Bawley Point and Kioloa areas.

MR Kioloa has welcomed a number of new volunteers who are in varying stages of their initial MRNSW training and will make a valuable addition to our small base, helping cover the additional demands of the holiday period.

Congratulations to unit Training and OH&S Officer John Stevenson, who recently attained his Leading Crew rating and is now in training for his Coxswain rating, as well as

undertaking a Certificate IV Training course. Lee Kennedy also began his Coxswain training in November.

John and his son Shane also deserve thanks for their painting work around the Kioloa base.

The unit has used an \$8,000 Community Building Partnerships grant to employ a local builder to revamp the entrance to our beachfront base, including the installation of a secure video intercom system and new signage.

The unit will hold a raffle this summer with prizes including a solar-powered refrigerator and local holiday accommodation or shopping vouchers to raise funds for the



Eager bargain-hunters at MR Kioloa's fundraising markets in September.

operation and maintenance of the base and associated assets.

The annual Kioloa Fair, held on

the first weekend in January, also will assist with fundraising.

Graeme Beavis

Boat bolsters resources on Illawarra coast

Generous donation from six-year-old birthday boy warms members' hearts.

Search and rescue resources in the Ulladulla area have been boosted for the peak summer boating season with the commissioning of a new \$300,000 rescue vessel, *Ulladulla 20*.

South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, Gilmore MP Ann Sudmalis, Shoalhaven Mayor Amanda Findley and Cr Joanna Gash joined Commissioner Stacey Tannos and MR Ulladulla members for the commissioning on October 15.

Mrs Hancock welcomed the naming of the new boat in honour of Rex Pymble, who gave more than 34 years' service before his death in 2016 and whose family members attended the commissioning.

"This new 7.5m Ocean Cylinder vessel further reinforces the marine safety net for boaters along the Illawarra coastline," she said.

"The NSW Government is proud to support our emergency services volunteers, directing more than \$45 million to MRNSW over the past six years."

Unit Commander Dave Hall said Mr Pymble had joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (now MRNSW) in 1982, serving as Ulladulla unit Treasurer for most of the following three decades.

"Rex's expertise in this area was well recognised and he was frequently called upon to lend his skills to other units," he said.

"Rex was awarded Life Membership of the RVCP and then MRNSW in acknowledgement of his willing assistance and commitment."

Commissioner Tannos thanked the State Government and members of the boating community for their ongoing financial support for the vital work of MRNSW volunteers.

"Thank you, too, to the local residents and holidaymakers whose support enabled the volunteers from Ulladulla to raise \$60,000 towards the cost of this boat," he said.

Earlier this year the unit's base was contacted by Radio Club member Greg Russell to tell us his son Nathan was about to celebrate



Nathan Russell set to inspect the new *Ulladulla 20* after presenting UC Dave Hall with \$180 he raised at his sixth birthday party.

his sixth birthday and had asked that instead of bringing presents, guests attending his party donate to Marine Rescue Ulladulla.

On October 28, Nathan and his family visited our base and presented us with the \$180 proceeds from his endeavour.

Of course, this is a large amount of money for any six-year-old and

for Nathan to donate this to our base was a proud experience for his parents and very moving for all our members. We presented Nathan with a Certificate of Appreciation and a MRNSW bag filled with caps, beanies, colouring books and pencils before giving him a guided tour of *UL 20*.

Dave Hall

Volunteer support on restaurant's menu

Grill'd donation serves up training equipment for Shellharbour unit.

Boaters in the Shellharbour area recently had another good reason to grab a burger on their way home after a day on the water.

Customers of the Grill'd Burgers Shellharbour restaurant had the chance to support their local MRNSW volunteers through the restaurant chain's generous Local Matters community donation program.

Under the program, each Grill'd restaurant chooses three local community-based groups or causes each month to share \$500.

Each of the three groups is assigned a jar in the restaurant and customers place a token in the jar of their choice. At the end of the

month, the group with the most tokens receives a \$300 donation and the other two each receive \$100.

The MR Shellharbour unit was fortunate enough to be entered in the program and with the help of the community, we received a \$300 donation from Grill'd Shellharbour in October.

We are extremely thankful for this opportunity and would like to thank Robert Gorgievski and the crew from Grill'd Shellharbour, along with everyone who placed a token in our jar, for their generosity and support. This is greatly appreciated.

The unit will use the donation to buy training equipment and aids to



Sascha Jaworski and Robert Gorgievski from Grill'd Shellharbour present a \$300 donation to MR Shellharbour UC Richard O'Connor (right) and members Alana Heywood and Geoff Troth.

enable members to improve their skills to better serve the community.

Details of the Local Matters

program are available at grilld.com.au/about/do-good

Alana Heywood

Alpine Lakes welcomes new vessel and shed

\$405,000 investment sees unit well prepared for High Country events in 2018.

Marine Rescue Alpine Lakes has taken delivery of a new search and rescue vessel, a \$265,000 investment in the safety of the region's local and visiting boating community.

Alpine Lakes 21, a 6.8 metre Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB), is equipped with VHF, UHF, CB and 27 MHz radios and a thermal camera.

"It's a magnificent vessel, first class," Unit Commander Les Threlfo said. "Marine Rescue NSW has picked beautiful vessels and very good people to make them."

Mr Threlfo, Treasurer Adolf Franco and Monaro Regional Director Glenn Felkin travelled north to Yamba in November to familiarise themselves with the Ocean Cylinder.

Mr Threlfo said the boat builders at Yamba Welding & Engineering were busy filling orders.

"It's wonderful how it's working for them," he said.

The new boat will be stored in a purpose-built \$140,000 shed by the



MR Alpine Lakes Unit Commander Les Threlfo and Adolf Franco inspect their new Ocean Cylinder with Ben Allen from Suzuki and Stuart Collingburn from Yamba Welding & Engineering. Photo: Glenn Felkin.

boat ramp on Lake Jindabyne.

Deputy Premier and Monaro MP John Barilaro turned the sod for the start of work on the shed, partly funded with a \$40,000 NSW Government Community Building Partnership grant, in July.

"Snowy Sheds have done an amazing job," Mr Threlfo said.

"We now have a secure space to store the vessel on its trailer, so it's

ready to roll whenever we need it."

AL 21 replaces a boat with the same name built in 2003.

Mr Threlfo said the unit was well prepared for the next big events on the water.

"In January will be the World Speedboat Championships on Lake Jindabyne with about 50 of the fastest boats in Australia. We will keep the exclusion zone," he said.

The Lake Jindabyne Dragon Boat Challenge is in February, followed by the Sri Chinmoy Multi Sport Classic in March, which combines swimming, mountain biking, paddling and running.

With the pristine lakes famous for their fishing, the 45th Snowy Mountains Trout Festival will be held in November.

Brendan Trembath

Array of paddlers tackles the Massive Murray

Moama members provide a safety watch on 404km river course.

Entrants in the 49th Massive Murray Paddle included dozens of canoeists, kayakers and even a daring duo on a stand up paddle board.

MR Moama volunteers helped make the 404km race a safe event by operating one of the safety boats.

Deputy Unit Commander Roy Maiden said the unit's members worked closely with Roads and Maritime Services on the five-day event.

"Maritime had two vessels going down and shutting off boat ramps and clearing the water," he said.

"Our sweep vessel went behind them, just in front of the paddlers, to make sure they were safe."

The race started in Yarrawonga

and finished in Swan Hill.

"I don't know why they do it," Mr Maiden said.

He joked that a power boat would have covered the distance faster and with less effort.

The paddlers faced daytime temperatures in the high 30s.

"It would have been pretty warm for them," Mr Maiden said.

All entrants had to wear a lifejacket with a whistle attached and carry sufficient food and drink.

Massive Murray Paddle Managing Director Shannon O'Brien said it was important to have the MRNSW base on the Murray.

"Local knowledge is everything, especially with a great river like the Murray which has many faces," Mr



MR Moama watched over entrants in the Massive Murray Paddle, including this pair of stand up paddle boarders.

O'Brien said.

The event occurred during a busy time for MR Moama members.

"Everyone was doing the harvest," Mr Maiden said.

The first crops to harvest were canola, wheat and barley.

Mr Maiden said members had rallied from around the countryside to assist in the event.

Intensive regime boosts seasonal readiness

Merimbula crew ferries patient for treatment after surf ski race capsiz.

Skippers and crew from MR Merimbula have been undertaking intensive training as part of the unit's preparations for the summer holiday period.

With boating traffic to swell over coming months, our rescue vessel personnel have been committed to their training regime, which was complemented by our participation in the Monaro Regional Search and Rescue Exercise on November 25.

Our members joined vessels and volunteers from MR Bermagui, Tuross, Narooma, Batemans Bay, Alpine Lakes and Eden in the successful exercise off Bermagui.

Earlier in spring, the Pambula Surf Life Saving Club held its annual 23km surf ski race in less than ideal conditions on Merimbula Bay. With winds gusting around 20 knots, the sea was washing machine-messy.

MB 30 was stationed at the second turn buoy as a safety vessel. Not long into the race, with only a handful of the fastest paddlers having passed our vessel, news of an injured entrant reached our crew.

A paddler near the first turning buoy had been violently thrown from his sea kayak and was suffering suspected broken ribs.

Eden Police Marine Area Command vessel *Falcon* quickly recovered the injured racer from the water but due to the depth of its draft, could not transport the patient over the Merimbula bar. The man was transferred to *MB 30*, with skipper Stewart Dietrich and crew Walter Kleiner and Sonia Teston ferrying him to the town jetty to be transported to the Southern Regional Hospital at Bega. A paramedic with more than 30 years' experience, the



Merimbula 30 with a unit member's personal boat rafted up alongside during a training exercise ahead of summer.

man was unfazed by his injuries.

The unit has recently presented certificates of appreciation to two of our generous sponsors.

Unit Commander Bill Blakeman thanked Eve O'Brien, from Eve O'Brien Real Estate and Dave

Goodall, of Goodall's Quality Meats, for their support.

"Without generous donors such as Eve and Dave, we could not maintain the number of rescues we undertake each year," he said.

Sonia Teston

If it's Saturday morning, we must be training

Audience of Montague Island seals takes in Narooma navigation exercise.

As a member of MR Narooma's boat crew, it's a given that Saturday mornings are reserved for training.

With 17 crew members, there's always an opportunity for skills to be refreshed and equipment to be tested to ensure both our vessel,

Narooma 30, and crew are as prepared as possible to respond to calls for assistance.

This was no different for the eight boat crew who turned out for a navigation exercise conducted by Master Trevor Taylor around Montague Island on November 4.

As an audience of the island's seals watched, the exercise included conducting expanding square, creeping line ahead and parallel search scenarios, as well as executing sector search patterns under the vessel's newly-installed auto pilot control.

To bolster the unit's preparedness for the upcoming busy summer boating season, members Shannon Greene and Don Shortridge have also recently completed their operational assessment for MR Crew training.

Megan Fraser

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MR Narooma Unit Commander Paul Houseman and crew on board *Narooma 30* for a Montague Island navigation exercise.

AMSA jet swoops in to join rescue exercise

Crew diverted from training to save three boaters adrift offshore.

Marine rescue experts taking part in a major capability-building test off the Far South Coast received high-tech support from above when an Australian Maritime Safety Authority jet joined a MRNSW Search and Rescue Exercise for the first time.

Sixty-five volunteers from the Alpine Lakes, Batemans Bay, Bermagui, Eden, Merimbula, Narooma and Tuross units were activated as part of the Monaro Region SAREX off Bermagui on November 26.

The exercise was designed to test joint-agency marine search and rescue practices and coordination.

North to north-easterly 15-25 knot winds were blowing and the seas were moderate when the search and rescue crews headed out after a joint morning briefing.

The crew of *Merimbula 30* was quickly diverted from the exercise to rescue three boaters stranded in a 5.2m half cabin cruiser one nautical mile offshore.

The crew located the disabled boat drifting in a strong current and towed it back into Bermagui before returning to the training search area to locate three fictional fishermen.

The search party was looking for three men in a tinnie called *Silver Bullet*.

According to the scenario, one



The MRNSW fleet heads out from Bermagui for the Monaro Region SAREX. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

of the boaters was a diabetic who needed regular insulin treatment.

As well as the specially-modified AMSA Bombardier Challenger jet, personnel and assets from the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Westpac Rescue Helicopter and Surf Life Saving NSW also took part.

Rescue Water Craft combed the shoreline while search and rescue vessels covered a defined search area south of Montague Island.

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter and AMSA Challenger made low altitude passes over the fleet.

The Challenger carries air observers and can drop safety equipment such as life rafts, distress beacons and flares.

It has large observer windows forward of the wings, highly

sensitive cameras and sensors and a door that can be opened in flight to drop life-sustaining stores and communications equipment. It has a cruising speed of 445 knots and a range of 3,086 nautical miles (5,715 kilometres).

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the successful

exercise would help ensure crews were rescue ready for the summer boating season.

"It is important for our personnel to train with our rescue colleagues in order to fine-tune our response and maximise the safety for our courageous volunteers," he said.

Brendan Trembath



A specialist AMSA Bombardier Challenger search and rescue jet makes a low-altitude pass over the search area.



MR Bermagui radio operator Stephen Knight maintains SAREX communications channels from the unit's radio base.



Eagle eye ... MR Bermagui volunteer Lynda Bailey takes off with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter crew. Photo: Glenn Sullivan.

Radio room quiet as bad weather dogs coast

Eden members looking forward to summer and Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

The Eden coastline has continued to be dogged by unseasonal weather and generally unfavourable conditions for boating in the lead-up to summer.

As a result, we have had a generally quiet time in the MR Eden radio room and are all looking forward to some warmer weather and the chance to dust the cobwebs off our fishing gear and get out on the water.

Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings, headed to the Far South Coast in October, visiting our base with Sergeant Steven Judd from the Eden MAC.

MR Eden maintains a close working relationship with the local MAC officers, who put a great effort into keeping our waterways safe and assisting sailors and boaters in distress in all weather.

More than 60 visitors took a first hand look at our radio room in operation during the recent Eden Whale Festival, which attracts many visitors to our region each year.

The unit is gearing up for our part the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in December. With our refurbished radio installation on Mt Imlay, Eden is well placed to provide radio coverage to the fleet as it makes its way down the coast.



On deck at MR Eden, Commander of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command Det Supt Mark Hutchings, Unit Commander John McKinnon, Deputy UC Peter Horne and Eden MAC Sgt Steven Judd.

Australian Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove presented MR Eden training officer and assessor John Steele with the Emergency Services Medal in an investiture ceremony at Government House in Canberra in September.

Work is continuing on dredging the Eden Port with operations continuing 24 hours a day.

Disruption will continue until 2019, with the construction phase of the wharf extensions starting soon.

John McKinnon



MR Eden training officer John Steele receives his Emergency Services Medal from Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove.

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A large illustration of a pelican's head and beak, facing right. The pelican has a white head and neck with a pinkish-purple gular pouch. Its beak is long and slightly open.

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Men thrown overboard in Tuross bar capsize

Crew quickly on scene to administer first aid to injured 75-year-old.

Two men were knocked about but fortunate to escape serious injury when their 6m runabout overturned just after crossing the treacherous Tuross bar on November 21.

"They got through the bar ok," MR Tuross volunteer Mike Byron said. "They were then attempting to cross a sand bar build-up about 50 metres out when they were punched sideways by a rogue wave and capsized."

Several members of the public called Triple Zero and the Marine Rescue base, resulting in the activation of the rescue vessel *Tuross 12* and Rescue Water Craft *Tuross 11*.

RWC Operator Nathan Benbow went ahead to One Tree Beach,

about one kilometre from the base, to assess the situation, spotting the washed up runabout and the two boaters with a local man who had called for help.

"The two fishermen got knocked around a bit," he said. "I told them I would return to the base and get some assistance."

On his return to base, he alerted volunteers that the men were in need of first aid.

Mike Byron drove to the scene to administer first aid to a 75-year-old man with an injured arm.

"My major concern was there was a significant swelling on the arm," Mr Byron said. "The other factor was he was obviously quite hypothermic and not really alert."

"I looked at him and I said, 'All



Nathan Benbow, on TU 11, surveys a 6m runabout that washed up on One Tree Beach after overturning on the Tuross bar.

things considered, let's get the ambulance in and get him taken to hospital'."

He said the Tuross bar could be particularly dangerous, especially when the tide was receding and a

reasonable surf running.

"We'll go out through the bar in either TU 12 or TU 20 but there are better places to put a boat out," Mr Byron said.

Brendan Trembath

Broken pipe forces radio base off the air

Logging On gives rescue crews vital information to assist in searches.

A burst water pipe caused \$10,000 worth of damage and closed the radio room at MR Batemans Bay for four days in mid-November.

A broken pipe in a toilet flooded the radio room and unit offices on the first floor of the unit base before pouring downstairs to the boat and equipment storage areas.

Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan said the unit had been forced to shut the radio room for four days due to the stench from the sodden carpet, with radio communications managed by MR Terrey Hills until the base was up and running again.

Mr Sullivan thanked Terrey Hills for shouldering the extra load.

A spate of rescue operations over a single weekend has provided a reminder for boaters to check local conditions, carry correct gear and always Log On and Off with MRNSW.

Over the weekend of October 28

and 29, almost all the boaters who found themselves in trouble were Batemans Bay Radio Club members who had Logged On, ensuring crews had timely and accurate contact and vessel details to help locate them.

On the Saturday afternoon, crews were performing man overboard drills when alerted to an overdue vessel in the Clyde River.

Within minutes of readying *Batemans 20*, a member of the public reported two people overboard from a capsized kayak in rough water near the marina.

BM 20 was on the scene within about five minutes, rescuing the two people from the water before taking the kayak under tow to a nearby boat ramp, arriving about 10 minutes later.

The crew was then stood down from the search for the overdue boater, who had been discovered safely back onshore.

Next morning, a vessel that was



Mopping up the damage ... Unit Commander Mick Syrek cleans up after a broken pipe flooded the MR Batemans Bay base.

Logged On with the base requested a tow from about 3nm east of Durras. As *BM 30* returned the boat to the Hanging Rock boat ramp, the crew was tasked to assist a broken

down jet ski near Black Rock.

Fortunately, by the time they arrived in the area, the owner had resolved the problem and was soon on his way again.

What we've been up to



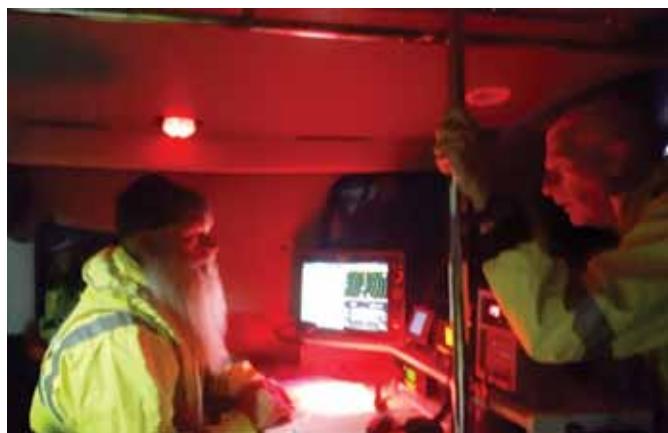
New addition to the fleet ... Shoalhaven Cr Joanna Gash, MR Ulladulla Unit Commander Dave Hall, Keven Marshall, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Royleen Pymble, Gilmore MP Ann Sudmalis, Bruce Pymble, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock and Shoalhaven City Mayor Cr Amanda Findley at the commissioning of the new \$300,000 *Ulladulla 20* (Rex Pymble) in October (see story Page 36). Photo: Lisa Hardwick.



Warm welcome ... MR Middle Harbour members Colin Crawford, Dennis Cowell and Howard Gipps greet Lisa Blair, the first woman to circumnavigate Antarctica alone in a yacht, on her arrival in Sydney.



Gold ... MR Shoalhaven's James Taylor receives his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award from Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove. James' service with the unit contributed to his award requirements.



Under cover of darkness ... Volker Aebischer and Ray McLeod illuminated in the red night lights on board *Bermagui 30* during a night navigation and search exercise.



Beachfront at Cronulla ... Treasurer and Cook MP Scott Morrison greets MR Botany Port Hacking's Steve Massone, Ross Levinsohn, Bob Wilson and Brendan Haynes at the Cook Community Festival.

More than 'simply messing about in boats'

Long-term Marketing Manager was committed to making a difference.

Like his namesake, *Wind in the Willows* author Kenneth Graham, there was "absolutely nothing half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats" for long-term MRNSW Marketing and Media Manager and Hawkesbury volunteer Ken McManus.

Ken joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol on the Hawkesbury River in February 2000, motivated more by "messing about in boats" than making a difference, he told *Soundings* upon his retirement from Headquarters in December 2016.

However, "making a difference" soon assumed greater significance as Ken took to training and volunteer duty with his trademark enthusiasm and was subsequently elected to the RVCP Board.

Awarded the Emergency Services Medal in 2008 in recognition of his commitment, service and contribution, Ken was a member of the Board that took the decision

to support the formation of a new single volunteer marine rescue service in NSW. He said being part of the team that established the new MRNSW had been a privilege.

With a career in advertising and marketing and skill in editing and speechwriting, Ken was appointed the new organisation's Marketing and Media Manager, a role he held until his retirement late last year.

Ken was not only well known throughout our organisation but also to the NSW emergency services, boating community and the public as our regular media spokesperson.

To the ABC Radio audience in Sydney and its surrounds, he was a familiar voice early on Saturday mornings for more than a decade, dispensing boating safety information and advice, reminding boaters to wear their lifejackets, heed the conditions and Log On and Log Off with MRNSW.

Ken remained an active member



Former MRNSW Marketing Manager and volunteer Ken McManus.

of MR Hawkesbury, serving most recently with the unit's First Port before his diagnosis with a tumour on the lung.

With a calm nature, Ken was a keen conversationalist, particularly when sharing his love of Halvorsen boats and the Hawkesbury River, and a collector of memorabilia.

He is survived by his wife Ann, whom he met while they both

worked at Sydney radio station 2UW, and their sons Brett and Mitchell and their families. The McManus family advised that a funeral would not be held as Ken had donated his body to the University of Sydney Science Department. A future event in his memory may be organised.

Ken will be missed by his former colleagues on and off the water.

Craig Horner

Volunteering 'becomes part of your life'

Unit farewells former Commander after 34 years' service on Botany Bay.

Despite more than three decades' service to Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking, Bruce Bell was last year surprised to be awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his commitment to the community of Botany Bay and volunteer marine rescue.

The unit is mourning Bruce's passing in September, with members forming a guard of honour at his funeral.

Bruce joined the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association in April 1983 and in October 1984 was appointed acting Deputy Commander of the Botany Bay flotilla.

He was subsequently elected to the position from 1986 to 1988 and then as Flotilla Commander for the

following two years.

Bruce next held role of Training Officer before in 2001, he was tasked to lead the new boat committee to recommend a new purpose-built search and rescue vessel for the flotilla.

The result of the committee's lengthy research and consultation was the purchase of a 7.5m Marlin Broadbill with twin inboard turbo diesel engines, named *Bruce Bell* in his honour.

In recognition of his contribution to the boating community and AVCGA, Bruce was awarded Life Membership in 2006. This was recognised by MRNSW on its formation.

His other awards included the second clasp to the Long Service



Bruce Bell OAM. Photo: Simon Bennett, Liverpool City Champion.

Medal, recognising his 30 years' service and the National Medal and clasp.

Mr Bell told the *Liverpool City Champion* he was surprised to receive the OAM in the Australia Day Honours in 2016.

"We just like helping people and also passing on knowledge," he

said. "You enjoy what you are doing and it just becomes part of your life."

He encouraged others to volunteer with MRNSW.

Bruce is survived by his wife Betty and their children, Chris, Lorraine and Dianne.

Craig Horner

IN MEMORIAM

Tributes to valued members

Loss of three members a blow for Merimbula

Valued senior volunteers shared enthusiasm, commitment and pride in their roles.

Marine Rescue Merimbula has recently lost three valued senior members.

Caroline Svampa joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2003 and soon gained her radio operator certificate.

She not only willingly took on a permanent radio shift but could always be relied upon to fill in other shifts when vacant.

Caroline was actively involved in the unit's fundraising activities, often coercing her husband Franco to come along and lend a hand.

She was extremely proud of her MRNSW Long Service Medal and was unfortunately just short of qualifying for her National Medal when she passed away.

Keith Moxon joined MRNSW in 2011 after 28 years with the Victoria Police.

Keith was soon on both the radio and boat crew roster and greatly enjoyed his time on board, whether on a rescue operation or training.



Caroline Svampa.

He was elected Deputy Unit Commander in 2014.

His enthusiasm and great leadership skills were evident from the start and continued until his health forced him to step back from his DUC duties.

Despite this, Keith still managed to come along to do a radio shift or go for a run on the rescue vessel.

He continued to maintain a positive attitude throughout and would often lift the spirits of those around him with his sparkling blue



Keith Moxon.

eyes, broad smile and cheeky stories of his days in the force.

Chris Buller joined MRNSW in 2013.

He was a well-respected and dedicated member of the team, with a witty sense of humour and a quiet demeanour.

He became a Watch Officer and was very proud when he achieved his Leading Crew rating.

His experience, knowledge and skills contributed greatly to the unit.

Keen to impart his knowledge and



Chris Buller.

with a calm nature, Chris mentored many new members in both radio and boat crew duties, forming strong friendships that ensure he is fondly remembered.

At the age of just 67, he passed away in October after a relatively short struggle with Motor Neuron Disease.

All of these members were held in high regard by their colleagues at the unit and are sadly missed by us all.

Bill Blakeman

Adventurer helped others live dreams safely

Marine Rescue Ballina member Lesley Fernance was born in Grafton in 1936, one of four children growing up in the Depression.

The family still managed holidays at the beach, where Lesley's enduring love for the ocean was born.

Lesley, who passed away earlier this year, had many passions, including writing stories, limericks and poems.

She wrote the words for several songs for Norman Gunstan and her poems and short stories were frequently published in women's magazines.

Her thirst for adventure led her to learn to fly, gaining her licence for a Piper Cherokee two-seater plane.

With her great love for the ocean and sailing, she sailed on the *Lady*

Nelson and the *Endeavour* several times, subsequently acquiring her own 21-foot yacht, *Lassez Fair*, followed by *The Mad Hatter*.

Lesley enjoyed sailing the East Coast of Australia and Whitsunday Islands with her partner Paul Cantrill, who also was a member of the Ballina unit.

Lesley lived on her yachts from time to time with her cat Sabletina.

She studied for and gained her Master 4 qualification.

In the 1990s, when her strength began to fail, she gave up sailing and joined the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association at Ballina, volunteering many hours as a radio operator and standby operator.

She transferred to MRNSW at its inception and continued to be our unit's most reliable standby operator,

always willing to take on this job, which was often hard to fill.

An excerpt from her writings, dated March 3, 1997, reads:

"Jim asked what I wanted to do with all this knowledge when he found I was studying for Marine Master 4.

"The best way to explain is to repeat the quote 'If you want your ship to come in you must first build a dock'.

"I'd like my ship to go out, but if that is not possible, I may have the knowledge to help others realise their dream in safety."

The considerable number of MRNSW awards and amount of memorabilia on display at Lesley's memorial service showed the importance of MRNSW in her life.

Lesley's daughter Kim Prior said



Lesley Fernance.

of her mother, "She lived her dreams and followed her passion and that is why I am so proud of her."

To her unit colleagues, she was a dedicated, reliable, gentle and kind lady whom it was a privilege to have known.

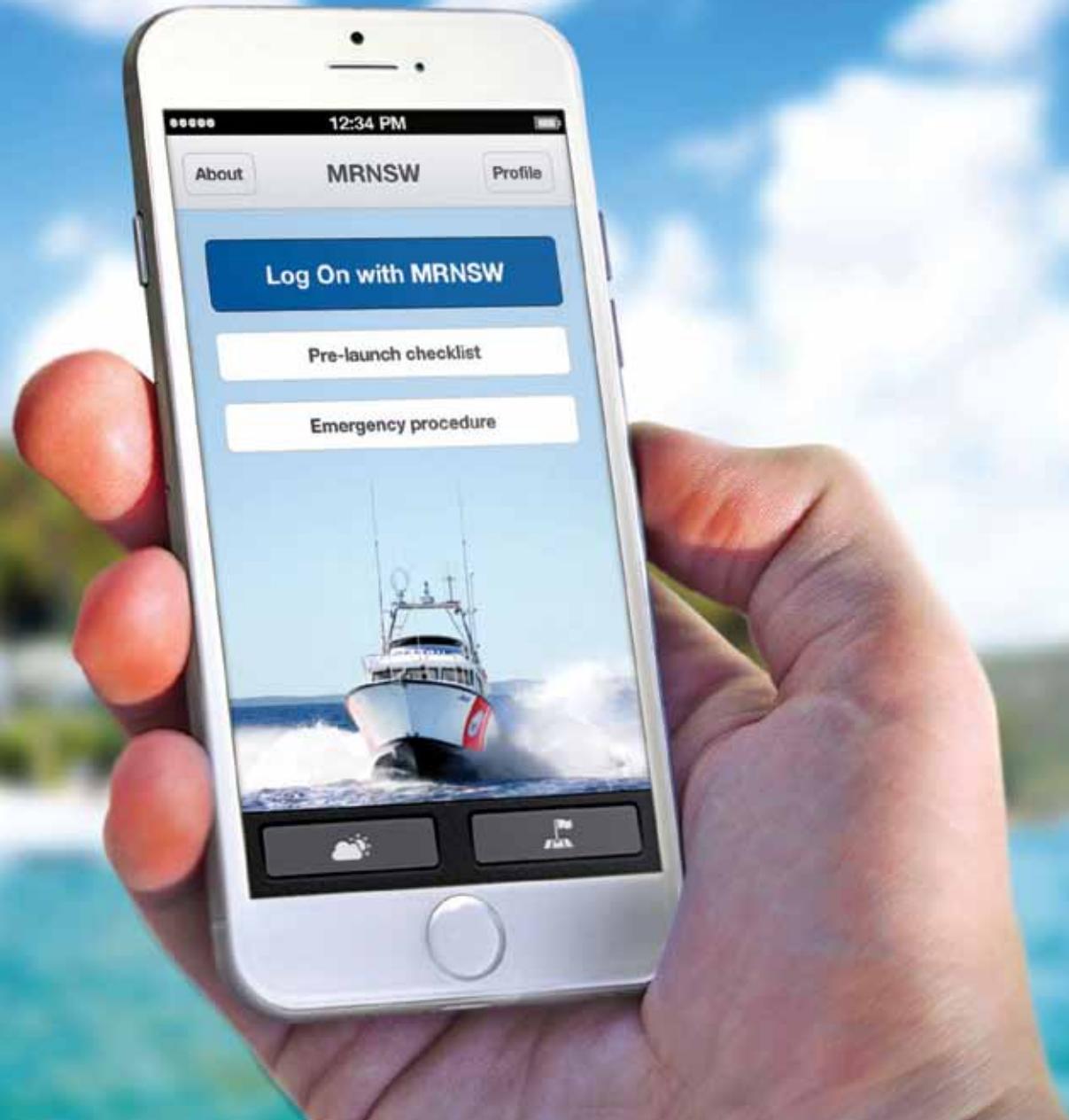
Joan Hurley

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Images for illustrative purpose only

Raymarine