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SOUNDINGS



Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 38, Autumn 2019



\$37.6M BOOST

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Summer sadness

Deaths on the water

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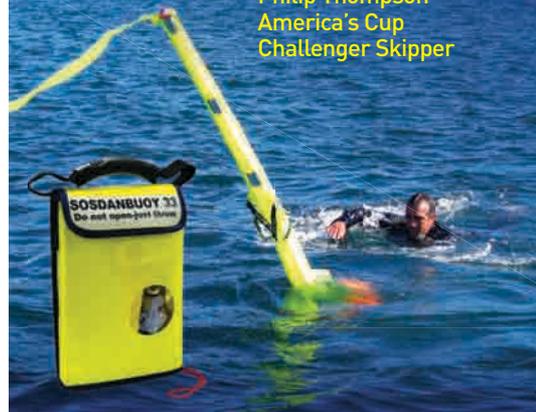


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Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

Cover Image

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Premier Gladys Berejiklian meet Marine Rescue Middle Harbour members Joanna Mycroft and Anna Kalisiak after announcing a \$37.6m funding boost to Marine Rescue NSW. *Photo: Tom Crvenkovic, Marine Rescue Port Jackson.*

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From the Commissioner

\$37.6 million announcement is a game changer for our organisation.



Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

It's no exaggeration whatsoever to say that NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian's announcement of an additional \$37.6 million in funding over the coming four years is the best news Marine Rescue NSW has received in its first decade.

In short, this is a game changer for our organisation.

We owe the NSW Government and particularly the Premier and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant a great debt of gratitude for this generous acknowledgement of both our service to the community and our financial need.

It is fitting that this recognition came at the end of the summer holiday boating period. Over the season, our volunteers carried out 1,069 rescue missions, bringing 2,959 boaters safely home. Sadly, we also joined operations mounted in response to tragedies.

The Premier and Minister made clear their personal gratitude and the Government's recognition of our members, their skill and service. There can be no better thanks for the enormous effort and time our volunteers devote to saving lives on the water than supplying the funding to provide them with modern, safe vessels and appropriate facilities for their operations.

This new finance gives us the ability to invest in essential new and upgraded resources, facilities and infrastructure, meaning we can achieve far-reaching improvements across our operations far more quickly.

The funding is not an election promise; it has been allocated in the State Budget from 2019/20 forward.

The \$9.4 million a year will come on top of our existing income - which consists of a direct State Government grant and the levy on recreational boat licences and registrations - to give us projected

so that we will be able to achieve much more, with additional revenue to commit to volunteer training, support, recruitment and retention and boating safety education.

The Government's confidence in allocating funding of this magnitude is built on our track record as accountable, transparent and responsible financial managers.

This new funding will not change that approach: we will remain prudent and cautious in our investment decisions.

We will be seeking every opportunity to drive every dollar as far as we can to achieve the

The Government's confidence is built on our record as accountable financial managers.

annual revenue of almost \$17.5 million over the four years from July 1. Coincidentally, July 1 is also the 10th anniversary of the formal establishment of MRNSW, making this a double milestone to celebrate.

The announcement by the Premier and Minister was based on a carefully-considered business case presented to the Government and many years of advocacy for a budget enhancement for our service. Our argument was built on solid research, cost-benefit analyses and forward projections, including the 2015 Operational Communications Strategy and Fixed Assets Audit. These studies identified the capital investment required to redress shortcomings in both our marine radio network and unit infrastructure.

A detailed capital works program will be set out to provide units with new rescue vessels, improve unit facilities, including bases, boat sheds and jetties, and continue the program to upgrade the major infrastructure and unit equipment in the marine radio network.

Of course, the new funding also frees up our existing funding

maximum possible value for taxpayers' money.

In coming months, new budget processes will be developed to guide expenditure and assist units in putting forward projects for consideration.

I would like to express not only my personal thanks but also the organisation's appreciation to the Premier and to Minister Grant, who has been tireless in his drive to deliver for our emergency services volunteers during his tenure. I wish him and his family well for the future after his retirement from politics at the coming election.

I also thank the MRNSW Board and staff for their support and input to the work that went into this achievement.

Above all, I commend our volunteers. The Government's commitment is fitting recognition of your dedication and the generous time and effort you give to save lives on the water. It is with thanks to you that I can confidently say that this announcement marks the start of our new future.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner



Commissioner Tannos addresses the media at the announcement of the NSW Government funding boost. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

Historic \$37.6m Government funding boost

Premier's commitment 'sets our course for a strong and vibrant future'.

Boaters on the State's waterways will be even safer thanks to the NSW Government's historic commitment of \$37.6 million in additional funding for Marine Rescue NSW over the next four years.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant said the major funding boost would help save lives on the water by delivering new purpose-built rescue vessels, upgraded operational bases and improvements to the marine radio network.

The funding will more than double the annual MRNSW budget to over \$17 million.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked the Government for its support, saying the additional funding was a landmark in the development of the organisation as it approached its 10th anniversary on July 1.

"This is the largest commitment of funding our organisation has ever received and truly sets our course

'Those who use our waters will know they have angels on the water protecting them.'

for a strong and vibrant future," he said.

The Premier and Minister joined Drummoyne MP John Sidoti, Commissioner Tannos and members of Marine Rescue Port Jackson and Middle Harbour to announce the additional funding on January 27.

"Community safety is our top priority and this major investment will deliver an extra layer of security and reassurance for anglers, divers and everybody who gets out on our amazing waterways," Ms Berejiklian said.

"We know so many of our citizens enjoy their waterways, enjoy taking their boats out, whether it's a small dinghy or a larger vessel.

"The extra dollars will go into extra boats, better radio equipment and also resourcing to make sure



Drummoyne MP John Sidoti, Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant join Commissioner Stacey Tannos and members of MR Port Jackson and Middle Harbour to deliver the news of the NSW Government's \$37.6 million injection to MRNSW. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

Marine Rescue NSW is able to expand to meet the demands of our growing communities who are enjoying our waterways," she said. "I'm thrilled about this extra investment. It means that people can feel confident and safe that when they're using the waterways and they get into trouble, someone is there to help them."

Mr Grant said the Government

is extraordinary. This opportunity to fund them to an additional capacity is an important one because it directly goes to their ability to save lives. The team of volunteers we have spread throughout NSW, up and down the coastline and on inland waterways, are there at a moment's call, in a voluntary capacity, to go out in all sorts of conditions, treacherous conditions, very unsafe conditions.

"Yet they're so highly skilled and trained, they're so dedicated to the community, to those people who operate on and love our waterways that they're there to save lives.

"This organisation has great reach into the community. I know this injection will be very welcome so the boating community, those

who use our waters, know they have got angels on the water protecting them throughout the next four years," he said.

Commissioner Tannos said the additional \$9.4 million a year in funding would increase the organisation's annual budget from the \$7.95 million received from the NSW Government and boating community in 2017/18.

"Last year alone there were some 2,800 rescue missions activated, bringing home safely to port some 6,800 individuals," he said.

"It's a tremendous amount of work that our members do. They're all volunteers. Today the government has thanked our volunteers in the best way possible and that is with this additional funding."

would establish a new rescue unit on Lord Howe Island, as well as new or upgraded bases and boat buildings at Tweed Heads, Ballina, Narooma, Lake Macquarie, Middle Harbour, Newcastle and the Central Coast.

He said the extra funding would also deliver 38 brand new vessels and allow MRNSW to upgrade the marine radio network it owned and operated.

"This includes eliminating black spots along the south coast and on the Hawkesbury, making it much safer for boaters and the dedicated volunteers dispatched to support them in times of trouble," he said.

"Marine Rescue NSW is about to enter its 10th year of operation. Their service to the communities of NSW, the amount of lives they save,



MR Port Jackson skipper Paul Ballard, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Minister Troy Grant on board the new Port Jackson 20.

From the Chair

Funding will be invested for the good of our members and boating community.



Chair
James Glissan ESM, QC

The first Board meeting of 2019 was naturally dominated by consideration of the strategic management of the momentous funding injection announced by the State Government on January 27.

The Board was, of course, delighted with the \$37.6 million news, which will enable us to fulfil many more of our hopes and ambitions for our volunteers and our service to the boating community.

We will be working closely with our staff and volunteers as new procedures and processes are introduced to allocate and manage this funding, which will deliver benefits for us all in terms of increased capability and volunteer support.

The Board's role will be to provide the high-level oversight to ensure that we extract the maximum value from this revenue not only over the coming four financial years but well into the future.

This will include reviewing the processes that will be put in place to equitably distribute funding to meet needs that have already been identified as part of the business case put to the Government and those that are sure to arise in the years ahead.

MRNSW has a comprehensive and transparent financial reporting regime. The budgetary clarity and discipline we have worked hard to instill in our first decade will stand

us in good stead in ensuring we maintain our strict fiscal controls and reporting transparency.

The Board took the opportunity to particularly commend Commissioner Stacey Tannos, who has been indefatigable in his quest to secure additional funding for our organisation since the day he first walked through our door.

The Commissioner's extensive State Government experience underpinned the development of a persuasive business case based on a clear rationale and assiduously compiled costings and data.

On behalf of the Board and our organisation, I take great pleasure in thanking Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant for this unprecedented support for MRNSW.

They can be assured that this funding will be responsibly invested for the good of our volunteers and the boating community we serve.

The February meeting also gave the Board's newly-elected Directors their first opportunity to have input to our strategic deliberations.

Fresh viewpoints are always healthy in the decision-making process and it was a pleasure to welcome Greater Sydney Director Ken Edwards to the table and the return of Bob Wilson as our new General Director.

Another matter that will demand the Board's attention in coming

months is a periodic review of the MRNSW Constitution to ensure this document remains effective in meeting our legislative requirements and strategic objectives.

Advice received from the Australian Institute of Company Directors last year would indicate that a series of minor amendments are necessary to comply with the regulatory requirements of the *Corporations Act* and to provide relevant references to the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act* and Regulations in relation to MRNSW's charitable registration status.

While these modifications are being considered, it is prudent to also take a wider view to determine if other changes need to be put to the membership.

This is not a process of wholesale change, as we saw when we introduced the new Constitution in 2016, but more of a tune-up for continued good performance.

We have reached the end of another busy summer boating season. Through our combined efforts, almost 3,000 boaters in trouble on the water made it back to shore safely. That should bring each of us great satisfaction.

I thank all our volunteers and staff for their hard work to keep boaters safe on NSW waterways.

Good sailing
Jim Glissan

Planning under way for first offshore unit

Discussions are advancing on the establishment of the 45th MRNSW unit on Lord Howe Island.

Funding to create the service's first offshore unit was committed in the \$37.6 million State Government funding package.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Emergency Systems Manager

Andrew Cribb met members of the Lord Howe Island Board and representatives of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command in early March to discuss the new unit.

Lord Howe is a magnet for boating and fishing enthusiasts.

"Both the island's board and MAC have identified a need for a dedicated marine rescue service on

Lord Howe and have approached Marine Rescue to establish an operation on the island," Commissioner Tannos said.

"We met with members of the island's board, local emergency services and MAC to scope out the resources and effort that would be required to build a new unit before a case is put to the State Rescue

Board for its consideration.

"Necessary resources would include a large rescue vessel suited to deep water operations, unit facilities and membership recruitment, support and training.

"We also will need to thoroughly explore the expansion of VHF marine radio safety coverage into the Tasman Sea."

Finances for upgraded resources, expansion

Major capital works program to provide volunteers with modern facilities.

The \$37.6 million funding package delivered by the NSW Government will deliver an array of upgraded resources and facilities to support MRNSW volunteers in their work to save lives on the water.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said MRNSW would receive an additional \$9.4 million over each of the coming four financial years to enhance key areas of operations and volunteer resources.

"This boost to our annual budget will not only enable us to invest heavily in essential capital works but also free up more of our existing funding for volunteer training, support and recruitment," he said.

NEW LORD HOWE UNIT

The Government announcement included funding to establish the 45th MRNSW unit, on Lord Howe Island (see story Page 4).

NEW RESCUE VESSELS

The funding includes almost \$15 million to accelerate the delivery of 38 new rescue vessels to our volunteers over the next four years.

"This is the most valuable investment we can make in volunteer safety and in expanding our operational capacity on both coastal and inland waters," Commissioner Tannos said.

New boats will be delivered to the Alpine Lakes, Batemans Bay, Botany Port Hacking, Broken Bay, Central Coast, Cronulla, Crowdy Harrington, Eden, Evans Head, Hawkesbury, Jervis Bay, Kioloa, Lemon Tree Passage, Lord Howe Island, Merimbula, Moama, Nambucca, Narooma, Newcastle, Point Danger, Port Jackson, Port Kembla, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens, Sussex Inlet, Tuross, Tuggerah Lakes and Woolgoolga.

A range of vessels will be purpose-built for local operating conditions.

The build schedule will be determined in consultation with units, according to need.



Marine Rescue Port Jackson hosted the funding announcement ... unit members joined Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Unit Commander Greg Urand (third from right) for the news. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

NEW FACILITIES

"For the first time we will be able to invest in a major capital works program to provide our units with efficient and modern operating facilities and a safe, secure working environment for our volunteers," Commissioner Tannos said. "Many of our facilities are ageing and in a deteriorating condition, lacking the space and fit-for-purpose facilities for search and rescue coordination, training and equipment storage."

More than \$13 million will be allocated to new and upgraded facilities, including marine radio bases, boat sheds and wharves.

A comprehensive capital works program will be developed in consultation with units to identify priorities for both large-scale projects and minor repairs and improvements. Projects will include the planned new MR Lake Macquarie radio base at Swansea Heads, a facility for a new Lord Howe Island unit currently being scoped and a new base for MR Newcastle, which has not had a permanent home since 2015.

Other proposed projects include the redevelopment of the MR Central Coast unit and wharf at Point Clare, new facilities for MR Hawkesbury, Broken Bay and Terrey Hills and refurbishment works at Point

Danger, Middle Harbour, Batemans Bay, Eden, Botany Port Hacking, Port Kembla and Shellharbour. Smaller-scale capital works will provide boat sheds at Ballina, Norah Head and Narooma and a new wharf at Merimbula.

RADIO NETWORK

Our marine radio infrastructure and technology, both at a network and radio base level, is fundamental to our emergency responsiveness.

The funding package provides more than \$3 million to upgrade network infrastructure to eliminate black spots in marine radio reception along the coastline and ensure our radio bases are fully equipped with a suite of contemporary online radio technology.

We will be able to progressively upgrade infrastructure, including new installations on the Illawarra and Far South Coasts and on isolated reaches of the Hawkesbury River. These works will benefit boaters on some of the most popular waterways in the State, improving reception for at least 15 of our marine radio bases between the Central Coast and Merimbula.

In conjunction with our units, we will also accelerate our existing program of installing online radio equipment in our Search and Rescue Coordination Centres and radio bases, including Evans Head, Coffs Harbour, Camden Haven, Newcastle, Norah Head, Shoalhaven, Jervis Bay, Batemans Bay, Narooma, Bermagui and Merimbula.



The replacement of the outdated MR Lake Macquarie radio base at Swansea Heads is a priority project under the new funding package.

National recognition for leader's expertise

Deputy Commissioner awarded Emergency Services Medal on Australia Day.

Marine Rescue NSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey has been recognised for his commitment to boating safety and the development of the State's official volunteer marine rescue service.

The Deputy Commissioner was awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal in the national Australia Day Honours.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos congratulated him on the nation's recognition of his distinguished service to MRNSW.

"Dean has given exceptional service to assist and protect the boating community and drive the development of volunteer marine rescue capability on NSW waterways," he said. "This award is fitting recognition of his professionalism in building

our organisation, matched by his commitment to ensuring our volunteers have the support, training and world-class resources they need to perform their duties safely and effectively. He has been tireless in his commitment to the professional development of the organisation and our volunteers."

Deputy Commissioner Storey manages the service's operational activities and has been instrumental in the \$20 million Fleet Modernisation Program. He also brings insight to his role from his own lengthy experience as an active volunteer, currently undertaking his 26th annual season of regular active patrols as a volunteer life saver.

He said he was humbled by the honour and appreciative of the recognition.

"I love the volunteer ethos, culture and camaraderie, which has sustained me as an active volunteer for the best part of three decades," he said. "I am also extremely fortunate that volunteering has provided me a pathway to build a career over the past 24 years focused on my love of the ocean and community service.

"What the thousands of hard-working women and men of MRNSW do across our 44 rescue units is inspiring. I look forward to coming to the office every day and working in support of them. I am also constantly in awe of the devotion shown by our small team of Headquarters staff, who largely commit themselves seven days a week to the organisation. The fact that most are also volunteers in their



Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey, awarded the ESM.

own right and have committed both their personal and professional lives to community service, forgoing likely better pay elsewhere, is a testament to the types of people they are."



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Mobile comms van reaches end of road

New \$200,000 command post on way.

A new MRNSW Mobile Incident Command Vehicle will soon be on the road.

The new command vehicle will replace the 26-year-old communications van that has come to the end of its operational life.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said the new resource would provide additional communications and volunteer capacity in a variety of circumstances.

"It will be able to be rapidly deployed to provide critical command and control during major response operations over extended periods or in remote areas," he said

"We will also deploy it to support regional Search and Rescue Exercises and its most fundamental role will be to serve as a back-up communications system for units experiencing significant power or

equipment outages or damage and during the installation of upgraded online marine radio monitoring equipment," he said.

"It will be fitted with a contemporary array of equipment that will mirror the communications and IT installations in our Search and Rescue Coordination Centres and marine radio bases."

Based in a new Iveco Daily van, the command post will cost more than \$195,000 to supply and equip with marine radio communications, IT and audio-visual equipment and stand-alone power, including solar panels. It will be able to transport four personnel, accommodate two radio operators and include a retractable awning and external video screens for outdoor operational briefings or educational activities.

Massive search response to summer fatalities

Volunteers bring thousands of boaters in trouble safely to shore.

A series of extended searches for swimmers lost off beaches in the State's north were among more than a thousand operations launched by Marine Rescue NSW crews over the summer season.

Our crews again proved a high-visibility presence on coastal and inland waterways, stepping up their activities and responding to a string of emergencies as the warm weather sparked a surge in boating traffic.

Unfortunately, unfavourable conditions for boating, including large seas, high winds and sea fogs, hampered holidaymakers' time on the water on some areas of the coastline.

MRNSW crews launched 1,069 rescue missions over the summer, responding to 270 life-threatening emergencies and ensuring almost 3,000 boaters returned safely to shore.

Rescue teams swiftly deployed to overturned vessels, a runaway runabout, six women thrown from an outrigger canoe offshore and numerous boaters stranded by engine, battery and fuel problems, as well as joining the response to fatalities on the Mid North Coast, Northern Rivers and Hawkesbury River.

MRNSW units extended their marine radio monitoring over the season, complementing the 24/7 coverage provided year-round by regional Search and Rescue Coordination Centres and the Terrey Hills State Operations Centre. In all, radio operators handled 58,542 radio calls from December 1 to February 28. Helping keep boaters safe on the water, units Logged On 22,430 vessels, including 5,168 using the *MarineRescue* app, with 84,876 people on board.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey thanked the MRNSW volunteers who gave their time over summer to assist the community, in



The crew of *Camden Haven 30* joins the extensive sea and ground search for two tourists who went missing off Shelly Beach at Port Macquarie. Photo: Alex McNaught.

sometimes trying circumstances.

"Our volunteers worked tirelessly to save lives on the water," he said.

On December 17, two men drowned and a third was reported missing in the surf at Moonee Beach on the Coffs Coast. Volunteers from MR Woolgoolga, Coffs Harbour and Wooli assisted the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command in an extensive search. When the man's body was later located 76nm south, a crew from MR Port Macquarie assisted with the recovery.

Eight weeks later, crews from MR Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga again joined a large-scale search operation after a 27-year-old man disappeared in the surf at Woolgoolga Beach on February 7.

Crews from MR Ballina, Evans Head and Iluka Yamba joined a full-scale search for a Surf Life Saver who did not return from a swim at East Ballina on February 16.

The next day, one man died and another disappeared after falling from a jet ski at Wilberforce on the Hawkesbury River, with both search and rescue boats from MR Hawkesbury activated.

On February 18, a mass land and sea search, involving crews from MR Port Macquarie and Camden Haven, also was launched when two 20-year-old tourists from Britain

and France went missing at Port Macquarie.

The high risk of hypothermia, even in summer, prompted a swift response from MR Alpine Lakes to a boater who fell from a moving tinnie on Lake Jindabyne on January 21.

"Thank God I was wearing a lifejacket," Colin Oatley said.

Regional Operations Managers and volunteers were again based at the Police Marine Area Command base at Balmain during the busiest periods to liaise with Police and help coordinate rescue operations.

Deputy Commissioner Storey said units also deserved praise for providing operational support and maintaining exclusion zones at

major events on Sydney Harbour and regional waterways over summer, such as the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, New Year's Eve fireworks, Australia Day festivities and ocean swims.

He said they also helped make the inaugural Sydney SailGP a safe and successful event, patrolling an exclusion zone to keep private and commercial vessels a safe distance from the supercharged F50 catamarans flying on the harbour at speeds over 50 knots.

MR Eden again provided communications support to Sydney to Hobart competitors heading to Bass Strait in favourable conditions.

Brendan Trembath



Alpine Lakes 21 was quickly on the scene when Colin Oatley was thrown from his tinnie on Lake Jindabyne. Photo: Anthony Davies.

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Sonia Teston

Deputy Unit Commander, Marine Rescue Merimbula



Marine Rescue Merimbula Deputy Unit Commander Sonia Teston on duty as a Marine Rescue NSW liaison officer in the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command base in Sydney over the festive season and on her home waters on board *Merimbula 30*.



Sonia Teston joined Marine Rescue Merimbula in 2015. In addition to serving as a Radio Operator and Leading Crew member, Sonia has held the position of Deputy Unit Commander since June 2017. Over summer she was one of the senior MRNSW personnel rostered as Liaison Officers in the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command base in Sydney, assisting with the coordination of rescue operations along the coastline.

■ **Late last year I received an early Christmas present when MRNSW Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan extended me an invitation to accompany him to the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command (MAC) base in Balmain over the busy boating weekend that fell between Christmas Day and New Year's Day.** The visit was an opportunity to experience what happens when reports are made to MAC, see what other activities they undertake and lend a hand with incoming calls for assistance.

■ **Like most Marine Rescue volunteers, I had spoken to MAC when reporting incidents in MR Merimbula's area of the Far South Coast and know of their capabilities and responsibilities in coordinating search and rescue operations on NSW waterways.** This was an exciting opportunity to see what happens on the other side of those calls. I tried not to go in with any preconceived ideas of the scale of work undertaken by the team, the capacity of those on duty or the high-tech wizardry on tap to coordinate rescues.

■ **I was still not prepared for what I found. On duty that busy weekend was the MAC Search and Rescue Coordinator Sergeant Paul Farquharson, a State Duty Officer for Surf Life Saving and Glenn Sullivan and me as the MRNSW Liaison Officers.** We were in a room about the size of most MRNSW radio rooms with a couple of computer screens and phones available to each of us. My excitement shifted towards

nervousness, which I'm happy to report turned out to be unfounded. Apart from monitoring the MRNSW Seahawk vessel tracking system and receiving calls on incidents to which MRNSW crews were responding, MAC was also receiving information fed via computer from Triple Zero (000) emergency operators, calls from the public directly to the Water Police seeking help and incidents being actioned by Surf Life Saving. Some of the calls required tasking to just one agency and others to a combination of first responders.

■ **The professional teamwork not only within but between our three organisations was impressive.** The speed with which activities were tasked was matched only by the speed of those responding. I felt lucky to witness the quiet determination, focus and high level of skill displayed by those in the command room.

■ **Marine Rescue NSW can hold its head high and be proud of its well trained, dedicated and committed volunteers.** I

also would not have enjoyed the experience as much without the outstanding assistance I received from Glenn Sullivan, whose knowledge of the NSW coastline and inland waterways and ability to feed me information for tasking instantaneously made the burden of my duties light. The workload for our Regional Operations Managers seems to have no timeframe. After a full day at MAC, Glenn coordinated and monitored a further two rescues, one of which required the deployment of vessels from three bases.

■ **I feel privileged and grateful to have been extended the opportunity to witness and participate in the activities in the Marine Area Command.** My profuse thanks to MRNSW for investing in me and providing this incredible insight and experience. If any MRNSW volunteers are lucky enough to be extended the same invitation, I encourage them to accept the offer wholeheartedly. It was an eye opening, exciting and unforgettable experience.



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'Awesome' night on parade at Mardi Gras

Team spirit and inclusivity on show as Marine Rescue reaches out to all.



Ready to roll ... the Marine Rescue NSW contingent of volunteers, staff, family and supporters assembles for the 41st Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. *Photo: Brian Roberts.*

Marine Rescue NSW members Reached Out to the hundreds of thousands of spectators cramming the streets for the 41st Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade on March 2.

More than 30 volunteers, family members, staff and supporters marched behind the decorated rescue vessel *X Ray 21*, running the crowd line, shaking hands and lapping up the warm applause.

Volunteers gathered from the Point Danger, Hawkesbury, Cottage

Point, Broken Bay, Middle Harbour, Port Jackson, Botany Port Hacking, Port Kembla and Bermagui units. The MRNSW theme, Reach Out, highlighted our role rescuing people reaching out for help on the water and also that we reach out to the community for members, support and inclusion.

MR Point Danger members, Unit Commander Glenda Ashby and Gary Ashby, marched in memory of Glenda's sister Karen Henderson, who also was a MRNSW volunteer.

"It was just so awesome and to be able to participate, especially for the memory of my beautiful sister Kaz, was so warming for our family," UC Ashby said.

MR Cottage Point's Carly Danne, who also joined MRNSW's original 2017 parade contingent, vowed to be back next year, as did MR Bermagui member Volker Aebischer.

"Nothing compares to that," he said. "People were coming up and saying 'thank you, you guys do a great job'. It was nice to get the

positive feedback from people."

New MR Port Jackson recruit Sandra Cittadini thanked MRNSW for Reaching Out and taking part.

"The atmosphere was one of pure joy and pride - not only marching alongside my Marine Rescue pals but the crowd were so encouraging and enthusiastic. I'm putting my name down to march next year, not only to celebrate the wonderful pride and diversity of the LGBTI+ community but also to experience the gratitude of the crowd."



All the colours of the rainbow ... *X Ray 21* and the MRNSW contingent receive a rousing welcome from the crowd lining Oxford Street. *Photo: Garry Luxton.*



MR Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby, who marched in memory of her sister and fellow volunteer Karen (Kaz) Henderson, and Central Training Manager Jane Shirriff. *Photo: Brian Roberts.*

A \$660,000 helping hand for 16 projects

Units congratulated for success in securing valuable grants funding.

Marine Rescue NSW has secured valuable funding worth more than \$660,000 in NSW and Commonwealth Government grants in recent months.

The funding, for 16 projects, has been shared by 12 units, with two Statewide projects also funded.

Grants Manager Mat Smith congratulated the successful unit grants officers and executives.

“Winning grants funding requires a great deal of time and effort from our units, who have done a terrific job in securing grants for a range of valuable equipment, training and building projects,” he said.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra Gareth Ward and Wollongong MP Paul Scully revealed MR Port Kembla had received \$164,080 for a safety upgrade and repairs to its Hill 60 base and radio mast under the Port Kembla

Community Investment Fund.

In January, Federal Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, Senator Linda Reynolds and NSW Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant announced Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme funding of \$100,319 for nine MRNSW projects focused on training equipment and activities.

The Alpine Lakes, Broken Bay, Cottage Point, Evans Head, Point Danger, Terrey Hills and Tuggerah Lakes units received almost \$29,000, with two State projects receiving more than \$71,500.

Three projects were funded from the NSW Infrastructure Grants program. Terrigal MP Adam Crouch presented MR Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer with a \$161,000 Infrastructure grant for a new amphibious tender vessel on January 24. This followed Port



Terrigal MP Adam Crouch (centre) presents MR Central Coast UC Roger Palmer (second from left) and members with a \$161,000 grant.

Macquarie MP Leslie Williams' announcement of \$84,900 for two MR Crowdy Harrington projects.

NSW Community Building Partnership grants worth a total of

\$50,000 also have been awarded to the Broken Bay unit for new outboards, MR Narooma for a garage refurbishment and MR Nambucca for equipment storage.



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Campaign encourages Logging On for safety

Social media, radio advertising take vital message to boaters.

Whenever Lake Macquarie commercial skipper Brad Minors heads offshore on the charter boat *Explorer* he reaches for the marine radio and contacts the local MRNSW unit to say where he is going and when he is due back.

"We want to take whatever safety precautions we can," he said.

Mr Minors was part of the MRNSW summer campaign to encourage boaters to Log On when heading out on the water, appearing in one of a series of social media videos targeted at our boating audience. These also featured fishermen Danny Daley and Martin Field, who had both Logged On before being caught in emergencies off Brunswick Heads and Ulladulla.

MRNSW also ran its first commercial radio campaign to take its message to the boating public over summer. Four hundred ads ran on the Maquarie Radio network in January, including Sydney's 2GB, Macquarie Sports Radio and a selection of coastal stations in popular holiday boating locations,

including Tweed Heads, Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, Wollongong, the South Coast and Bega.

Early morning timeslots were targeted to reach boaters as they headed out on the water.

A total of 6,693 vessels Logged On in December, including 1,503 via the *MarineRescue* app. In January, this rose to 10,082, including 2,348 via the app.

Mr Minors Logs On as he heads out to sea.

"As we're going up the channel we'll call Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie," he said.

He makes his initial call on Channel 16, the VHF distress, safety and calling channel, after a head count of those on board. The radio operator then directs him to a working channel to record the vessel's Log On details: departure point, destination, time due back and number of people on board.

Mr Minors said Logging On was a "two way street", providing a safety net not only for his boat but also



Charter boat skipper Brad Minors always Logs On with MR Lake Macquarie when heading out on the water. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

other vessels in the area.

"Should there be an incident with another boat, if Marine Rescue knows we are in the area they may ask us just to have a quick look to see if we can locate someone."

Explorer serves as another pair of eyes on its travels, ranging from a few miles out to way off the coast.

At the end of each voyage, once across the Swansea Bar, Mr Minors calls MR Lake Macquarie to Log Off.

"We Log Off at the end of the day so they know we are safe.

"We go straight past Marine Rescue," he said.

He recommends all skippers Log On via marine radio, phone or the free *MarineRescue* App.

"It's just a wonderful service for marine safety," he said, while praising MRNSW volunteers.

"For someone to donate a beautiful day like today, up there looking after someone else's welfare they've got their heart in the right place."

Brendan Trembath

Reporting team retires after 60 years' service

After clocking up a combined 60 years' Marine Rescue service, Kate and David Jones have decided to retire.

"We've had a lot of experiences and we've enjoyed every one of them," Mrs Jones said.

The couple has for years supported the organisation's public boating safety education.

As the Safe Boating Course liaison officer, Mrs Jones maintained a register of all MRNSW boat licence examiners and compiled annual statistical reports on the boat and personal water craft licence courses and examinations conducted by units, participants' success rates and revenue raised.

As has been the case throughout their membership, they worked together on the task.

"It was good. I enjoyed it. We both enjoyed it," Mrs Jones said.

"Kate and I work as a team, always have done," Mr Jones added.

Mr Jones ESM, a Life Member, joined the RVCP in 1979 when the couple moved to Sussex Inlet. Mrs Jones said that as women had not been allowed to join in those days, she had officially only been a member for 21 years.

As well as crewing rescue vessels, monitoring marine radio at all hours and fundraising, they both served in various senior executive roles, with Mr Jones rising



David and Kate Jones ... retiring after a combined 60 years' service.

to Division Commander and later becoming Chairman of the RVCP Board and Company Secretary.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos wished the Joneses all the best.

"Sixty collective volunteering years is something they should both

be very proud of, as am I," he said.

"I particularly thank them for their contribution in helping us meet our Safe Boating reporting requirements, which has involved a great deal of interaction with our units and State Government agencies."

Cold, wet skipper's case of mistaken identity

Crew searches in vain for sinking boat at Swansea.

When the MR Lake Macquarie radio base received a call for help from a boater whose vessel was sinking off Swansea Caravan Park on February 26, a rescue vessel was quickly deployed.

The crew of *Lake Macquarie 11* made good time to the scene but could not locate the boat or any sign of people in the water.

The crew continued searching in the vicinity without success before calling the skipper's mobile to ask if he could see the rescue vessel.

No, was the response. The boater couldn't see his rescuers and the rescue crew couldn't see him. The skipper said he had by now made it out of the water and was standing cold and wet on a jetty.

The conversation continued as the crew tried to ascertain details

that would point to a likely location.

And then the penny dropped. The caller was at Swansea in Tasmania, not New South Wales. This information was swiftly passed to the radio base and transmitted to Maritime and Safety Tasmania.

The incident echoed an emergency in December 2013 when a 5m runabout capsized in rough conditions off the Swansea coast, throwing two brothers into the water as they headed out fishing.

The young men managed to reach nearby Moon Island, from where they could see the unit's radio base. Unable to read its signage, they Googled Swansea Coast Guard on their mobile and rang for help.

The radio operator was having great trouble understanding their location and finally, out of

Help just a phone call and 10,000 miles away

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

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

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

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

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

"They could not read our sign and did not have our phone number, so they Googled Coast Guard Swansea



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

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

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

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

however, you guys did a brilliant job. It was pleasing the crew had lifejackets on and their boat was so well equipped, something which sadly does not happen in the UK too often."

Malcolm later emailed the base to thank the rescuers: "I'd like to thank everyone who was involved with our rescue ... as I didn't get the chance to thank everyone personally. Even though my boat is destroyed and



Deja vu ... *Soundings'* report in Autumn 2014.

desperation, asked what country they were in.

It was then Steve Yates, a 13-year veteran taking the call in the Coastguard Swansea Rescue Coordination Centre in Wales

realised the pair was on the other side of the globe.

Meanwhile, the radio operators in the nearby Swansea base had seen the incident unfold and - just like in 2019 - sent a vessel to the rescue.



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Lifejacket rule covers more rock fishers

Rock fishers on Sydney's Northern Beaches and areas of the North Coast will now have to wear lifejackets when fishing on the coastline.

The Northern Beaches and Richmond Valley councils will enforce this safety rule, joining Randwick Council, where it has been mandatory for rock fishers to wear appropriate lifejackets for the past two years under the NSW Rock Fishing Safety Act.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said wearing a lifejacket was an essential safety precaution for rock fishers, giving them the chance to survive if washed into the ocean.

A six-month advisory period will apply in both locations, with campaigns to inform anglers about the new laws and provide advice on safe rock fishing. NSW Police, council rangers, Department of Primary Industries Fisheries

Officers and National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers can enforce the rule. Fines for not wearing a lifejacket will apply in both new locations following the six-month advisory period.

As well as always wearing a lifejacket, rock fishers are encouraged to follow safe rock fishing protocols, including:

- Check the weather, swell and tide conditions before you leave home; stay alert to changing weather conditions while fishing.
- Wear non-slip shoes and light, non-restrictive clothing.
- Do not rock fish when the conditions are dangerous.
- Never fish alone. Never turn your back on the ocean.
- Do not jump in if someone is washed into the ocean: throw a life buoy, call Triple Zero or get help.

Visit <http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au> for more information.

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Rotary awards to honour our quiet achievers

Nominate a volunteer whose commitment demonstrates Service Above Self.

Nominations are now open for the 2019 Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards.

The awards are held each year to acknowledge and celebrate the community service of members of the emergency services.

The awards are open to volunteer and career personnel from Marine Rescue NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Ambulance Service, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Volunteer Rescue Association.

Governor of NSW, General David Hurley, launched this year's awards on St Valentine's Day.

There was a lot of love in Government House as Mrs Linda Hurley sang her own composition honouring the emergency services to the assembled representatives of

the six services and Rotary.

MRNSW volunteers can be nominated for the awards by any member of the community.

Nominations close on May 1 and the winners will be announced at a gala dinner on August 2.

Up to four members of each service will be selected as finalists, with a winner named for each agency. Two of these will be named the overall volunteer and paid officer of the year.

Nominees will be judged on three criteria: community service over and above the call of normal duties exemplifying Rotary's motto of Service Above Self, personal attributes and contribution to their organisation.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the Rotary awards were a valuable



Governor of NSW General David Hurley with Greater Sydney Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans, MR Botany Port Hacking member Terri-Mae Fitzgerald and Commissioner Stacey Tannos at the launch of the 2019 Rotary awards. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

opportunity to recognise Marine Rescue's quiet achievers.

"Our members do not volunteer in order to win accolades but it is always gratifying when their selfless

service is acknowledged by the community," he said.

Nominations can only be made online at www.rotaryescawards.org.au



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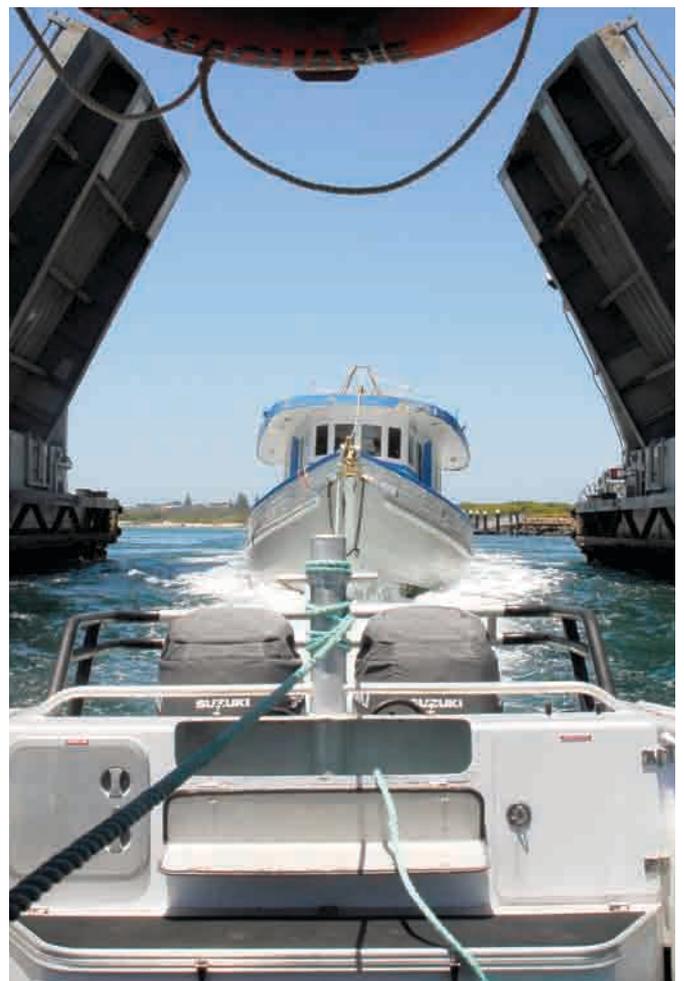
What we've been up to



In the churn ... Cottage Point 31 is dwarfed by super maxi *Alive* at the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race on Boxing Day. Crews from six MRNSW units joined the marquee events on Sydney Harbour over summer, providing operational support and maintaining spectator craft exclusion zones for the yacht race, New Year's Eve fireworks, Australia Day festivities and the inaugural SailGP. Photo: Brendan Trembath.



Painful crossing ... *Point Danger 30's* first operation of 2019 was a medevac for a skipper who had dislocated his knee while negotiating the Tweed Bar early on New Year's Day (see Page 20).



Coming through ... the Swansea Bridge opens for *Lake Macquarie 30* to return a former trawler stranded with engine problems near Moon Island to safety on January 2. Photo: Paul Satchell.



Australia Day recognition ... Richmond Valley Council Volunteer of the Year, MR Evans Head member Bev Lauritzen (centre), with her fellow unit nominees Neville Hamilton and Heather Stacey (see P 21).

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Missing Ballina volunteer sparks mass search

Crews from three Northern Rivers units scour coastline for life saver.

North Coast emergency services, including three MRNSW units, assembled for a mass search operation when one of their own went missing in choppy surf at Ballina on Saturday, February 16.

The alarm was raised about 10.15am after the 69-year-old volunteer member of Ballina Lighthouse Surf Club failed to return from his regular morning swim at Lighthouse Beach.

Witnesses told police Raz Burtonwood - a popular 25-year club veteran known to be a strong swimmer - had entered the water earlier but was not seen again.

The search operation was coordinated by Police Marine Area Command, assisted by Richmond Police District officers, Surf Life Savers, MRNSW, the State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance and the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter.

MRNSW Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray said crews from MR Ballina, Evans Head and Iluka Yamba had searched offshore waters from Saturday through to Tuesday afternoon.



All hands on deck ... *Ballina 30* and *Evans Head 30*, with Lance Fountain at the helm, join the extensive search for a missing Ballina Surf Life Saver in mid-February. Photo: Ian Murray.

"This was a major operation, involving numerous emergency services over four days," Mr Murray said.

"The crew of *Ballina 30* was deployed on Saturday afternoon to search off the beach.

"They were joined by *Evans Head 30* on Sunday and Monday mornings to scour the region from Ballina south to Evans Head.

"*Iluka Yamba 30* also was tasked on Monday to search between Evans

Head and Yamba, before the search was officially suspended on Tuesday morning."

MAC Commander, Detective Superintendent Mark Hutchings said: "We don't believe at this stage that we will be able to locate that person alive, which is tragic but I am confident we've searched 100 per cent of the area and if we were able to locate the gentleman, we would have by this stage."

Mr Murray said the MR Ballina

unit's large base, located on the Richmond River sea wall at the southern end of Lighthouse Beach, had been employed as the coordination centre for the duration of the search.

"Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant, who was in the region, also called in to thank those involved and check on their welfare in the difficult circumstances of searching for a fellow member of the emergency services family," he said.

Overdue boat raises fears for pair's safety

When a local hire boat business reported to MR Brunswick that one of its boats was overdue for return, fears were raised for the safety of the two people on board.

Brunswick 30 was immediately deployed to search the local waterways into the evening, finding no sign of the boat. The vessel was located next morning abandoned near Mullumbimby with no signs of damage and no reports of missing people over coming days.

Two tired swimmers struggling against an outgoing tide in the Brunswick River were fortunate that *BR 30* was close at hand to pluck

them from the water and return them safely to land.

The unit's offshore operations over summer included towing a dive boat that broke down with three people on board at Julian Rocks off Byron Bay and another with three people and a dog on board that needed help on the Brunswick bar.

We are eagerly awaiting the final approval of our training and meeting rooms to be installed in the Brunswick Heads harbour precinct.

This is a great site near our rescue boat that will enhance our presence in our coastal town.

David Parkinson



Brunswick 30 returns a runabout to safety in an offshore operation over summer.

One last mission before outboards retire

Ballina volunteers power through major search, patrols and training.

Rescue vessel *Ballina 30*'s original outboards got a temporary stay of execution when a call for help from a disabled boat delayed a scheduled voyage to have brand new engines fitted.

The crew of *BA 30* was preparing for its trip south to Yamba to slip the vessel for its repowering with twin 250hp Suzuki engines when the unit's radio base received a call from a 6m centre console runabout with engine failure at Black Rock off Lennox Head, north of Ballina.

Skipper Ian Grimwood and crew swiftly powered up the engines for one last rescue mission, locating the distressed vessel and taking it safely under tow back to the Fishery Creek boat ramp at Ballina before turning south to Yamba. The new engines have since been well run in.

The windy weather over summer was not ideal for offshore boating, leading to increased recreational activity on the Richmond River and

its adjacent waterways. Despite the unfriendly conditions, the unit was busy, with our radio base taking some 3,000 radio calls and Logging On 595 local and transiting boaters and our crews responding to five serious emergencies.

BA 30 was on the water for three days as part of the large multi-agency search for a swimmer who went missing off Lighthouse Beach on February 16 and our base was employed as the search coordination centre (see report page 19).

In addition to this operation and our weekend and public holiday patrols, our crews took every opportunity to train at sea, staging a range of exercises, including at night and mid-week, to build the number of Leading Crew and Coxswains in our ranks. We also held local Search and Rescue Exercises with our colleagues from MR Evans Head and joined successful training sessions with the local Westpac Rescue



Ballina 30 on a training exercise with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter on the Richmond River on February 19. Photo: John Murray

Helicopter crews on the Richmond River and open waters.

We also were a high-profile presence on land, with our promotional trailer attending a number of local events and our base open to the public for tours and a barbecue on Australia Day.

We are targeting our boating safety education activities at local boat ramps, providing boaters with stickers to record their vessel details for quick access when Logging On and promoting the *MarineRescue* app.

Doug Hunter

Medevac Pt Danger's first task of new year

Crews remove pontoon, log posing serious offshore navigation hazards.

Marine Rescue Point Danger's first operation of 2019 was in response to a radio call at 9.30am on New Year's Day from the injured skipper of a vessel at Cook Island off the coast of Fingal.

The skipper had dislocated his knee while crossing the Tweed Bar.

In one of the unit's 26 taskings throughout the peak season, the crew of *Point Danger 30* was deployed to medevac the casualty to a waiting ambulance at the Tweed River jetty. The patient and two of the vessel's three passengers were transferred on board *PD 30* for the return voyage.

Our crews have recently removed two large navigation hazards that could have posed a danger to passing vessels.

A tree log floating just off the Tweed bar was reported by a vessel in transit and brought back to land by the crew of *PD 30*, who were performing training drills in the area at the time. NSW Maritime alerted the unit to an unmanned pontoon floating off Nine Mile Reef. *PD 30* took the pontoon under tow back to the Maritime jetty on the river.

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Tweed MP Geoff Provest visited our Search and Rescue Coordination Centre on February 18.

Unit Commander Glenda Ashby expressed the unit's gratitude for the State Government's \$37.6m funding boost for MRNSW, which will provide a new 12m state-of-the-art rescue vessel to replace *PD 30*, an 11.3m Naiad. UC Ashby and DUC Nick



MR Point Danger UC Glenda Ashby, DUC Nick Wythe and Regional Operations Manager John Murray with visitors Tweed MP Geoff Provest and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant.

Wythe outlined planned changes as a result of redevelopment work on the Captain Cook Lighthouse and demonstrated the vision from the new Tweed Bar camera, installed

with Mr Provest's input, to eliminate a black spot on the bar's northern wall, helping volunteers monitor vessels entering the river.

Dale Leo

Few boaters venture out in troubling seas

Extreme caution needed when alarmed skipper calls for help to cross bar.

Boaters again flocked to Evans Head for the summer holidays but few were able to venture offshore, with large seas and onshore winds seeing most stay safely on the Evans River.

While this resulted in only four incidents over the season, one fisherman who did venture out on January 3 found himself caught in increasing winds and worsening seas.

Realising he did not have the experience to safely re-cross the bar, he called MR Evans Head for help. With the unit's radio operators reassuring the alarmed skipper and his passenger, the crew of *Evans Head 30* headed out across the bar, rated at 'extreme caution'.

Scott Mohr transferred to the vessel to steer it across the bar, while the fishermen returned on *EH 30*, with Bill Bates at the helm.

Rough conditions saw one capsized boat wash up on the beach and another that overturned on the bar retrieved by *EH 30* and taken back down the river, where its owners eventually managed to right it.



Evans Head 30 carefully tows a fishing boat that suffered a mechanical failure 4nm out to sea back across the hazardous Evans Bar in large seas. Photo: Brad Burgess.

On January 13, a boat 4nm out to sea suffered a mechanical failure. *EH 30's* crew, Ian Murray, Scott Mohr, Ken Exley and Bill Bates, returned it to shore after a tricky tow back through the breakers.

Our radio operators took 680 radio calls and Logged On 603 boats with 674 people on board over summer.

In January alone, we clocked up 2,214 volunteer hours.

Three of our members were nominated for the Richmond Valley Council Volunteer of the Year

Awards. Bev Lauritzen, who has served as a radio operator and fundraiser with our unit for 15 years, was named the Volunteer of the Year.

Our other two nominees were our Treasurer of 25 years Heather Stacey and Neville Hamilton, who has served eight years as Administration Officer and a radio operator.

Pilots from around the nation gather in Evans for the Great Eastern Fly In each Australia Day.

The unit again took part, providing

information and a cracking barbecue over the weekend.

Congratulations to Joe Medina on gaining his Crew rating and Ian Murray who gained his Radio Operator's certificate.

The unit was pleased to secure a \$1,248 Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant to assist with upgrading our training computers.

With increasing numbers and plans for new equipment and a training room extension, we are looking forward to an exciting 2019.

Bill Bates

Oma keeps crews, new rescue boat off water

The impact of ex-tropical cyclone Oma hit the Northern Rivers with a punch in late February.

Forty knot winds, rain and large seas prevented MR Iluka Yamba boat crew members taking to the water for familiarisation and induction on our new vessel, *Iluka Yamba 20*.

Remarkably, the conditions were not sufficient to deter some swimmers from entering the water.

The new 5.45m Ocean Cylinder was built by local boat builder Yamba Welding & Engineering, which also produces the Naiad vessels in the MRNSW fleet.

The smaller Ocean Cylinder will

enable us to reach areas of the Clarence River that our *Steber 38, IY 30*, cannot access due to traffic bridges or shoal water.

Our crews responded to 16 incidents over summer. On January 2, our base received a call from Seaway Tower at Southport informing us that a vessel from the Gold Coast had broken down just south of Evans Head.

With conditions on the Evans bar difficult and no local repair option, *IY 30* was activated at 4pm, arriving on scene at 5.30pm and taking the vessel under tow, arriving safely into the Clarence River about 8pm.

Frank Bond



The newly-delivered *Iluka Yamba 20*, built in the local factory of Yamba Welding & Engineering.

Searchers do utmost to locate missing men

Swimmers lost in tragic summer on Mid North Coast beaches.

Crews from five MRNSW units joined three large-scale search operations for missing swimmers swept out to sea over a tragic summer on the Mid North Coast.

MR Port Macquarie, Woolgoolga, Coffs Harbour, Camden Haven and Wooli crews spent more than a week in total searching for four missing men, only one of whom was recovered, between December and February.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey thanked the rescue vessel crew members and radio operators who took part in the operations.

“Our volunteers did their utmost to try to locate these missing men,” he said.

“Search operations such as these are demanding for all involved.

“Vessel crews are on the water for long hours in the heat, keeping a painstaking watch to ensure they don’t miss a vital sign, while at the same time calculating the impact of drift, swell and prevailing conditions.

“Our radio operators also are vital to these operations, maintaining communications links between search coordinators and crews on the water.”

A major sea and ground search was launched on Monday, February 18, for two 20-year-old tourists feared drowned in rough surf at Shelly Beach at Port Macquarie.



The crew of *Port Macquarie 20* conducts a sweep of the coastline while SES volunteers comb the shoreline for signs of two tourists missing from Shelly Beach. Photos: Alex McNaught.

The friends’ personal belongings were seen at the beach the previous afternoon and early morning walkers reported they were still there on Monday.

A four-day search saw officers from the Mid North Coast Police District and Marine Area Command, police divers, MRNSW, Surf Life Saving and the State Emergency Service working together to find the young men.

Port Macquarie 30 and *PM 20* conducted drift tests and parallel searches along the coast from Shelly Beach south to Lake Cathie and 3nm out to sea.

MR Camden Haven also joined the search, which was scaled back without success on February 21.

This operation followed another

major search 11 days earlier at Woolgoolga Beach.

Emergency services were called to the beach after a man disappeared in the surf shortly after 3.30pm on February 7.

Witnesses told police the 27-year-old and a 21-year-old woman got into difficulties in the surf and while bystanders assisted the woman to safety, the man could not be found.

Coffs/Clarence Police, Marine Area Command, MR Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour, Surf Lifesavers and the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter began searching into the evening, resuming at first light with the PolAir helicopter, the Police launch *Fearless*, a Surf drone and the SES.

The crews of *Woolgoolga 30* and *Coffs 30* conducted sweeps of the bay from Woolgoolga to Darkum Headland and around Woolgoolga Reef. The crews then moved to search 500m off the coastline from the Woolgoolga Headland south to Moonee and around Groper and Split Solitary islands before the search was scaled back in deteriorating conditions.

On December 17, six members of an extended family visiting the Coffs Harbour area got into trouble when they were swept offshore in a strong current at Moonee Beach, north of

Coffs Harbour, about 6.15pm.

Two girls, aged 15 and 17, and a 15-year-old boy were rescued unharmed but lifeguards could not revive two men, aged 35 and 45.

A third man, aged 28, could not be found, sparking a wide search by crews from MR Woolgoolga, Coffs Harbour and Wooli, along with police from the Coffs/Clarence district and Marine Area Command and the PolAir and Westpac Rescue helicopters. *Woolgoolga 30*, *Coffs 30* and *Wooli 30* focused their efforts on the area from Green Bluff Point to Muttonbird Island and 3nm east, along with the shoreline north to Bare Point.

MR Port Macquarie assisted with the recovery of the man’s body, located in the ocean near Point Plomer, about 2nm north of Port Macquarie, on December 20.

Just five days later, a 60-year-old Swiss national also died on Moonee Beach. A 66-year-old died at Boomerang Beach at Forster on January 14.

Deputy Commissioner Storey said the obviously distressing circumstances of operations that moved from search and rescue to recovery over time could take an emotional toll on all involved.

MRNSW members in need of support can contact Critical Incident Support Services on 1800 049 933.



Yolanda Bosschier launches a drift test from *Port Macquarie 30* during the search for two men lost at Shelly Beach.

Three swept into sea in Mayday emergency

Water-filled cruiser proves test for crew in marathon night mission.

A 40-foot motor cruiser at risk of sinking with two people on board a mile off Boomerang Beach south of Forster was returned to safety in a five-hour overnight rescue operation on February 19 and 20.

The crew of *Forster 30* was deployed at 8.30pm after the cruiser's skipper called for help as his boat was taking on water and the bilge pump could not keep up.

Skipper Peter Nash and crew members Bryce Nicholls, Graeme Rudd, Peter Jelfs and Keith Herdon arrived on scene at 10.30pm, taking the vessel under tow for a long slow journey back to Forster Harbour, arriving at 2.30am. Watch officers Mike O'Halloran and Judy Westcott oversaw communications.

With the cruiser full of water, manoeuvring it to safety in the darkness proved a test of the crew's skill.

This incident followed an earlier

emergency, when a crew was swiftly dispatched in response to an EPIRB activation and Mayday call to the MR Forster-Tuncurry radio base on January 11.

Three people had been swept overboard from a 5-6m half-cabin cruiser, which then began sinking, 7nm north-east of Forster.

Skipper Ray Mazurek and crew members Gary Dickson, Keith Herdon and Richard Neal were quickly under way on board *FO 30*, with watch officers Henry Kocon and Judy Westcott in the radio base. The Westpac rescue helicopter also responded.

Two nearby fishermen managed to pull the three holidaying boaters from the water before *FO 30* arrived on the scene and took the survivors, who had not suffered any injuries, on board for the return to shore. The partially-submerged boat was taken under tow.

This was the most serious



The crew of *Forster 30* takes a capsized runabout under tow after three people were swept overboard on January 11.

emergency to which the unit's crews responded over an otherwise relatively quiet holiday season on the water, mainly due to a summer of strong winds.

Nevertheless, our vessel and radio crew members responded to 28 incidents over the season, ensuring 86 boaters returned safely to shore. More than 650 vessels Logged On during our busy period.

Our new vessel, *Forster 20*, delivered in November last year, proved a valuable asset on Wallis Lake over the summer, responding to a number of incidents, including broken down vessels, a drifting house boat and a late night search for a person feared missing in Pipers Creek but later located safe and well on land.

Fran Breen

Family thanks volunteers for saving baby

Quick response from Crowdy Harrington prevents boat sinking.

When members of MR Crowdy Harrington succeeded in saving a very tiny life, they earned a relieved family's lasting gratitude.

The unit's best Christmas present was a thank you card and photo of a well and happy baby Ivy doing well after a traumatic emergency.

Weeks earlier, the radio base had received a call for help from a family whose vehicle was bogged on Harrington Beach. Soon after, the mother ran into the base with her three-month-old, who had stopped breathing.

Unit Commander Bek Brown and watch officer Kevin Bailey provided immediate emergency first aid, calling an ambulance to attend at speed. As Kevin was about to start CPR, Ivy began breathing again.

On the water, the skipper of a 7.5m Whittleby Cruiser contacted us by radio on February 16, stating the boat was experiencing motor problems and taking on water in the Manning River.

The skipper told watch officer Bek Brown that while the bilge pump was handling the situation, he needed a tow. Kevin Bailey and Peter Ward quickly deployed *Crowdy 20*. On arrival at the scene, they found the skipper had managed to tie up at a wharf, where the boat was now taking on far more water than the bilge could handle.

With the boat at risk of sinking while under tow back to Cooperook boat ramp, it needed a further 15 minutes of pumping out once back on its trailer. Due to the swift



MR Crowdy Harrington's UC Bek Brown, Mary Thomas and Kevin Bailey collecting donations in 40 degree heat over summer.

response from both radio and boat crews, a disastrous emergency was avoided and both boat and skipper were returned to safety.

Boaters stayed safe on our local waters over the peak season, with

the unit Logging On 218 vessels, including 17 via the *MarineRescue* app, with 540 people on board.

The radio base took a total of 1,780 radio and phone calls.

Mary Thomas

Nambucca vigilance keeps swimmers safe

Fantastic public response to unit's proactive summer patrols.

Marine Rescue Nambucca Heads volunteers were activated on December 10 after a board rider was attacked by a shark on the Nambucca Bar.

The 36-year-old was surfing on his own at the Nambucca River entrance when he was bitten about 7.15am, sustaining deep lacerations to a leg. He managed to get to the breakwall, where he was recovered by an ambulance crew and transferred to a rescue helicopter that had landed on the V Wall.

The crew of *Nambucca 20*, skipper Graham Horne, David Morris, Colin Cracknell and Vaughan Thompsett, located the injured surfer's board and patrolled the bar to look for sharks. Another surfer had his board bitten by a Great White shark just north of the river entrance at Urunga on February 4.

This summer we again implemented our proactive procedures to prevent swimmers being swept into danger at the river mouth, with two rapid-response Rescue Water Craft, *NH 11* and *X 10*, patrolling the bar.

Daily patrols started on December 22, with our three accredited RWC operators, Ken Brandli, Dave Morris and Gary Nichols, rotating shifts on the ebb tide for five to six hours a day. They were supported in the radio base by Graham Horne, Colin Cracknell, Vaughan Thomsett and Theo Ceapa.

While we assisted a number of swimmers, no one needed to be rescued and the response from the public was fantastic. Planning Minister Anthony Roberts was among the holidaymakers, complimenting us on our strategy.



High-profile summer patrols ... Dave Morris and Ken Brandli on board *X 10* and Gary Nichols and Lawson Tinmouth on *NH 11*.

In one incident, a 3.6 m boat with two adults and four children - who were not wearing lifejackets - on board was headed towards the bar when it struggled to turn back against the tidal flow.

With Ken Brandli's assistance, it managed to turn and slowly head back in. We then realised its

outboard was a 2hp motor.

By the end of the summer patrols, our operators had amassed nearly 50 hours each on the RWCs, which are a great, flexible asset. We are continuing our training, hoping to have six accredited operators for next summer's patrols.

Gary Nichols

Minister inspects new state-of-the-art base

State, council contribute \$1m to Woolgoolga unit's Arrawarra facility.

The new MR Woolgoolga base at Arrawarra Headland has already been lauded as one of Marine Rescue NSW's finest and members recently took the opportunity to show off their new facility.

Lands Minister Paul Toole, Coffs Harbour MP Andrew Fraser and National Party candidate Gurmesh Singh joined Unit Commander Tony Skalla, Deputy Mitch Harvey, Treasurer Cherill Powell and Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne for a tour of the base on February 25.

They thanked the volunteers for their work for the community.

Mr Toole said the State Government and Coffs Harbour City Council had provided more than \$1 million to provide the base overlooking Arrawarra Bay.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the new facility at Arrawarra

Headland was "fit for purpose and one of our best sites in the state".

Mr Fraser said the project was just one in Coffs Harbour that had been supported by the Crown Reserve Improvement Fund. The State Government announced in 2017 that almost \$441,000 had been allocated for works to enable the unit to relocate from Woolgoolga Beach.

Mr Singh said the radio room was crucial to Marine Rescue's work.

Coffs Harbour Mayor Cr Denise Knight said the new facility, to which council had contributed an additional \$600,000, was a great result for the community.

"Council worked with multiple partners to facilitate relocations at two different sites involving Marine Rescue, the University of New England and the Woolgoolga Surf Life Saving Club. It was a complex



Nationals candidate Gurmesh Singh, Lands Minister Paul Toole and Coffs Harbour MP Andrew Fraser take in the panoramic views from the new MR Woolgoolga radio room.

project but we never lost sight of the goal and the final results speak for themselves - both UNE and Marine Rescue now have a fantastic new facility at Arrawarra and the surf club can begin building their brand new building in Woolgoolga."

Deputy Unit Commander Mitch Harvey has been recognised in

the Seven News Young Achiever Awards, which promote the positive achievements of young people up to 29 years of age.

Mitch was named the winner of the Scouts NSW/ACT Youth Development Awards category. The winners were announced at a gala dinner in Sydney on March 1.

Rescue Water Craft a rapid response asset

Port Macquarie operators quickly on scene on river and offshore.

Marine Rescue Port Macquarie rescue vessels and crews were a high-visibility presence on the water over summer, performing a series of rescue missions and training drills on the Hastings River and offshore.

In a tragic end to the season, our crews spent four days on the water in the search for two young overseas tourists lost off Shelly Beach.

The unit's two Rescue Water Craft, *PM 10* and the new *PM 11*, proved a flexible asset both during regular patrols and as a rapid-response resource. Two families were assisted back to shore on the RWCs, including a mother and her two young sons who swam from the bank to Pelican Island in the middle of the river on January 27. Tired and unsure how to return, the family was helped back to land by *PM 10* and *PM 11*.

The RWCs also were scrambled when a swimmer was swept out



Colourful armada ... MR Port Macquarie's Rescue Water Craft and *PM 20* join a NSW Police vessel in the Australia Day parade on the Hastings River. Photo: Alex McNaught.

to sea in challenging surf and bar conditions. As well as being tasked up river and out to sea and taking a prominent role in the Australia Day river parade, both inflatable *PM 20* and our primary vessel *PM 30* staged additional patrols and training, giving more members the chance to join vessel operations.

Man overboard drills by the RWCs

and *PM 20* in the choppy conditions at the river mouth provided training in rapidly retrieving a person from the water and a demonstration of the unit's operations for the public on the breakwall.

We have 12 new boat crew trainees, six in training as watch officers and 13 radio operators in training at our radio base, nine of

whom are local paramedic students. All will be welcome additions to the rosters when qualified.

First prize in our latest raffle, a boat and trailer, was fittingly won by a marine studies student and second prize, a travel voucher, by a mother looking forward to a welcome break.

Alex McNaught

Crews praised for skill and compassion

Searches for missing people and vessels at sea dominated the seasonal workload for members of MR Coffs Harbour.

Unit Commander Russell Shelton said he was proud of the professional, skilled and compassionate response by the unit's rescue crews and Search and Rescue Command Centre personnel to a recent series of fatalities.

Just before summer, a search was mounted for a possible lost fisher when a tinnie was found upturned on Campbells Beach just north of Coffs Harbour with one person deceased nearby. The vessel had not Logged On so there was no information as to how many people may have been on board.

A search by *Coffs 30* and Surf Life Saving fortunately identified no further casualties.

On December 17, six swimmers got into difficulty in the surf at Moonee Beach, with two dying at the scene and one unable to be found.

An intense search for the missing man was mounted with vessels from MR Coffs Harbour, Wooli and Woolgoolga, as well as Surf Life Saving and the Police Marine Area Command. The search concluded on December 20 without result but the missing man was recovered the following day near Point Plomer, 76nm to the south.

A confirmed flare sighting off Sawtell on January 9 led to a search in the darkness that ended without any distressed vessel being located.

A woman was retrieved from rough surf at the northern end of Woolgoolga Beach on February 7 but her male companion could not



MR Coffs Harbour Unit Commander Russell Shelton on duty in the unit's Search and Rescue Coordination Centre.

be found. Crews from MR Coffs Harbour, Woolgoolga and Wooli searched with Surf Life Saving, police and the Westpac helicopter for two days, again without result.

While these were our major operations of the summer, our crews responded to a total of 19 incidents and our radio team took 4,204 radio calls, Logging On 1,369 boats.

Operations included the rescue of two people from a small sailing catamaran overturned out to sea, waking a skipper to pull his yacht off the rocks inside Coffs Harbour when his anchor dragged after a night time wind change and an unusual run of engine failures, flat batteries, steering failures and fuel problems.

Graeme King

It's a dirty job but someone's got to do it

Mud, wind, storms all in a day's work for Newcastle rescue crews.



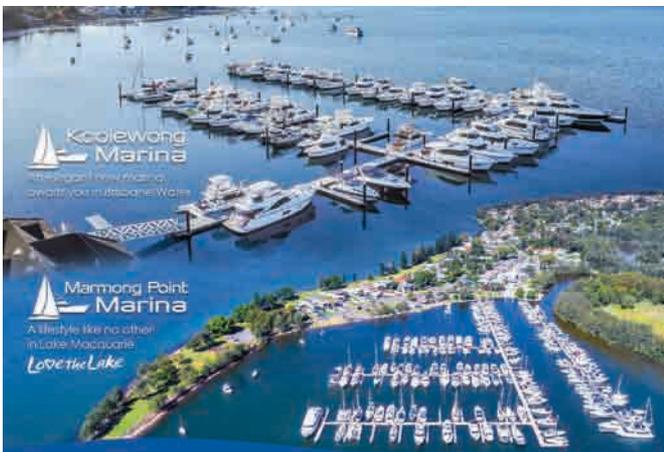
Up to his knees in it ... Newcastle 30 crew member Wayne Bissett crawls through the mud to transfer a tow line to a boater stuck fast in the mud on an ebbing tide on the Hunter River. Photos: Ron Calman.

The new year got off to a stormy start in Newcastle, with severe weather forcing the cancellation of the city's planned New Year's Eve fireworks extravaganza, but by February conditions were even filthier for the crew of *Newcastle 30*. The unit was on duty to patrol the

fireworks exclusion zone and assist boaters who had anchored off the Stockton waterfront for the planned 9pm show. As a safety precaution ahead of the approaching weather, the rescue crew advised the smaller spectator boats of the expected wind

strengths, which saw most skippers wisely depart for home. After the storm resulted in the show being called off, *NC 30* turned to helping clear the main channel for a 100m bulk carrier to enter the harbour. *NC 30* was again on the water to assist boaters enjoying the celebrations for Australia Day. The crew provided a safety watch to help vessels find a safe passage around the Newcastle to Stockton swim and while not many boats were out in the hot conditions, this time the rescheduled fireworks went off with the expected bang. The unit's radio operators logged On 250 vessels and responded to 352 radio calls over December and January. Boaters generally stayed safe on local waters, with our crews responding to 14 incidents between November and mid-February, mostly related to mechanical and battery problems. On January 12, a 13m yacht travelling from Port Stephens to Newcastle called for help late at night when its engine failed and its mainsail blew out. *NC 30* was deployed, taking the yacht under tow just before 1am and returning it to a safe anchorage at Stockton. The following day, three people on board a 6m runabout called for help when their boat's engine failed

just off the entrance to the harbour, leaving them drifting towards the rocks. The boat was towed in choppy conditions back to the North Stockton boat ramp. On February 3, the unit's radio room received a call from a boater who had unsuccessfully tried to tow a stranded runabout from the mudflats on the Hunter River. The runabout, with two adults and two children on board, had run aground on an ebbing tide. Unit Commander Ron Calman and crew member Wayne Bissett arrived on *NC 30* on the south side of the north arm of the river to find the boat stuck high and dry. Our crew members are never ones to turn their backs on people in need of help in a tough situation and weren't about to let some mud and grime stop them in this case. Disembarking *NC 30*, Wayne crawled 50 metres through the mud to carry a tow line to the runabout's skipper before retracing his 'steps'. The UC's talents as a skipper then came to the fore and he was able to re-float the boat. *NC 30* returned to its pen where both Wayne and the rescue vessel had a good wash. Congratulations to MR Newcastle members Stuart Lawson and Mick Quill who have achieved their Marine Rescue Crew qualification. Terry Reynolds



Koolewong Marina
The Space and Time
await your Multisport Waters

Marmong Point Marina
A lifestyle like no other
in Lake Macquarie
Love the Lake

A Lifestyle Like No Other

Discover the tranquil 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's of unspoiled shoreline with vast expansion 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 hardstand area.

Koolewong Marina is the Central Coast's newest marina. With 50 berths for vessels up to 25 metres, including catamarans, this fantastic facility has state of the art services, stylish onshore guest amenities, vessel pump out system, high tech security & safety systems and 7 day a week onsite Marina supervisor. Enjoy on-site hospitality at Boathouse Bar & Dining, easy access to public transport by land and stunning cruising areas, such as Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury by water. Koolewong Marina is the ideal location to berth your pride and joy.

marmongpointmarina.com.au
1 Nanda Street, Marmong Point NSW
Ph: (02) 4958 3333

koolewongmarina.com.au
19 Brisbane Water Drive, Koolewong NSW
Ph: (02) 4341 4000

New boats mean safer seas on Central Coast

Flexible resources ensure we're ideally equipped: Unit Commander.

Boaters' safety on the Central Coast has been bolstered thanks to two versatile new rescue vessels recently welcomed to the MRNSW fleet.

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Terrigal MP Adam Crouch joined Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Board Directors and MR Central Coast volunteers and their families to commission the unit's new boats at its Point Clare base.

Mr Grant said *Central Coast 30* and *Central Coast 21* would significantly strengthen the unit's rescue capability and ensure recreational boaters could enjoy their local waterways safely.

"The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government is proud to have provided Marine Rescue's volunteers with two new state-of-the-art, fully-equipped Naiad rescue boats worth more than \$780,000, meaning safer seas across the Central Coast," Mr Grant said.

Light rain fell as the ceremony

began, a reminder that rescues take place in all weather.

Mr Crouch said *CC 30* was a 10m vessel that could carry out offshore operations from the unit's Terrigal base, while the 7.5m *CC 21* would be dispatched from Point Clare to respond to emergencies on Brisbane Water and up to 15nm offshore.

"These new additions will give Marine Rescue's dedicated volunteers on the Central Coast valuable operational flexibility, and come on top of the State Government's recent \$37.6 million investment in the organisation - the biggest in its history," he said.

Commissioner Tannos said the two boats were among almost 90 vessels delivered under the MRNSW Fleet Modernisation Program.

"Thanks to the ongoing support of the State Government, we have been able to ensure our volunteers have modern, reliable and safe rescue vessels to assist the region's



Liberal candidate for Gosford Sue Dengate, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Terrigal MP Adam Crouch, Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Unit Commander Roger Palmer at the commissioning of the new MR Central Coast rescue vessels.

large boating community in times of trouble on the water," he said.

MRNSW Senior Chaplain Richard Wrightson blessed the vessels and the volunteers who serve on them.

MR Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer said the unit was now ideally equipped to mount offshore search and rescue operations and assist boaters in

trouble closer to shore on Brisbane Water, Broken Bay and their tributaries.

"*Central Coast 30* now is permanently over at the Haven on operational duties," he said.

"Everything is going well and I am very pleased with it and so are all the members of Central Coast."

Brendan Trembath

Viewers follow vessel from factory to sea

Video series puts our world-class search and rescue fleet on show.

Marine Rescue NSW has tracked the progress of new rescue vessel *Central Coast 30* from the factory floor through to its February commissioning.

The boat was the feature of the *How to build a cutting edge rescue boat* video series launched on MRNSW social media channels in May last year.

The first video in the series showed Yamba Welding & Engineering staff working on the boat design and welding the skeleton of the 10m Naiad.

YW&E owner Bill Collingburn explained that MRNSW's commitment to building boats in NSW had meant he could employ extra skilled staff and apprentices

in the regional town where his business is based.

We next joined the boat on its sea trials to test its performance and followed it to the Sydney International Boat Show, where it proved a popular drawcard on the marina.

Episode four saw the boat heading north up the coastline to its new home base at the Central Coast unit. YW&E apprentice Dana-jo Radanovic joined the delivery crew for the voyage.

The series, posted on Facebook, concluded with the commissioning ceremony, capturing MR Central Coast crew members' satisfaction with their new vessel and its sister boat, *Central Coast 21*.



Star of social media, *Central Coast 30*, at its new home base with its sister vessels, *Central Coast 21* and *Central Coast 22*.

Media and Marketing Manager Brendan Trembath, who produced the series, said it had logged 13,500 views.

"The series was a great way to

demonstrate the world-class search and rescue vessels in our fleet. It also showcased the expertise and skill of the workforce employed in our vessels' construction," he said.

Boaters, rescuers work together to save lives

Lake Macquarie vessel to be named in memory of late Unit Commander.

Six women thrown in the water from an overturned outrigger canoe, a man injured by a stingray and two teenagers three hours overdue on a jet ski ride were among 120 emergencies to which crews from MR Lake Macquarie responded over the peak summer season.

Strong winds and rough seas kept many boaters on shore, with the number of vessels Logging On and calls for help subsequently slightly lower than in previous years. Our radio base still took about 3,500 radio and phone calls, Logging On some 800 vessels and booking 425 Swansea Bridge openings.

The peak season drew to a close with the welcome arrival on February 7 of our new rescue vessel, *Lake Macquarie 20*, a \$300,000 7.8m Sailfish, to be named after our late Unit Commander Neil Grieves, who passed away last year.

An otherwise routine morning on December 29 was interrupted by a call from a local boat reporting that an outrigger canoe had overturned

on the Swansea Bar and was being carried out to sea by the tide, with a number of people in the water. The operator asked the skipper to assist while our crews were deployed.

Another boater radioed in to say they were also assisting as Rescue Water Craft *LM 13* raced over the bar to find six women, all of whom were wearing lifejackets, in the water. *LM 30* also was under way within 10 minutes and soon had the overturned canoe under tow with two women on board. With the other women taken on board the private vessels and *LM 13*, the group was returned to shore. This was a fantastic example of MRNSW crews and the boating public working together to achieve a safe outcome in an emergency.

On January 12, the radio base received a frantic phone call to say that a man walking in shallow water at Salts Beach had received a serious foot injury from the barb of a stingray. He was in severe pain and bleeding from his foot.

LM 13 was immediately



The newly-delivered *Lake Macquarie 20* will be named after the late Unit Commander Neil Grieves. Photo: Kelly McNeil.

dispatched, with our operator providing emergency first aid until a NSW Ambulance arrived to transport the man to the John Hunter Hospital.

Just on dark on Australia Day, a worried mother called the base to advise that her 13 and 17-year-old children, who had gone for a jet ski ride to visit the sand islands in the Swansea channel, were three hours overdue and not answering

their phones. *LM 30* diverted from a patrol to search for the missing pair, with the skipper using the boat's loud hailer to ask people in the area if they had seen the teenagers.

The crew was able to locate the pair and take them on board and the jet ski in tow, before reuniting them with their father, who was on another vessel looking for them.

Mal Wardrop

Falling water levels a hazard in poor visibility

Crews at MR Tuggerah Lakes have responded to an increased number of emergencies resulting in people needing to be rescued from the water this summer.

Eleven people on board boats and jet skis ended up in the water when their vessels overturned or broke down. The unit also has seen more boaters without lifejackets.

The drop in water levels over the lakes during the season has made operations more hazardous for our crews, especially when called out after dark or in poor visibility.

With the Central Coast attracting an ever-increasing number of tourists from Sydney and overseas and locals keen to get out on the

water, we have seen a rise in the variety of water craft on the lakes this year, particularly stand-up paddle boards. These can be easily blown off course with weather changes and with the riders not usually wearing a lifejacket, they are susceptible to the cold and wind. Once in the water, they can be quickly separated from their board with no means of communication and are difficult to see and locate.

The unit's rescue crews responded to 16 incidents over summer, starting on December 3, when *TL 20* was quickly deployed after our radio base received a report at 9.15pm that cries for help could be heard in the vicinity of

Pelican Island on the lake.

Three people on board an overturned tinnie had been rescued by a passing vessel and returned to the shore, with *TL 20* taking their boat under tow to Picnic Point.

When a 3m tinnie overturned on the lake on December 15, one of the two people on board managed to swim to shore and alert police.

TL 20 was dispatched just after 5pm, along with members of The Entrance Surf Club and Westpac Rescue helicopter, which located the other person about 500m from the outer marker of Wyong River. The casualty was winched to safety and transported to a waiting NSW Ambulance at nearby Tacoma Oval.

Our crew rescued two people, neither wearing a lifejacket, whose 4m runabout was stuck upside down in mud, blocking the entrance to the Wyong River on Boxing Day. On December 29, *TL 21* was on the water when it came across a broken down jet ski with two people in the water and one on the craft, all wearing lifejackets. The trio was returned to our north base safe and well.

Our crews also were kept busy with several tows for broken down vessels, as well as supporting local fireworks celebrations by towing the firing barges and helping maintain a safe perimeter during the shows.

Robert Sutton

Night missions show value of training in dark

Waterbomber drops in on port side at height of bushfire fighting operation.

Regular night operations training has proved invaluable for the boat crews at MR Port Stephens, who were tasked to assist seven boats in trouble after dark throughout December and January.

Night manoeuvres on the water are a different experience from those in daylight. Naturally, visibility is dramatically reduced, precise navigation is essential and disorientation can be an issue. This is the reason our boat crew undertakes monthly night training.

In late January, our crew was tasked to investigate and if possible, assist a vessel that had run aground along the coast.

The heavy yacht was beached and the tide was rapidly falling.

Despite the tireless efforts of the skipper and crew of *Port Stephens 31*, it wasn't possible to free the stranded vessel. The crew placed a kedging anchor to help stabilise the yacht until the next morning's flood tide and returned to base, Logging Off after 1am.

With the yacht's crew choosing to stay on board, the unit's radio base monitored their safety overnight.

Next day, police vessel *WP 24* assisted the yacht off the sand before towing it into Port Stephens, with all those on board safe.

Most incidents over the summer season were caused by fuel problems or engine failure. In 2018, our radio room managed 225 incidents and answered almost



The crew of *Port Stephens 31* responds under darkness to a yacht beached on a rapidly falling tide in late January.

32,000 radio and telephone calls.

On a lighter note, while *PS 31* was assisting two other distressed vessels one morning, the ever-watchful crew reported something rarely heard on a marine rescue

vessel to the helm: "Skipper, watch the aircraft on the port side" as a water bombing aircraft swooped to pick up water for a bushfire fighting operation at nearby Tea Gardens.

Iain Blackadder

New Naiad put to test over peak season

Seven rescues keep Central Coast crews on the move on Australia Day.

The newest vessel in the MR Central Coast fleet, *Central Coast 21*, has proven quite the workhorse since its delivery at the start of the summer, undertaking numerous rescues over the peak season.

The Central Coast unit launched 68 missions over the three months of summer. Our radio operators Logged On 393 vessels and handled 684 radio calls.

Our first task of 2019 was to assist a vessel that suddenly lost steering just off The Entrance as it travelled south to Davistown on Brisbane Water on New Year's Day.

CC 21 took the boat under tow about 7pm. Reaching Box Head about 9pm, the skipper decided to take the vessel to a mooring outside the Point Clare base as it was too dark to safely travel to Davistown. The two boats arrived at the base at 11pm at the end of a long day for the crew, who had been on the water for 12 hours.

Our crews were kept on the

move on Australia Day, with seven incidents and support for the Woy Woy fireworks adding to scheduled crew assessments. Not long after the duty crew had headed out on *CC 21* for an assessment, they were tasked to tow a putt putt beached in Lintern channel with engine problems to safety.

They then headed to Tascott for man overboard drills and were joined by *CC 22* for a successful towing assessment.

The next call was from a skipper whose engine had failed, sending the vessel drifting on to mud at Blackwall. The crew of *CC 21* carefully navigated through the mud to attach a tow line and return the boat to Blackwall ramp before then taking a vessel at Booker Bay back to the Lintern Street ramp.

Ten minutes after *CC 21* returned to base at 2.20pm, the crew was tasked to assist a vessel with a flat battery at Lobster Beach. On the way, they were diverted to a 39-foot



Summer workhorse ... the new 7.5m Naiad, *Central Coast 21*.

yacht taking on water at Booker Bay, with those on board all bailing frantically. Rescue crew members boarded the yacht to set up a bilge pump, investigate the source of the water and rectify the problem while *CC 22* instead responded to the stranded vessel at Lobster Beach.

Once the pump-out was completed 90 minutes later, the crew of *CC 21* headed to Lobster Beach to rendezvous with *Cottage Point 31*, taking over the tow of a vessel to Koolewong ramp, and

arriving back at base about 5.20pm.

CC 21 and *CC 22* spent the evening supporting the fireworks show. As they were heading back to base about 9.30pm, *CC 21* diverted to assist a tinny with two people on board that had run aground in Paddys channel.

The next day *CC 30* joined our colleagues from MR Broken Bay, Hawkesbury and Cottage Point to provide a safety watch for the Big Swim at Palm Beach.

Mitch Giles

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Three boaters, sea dog adrift in fog

Crew pinpoints vessel's location.



Cottage Point 30 tows a 5m runabout to safety through the summer sea fog.

The crew of *Cottage Point 30* expertly navigated their way through a thick summer sea fog to rescue three people and a salty sea dog from their stranded runabout early in the new year.

This was one of the more complicated operations during another busy summer for the *Cottage Point* unit, with our crews conducting more than 50 missions.

No sooner had the kettle boiled on January 12 than MR Terrey Hills tasked our duty team to rescue a 5m centre console runabout that had broken down at the Northern Sydney Fish Aggregation Device about 12nm east of Barrenjoey Headland.

CP 30 was soon making its way through a 1.5m north-east swell to reach the runabout. Unable to restart his engine and without a visual reference, the skipper gave the rescue crew his GPS coordinates.

By now, a thick sea fog had rolled in and enveloped *CP 30*, restricting visibility to less than 40m and making radar ineffectual in locating the 5m fibreglass boat.

Accurately plotting its set and drift became essential to locating the stricken vessel, which had now drifted some 3.5nm from its original reported position.

The rescue crew's training and experience led them to locate the

distressed vessel just 50m from where they had calculated it would be. A line was secured for a long, slow tow through the fog, with a lumpy swell on the starboard quarter making for an uncomfortable journey. A pod of dolphins provided an escort for the boats from about 6nm off Barrenjoey.

More than four hours after setting off, the crew returned the three relieved boaters and their dog to the Parsley Bay boat ramp, before heading back to base for that cuppa.

Unit Commander Paul Millar said the operation had demonstrated the importance of training members to the highest possible standards.

"The conditions were unfavourable but the crew were well trained, prepared and up to the task. Their preparedness resulted in more members of the boating community getting home safely," he said.

Our unit has been training with Toll rescue helicopter crews for two years, conducting 150 successful highline transfers. We were pleasantly surprised when Toll coordinator Kristina Mitropoulos presented us with a framed photo of *CP 30* with one of the new AW139 helicopters in recognition of our successful partnership. Thanks to the team at Toll for the presentation and the opportunity to work together.

Tim Pike & Tony Gordon

Welcome to newest rescue boat on harbour

Dual celebration as Port Jackson commissions vessel and opens base.

The newest rescue vessel on Sydney Harbour has been officially welcomed to the MRNSW fleet, with members of MR Port Jackson marking the commissioning of their new rapid-response boat and the opening of their new waterfront operations centre on February 23.

Drummoyne MP John Sidoti joined MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Chair Jim Glissan, Board Directors and representatives of the Police Marine Area Command and SES to commission *Port Jackson 20* and cut the ribbon on the new base in the redeveloped Birkenhead Point Marina.

This was the second major news event of the summer for the unit.

On January 27, we hosted Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant, Mr Sidoti, Commissioner Tannos and our colleagues from MR Middle Harbour for the announcement of the NSW Government's investment of \$37.6 million in MRNSW over the next four years.

Mr Sidoti said *Port Jackson 20* was a significant boost to the unit's rescue capability and would help ensure recreational boaters could enjoy Sydney Harbour, the Lane Cove and Parramatta rivers and offshore waters safely.

He said the NSW Government was proud to have provided the unit



MR Port Jackson Deputy Peter Richards, Paul Robinson, Unit Commander Greg Urand, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Drummoyne MP John Sidoti with *Port Jackson 20*. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

with the fully-equipped search and rescue vessel, worth \$340,000.

"Every cent that the community and government invests in this organisation is money well spent," he said.

The new 7.5m Naiad was delivered shortly before Christmas, just in time for its first duty in the washing machine conditions around the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race on Boxing Day.

Our crews also saw action during the other major summer events on the harbour, including New Year's Eve fireworks, Australia Day celebrations and the new F50 catamaran SailGP.

Members are impressed with the state-of-the-art equipment and

performance of the new vessel, which was named after long serving unit member Paul Robinson.

Unit Commander Greg Urand praised Paul for his selfless work over the years, not only coordinating the unit's administration and treasury roles but also acting as a supportive mentor to our members.

Commissioner Tannos said *PJ 20* was one of almost 90 vessels delivered under the landmark Fleet Modernisation Program.

Mr Sidoti said the unit's new base, overlooking its vessels' berths on the marina, provided the volunteers with the resources and facilities they needed to coordinate their rescue operations and training activities on the harbour.

The unit's members have thanked Managing Partner of accountancy and consultancy firm Nexia Australia, Paul Lenton, who presented us with a \$20,000 sponsorship during the commissioning ceremony.

The unit's expanded capability meant we were on the water for more than 10 additional weekdays during January, assisting boaters with jump starts, tows and retrieval of smaller vessels adrift.

Our trainees have continued to build their skills and congratulations go to Alexander Fenwick for being the first from the 2018 intake to attain his Crew rating.

Tom Crvenkovic & Brendan Trembath



MR Port Jackson treasurer Paul Robinson christens his namesake during its commissioning ceremony on February 23.



Commissioner Stacey Tannos and MP John Sidoti do the honours to open the new MR Port Jackson base at Birkenhead Point.

Two jet ski riders killed on Hawkesbury

Police thank volunteer crews for helping bring closure to family.

Police have thanked crews from MR Hawkesbury for their assistance in a multiple agency search for a missing jet ski rider on the Hawkesbury River.

Emergency services, including the crew of *Hawkesbury 22*, launched a search on the river at Wilberforce early on February 17, after three men are believed to have fallen from a jet ski near Percys Place Ski Gardens.

A 35-year-old man was uninjured, while a 49-year-old was recovered from the water but could not be revived.

When a 60-year-old man was unable to be located, a search was mounted by officers from the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains Police Area Commands, Marine Area Command, PoAir and Police Rescue, along with MR Hawkesbury, Roads and Maritime Services and the Hawkesbury SES.

Both *HW 22* and *HW 21* joined the operation the following day, searching 6nm downstream.

HW 21 and a crew from MR Broken Bay were stood down as they headed out for the third day of the operation, after the body of a man was found washed ashore about 800-900m from the site of the incident.

Chief Inspector Garry Sims from the Hawkesbury Police thanked the

volunteers for their efforts.

"We appreciate your assistance very much. Your boats played an important role in the task and while a sad result, we were able to bring closure for the family," he said.

This was a tragic end to a summer season that saw MR Hawkesbury busier than ever, with our volunteers committing more than 2,900 hours throughout December and January.

This workload included our participation in the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race and New Year's Eve fireworks on Sydney Harbour and responding to more than 40 incidents, including two medical assists for people living on the river with no road access.

In the first six weeks of 2019 alone, we launched over 20 missions, returning more than 50 boaters to safety and we handled more than 500 radio and phone communications.

One of the biggest hazards for boaters on the Hawkesbury River is the ever-present mud banks.

Although most are well marked by lateral and cardinal marks, this does not prevent boaters getting themselves into sticky situations, particularly on an ebbing tide.

Over the years, we have received calls from vessels ranging from jet skis and small tinnies to large



The PolAir helicopter and *Hawkesbury 21* join the search for a missing jet ski rider on the Hawkesbury River. Photo: Sarah Adair.

cabin cruisers. We frequently warn houseboat skippers to move before the falling tide leaves them high and dry.

In recent weeks we have assisted two teenagers stuck on the mud for five hours on a runabout and a jet ski well and truly mired near our base.

We were able to get a rope to the rider and as gently as possible, pull him off the mud.

Generally speaking, boaters on the larger vessels are quite comfortable to wait for a higher tide to refloat their vessel but this is not so for smaller vessels with little to no shelter from the elements and usually only limited supplies on board. Given there is significantly less chance of damaging their

vessels' hulls or motors, we are more likely to try to pull these off the mud bank.

Many of these incidents are avoidable. When boating on the Hawkesbury or any other sheltered waterway, it is vital for the skipper to understand the meanings of the navigational markers.

Always check a local chart or boating map from Roads and Maritime Services or on a smartphone app and make use of your onboard technology, such as depth sounders or fish finders, which can be set to sound an alarm when shallow water is under the vessel - useful equipment, given the banks' constantly changing nature.

Derek Whorlow & Jamie Abnett-Miller

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Extra patrols ensure team rescue-ready

Public grateful for help as Middle Harbour crews launch 54 missions.

With additional mid-week operations ensuring a ready rescue presence on the State's busiest waterway throughout peak season, crews from MR Middle Harbour performed 54 operations between Boxing Day and the end of the Australia Day long weekend.

The decision to mount extra weekday operations proved popular with the boating public, who were grateful for our assistance.

The unit was again at the heart of Australia Day activities on Sydney Harbour. *Middle Harbour 30* started the day working with *Port Jackson 30* and NSW Maritime to maintain the exclusion zone for the ferry marathon before next moving to patrol the zone set up for the yacht and tug ballet. *MH 20* had the happy task of distributing prizes for the best dressed vessels scattered around the harbour before *MH 30* joined the evening's working vessel



Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye ... David Beeforth keeps a lookout as *MH 30* farewells HMAS *Canberra*, departing Sydney for Exercise Ocean Explorer. Photo: Brian Roberts.

parade in and around Sydney Cove.

Crews conducted eight operations over the long weekend, responding to a kayaker suffering a medical issue and towing vessels with

mechanical issues and out of fuel.

On February 17, *MH 30* farewelled HMA Ships *Success*, *Canberra* and *Newcastle* as they left Sydney Harbour on a three-

month deployment. The taskforce was sailing from the east coast to Western Australian waters to take part in Exercise Ocean Explorer.

Brian Roberts

Swift response to help seasick mum, baby

Broken Bay volunteers clock up 1,000 hours on the water in just one month.

A squally New Year's Eve on Sydney Harbour kicked off a demanding start to 2019 for MR Broken Bay members, who clocked up almost 1,000 crew hours in January alone.

Broken Bay 20 and *BB 30* carried out 50 operations over the summer, mostly in response to boaters experiencing mechanical or fuel issues, but also including safety watches and medical emergencies.

BB 30 was deployed to assist a young family on board a 5m centre console vessel with mechanical problems 1nm north east of Barrenjoey Headland on February 16. Adrift for some time in rolling seas without any shelter, both the infant and mother were seasick and showing signs of dehydration.

They were transferred to *BB 30*

and given their serious condition, skipper Andrew Majewski decided to deliver the mother and child directly to the Palm Beach ferry wharf before returning to tow the boat to Bayview.

Our crew demonstrated the value of our strong emergency service partnerships on January 20 when they transported three NSW Ambulance paramedics to Elvina Bay, near Scotland Island, to treat an injured 40-year-old man who had fallen from a ride-on lawnmower.

Fourteen people were stranded on a broken-down 30-foot cruiser near Scotland Island on January 19. *BB 30* towed the vessel to Newport before next responding to a wooden vessel stopped at Long Nose Point.

As well as taking part in the New Year's Eve fireworks operation,



Broken Bay 30 arrives at Long Nose Point to assist this wooden boat.

we also joined MR Central Coast, Hawkesbury and Cottage Point and Surf Life Saving to provide a safety watch over more than 2,000 participants in the Whale Beach Big Swim offshore on Australia Day.

Congratulations to Deputy Unit Commander Stuart Sperduti

on attaining his Masters rating; Christoph Schrader, Andrew Palma and Jason Cain on gaining their MR Crew rating; and to our newest members, Maxine Rickman, Michael Whitworth, Wayne Laughton, Andrew Curdie, David Faen and Jay Khan.

Jimmy Arteaga

Stranded teens rescued in joint operation

Return of the Putters' Regatta celebrates Port Hacking vintage vessels.

The crew of *Port Hacking 30* was quickly on the scene when three teenage boys were caught in the current at Deeban Spit, less than a nautical mile from the MR Botany Port Hacking base, on January 23.

The boys in distress were spotted by the crew of the *Tom Thumb III*, the faithful ferry which takes residents and visitors between Cronulla and Bundeena.

The water was too shallow for the ferry to reach the trio but two men in a smaller boat were directed to the Spit to fish the boys from rocks.

The volunteer crew of the rescue boat *Port Hacking 30* retrieved the boys' two concerned mates from the sandy shore.

Skipper Graham Clarke skilfully brought the vessel into the shallows, while contending with strong wind and a heavy chop. The boys waded out and were helped on board by Grahame Aulbury and Jesse Rowley.

A 15-year-old who had cuts to his

leg and foot was given first aid by Mr Rowley.

NSW Ambulance and police officers were waiting at Cronulla Wharf for the boys' return.

The unit often trains with other agencies to prepare for emergencies on the water. On February 4, *Botany 30* helped tow one of two large life rafts dropped by the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter in Yarra Bay near Sydney Airport.

Thanks to our volunteers for their hard work through the season, whether on the search and rescue vessels, at the Solander radio base, fundraising, training or maintaining the base grounds; and a big hand to roster wrangler Ian Baker.

Members have farewelled Unit Commander Craig Horner, a 20-year veteran of the unit, who resigned in January and will be sorely missed. Lewis Stockbridge will serve as UC until the next election.

He described Mr Horner as a



Skipper Graham Clarke steers *Port Hacking 30* towards a group of boys caught in the current. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

dedicated member of the unit.

"He's been a great skipper, a good sounding board," he said.

This summer also saw the return of an event celebrating the vintage vessels of Port Hacking and our unit played a starring role.

PH 30 escorted more than 60 boats taking part in the Port Hacking Putters' Regatta, organised by

MRNSW State Training Manager Brad Whittaker, on February 3.

Cronulla MP Mark Speakman started the event from Hungry Point.

Cronulla Ferries, which put on a ferry for spectators, generously donated the proceeds from ticket sales to the unit to support our mission of saving lives on the water.

Brendan Trembath

Radio operators keep watch around clock

13 Maydays among hundreds of calls for help to Terrey Hills base.

Thirteen boaters forced to issue Mayday calls over summer were assured of a rapid emergency response thanks to the hard working volunteers at MR Terrey Hills.

Our radio operators kept watch around the clock, responding to a total of 869 calls for help throughout the season, including 13 Maydays and 27 Pan Pans. While the workload was similar to last year, it marked an increase of more than 550 calls over 2017.

Over the peak season the team handled a total of 6,634 radio and phone calls. As well as coordinating the response to emergencies, the unit helped keep boaters safe on the water, Logging On 1,766 vessels, including 771 via the *MarineRescue* app, and assisting with 876 radio

checks to ensure boaters' marine radios were operating properly.

An Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant for \$4,755 has enabled the unit to acquire an interactive display screen for its training activities. Thank you to the NSW and Commonwealth governments for this valuable funding and to our grants officer Helen Manifold for her work.

Congratulations to radio operator Col Dixon who has been awarded his 10 Year Long Service Medal.

With a current complement of 111 members, we are continuing to attract new volunteers through our recruitment campaign.

The unit also is sharing its communications expertise with our colleagues in the NSW Rural Fire



MR Terrey Hills Deputy Unit Commander Graham McNaney (right) presents Col Dixon with his 10 Year Long Service Medal.

Service, who are required to install VHF marine radios in their fire boats.

In January, Terrey Hills trainers Geoff Rose and Sandy Howard held a marine radio course for the RFS Regentville fire boat base crews.

Ten coxswains were trained and an additional nine crew attended as observers, with positive feedback from all involved.

Graham McNaney & Denis Comber

Volunteer memorial theft 'a terrible blow'

Shoalhaven members appeal for propeller's return to Crookhaven Heads.

A heavy bronze propeller from an old trawler that formed a valued memorial to deceased members of MR Shoalhaven has been stolen from the unit's radio base at Crookhaven Heads.

The theft was discovered by members when they arrived for duty on February 19, Deputy Unit Commander Martin Kaye said.

"It's part of our memorial for passed members. This is disrespectful to a volunteer emergency service and to our late colleagues who gave their time and energy to save lives on the water," he said.

"Our volunteers usually receive immense respect and gratitude from our local community but this is a terrible blow from someone who obviously gave no thought to the impact of their actions. Whoever who has taken the propeller, if they are willing to bring it back and leave

it here, there will be no questions asked." Police were contacted and the unit's security footage reviewed.

The unit extended its operations over the Christmas-New Year period with additional rescue vessel activity and extra hours at the Pilot House radio base.

Over December and January, the unit's radio operators handled 1,715 radio calls and 1,318 landline calls, Logging On 779 vessels with 1,903 people on board. Our rescue vessel crew members put in 780 duty hours, responding to 16 calls for help.

In addition to our operational duties, members participated in the Shoalhaven Heads Hotel Monster Charity Day on January 6, where we met Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

The hotel is a great supporter of our unit and we were pleased to support the charity event, staging a display featuring the MRNSW



MR Shoalhaven members Grant Wellard, Danielle Carter and Unit Commander Bill Carter meet Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the Shoalhaven Heads Hotel Charity Day in January.

education trailer and providing trips on board the rescue vessel for families.

Our volunteers spent Australia Day on land operations, carrying out traffic control and car park duties at the Under the Southern Stars

concert at the Shoalhaven City Turf Club.

With a gold coin donation for parking and a donation from the club, our proceeds for the day totalled \$1,000.

Bill Carter

Boats spend summer in the Sussex shallows

Rescuers tow vessels stuck high and dry back into the deep.

Boats that had either run aground or were stranded in very shallow water dominated the workload of crews from MR Sussex Inlet over the summer holiday period.

The unit responded to 17 incidents on the water, including one Mayday operation on January 14, when a boater's 4.9m cuddy cabin ran out of fuel a mile south of the inlet bar and with the anchor dragging, was being washed towards the rocks.

Rescue Water Craft *X Ray 22* proceeded under lights across the bar, locating the boat, which was displaying a V sheet, and pulling it clear of the rocks. After waiting 30 minutes for a higher tide to cross the bar, the vessel was towed to Pelican Shores to refuel.

Earlier in the season *Sussex 10* was deployed when a member of

the public reported a catamaran had foundered on St Georges Basin. Two people were thrown overboard but managed to make their way to shore.

The basin is generally a safe waterway with consistent depths of 6-10 metres but shelves quickly at the edges, at places extending to about 200m from the shore.

Although well marked with navigation markers, boaters frequently end up in shallow water on the wrong side of cardinal markers.

On three occasions vessels were either high and dry or in ankle deep water. Two were successfully pulled into deeper water, one requiring the combined strength of *X Ray 22* and a NSW Police vessel. The other boat was stuck hard in ankle deep water and could not be pulled off, needing



The combined strength of MR Sussex Inlet and Police vessels was needed to pull this boat out of trouble. Photo: Aaron Hayward.

to be dug out in the following days.

Some boaters failed to understand the meaning of the cardinal markers while others failed to anchor after breaking down, ending up in shallow water, creating challenging circumstances but valuable learning opportunities for the rescue vessel crews.

The Sussex Inlet recruiting campaign is proving highly successful with nine new recruits swelling the numbers of our small unit.

Radio operator and crew training is progressing with weekly training sessions.

Les Pataky

Yuletide search result of likely hoax call

Vessel, chopper crews find no sign of overturned boat off Kioloa beach.

A report of an overturned boat that sparked a major search operation on Christmas night is believed to have been a hoax call.

The crew of *Kioloa 20* was quickly deployed at 8.30pm and on the scene off Merry Beach in 15 minutes, soon joined by the Toll rescue helicopter from Wollongong and a crew from MR Ulladulla.

KL 20 coordinated the on-water search, with the Toll helicopter concentrating on the coastline. The operation was called off after three hours when nothing was found.

Police Marine Area Command informed the searchers that no vessels or people had been reported missing and the original call to Triple Zero was untraceable and likely to have been a hoax.

Despite this, the *Kioloa* and Ulladulla rescue vessels were back out on the water at first light on

Boxing Day to continue the search.

The peak summer period was busy for the unit with rescue crew taskings, daily radio watchkeeping and fundraising.

A vessel that had broken down and required a tow back to the *Kioloa* boat ramp again demonstrated some boaters' lack of awareness of navigation regulations, in particular the need to give way to a vessel showing a Delta flag that is 'limited in its ability to manoeuvre'.

Eleven members of MR Ulladulla supported *Kioloa's* growing ranks of radio operators by performing shifts at the unit's radio base to ensure it stayed open from early morning until last boat back each day.

Many thanks to our colleagues for their generous support.

Thanks, too, to the unit's own members for their professionalism, dedication and many hours of



Newly elected MR *Kioloa* Unit Commander Peter White and Deputy Unit Commander Peter Lee.

hard work, ensuring they continue to provide a service to the local community and achieve outstanding results for the unit.

Unit elections were held in January to fill vacancies in the positions of Unit Commander and Deputy Unit Commander, with Peter White elected Commander and Peter Lee as Deputy.

Both have a lengthy background in marine rescue, stretching back to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol.

UC White expressed his gratitude to Illawarra Regional Operations Manager Bruce Mitchell for his hard work in taking on the added role of administering the unit over the past six months and helping return it to operational status.

Ulladulla strikes right note with jazz star

While MR Ulladulla was called to fewer emergencies and saw evidence of improved boating safety awareness throughout 2018, the calm was not to last, with the unit's crews mounting 18 operations, including two on Christmas Day, over the peak boating season.

All three of the unit's rescue vessels were in action, despite a reduction in boating traffic due to the poor weather on many weekends. This mirrored much of 2018, when a series of strong and gale force wind warnings kept boaters on shore.

Our radio operators Logged On 813 vessels and took 1,257 radio calls over December and January.

A famous face was among the skippers assisted in one of seven search and rescue operations at year's end.

On Christmas eve, the crew of *UL 30* escorted a yacht skippered by

Australian jazz star James Morrison into harbour for emergency repairs.

"Our voyage has stopped for now at Ulladulla, not without the help of Marine Rescue - David, Gabrielle and everyone else here at Ulladulla helping us find somewhere to secure the boat till we get it repaired and helping us find our way in last night when there was a squall. It's been great to have people like this to help us mariners get where we're going," the musician said in a Facebook video.

Christmas festivities for the crew of *UL 20* were put on hold when the skipper of a 4.8m runabout with a flat battery 1nm off Bannister Head called for help at 10.40am. Later that night, *UL 30* joined a crew from MR *Kioloa* searching for a reported overturned boat.

The New Year started with a reported flare sighting about 4km north east of Sussex Inlet on



MR Ulladulla Unit Commander David Hall and Deputy Gabrielle Boermans with sailor and jazz star James Morrison.

January 4. *UL 30* was deployed to search the Wreck Bay area along with the Life Saver 23 helicopter. After several hours of fruitless searching and with no vessels reported missing in the area, the crews were stood down.

Both *UL 20* and *UL 30* were deployed on January 12, responding to three rescue calls.

UL 20 searched for an overdue vessel near Brush Island which was located safely, having returned to the *Kioloa* ramp. *UL 30* assisted a sailing vessel that ran out of fuel and needed to be guided into the Ulladulla Harbour mooring point and towed a vessel with mechanical failure near Sussex inlet to safety

Raine O'Keeffe

Eight rescued in two Christmas Day missions

Jervis Bay volunteers go extra mile to help boater in triple trouble.

Christmas lunch was cut short for volunteers from MR Jervis Bay, who were called to rescue eight boaters caught in two serious emergencies in quick succession.

The crew of *Jervis Bay 20* was deployed at 1.30pm when a 5m jet boat with three people on board lost power and with no anchor was drifting towards rocks near the Creswell Navy base.

No sooner was the jet boat returned to safety at Vincentia than both *JB 40* and *JB 20* were rapidly dispatched to Bowen Island, where a 5.5m runabout cruiser had capsized.

All five passengers had managed to reach the island before being taken on board the two rescue vessels and transported to shore.

These were among 30 rescue missions launched by the unit over summer, including a marathon operation that began with a call-out in the dead of night on January 28 when a 7m motor cruiser ran out of fuel on Jervis Bay. *JB 40* departed at 1am, taking the boat under tow to Huskisson Wharf and returning to base by 5am.



Holidaying kids flock to the MR Jervis Bay unit's successful Australia Day Duck Derby fundraiser on Moona Moona Creek. Photo: Ron Walsh.

Informed that the skipper was walking 3km with a jerry can to find fuel, members then used the unit's fuel vehicle to help refuel his boat.

Later the same day the skipper returned to the unit's radio base, asking for medical help. After calling an ambulance and arranging for the man's boat to be slipped, a crew towed it to a local boat yard.

As well as its on-water workload, the unit Logged On 770 vessels over the summer and a third of members

pitched into the organisation of another highly successful Australia Day Duck Derby. A large crowd gathered at Moona Moona Creek for our major annual fundraiser.

We ran six races, each with a \$500 first prize, and a corporate race with \$1,000 for the winning duck. Unit Commander Alex Ross, head of the fundraising team Leona Curran and unit members have thanked our major sponsor Bendigo Bank, Sanctuary Point

and our six \$500 race sponsors, the Huskisson Hotel, Huskisson Chamber of Commerce, Club Jervis Bay, Jervis Bay Wild/Portside Café, St Georges Basin Country Club and Vincentia Village Chamber of Commerce, for their support. Thanks also to our fundraising team and our members who gave their time to ensure the success of the Derby and the members of the public who supported such a worthy cause.

Alex Ross & Ron Walsh

Grant funds top deck upgrade for Hill 60

A \$164,000 grant announced on February 25 will fund a major safety upgrade to MR Port Kembla's Hill 60 radio base.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra Gareth Ward and Wollongong MP Paul Scully announced the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund grant to replace the radio base's viewing platform and stairs and repair and paint the building and radio mast.

"Our MRNSW volunteers work tirelessly to protect boaters and upgrading the local Marine Rescue tower will help them help the community, while the new observation deck will be an exciting tourist attraction with ocean views,"

Mr Ward said.

MR Port Kembla Unit Commander Graeme McCrudden welcomed the grant as fantastic news for the unit.

"This work will benefit both our volunteers and our community," he said.

"The improvements to the building will enhance the working environment for our volunteers, who are on site around-the-clock.

"The Hill 60 deck has been a popular viewing platform for local residents and visitors over the years, particularly during whale watching season but it has been closed for some time because of safety concerns.

"The new veranda and stairs



Set for a facelift ... structural repairs and upgrading works have been funded for the MR Port Kembla Hill 60 base.

mean we will be able to welcome the community back again."

The unit carried out 28 operations

over the peak season, including 15 in response to life-threatening emergencies.

Mist chances for boaters to get out on water

Sea fogs and rough conditions keep most close to Bermagui shore.

Rough conditions and intense sea fogs created boating hazards on the Bermagui coastline over summer, discouraging many boaters and prompting safety warnings to those who did venture out.

A series of sea fogs - or mists - in January resulted in minimal visibility on the water.

While *Bermagui 30* was operating under navigation lights, sounding its horn and making good use of radar, the crew were concerned to see boats travelling at speed with no lights or sound signals. The unit's radio base issued a Securite warning and information was posted on social media to advise boaters of the appropriate precautions for the conditions and encourage safe navigation.

This weather condition is not common in this area but is clearly dangerous if the collision regulations are not followed.

In order to accommodate the holidaying boaters who head to our

region for the summer break and tend to Log On earlier and Log Off later than normal, our radio base opening hours were extended by two hours a day. Our radio operators were on air from 6am to 6pm, with 30 per cent of Log Ons and Log Offs conducted in the extended hours.

This service was appreciated by the boaters who did get out on the water, although with the rough conditions and unusual weather not conducive for enjoyable general boating, sensible boaters stayed home or fished on inland waters.

Our rescue vessel masters and crews had to use considerable skill to tow two yachts to safety and berth them in rough and windy conditions in January.

On January 4, crews from MR Bermagui and Narooma worked together to rescue a 45-foot yacht that had lost steering in 31-knot winds and a 2-3m swell near Montague Island. *Narooma 30* located the Peterson 46 sloop



One of the sea mists that cloaked the Bermagui harbour over summer, prompting safety warnings to boaters. Photo: Denise Page.

running erratically before the weather south of the island. The 16 tonne vessel was far too heavy to tow in the conditions and the larger *Bermagui 30* was rapidly deployed.

NA 30 stayed close as the disabled yacht headed south under engine power to rendezvous with *BG 30*, with the skipper disappearing from the helm several times to reconnect the yacht's steering gear.

The *BG 30* crew managed to pass a tow line to the yacht 600m from a breaking Bermagui bar, towing it in

to the harbour by 7pm.

On January 28, a 37-foot yacht that developed mechanical problems off Bermagui also was returned to harbour by the crew of *BG 30*.

MR Narooma members visited our unit in January to demonstrate the new Fastwave satellite tracking buoy technology. Dropped off in rough conditions, it was recovered with almost pinpoint accuracy using the transmitted data and related calculations on set/drift and leeway.

Denise Page & Paul Houseman

Units witness value of new search technology

With boaters taking advantage of improving conditions to get out on the water in January, two Monaro units also headed out for a training exercise using the region's new coastal search technology.

The training in the use of the Fastwave search datum buoy (SDB) encouraged interactive involvement between radio operators, watch officers and boat crews from both the Narooma and Bermagui units.

More favourable boating weather saw 329 boaters Log On with MR Narooma in January, almost twice the number the previous month. Over 10 weeks of summer, 615 vessels with 2,701 people on board Logged On with the unit. Almost 20 per cent of those taking local trips Logged On using the *MarineRescue* app. Members devoted a total of

924 volunteer hours to their duties.

An electrical storm hit the Narooma base on January 17, knocking out our Automated Identification System and weather station and the Automatic Weather Station on Montague Island.

Our regular Saturday boat crew training was supplemented by the buoy training with Bermagui. The exercise, conducted out of the Bermagui base and an on-water location 4nm north-east of Bermagui Harbour, involved a person-in-water scenario based on realistic response times for both units.

The exercise began on board *Bermagui 30*, with a crew briefing by Narooma's Ross Constable. Two hours later the activated buoy was launched at the search target's last known position by the Bermagui



MR Narooma's Mick Wahren (back right) trains MR Bermagui members Stephen Knight, Peter Ford, Jochen Adam and Lynda Bailey in the use of new search technology.

crew, who were then joined by *Narooma 30* on the search. At the same time, Narooma member Mick Wahren guided the Bermagui watch officers and radio operators through the process of monitoring the SDB and its real-time data via an on-line

dashboard. The value of the buoy was realised by the participants at the base when they successfully calculated the search target's position on the water.

Gillian Kearney & Ross Constable

'They risked their lives and safety to help us'

Volunteers awarded for challenging operation to save yacht from rocks.

Fourteen MRNSW volunteers involved in the night rescue of a stricken yacht off the State's Far South Coast in 2017 were formally recognised for their skill and courage at an awards night in Batemans Bay on February 19.

The event was attended by members of MR Batemans Bay, Bermagui and Narooma, family and friends, local media and Member Services Manager Adrian Adam from State Headquarters. Sergeant Steven Judd represented the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command.

Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan presented awards on behalf of Commissioner Stacey Tannos to recognise the members involved in the challenging rescue in tough conditions south of Moruya.

Mr Sullivan said Commissioner's Commendations for Courage had been awarded to rescue vessel crew members Denise Page, Ray McLeod and Alec Percival from MR Bermagui and Keith Wrench, Peter Varkulevicius, Michael Dolan and Paul Hallam from MR Batemans Bay.

Commissioner's Citations were presented to watch officer Judith Barry-Cotter (MR Narooma), radio operators Peter Ford (MR Bermagui) and Donald Brewster (MR Batemans Bay) and MR Batemans Bay relief crew members Michael Syrek, Matthew Mason, Peter Withington

and David Murn.

"In January 2017 Marine Rescue Batemans Bay Watch Officer Donald Brewster received a Mayday call from the skipper of the 52-foot yacht *La Jo Jo Tres*," Mr Sullivan said.

"The vessel had lost steering and was in danger of smashing onto rocks near Bingi Bingi Point about 15nm south of Moruya Heads."

Remembering the close call, the yacht's skipper Ray Muller said he and his wife and son had exhausted all efforts to save themselves.

"We were totally at the mercy of the ocean," he said. "We were 800 metres off the rocks when I declared an emergency."

Mr Muller was delighted to hear of the volunteers' awards.

"They risked their life and safety to help us. The gratitude and thanks, I can't express it enough," he said.

Rescue boat *Batemans 30* was deployed, skippered by Keith Wrench and crewed by Peter Varkulevicius, Michael Dolan and Paul Hallam.

"A volunteer crew from MR Narooma was also called out but the bar was assessed as not safe to cross," Mr Sullivan said.

"The unit still played a key role as watch officer Judith Barry-Cotter maintained marine radio contact with the distressed vessel and rescue boats sent from Batemans



Battered and torn ... *La Jo Jo Tres* safely back in Batemans Bay after being rescued in a hazardous overnight operation.

Bay and Bermagui."

The Batemans Bay crew punched through large swells for more than 90 minutes to locate the yacht just before 9pm. The crew secured the vessel before transferring the tow to *Bermagui 30*, with Denise Page the skipper and Ray McLeod and Alec Percival the crew.

The Batemans Bay relief crew took over the tow for the final leg of the mission, securing the yacht on a mooring before escorting *BG 30* into

the marina.

MR Batemans Bay Unit Commander Richard Blundell said cooperation between neighbouring units was strong, with the awards night reinforcing the regional bond.

"It was a good night, very well attended," he said, adding he was pleased to see many members' spouses had attended as well.

"Without them we wouldn't have the volunteers," he said.

Brendan Trembath



Peter Withington, David Murn, Donald Brewster, Peter Ford, Judith Barry-Cotter and Mathew Mason with their awards.



MR Narooma watch officer Judith Barry-Cotter (with flowers) celebrates her Commissioner's Citation with unit colleagues.

Stuck sloop freed from Batemans bar in dark

Mechanical, fuel, battery problems cause of most holiday incidents.

More than 1,000 vessels Logged On with MR Batemans Bay over the peak holiday season as boaters flocked to the coast to take advantage of the outstanding summer weather.

With temperatures in the high 30s throughout summer, traffic on the boat ramp was flat out.

Our radio operators took 2,132 radio calls over the two months, with our crews responding to 28 incidents on the water.

Our operations were dominated by calls for help from vessels experiencing relatively minor problems mostly involving flat batteries, mechanical problems or insufficient fuel.

In one lengthy operation, a large sloop called the radio base for help at 2.50pm on December 9, advising that it was stuck fast on the bar on a falling tide.

Both *Batemans Bay 30* and *Batemans Bay 20* were training

nearby and were immediately tasked to assist. After a number of attempts to free the vessel, it was decided to deploy the anchor and wait for the tide to rise.

At 4.45pm, the skipper reported that the sloop was taking on water through a damaged propeller shaft seal and the necessary repairs would render its engine unserviceable.

The crews of *BM 30* and *BM 20* re-launched under darkness at 8pm once the tide was high enough to permit the boat to be freed.

A crew member transferred to the disabled vessel to help weigh the anchor before *BM 30* took the yacht under tow in benign conditions, placing it safely on a mooring at Snapper Island by 8.50pm.

On January 15, an overturned catamaran was spotted drifting near the Tollgate Islands at the entrance to Batemans Bay.

The Westpac Life Saver Rescue



Operation under lights ... *Batemans 30* frees a disabled sloop that had become stuck fast on the Batemans bar at low tide.

Helicopter investigated and found no markings or personal effects on board.

The NSW Police Marine Area Command tasked our crew to tow the boat back to Batemans Bay.

The minor nature of the incidents

to which our crews responded over the peak summer season is evidence that the safe boating message is getting through to our boating community and the majority of boaties are doing the right thing.

Richard Blundell

Man overboard gives thanks for lifejacket

High country crews watch over water dragons on Lake Jindabyne.

A training exercise turned into a real-time emergency response for a crew from MR Alpine Lakes when a fisherman was tossed overboard on Lake Jindabyne on January 21.

Colin Oatley was thrown from his tinnie into the lake in front of the unit's base. Observing the fisherman go under, Unit Commander Les Threlfo tasked the crew of *Alpine Lakes 21*, training nearby with Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan, to respond urgently. There is a high risk of hypothermia for people overboard on the lakes, even in summer.

Mr Oatley said he had submerged a couple of times before managing to inflate his lifejacket and make his way back to shore with the aid



Alpine Lakes 21 watches entrants in the Flowing Festival dragon boat races. Photo: Lorraine Key.

of passers by. "Thank God I was wearing a lifejacket," he said.

The crew of *AL 21* retrieved his tinnie.

Unit members spent two days on board *AL 21* to support the Flowing Festival dragon boat races staged

on a glass-like Lake Jindabyne on February 16 and 17. Other members provided first aid services on shore.

Dragon boat crews travel from across the state for this biannual community event, in which MR

Alpine Lakes has participated over eight years. With thousands of spectators cheering on teams from the shoreline, this was a great promotion for MRNSW, attracting many membership inquiries.

Karin Davies

More boaters Log On after safety campaign

Public response to jet ski emergency shows increased awareness at Merimbula.

A string of emergencies on the Merimbula coastline over summer, including two boats rolling and throwing eight people overboard, all fortunately ended without loss of life or serious injury.

Four people were rescued from the water when their boat overturned at the entrance to the Pambula River on New Year's Eve.

Another four received medical attention after their 5m open runabout overturned north of Mogareeka at the northern end of Tathra Beach on January 21. The boaters were picked up by a passing vessel. Arriving on scene, the crew of *Merimbula 30* determined the overturned boat could not be safely righted offshore, taking it under slow tow back to Tathra Beach.

Fears were held for the safety of a kayaker when an upturned motorised kayak was found floating in deep water 2nm offshore from Turingal Head on January 12.

MB 30 and the Eden Police Marine Area Command were

deployed to search the area but with no one located, *MB 30* towed the abandoned kayak back to shore.

MB 30, Eden Marine Area Command and the rescue helicopter were activated to search for a swimmer feared lost off Short Point on November 29. All were stood down when the swimmer was found safe and well.

A safety awareness campaign in the lead-up to summer, particularly focusing on Logging On and Off, resulted in greater awareness of MR Merimbula's services to the boating community. Our public relations team distributed information about Logging On to venues including holiday parks, hotels, motels, real estate agents and visitors' centres.

The public response to one incident in particular showed the team's hard work had paid off. When a jet skier stranded in rough conditions let off a distress flare on January 9 our radio base was inundated with telephone calls and concerned members of the public



Merimbula 30 crew Stewart Dietrich and Trish Moxon take a vessel that overturned at Tathra on January 21 under tow.

knocking on the door. The rider was rescued and his jet ski towed back to the boat ramp.

Our radio operators handled 1,425 calls in December and January - up 35 per cent over last year - and were encouraged by an increase in the number of skippers Logging On for the first time.

Members again joined in the popular Australia Day Float on the lake from the Merimbula Causeway

to Spencer Park. Our increased public profile, also boosted by our raffle ticket sales, fundraising barbecues and presentations to community groups, has resulted in steady membership inquiries.

Thanks go to the Merimbula Game and Lakes Angling Club for donating the proceeds of the 83rd Gala Fishing Competition Monster Fresh Fish Auction to our unit.

Sonia Teston

Race fleet heads to Hobart without incident

The MR Eden radio base operated around the clock to provide a safety watch over competitors heading down the coastline in the 2018 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

Favourable weather conditions resulted in only one yacht retiring into Eden, before continuing to Hobart in cruising mode after repairs. The usual large number of returning yachts called into Eden. The unavailability of the Breakwater Wharf due to the port development works created some congestion as yachts rafted up to find a resting place.

The summer boating season was relatively quiet, although MR Eden responded to three medical emergencies on board a local tourist

boat and transiting motor cruiser, arranging for medical assistance to meet the vessels at the wharf as they entered port. All had satisfactory outcomes.

The unit's statistics for 2018 show that on average each month, Eden took 1,833 radio and phone calls, Logged On 168 vessels and responded to three calls for help.

Bega MP Andrew Constance recently visited the radio base to inspect our upgrading works.

A \$75,000 NSW Government Infrastructure Grant funded a new search and rescue coordination facility, along with a new staircase and stair lift to improve access to the base and public viewing platform. An official opening will



Bega MP Andrew Constance inspects the upgraded MR Eden base with member Rob Bain, who oversaw the building funding and work, radio operator Tony Lewis and Unit Commander Peter Horne.

be held once the internal fit-out is complete.

Work on the wharf extension is expected to be completed soon.

Visiting skippers should check the Port of Eden website for navigation and mooring changes.

John McKinnon

What we've been up to



Wave! The MRNSW contingent in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade was led by standard bearers Tom Dragutinovich from MR Port Kembla (above) and Headquarters Systems Support Officer Matt Sims, with Greater Sydney Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans steering our decorated 4WD and X Ray 21 (see Page 11). *Photo: Brendan Trembath.*



On a clear day you can see forever ... MR Shellharbour volunteer Joanna Cunningham keeps watch as *Shellharbour 30* returns a disabled 6m half cabin cruiser back to harbour on January 13.



View from the helm ... in a successful joint operation, *Narooma 30* accompanies *Bermagui 30* as it tows a 45-foot yacht that lost steering in rough conditions to safety (see P 38). *Photo: Alison Philip.*



Volunteers afloat ... Hannah Cousin and Wayne Flaherty were among MR Merimbula members who took to the water in colourful additions to the MRNSW fleet for the Australia Day Float (see P 41).



Congratulations ... MR Woolgoolga DUC Mitchell Harvey, with Mid North Coast ROM Randall Gawne and Unit Commander Tony Skalla, a winner in the Seven News Young Achiever Awards NSW & ACT.

Serving his community central to Adrian's life

Crowdy Harrington social officer always ready to help those who needed it.

Giving back to the community through volunteering was always at the heart of MR Crowdy Harrington member Adrian Gale's life.

A highly respected and much-loved member, Adrian passed away in January.

Adrian joined MR Crowdy Harrington in 2015 when he moved to Harrington, combining his love of boating with his commitment to volunteering in his community.

Over his three-and-a-half years as a member, Adrian became an integral part of our unit.

He was always among the first

to assist with fundraising and social activities. Appointed our social coordinator, he took part in many activities, including liaising with the Mermaid with a Message, who stopped over at Crowdy Harbour on her charity paddle from Newcastle to Noosa, and helping to arrange the inaugural Drag-Ens Hot Rod Club Rattletrap event at Crowdy Beach.

Adrian was also an enthusiastic moulage 'victim' for our first aid training.

He was always available for a chat and a laugh, ready to help anyone who needed it in any way he could. He will always be



MR Crowdy Harrington's Adrian Gale with his wife Monika Hansen.

remembered for his 'dad' jokes, great food, excellent coffee and vibrant personality. Members of the unit formed a guard of honour at Adrian's memorial service and will

continue to support his wife Monika, who also is a unit member, into the future. Adrian will be sadly missed by us all.

Mary Thomas

Bermagui mourns radio, fundraising veteran

Members of MR Bermagui are remembering their late colleague Dave Evans for his 15 year contribution to the unit, whether on duty in the radio room or with fundraising activities.

Dave originally joined the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association in 2003, after transferring from the Bellambi Coast Guard, further north on the Illawarra coastline.

From the start, Dave was keen to help out in any way he could, taking

on regular duty as a radio operator.

More recently, he had been a regular in the radio room on Saturday mornings, assisting our radio operators.

Dave was always one of the first to put up his hand to help out at the unit's major fundraising events, most notably the popular Bermagui Seaside Fair.

We were very grateful for his help setting up the stand, selling tickets and still being around to pack up and return everything to the unit at

the end of the day.

Dave's wish was to have his ashes scattered off Horseshoe Bay, a spot he loved to look out over while sharing time with friends on the veranda of the Bermagui Beach Hotel.

On November 29, a group of his family and friends gathered at the Bermagui wharf to farewell Dave before his ashes were scattered at sea from on board our rescue vessel *Bermagui 30*.

Caron Parfitt



Dave Evans.

Brian an altruist who gave from the heart

Many members of MR Port Jackson have fond memories of their long-serving colleague and friend, Brian Kowalski, who recently passed away after a lengthy illness.

Brian joined the unit in 1983, when it was part of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard. A Coxswain, he skippered more than 200 rescue operations, with his active duties also including radio operations, fundraising and community engagement and technical support.

Brian was an avid supporter of the radio base at South Head, clocking up more than 2,300 hours of radio duty. His technical support to the base included setting up and maintaining the back-to-base alarm and CCTV systems. He also made major contributions in sustaining our vessels' capabilities, including wiring, fitting-out and electronics troubleshooting.

Described as a gentleman, Brian was quietly spoken yet keenly

observant with a dry sense of humour and always had a way of making team mates feel at ease while learning. This was especially evident while Brian skippered boats being towed; he often liked to sit outside the cockpit, observing the towed vessel. He will be remembered as a highly experienced quiet achiever and altruist, who gave from the heart without expecting anything in return.

Tom Crvenkovic



Brian Kowalski.

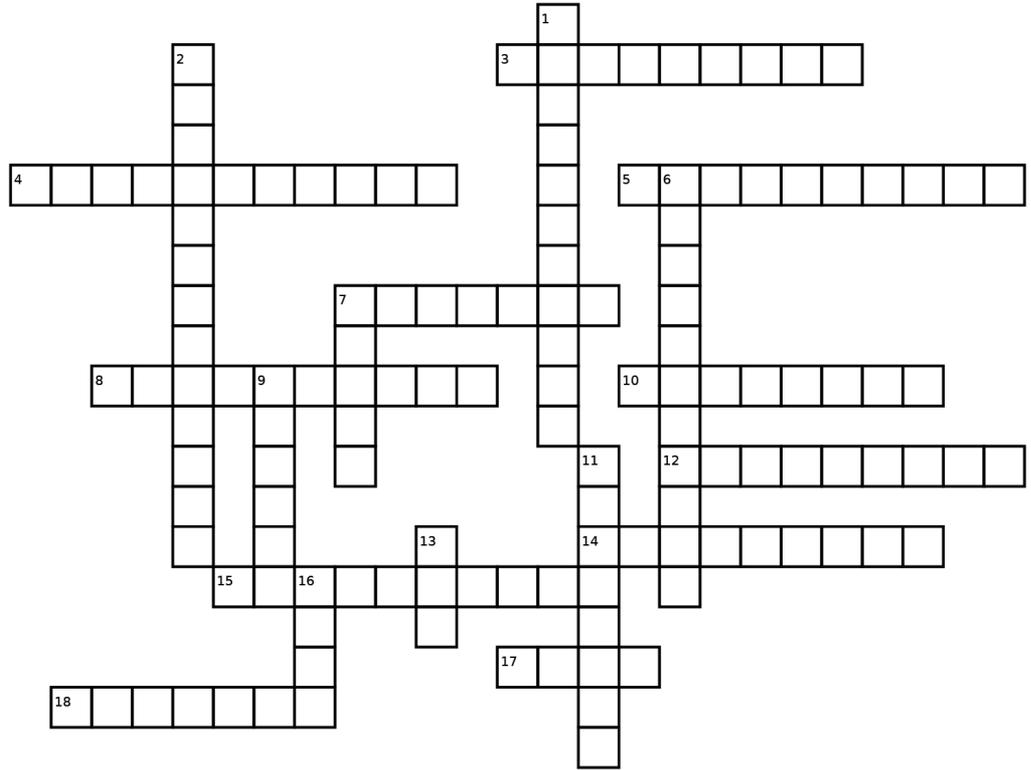
Welcome to the MRNSW crossword. Compiled by MR Brunswick Unit Commander David Parkinson, it will test your knowledge of our organisation and operations.

DOWN

1. Which is the northern-most unit in MRNSW? (5-6)
2. Which member of the Royal family is the Patron-in-Chief of MRNSW? (6-7)
6. What day in 2009 did MRNSW officially take to the water? (3-5-3)
7. What course will enable you to use VHF, MH and HF marine radios? (5)
9. The supplier of the MRNSW power of choice. (6)
11. VHF radio channel 16 is also called this. (8)
13. Who is responsible for coordinating marine search and rescue? (3)
16. Another term for an infra-red camera. (4)

ACROSS

3. Where you will find Otter. (9)
4. What we want all boaties to do when leaving and returning. (3-2-3-3)
5. What does the I stand for in EPIRB? (10)
7. What does the L stand for in FLIR? (7)
8. Who in MRNSW was awarded the ESM on Australia Day? (4-6)
10. In which State is the Australian Maritime College located? (8)
12. It's our magazine. (9)
14. Ensure your boat is in this condition before taking it on the water. (9)
15. What has never ruined a day on the water? (10)
17. The southern-most unit in MRNSW. (4)
18. You should check this before heading out on the water. (7)



Thanks from one of our own

'I was quite worried for the safety of my boys.'

I would just like to thank Marine Rescue Cape Byron for being there this afternoon (December 27) when my boat broke down on the Brunswick bar and a special thanks to Pam, who answered my radio and phone call.

As waves were breaking over the back of my boat I was getting quite worried for the safety of my two boys, one aged six and the other 17, plus my dog.

Also for the assistance from Surf Life Saving NSW Byron Bay for responding with their jet ski; thanks to the jet ski operator.

Also a special thank you to the crew of *Brunswick 30*, Bill, Brian and Phil, who came to my assistance.

Then they spotted two swimmers

in distress who had been washed out of Simpson Creek into the Brunswick River and were struggling against the fast following run out tide and were taken aboard and returned safely to shore.

Well done to all; thank you for your time.

Jonathan Wilcock
Deputy Unit Commander
MR Brunswick



Help at Australia's eastern-most point ... the MR Cape Byron marine radio base.

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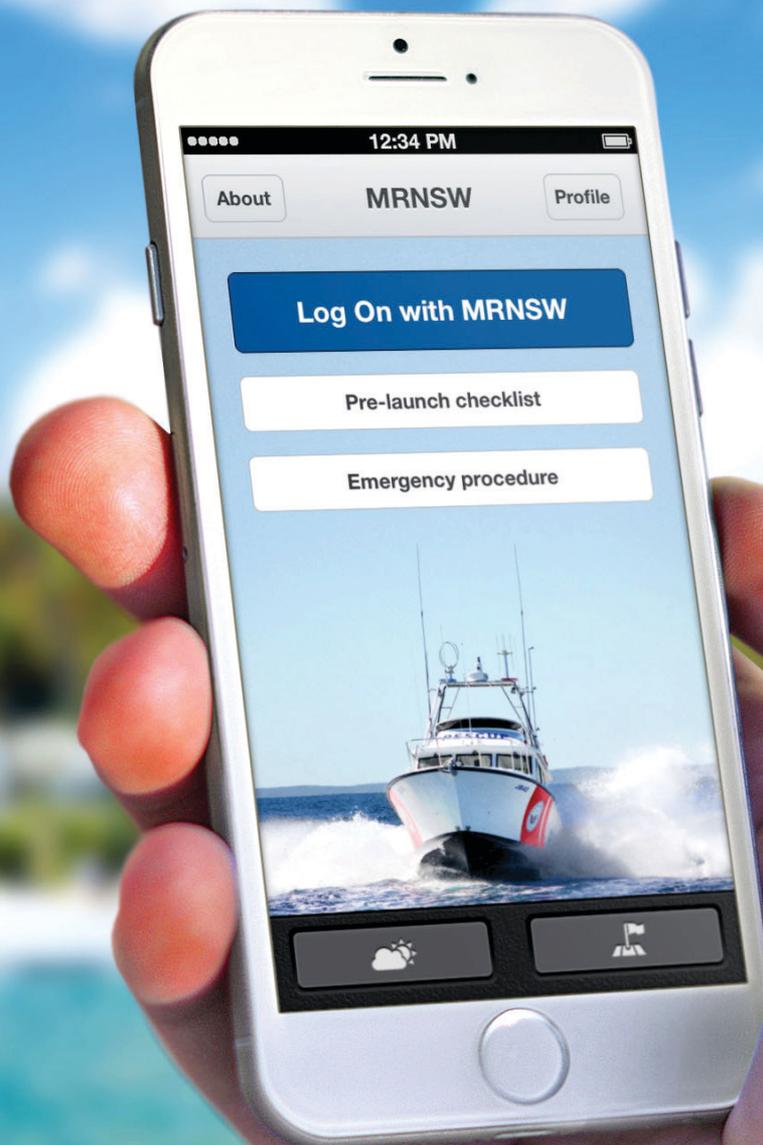
Down: 1. Point Danger. 2. Prince Charles. 6. New Years Day. 7. LROCP. 9. Suzuki. 11. Distress. 13. MAC. 16. FLIR. Across: 3. Portholes. 4. Log On Log. 5. Indicating. 7. Looking. 8. Dean Storey. 10. Tasmania. 12. Soundings. 14. Seaworthy. 15. Lifejacket. 17. Eden. 18. Weather.

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