

Volunteers saving lives on the water

# SOUNDINGS



Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 43, Winter 2020

## COVID CRISIS

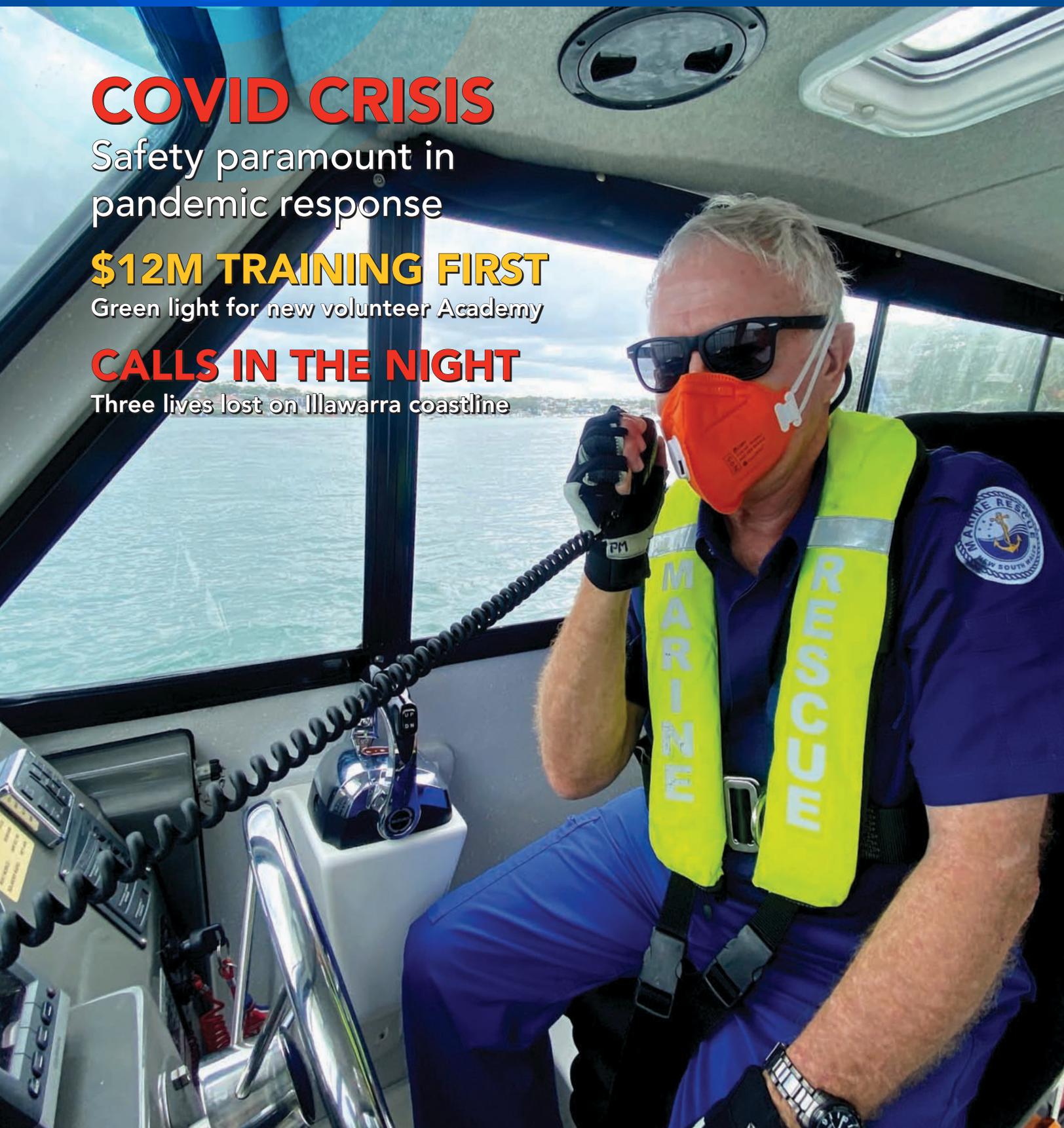
Safety paramount in pandemic response

## \$12M TRAINING FIRST

Green light for new volunteer Academy

## CALLS IN THE NIGHT

Three lives lost on Illawarra coastline



**PLUS:** National honours | \$24.5m fleet power | We light up the dawn

"ON THE WATER  
NOTHING  
IS FASTER  
THAN DISASTER"

# SOS MARINE

S.O.S  
MARINE

RESCUE-READY EQUIPMENT YOU MAY NOT LIVE WITHOUT

## WATERFRONT LIFE JACKET VEST

S.O.S Waterfront Life jackets provide a new approach to improve the working capabilities of marine professionals



## LOAD BEARING EQUIPMENT VEST

We are serious about our designs



- › Local Councils
- › SES
- › Parking Inspectors
- › Police
- › First Response
- › Parks & Wildlife
- › Mining
- › Security
- › Engineers
- › Emergency Response

## DAN BUOY

"When time is of the essence the  
SOS Dan Buoy is the answer"

Philip Thompson  
America's Cup  
Challenger Skipper



## REELSLING

For the Reel Rescue  
Man overboard equipment  
-Rescue Ready



Easy to use rescue system for retrieving  
a person who falls overboard

## 2 & 4 PERSON LIFE RAFT



For inshore & coastal boaters

- › JUST THROW- Automatically inflates
- › Easy to handle for most age groups
- › Much smaller servicing costs
- › Packed in valise

## RESCUE LASER FLARES

- › Detects reflective material on life jackets, channel marker etc
- › 40 hours continuous signalling on one battery



- › Penetrates smoke and haze
- › A worthy addition to pyrotechnic kits
- › Allows search & rescue to continue when darkness limits search

## RECOVERY/RESCUE LADDER



HOW DO I GET  
BACK ON BOARD?

Two-in-one  
recovery using just one product

- › Use rungs as a ladder or
- › Use entire shape to horizontally lift victim

## S.O.S SOCK



- › For short-handed crews - the SOS Recovery Ladder now has its own 'sock' for attachment to the toe rail, ready to be deployed at a moment's notice.

### LIFE RAFTS FOR HIRE

E ron@sosmarine.com.au

LIFE JACKETS  
SERVICE AVAILABLE

www.sosmarine.com

T 02 97000233

F 02 97000277

E sales@sosmarine.com  
Australian Manufacturer

SOS Marine's safety equipment is easy to use and ready-to-go

SOS Marine's 30 years expertise has led the field with international award winning, innovative safety equipment to save lives at sea. SOS Marine supplies equipment to 13 National Defence Forces, leisure boats and ocean vessels worldwide.

# SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

## Cover Image

Pandemic protection ... Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking crew member Peter Martyn makes safety the priority on board *Port Hacking 30*.

Photo: Brad Whittaker.

## Publisher

Marine Rescue NSW  
202 Nicholson Parade  
Cronulla NSW 2230

## Contact

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

## Design and Layout

Nicole Brown

## Advertising

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

## Printing

Ligare Book Printers  
Head office: 138-152 Bonds Road, Riverwood NSW 2210

Marine Rescue NSW is pleased to acknowledge the invaluable support of our *Soundings* advertisers.

© Copyright Volunteer Marine Rescue New South Wales. Reproduction in whole or in part prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Marine Rescue NSW encourages the use of *Soundings* articles on boating safety. Permission to use and supply of relevant images can be obtained from the publisher.



**MARINE RESCUE NSW**  
*Volunteers saving lives on the water*

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

## THE HELM

- 2 • Commissioner's report
- 4 • Chair's report

## ON THE RADAR

- 3 • \$12m Training Academy first in Australia
- 5 • Centralised campus for intensive education
- New Stores mark start of site restoration
- 7 • Medals honour commitment and sacrifice
- 8 • Welfare paramount in pandemic response
- 9 • Escalating measures to safeguard health
- Support from our Patron
- Boaters seize 'reasonable excuses' to go out
- 10 • Virtual volunteers embrace online learning
- 11 • Member joins search for virus treatment
- 12 • Kids, quiz, Zoom: our life in social isolation
- 13 • Pandemic forces new Qld border closure
- 14-15 • Marine Rescue NSW lights up the dawn on Anzac Day
- 16 • Shutdown recruits look forward to office life
- Deputy thanked for tireless commitment
- 19 • \$24.5m invested in safety promise to crews
- 20 • Grants welcome as COVID hits fundraising
- \$100,000 to take radio training off the air
- 21 • Online winners thrilled with new VHF radios

## MAKING WAVES

### 24-27 Northern Rivers News

- Evans Head • Brunswick • Ballina
- Cape Byron • Point Danger • Woolli

### 28-30 Mid North Coast News

- Forster-Tuncurry • Crowdy Harrington • Port Macquarie
- Coffs Harbour • Woolgoolga • Camden Haven

### 31-35 Hunter/Central Coast News

- Newcastle • Man overboard • Lake Macquarie
- Container spill • Port Stephens • Central Coast
- Tuggerah Lakes

### 36-37 Greater Sydney News

- Middle Harbour • Botany Port Hacking • Terrey Hills

### 39-41 Illawarra News

- Port Kembla • Sussex Inlet • Ulladulla
- Jervis Bay • Shoalhaven • Kioloa

### 42-45 Monaro News

- Eden • Batemans Bay • Merimbula
- Tuross • Good Samaritans

## PICTURE GALLERY

- 23, 46 • What we've been up to

## IN MEMORIAM

- 47-48 • Tributes to valued members



**Commissioner**  
**Stacey Tannos ESM**

## From the Commissioner

Visionary project sustains our hope beyond pandemic.

It is always darkest before the dawn - and so it is proving for Marine Rescue NSW as we take great heart in looking beyond the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic to the next exciting landmark in our professional development, our new \$12 million Training Academy.

Bushfires of terrible ferocity. Floods and storms. A global pandemic claiming lives and social connections. We have been tested this year like never before.

We have needed to draw on the same responsiveness, agility and ability to adjust to changing conditions required for safe operations at sea in order to weather this latest risk not only to our capability but indeed to our lives.

A swift response to the need to implement appropriate, escalating risk management procedures and the cooperation and forbearance of our people has enabled our organisation to stand strong in the face of the coronavirus threat.

I would like to thank each of our volunteers and staff for their contribution to our mutual safety and for maintaining our operational strength as boaters took to the water in numbers more commonly seen at the height of the boating season.

As we saw during the bushfire

crisis, the camaraderie among our volunteers is a great strength. As always, our members looked out for each other throughout the pandemic. Units found ways to keep in contact with their volunteers and maintain their engagement, including through newsletters, unit meetings on Zoom, online training and welfare support over the phone. While social isolation was a necessary health precaution, it was also a lonely time for many. I was proud our people took care to reach out to those who might have been struggling. Thank you all.

As the public health restrictions that ruled our lives for three months eased, we were able to announce a visionary new project that will provide unparalleled support to our volunteers and boating safety on NSW waterways in coming years.

The Marine Rescue NSW Training Academy, to be developed on the site of the State Headquarters, will be the first dedicated marine rescue

of our members for longer as they participate more fully in unit life.

Thank you to Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and the Attorney General, Cronulla MP Mark Speakman, for their strong support for this facility to ensure that our volunteers receive world class training. Thanks also go to the Hungry Point Reserve Crown Land Management Committee for embracing our vision to restore and protect the historic waterfront site.

MRNSW prides itself on being a responsible corporate citizen and we will now embark on detailed planning, discussions with a range of agencies and consultation with the community to assure them of our determination to preserve and enhance this valuable public asset.

Of course, none of this progress, nor our mission to save lives, would be achievable without each of our 3,000 volunteers and staff. The service of three of our people has been particularly recognised with the

### The Academy is great news for our volunteers, helping to streamline our skills development.

training facility in Australia. This is great news for our volunteers and our units. The Academy will make an enormous contribution to streamlining our skills development, enabling members to gain their qualifications and start duty much more quickly. This will help units to more equitably share their operational workload among more members. Just as importantly, it will help relieve their heavy burden of managing a range of training activities simultaneously for members at different stages of their various courses, easing the demand on the unit's finite resources and time.

The expedited training we will be able to deliver also will support our volunteer engagement and retention, helping us to keep more

award of the Emergency Services Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Congratulations to Ron Calman, Ross Constable and Glenn Sullivan (see story Page 7).

I would like to thank former Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey for his contribution to the organisation. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing him well in his future career endeavours following his recent departure from our ranks.

As we continue to navigate the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic, please ensure you maintain your rigorous hygiene and distancing procedures to help ensure your own and your fellow volunteers' health. Do all you can to stay safe in these uncertain times.

**Stacey Tannos ESM**  
*Commissioner*



**Commissioner Stacey Tannos at the announcement of the \$12m MRNSW Training Academy.**

# \$12m Training Academy first in Australia

There could not be a better investment for the boaters of NSW: Chair.

Marine Rescue NSW will develop Australia's first dedicated marine rescue training academy in a \$12 million project to ensure more skilled volunteers are ready to save lives on the water.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and Attorney General, Cronulla MP Mark Speakman, formally announced on June 6 that the Academy would be developed on the MRNSW Headquarters site on the Hungry Point Reserve, at Cronulla.

"This state-of-the-art facility will ensure we have more fully trained first responders on the marine radio airwaves and water to rescue boaters caught in life-threatening emergencies on NSW waterways," Mr Elliott said.

"Professional training is essential to equip every member of the team with the knowledge and skills they need to bring boaters home safely."

He said the State Government was a proud supporter of MRNSW volunteers, investing an additional \$37.6 million in new vessels, improved operating facilities and the marine radio network.

"When you're enjoying our waterways, it's quite likely that the first line of defence, the first operational capability that may come to you in the event that you're in trouble, will be a volunteer," he said.

"It's very, very dangerous work; it's work that's essential and it's work that certainly saves the taxpayers. The least we can do as a government and as a society is to ensure they have the best possible training that money can buy."

The Hungry Point Reserve Crown Land Management Committee named the Academy as the preferred use for the site in a public Expression Of Interest process. The self-contained campus, to cater for up to 100 trainees a week, will include a large lecture/meeting room, smaller classrooms



Attorney General Mark Speakman, MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott announce the MRNSW Training Academy.

equipped with marine simulators and other learning tools, outdoor training areas and a pool, along with accommodation and meal facilities.

Trainees will be able to undertake small-group intensive residential and day courses in subjects including first aid and advanced resuscitation, sea survival, firefighting at sea, marine radio operations, rescue vessel crew, coxswain and Rescue Water Craft operations and search and rescue coordination.

The Academy also will help boost boating safety by offering public boat licence and marine radio courses and on-site collection facilities for boaters to dispose of expired safety flares, EPIRBs, batteries and other equipment.

Mr Speakman said the Academy was an "excellent outcome for Marine Rescue, for water safety and for respecting the site's Indigenous, European and multi-cultural history".

"This is a training centre that will respect the maritime history of this site but also respect the Indigenous history and the important cultural history of the site," he said. "It's a beautiful site. It's also an iconic site for Shire residents, who can now enjoy the open space here.

"It's also wonderful, too, to have a primary occupier, in Marine Rescue, that is community based. This is not a commercial enterprise, this a



Subject to consultation and discussion ... an initial concept design for the \$12m MRNSW Training Academy on the Hungry Point Reserve.

voluntary organisation, a grassroots organisation that does such wonderful volunteer work keeping people safe on our waterways."

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos hailed the announcement of the Training Academy, at the end of the service's 10th anniversary year, as another significant milestone.

"The Training Academy will be the first of its kind in Australia," he said.

"It will be a one-stop-shop where you will be able to do everything that's needed in all aspects of training for Marine Rescue - be it on a boat, on radio, administration, leadership courses - in the one place," he said.

He said enabling members to complete their training more quickly would encourage volunteer retention

and engagement, strengthening the service's sustainability. He said consolidated block training could cut the time taken to obtain various qualifications from a year or more.

MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan said there could not be a better investment for the boaters of NSW.

"Marine Rescue volunteers are the first responders on the water," he said. "If somebody suffers an accident or disaster on the water, it is we who will be the first people who are called out. We, therefore, need to make sure our volunteers are trained to the very, very best level that is possible. We are extraordinarily grateful to the government of NSW for both its monetary support and its support in securing for us this wonderful site."



**Chair**  
James Glissan AM ESM QC

## From the Chair

Academy is a commitment to our members, boating public.

The establishment of the Marine Rescue NSW Training Academy is a wonderful opportunity for this organisation to cement its position as the nation's pre-eminent volunteer marine rescue agency.

The Academy will ensure we have the very best trained first responders, communications officers, volunteer managers and support crew possible.

While that is, of course, a proud achievement for us all, we do not train for training's sake.

The great and abiding value of this development will be the enhanced safety of those on NSW waterways for decades to come.

Put simply, more lives will be saved on the water.

The State Government's support for this initiative is an investment far greater than the immense value of the waterfront real estate that is home to our State Headquarters, MR Botany Port Hacking and soon, the Academy. It is a commitment to the safety of our members and all those who enjoy being on the water.

On behalf of us all, I thank NSW Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, the Attorney General and Cronulla MP Mark Speakman and the Hungry Point Reserve Crown Land Management Committee for the support they have shown our volunteers in designating

the Academy as the preferred use of the site through a public Expression Of Interest process. I give them and the Sutherland Shire community our word that we will develop an asset of which they, along with us, will be proud, while preserving the Reserve's heritage and delightful open space.

Many of you will not be familiar with the Reserve but rest assured it offers all you could want for a training establishment for a marine rescue service. The pool, for decades the site for groundbreaking fisheries research, has fallen into disrepair but can be transformed into a facility for sea survival training. The historic cottages once home to newly-arrived migrants to our country can be repurposed as classrooms equipped with modern learning tools. We have already transformed an abandoned records repository for our Stores and have room on site to carry out our lifejacket servicing and create a public collection point for expired EPIRBs and flares. Our concept plans involve replacing a more modern but unsound building with a purpose-designed facility providing accommodation for trainees from throughout the organisation, a mess hall, conference room and a restaurant and bathrooms open to the public.

Surrounded by the waters of Port Hacking, the Reserve offers swift access to the ocean. The jetty that now accommodates rescue vessel *Port Hacking 30* will be expanded to house dedicated training vessels. Our trainees will be able to apply and reinforce their theoretical lessons in the classroom and pool with practical activities on open water.

While we have much work to do to complete the required design, planning, consultation and approval processes, I very much look forward to the day when we open the doors to our bright new future.

At times over the past few months, as we all sat separate from each other but somehow together in our isolation, this future has seemed a shimmering mirage on the horizon. Our organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was swift and well-planned to adapt to the escalating restrictions on our way of life. At its heart was the safety of our people. Thanks must go to all our members and staff for their responsible and mature approach to changes that were reassuring and frustrating in equal measure. We must commit to maintaining our new public health measures and awareness as we gradually get back on board our vessels, into the radio rooms and on to our various other duties, so as not to jeopardise our hard-won return from lockdown.

The value our community places on our services and our people was highlighted again two days after the announcement of the Academy. Congratulations to Ron Calman, Ross Constable and Glenn Sullivan, who were awarded the Emergency Services Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours. They can be assured of our pride in them and every one of their colleagues.

*Good sailing*  
*Jim Glissan*



Embracing our vision ... Chair Jim Glissan with Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, Attorney General Mark Speakman and the Hungry Point Reserve Crown Land Management Committee.

# Centralised campus for intensive education

Minister praises leading role in emergency services training integration.

The new world class Marine Rescue NSW Training Academy will deliver professional, intensive vocational education to Australia's largest volunteer marine rescue cohort.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said MRNSW had reached a critical point in its development, requiring enhanced training facilities to keep pace with the needs of its 3,000-plus volunteers and the increasing demand for its services from the growing NSW boating community.

"This centralised facility will provide consistent training across our curriculum, from first aid through to the most advanced qualifications," he said.

"It can take more than a year to gain some of these qualifications, depending on how much time members can get on the boat or the radio, the availability of trainers and their unit's training and operational workload.

"Now, members will be able to

undertake core course preparation at their units and then complete their training and assessment at the Academy in a streamlined block of learning that can be completed in one to two weeks, depending on the subject."

The self-contained campus is expected to cater for up to 100 trainees a week from across the organisation.

Concept plans are for a showcase building to be developed to house accommodation and meal facilities and a large conference room.

Two historic timber cottages will be restored as classrooms equipped with simulators and other high-tech learning tools.

The swimming pool beside Port Hacking, used for marine research for more than a century, will be refurbished and fitted with jets to create a realistic sea survival training environment with waves and currents.

Commissioner Tannos said



Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan on the Training Academy site.

helping more members gain their qualifications more quickly would boost volunteer engagement and retention, in turn helping secure the service's sustainability and making boating safer on NSW waterways.

The Training Academy also will be available to other emergency services who use vessels in their response operations, such as the State Emergency Service and Rural

Fire Service, and volunteer marine rescue agencies from other states.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott said MRNSW had taken a leadership role in integrating its training with other emergency services.

Detailed design work and consultation will be carried out before construction of the main building starts next financial year.

# New Stores mark start of site restoration

Relocated dispatch centre will be more convenient, cost-effective.

The MRNSW Stores are being relocated to State Headquarters in the first stage of the restoration of the Cronulla site.

A dilapidated old records building filled with empty and rusting compactus files has been gutted and transformed into a spacious new store and dispatch centre.

The existing Stores will be relocated from leased premises in Chatswood.

Chief Financial Officer Todd Andrews said it would be more cost-effective, efficient and convenient to have the stores co-located with the Headquarters.

"It will save double-handling and free up valuable space in the main office building that has been used

to store a lot of training resources and equipment and other materials," he said. "This renovation was the obvious starting point for the development of the Academy and the associated facilities. The building was not heritage-listed, making the project relatively quick and simple to complete."

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked Stores Manager Graham Foy, who has decided not to make the daily commute from Sydney's upper North Shore to Cronulla.

"Graham has been with MRNSW since its earliest days. His assistance to our staff and units has been of great value to us all and we will miss his knowledge and his willingness to help," he said.



Changing of the guard ... newly-appointed Stores Manager Daniel Gatt meets Graham Foy to learn the ropes of MRNSW dispatch.

The new Stores Manager is Daniel Gatt (see story Page 16).

The building work was completed during the Headquarters pandemic shutdown. The brick and iron building had been sitting idle since the Department of Primary

Industries Fisheries Research Centre vacated the site. The building has been redeveloped with polished concrete floors and new offices, shelving and lighting. The exterior has been re-clad and a new receipt and dispatch point created.

# THE WORLD'S HARDEST WORKING RIBS



Recognised and operated by coast guards, police forces and commercial users around the world. Whatever the conditions, you can rely on Naiad's supreme ride and strength to get you home safely.

TO FIND OUT MORE PHONE +64 2 6646 2421 | [WWW.YWE.COM.AU](http://WWW.YWE.COM.AU)

RESCUE  
PATROL  
TOURISM  
DIVING

PILOT BOATS  
MILITARY  
SUPERYACHT TENDERS  
RECREATIONAL



# NAIAD

## Medals honour commitment and sacrifice

Trio congratulated for decades of skilled, distinguished service.

Almost a century of distinguished service by three members of MRNSW has been recognised in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Marine Rescue Newcastle Unit Commander and Training Officer Ron Calman, MR Narooma Vessel Master Ross Constable and Monaro Regional Operations Manager and MR Batemans Bay member Glenn Sullivan were awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott led the chorus of thanks for the volunteers' contribution.

"Hearty congratulations to our three Marine Rescue volunteers who are celebrated with the Emergency Services Medal," Mr Elliott said.

"The ESM is a very important way for the the community to recognise the sacrifice made by our volunteer emergency services particularly."

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos echoed the Minister's congratulations.

"These awards are an opportunity to thank Ron, Ross and Glenn for their many years of work, often in confronting circumstances and hazardous conditions and for their commitment to serving and protecting the boating community," he said.

"Between them, they have given almost a century of service to the people of our state - an incredible feat. Our people are our strength and we are proud to have such experienced, skilled and dedicated members in our ranks."

Commissioner Tannos said MRNSW volunteers made a valuable contribution to the safety of the community without any expectation of reward or recompense.

"They deserve our gratitude and these awards are our chance to say thank you not just to our three ESM recipients but to all their colleagues as well," he said.



Ron Calman ESM

Ron Calman has served the NSW community with distinction for more than six decades.

The Unit Commander of MR Newcastle since 2012, Mr Calman also has served as the Captain of the Toowoong Bay Surf Life Saving Club; the founding Commander of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association Swansea flotilla; the Division Commander of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol at Lake Macquarie; and an officer in the NSW Police Marine Area Command.

A skilled and respected rescue vessel Master, Mr Calman makes himself available around the clock to respond to emergencies on the water and has personally conducted hundreds of rescue missions, often in dark and dangerous conditions.

In July 2019, Mr Calman was the Master of one of the two MRNSW vessels tasked with retrieving three people who died when their catamaran capsized in rough seas off the Stockton coast, responding with great care and compassion.

As the unit's Training Officer, he has been committed to ensuring the unit's volunteers receive professional training, resourcing and support.

"I'm over the moon. I just love doing what I do and helping people," he told *NBN News*.

Mr Calman also has worked to maintain volunteer morale after the destruction of the Shepherds Hill base in the East Coast Low storms in 2015, persevering to secure a new home for the unit.



Ross Constable ESM

Ross Constable has given distinguished service to MR Narooma and the South Coast boating community for two decades.

Displaying the highest levels of professionalism and leadership, not only as a vessel Master but also as a member of the Unit Executive, his contribution is highly regarded.

Mr Constable's skill and experience gives his crew members confidence in his navigational abilities and judgment, even in the most unfavourable of sea and weather conditions. He has led numerous challenging search and rescue operations in response to traumatic emergencies, including a number of fatalities on hazardous local bar crossings and offshore coastal waters.

His innovation in training in all aspects of seamanship has helped the unit achieve a notable standard of operational excellence.

Mr Constable's care and compassion for those in need is also extended to his fellow volunteers, instituting effective peer support.

He told the *Narooma News* he was humbled and honoured to receive the award but would like to accept it on behalf of all the volunteers who worked with Marine Rescue, including radio operators, watch officers and boat crews.

Mr Constable also has served to protect the community through his role in firefighting management with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Glenn Sullivan ESM

Glenn Sullivan has made a lasting contribution to the operational capability of MRNSW and the safety of the boating community through his tireless work to assist and support MRNSW volunteers and commitment to education, both as a volunteer and career officer.

Mr Sullivan joined MR Batemans Bay in 2009. In addition to qualifying as a vessel Master, he undertook a Cert IV in Training and Education and became the unit training officer. A generous mentor, he has helped countless volunteers build their capability.

Initially appointed Southern Regional Training Manager, he is now the Monaro Regional Operations Manager.

Mr Sullivan has led numerous search and rescue operations, including an extended eight-day operation to locate the wreckage of a plane that ditched off Broulee in 2014, for which he was awarded a Commissioner's Citation. While guiding training for the new Alpine Lakes unit in 2011, he responded to save the life of a woman choking.

Mr Sullivan showed strong and empathetic leadership throughout the 2019-20 bushfires, coordinating deployments to maintain operations and assist the emergency response while supporting local volunteers.

"I was extremely surprised," he told the *Bega District News*. "I have a passion for the water. I joined to return the favour of volunteers looking after me on the water."

# Welfare paramount in pandemic response

Volunteers, staff adapt quickly to maintain essential services safely.

Marine Rescue NSW reacted swiftly to manage the risks posed by the COVID-19 crisis, putting in place measures to protect its volunteers and staff while ensuring it maintained its essential services to save lives on the water.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said like the rest of the community, MRNSW had needed to adapt and adjust to new ways of operating in an environment suddenly ruled by an invisible, dangerous enemy.

"This has been an emergency like none other we have ever seen before and it has required an unprecedented response - not just from MRNSW but from us all," he said. "It has been confronting to face such a severe crisis, especially so soon after the Black Summer bushfires and the storms and floods that followed."

Commissioner Tannos said the impact of the pandemic had been felt across the service, from radio and vessel operations, training and communications to fundraising activities, unit meetings and the wellbeing of members in isolation.

"Our major concern has been to ensure that we have taken every possible step to minimise the potential risks to the health and welfare of our people. That has been paramount," he said. "We needed to be agile and flexible in our response to ensure we kept pace with evolving government rules to

help manage the pandemic and also meet our own operational needs."

The organisation's response was reviewed daily to ensure it was in line with government requirements and SafeWork NSW guidelines.

"Our people adapted quickly and responsibly, selflessly continuing to put the safety of the boating community first, even during this worrying time for us all," Commissioner Tannos said.

"I want to thank each of them for their important contribution to managing the pandemic, whether they were on socially distanced duty or, just as importantly, helped everyone stay safe by staying home."

The first COVID risk management procedures, requiring enhanced hygiene, sanitation and personal health practices, were introduced on March 3.

Measures were escalated twice, to enforce social distancing and take 10 strategically located radio bases offline and limit six others to weekend and public holiday operations to ensure a workforce of volunteers would be available to maintain continuity of service if other units were impacted by the virus. A significant relaxation was introduced in late May, as governments began easing strict community restrictions.

Headquarters staff began working from home on March 17 and are expected to return in July.



MR Merimbula's Alan Grange and Trish Moxon, in COVID protective masks and gloves, head out to rescue a boat stranded on the bar.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said units had constructively implemented the changes to their established operations and adjusted to online rather than face-to-face activities.

"We know many of our members really missed their duties in the radio base or on the rescue vessel but they accepted the changes were necessary," he said.

Mr Cribb thanked the volunteers who maintained local operations and expanded their watches to remotely monitor radio traffic to offline or limited operation bases.

He said new vessels had been delivered to MR Merimbula, Tuggerah Lakes and Newcastle during COVID-19, with extended induction periods needed to allow for social distancing on board.

IT Director Florian Glajcar said MRNSW had shifted many activities online, predicting this innovation would outlast the pandemic.

"I think across the organisation we all realised that we could achieve a lot without the need to be together in person," he said.

"Zoom, in particular, proved an easy, practical and effective way for people to hold meetings, undertake training and keep in contact."

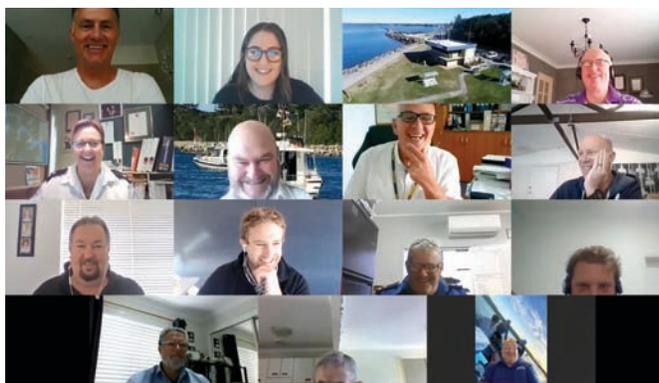
Over eight weeks, 1,953 MRNSW personnel spent 115,694 minutes

- or more than 80 days - on Zoom, attending 202 meetings, training sessions or catch ups. In another first, unit Annual General Meetings and elections are being held online, with eligible members voting via a dedicated website. Electronic recruitment processes and corporate invoice approvals were introduced and the Commissioner produced regular video updates for all members.

The Corporate Communications team engaged members and the community through social media safety messaging, MRNSW colouring in activities and posts revealing how volunteers were filling their time off-duty and staff members were working from their home set-ups.

Commissioner Tannos said with community pandemic restrictions being incrementally lifted, he looked forward to a gradual return to "normal" operations.

"It is likely to be quite some time before we can return to our operational life as we used to know it - if ever," he said. "Social distancing, enhanced hygiene and cleaning practices and greater awareness of our own personal health will be the new norm for us all for the foreseeable future as we adjust to living with coronavirus."



Office shutdown ... MRNSW staff meet via Zoom in the first week of working remotely. It's fair to say some nailed it better than others!

## Escalating measures to safeguard health

Marine Rescue NSW introduced a series of risk management strategies to safeguard our volunteers' and community health while maintaining our vital marine radio and rescue services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**March 3** - enhanced hygiene & cleaning protocols introduced.

**March 16** - protocols stepped up to support members' social distancing & isolation by limiting radio base operations to core numbers of personnel; rostering vessel crew members for on-call response rather than standby duties; cancelling all unit and community activities; Headquarters staff to work remotely from March 17.

**March 30** - escalated measures, taking 10 strategically-located radio bases offline & moving six others to weekend/public holiday operations. Radio monitoring for these carried out remotely.

**May 5** - following easing of public social distancing requirements, radio bases that had been offline or limited to weekends/holidays resumed rostered duties with core personnel. Vessel crews remained on-call.

**May 20** - rostered vessel duties resumed & units were allowed to hold meetings, training, recruitment & public classes of up to five people as long as social distancing was maintained. Operational assessments for vessel and radio training permitted.

## Support from our Patron



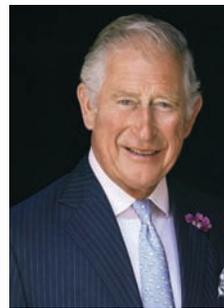
CLARENCE HOUSE

15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

As we face quite unprecedented challenges, I did just want to let you know that you are very much in my special thoughts at such a very anxious time for everyone.

The disruption we have experienced to normal life has been profound and therefore I can well imagine the appalling difficulties you must be experiencing.

Nonetheless, I have no doubt that you will deal with these new circumstances with determination, imagination and resourcefulness. As you do so, please be assured of my support, my gratitude and my admiration.



## Boaters seize 'reasonable excuses' to go out

Physical distancing rules relax ahead of expected surge on June long weekend.

Getting out on the water proved an ideal way for many boaters to break loose from their COVID-19 social isolation.

In the face of community uncertainty about whether people were permitted to go boating and fishing, the NSW Government issued public health directions on March 31 to clarify that people should stay at home unless they had a "reasonable excuse" to use a boat.

The four "reasonable excuses" were to: exercise (eg kayaking, sailing, paddling etc), fish, get to and from work if this could not reasonably be performed from home or get groceries. Individuals were required to maintain social distancing of four square metres of space per person on board.

More than 12,200 vessels Logged On with MRNSW in March

and April. While this was fewer than during the same period in 2019, anecdotal reports from units indicated the number of vessels Logging On was a fraction of those on the water, with boaters possibly under the mistaken belief that they would be reported for heading out.

The clarification of the social distancing on board rule on March 31 saw the average number of people on board each Logged On vessel drop from three in March to 1.95 in April.

MRNSW appealed to boaters to 'Stay Safe. Stay Home' to help protect their own and frontline volunteers' health.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said MRNSW had introduced measures to ensure as many volunteers as possible were able to comply with the community's

obligations to stay home unless essential, while still maintaining the organisation's core services.

"Reducing the number of boats on the water and correspondingly, the incidence of emergencies, was crucial to lessening the potential infection risk to crew members who would need to break their own social isolation to respond," he said.

Expecting a surge in boating on the June long weekend, Transport for NSW clarified that people from the same household no longer needed to follow physical distancing on board.

If not from the same household, boaters needed to maintain 1.5m distancing or as near as practicable on board.



Marine Rescue NSW appealed to boaters to stay home to help protect their own and frontline volunteers' health.

# Virtual volunteers embrace online learning

Staff and trainees cross digital divide to distanced classes together.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers and staff have embraced their own home schooling in a switch to online training throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 130 members have been attending classes on Zoom as they work towards their Leading Crew, Coxswain and Radio Operator ratings.

Training and Education Director Chris Butler said the Training Department was running 35 separate online classes between late April and mid-August.

He said more than 80 members were attending the Leading Crew course and about 50 were undertaking the Radio Operator course. Tutorial sessions also are available for members studying for their Coxswain qualification.

"The entire coastline is being covered virtually," Mr Butler said.

He said while the Training Department had been developing online learning course work and tools, the pandemic had led to an earlier rollout of the system in a real-time environment.

"We hadn't planned to switch overnight to running all our classes online," he said. "It was MRNSW home schooling for us all! The Training team was on the same learning curve as everyone else, finding out about Zoom and what it could do for us.

"Our members stepped across that digital divide with us and have really taken to Zoom classes.

"Many people have had more time available to focus on their training and the feedback from



Online and on course ... members and staff log on for a Leading Crew training session via Zoom.

participants has been positive."

Leading Crew trainee Andy Ross posted on social media: "So good to see training still going ahead and grasping technology."

From Geoff Boehm: "Good luck to everyone. I'm just waiting for this to

be over so I can do the operational assessment."

Mr Butler said online classes would continue. Members can access a range of online resources via the e-learning tab on Portholes on the MRNSW website.



## BE PREPARED BEFORE YOU LEAVE SHORE

**SAFETY GEAR  
COMMUNICATION  
NAVIGATION / FISHFINDERS  
+ 1000'S OF CHANDLERY PRODUCTS!**

**VISIT YOUR LOCAL SUPERSTORE**

<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b>		
<b>CARINGBAH NEW LOCATION</b>	23 Koonya Cct	(02) 9540 9865
<b>COFFS HARBOUR NEW</b>	211 Cnr Pacific Hwy & Hurley Dr	1300 964 264
<b>GATESHEAD</b>	21 Pacific Hwy	(02) 4920 6820
<b>MCGRATHS HILL</b>	3 Curtis Rd	(02) 4577 8088
<b>NORTH NARRABEEN</b>	1402 Pittwater Rd	(02) 8914 0885
<b>PENRITH</b>	81-83 Batt St	(02) 4722 4555



**1300 964 264**  
roadtechmarine.com.au

**PERMANENT LOW PRICES - EVERYDAY**

# Member joins search for virus treatment

Evans Head volunteer 'dodges a bullet' on ill-fated *Ruby Princess*.

A Marine Rescue NSW volunteer who contracted coronavirus on the notorious *Ruby Princess* cruise ship is now part of the hunt for a treatment for the illness that has claimed more than 400,000 lives around the world.

MR Evans Head member Jim Roberts says he dodged a bullet, only contracting a mild case of the virus on the ill-fated liner, reported to be linked to 21 deaths and hundreds of infections.

"It's so terribly sad that all those people have passed away and got so terribly ill," Jim said.

"I'm pretty healthy. I wasn't very sick. The worse symptoms I had were hot, heavy, sore eyes and a mild temperature but I had none of the other symptoms - no cough, no sore throat."

Part of a fortunate and valuable cohort of patients who have recovered from the virus, Jim is now donating plasma, from which antibodies are being extracted, as part of a joint project by Australian Red Cross Lifeblood and CSL to develop a product with the potential to treat critically ill patients with COVID-19. Donors who have recovered from the virus have a high level of antibodies - proteins that fight COVID-19 - in their plasma.

"They're hoping to get as many people as possible who have been positive and recovered to donate plasma so they can extract the antibodies," Jim said. "You can always live in hope that you're contributing (to an effective treatment)."

Jim said he and his wife Sandra had enjoyed their cruise to New Zealand but in retrospect, he believed the ship should not have been allowed to sail.

"In hindsight, everybody was in a position to stop it going - the *Ruby Princess*, Border Force, NSW Health, the Port Authority - but no one did."

Jim said the ship's departure

had been delayed for more than four hours to disembark ill people from the previous cruise and satisfy NSW Health as to the level of cleaning on board.

"There were 2,700 passengers milling around on the concourse for a couple of hours but the issue is not whether someone brought it on to the ship but that there was a reservoir of the virus on the ship with the crew," he said.

While rumours had been swirling that passengers had fallen ill and been confined to their cabins, Jim said crew members had assured people who asked that everything was safe.

"Cruises are what they are. You're in close proximity to everyone. As my doctor said, it was a petri dish for COVID," Jim said.

"Nobody on the ship came forward and said there were people who were ill and there was a possibility some might have COVID. I guess they didn't want to create panic but perhaps they should have gone straight back to Sydney."

After stopping in Wellington - where the couple later learned via media reports that a number of passengers had been tested for the virus - the Commodore announced the *Princess* would skip its last three stops and return early to Sydney.

The liner docked in the early hours of Thursday, March 19 and passengers were allowed to disembark, sparking a blame game over the subsequent spread of the virus in the community.

Jim and Sandra flew home to the North Coast the same night.

"By the time we got back, I had mild symptoms and organised a swab test on Friday morning," he said.

"My doctor called me about 8.15 on Sunday evening to say I was positive and my wife was negative," Jim said. The couple was required to isolate for a fortnight.



MR Evans Head member Jim Roberts at the Casino Rural Fire Service Headquarters during the summer bushfire crisis, before he sailed into his own health emergency in March.



The ill-fated *Ruby Princess* turned out to be "a petri dish for COVID".

Jim has put his time to good use, studying for his radio operator qualification via Zoom training courses run by MRNSW Regional Training Manager Stuart Massey.

"I've just enrolled in the Training and Assessment short course. My goal is to get to Watch Officer status," he said.

Describing MR Evans Head as "a big extended family", Jim said he had asked the unit's Membership Officer to inform his fellow volunteers of his positive result as he believed they had a right to know.



Sunrise over the *Ruby Princess'* return to Sydney.

"We have a wonderful little unit. The level of expertise and skills that people have and the freedom with which they pass that information on is outstanding," he said.

## Kids, quiz, Zoom: our life in social isolation

Maintaining connections important for individuals' resilience and wellbeing.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers and staff alike responded creatively and thoughtfully to the enforced social isolation that became a new way of life to help prevent the spread of coronavirus in the service's ranks.

People commandeered dining room and kitchen tables for new work and home school routines with kids, partners, laptop-loving cats and barking dogs, picked up new hobbies, resumed familiar pastimes and found various ways to maintain their connections with fellow volunteers, colleagues and friends.

Member Services Manager Adrian Adam said maintaining connections was important to individuals' mental health and resilience in the face of such a severe crisis.

"This will have been a lonely time for some people, especially for members who rely on their Marine Rescue activities for social interaction or a respite from weighty caring responsibilities," he said.

"We have encouraged units to maintain contact with their members and individuals to stay in touch as best they can by phone, Zoom, email or text. It will never replace a hug from your grandkids or a cuppa with your friends but staying connected can definitely help your wellbeing."

Inspired by a poll of MR Middle Harbour members by the unit's

newsletter editor Howard Gipps (see story P 36), MRNSW asked volunteers and staff how they were faring in isolation, posting their video stories on Facebook.

A Leading Crew member, Howard said social isolation had had an immense impact on his duties.

"I don't go down to the base anymore and train normally and go out and do the runs we used to do. I sit here waiting for the call out because that's what it's all about, emergency call outs," he said.

"I don't mind the isolation, I really quite like it. I read more. The streets are quieter, I can hear the birds more. I quite like what's happening to us, we're going back to the old ways of doing things."

MR Port Macquarie Training Officer and Skipper Ali Cameron-Brown set a weekly quiz to "keep our members entertained, still learning and engaged and for a bit of fun". While she missed the social aspects of training and time on the water, the upsides were spending more time with her family, getting to jobs like accounting and gardening, and learning a new computer program.

MR Ulladulla Deputy Unit Commander Gabrielle Boerman said for her, the biggest impact had been the loss of camaraderie between members meeting at the base.



Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff's son Lachlan takes on some MRNSW colouring while Ruby gets to work on her home schooling.

"Using our technology we've been able to connect with members on a regular basis, making sure they're ok, particularly the ones who live alone and the more mature members."

She said UC David Hall had started a music club and shared quizzes and jokes that had "helped us get to know members on a different level and appreciate the people they are. That's been really good, actually".

Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff faced the challenge of balancing working from her home office with home schooling her daughter Ruby, 8 and spending time on some therapeutic time colouring in with her son, Lachlan, 3.

She said had missed seeing unit training personnel and training with volunteers.

"It's been difficult not talking to them direct but Zoom has been fantastic to maintain that and launching our programs and e-learning quicker than we anticipated. It actually has gone really well with great participation and I look forward to continuing this post-COVID," she said. Ruby reported that home schooling with her mum had been really great.

**If you feel you need help at this time, you can call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit the Australian Government's Head to Health COVID Support at [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)**



MR Port Macquarie Training Officer and skipper Ali Cameron-Brown missed the social aspects of MRNSW life and operations.



Engaging ... Commissioner Stacey Tannos filmed a series of COVID-19 updates that were issued to all members and staff.

## Pandemic forces new Qld border closure

Point Danger Commander navigates checkpoint to reach Maroon home.

In a move not seen since the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1919, Queensland closed its borders on March 25 to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

On the normally-laidback Twin Towns tourist strip, barriers and police checkpoints were set up on roads heading north from NSW across the border, with motorists required to possess a Queensland Entry Pass.

MR Point Danger's base in the Captain Cook lighthouse straddles the State border and its members live on either side of the dividing line, which normally goes largely unnoticed by the locals, other than to mark the demarcation between two separate time zones during daylight saving each year.

Like other MRNSW volunteers,

Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby, who lives in Maroon territory, was staying home and staying safe.

When she needed to report to the base, her route was on Queensland roads but the trip home down the aptly-named Boundary Street took her into NSW, past the roadblocks and frequently-assembled media to a police checkpoint.

In recognition of the vital mission of MRNSW to save lives on the water, UC Ashby was granted an entry pass, so after a friendly word with a member of the Queensland constabulary, she was on her way back north.

She said the unit had maintained its services with one radio operator rostered on duty per shift and rescue vessel crews operating



MR Point Danger Unit Commander Glenda Ashby stops at the police checkpoint on the closed NSW-Qld border.

on a call-out basis in response to emergencies but she was ensuring that members were able to stay connected.

"Everyone else is staying home. We're sending out memos and newsletters to keep people up to

date but I'm ringing our volunteers to let them know I'm thinking about them and am concerned for them and their families," she said.

"I think it's helped lift people's spirits and I want them to know their health is the most important thing."

# FENWICKS MARINA

AN AWARD WINNING MARINA LOCATED IN BROOKLYN  
THE HEART OF THE HAWKESBURY RIVER

## 2019-2020 Best Boat Yard under 20 Boats

Nationally recognised R&M facilities using the latest equipment. Come and meet our helpful and friendly staff.

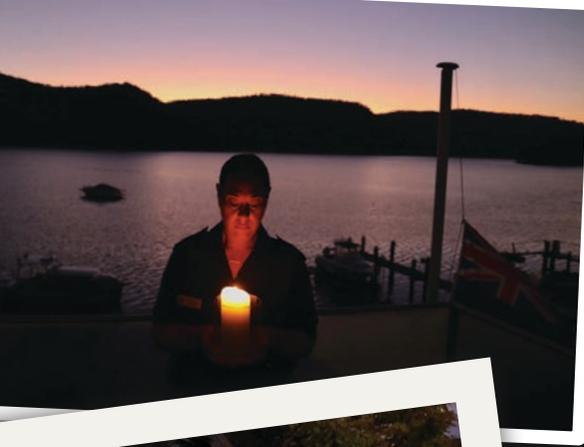


- ◆ On site Antifouling, Detailing, Travel Lift, Broker, Trimmers, Electrician, Mechanics, Shipwright and Fabricator
- ◆ Scheduled maintenance work for berthing clients
- ◆ Fuel - ULP, Diesel, PULP
- ◆ CCTV Camera's and secure surfaced car park with unlimited parking for you and your guests
- ◆ Unmetered power, water and TV to all berths
- ◆ 24/7 access to clean shower and toilet facilities
- ◆ A gateway to extensive, picturesque cruising grounds
- ◆ Protection from most severe weather
- ◆ Only 2km from the M1 exit, 45 mins north of Sydney
- ◆ Staffed 7 days a week



[www.fenwicksmarina.com.au](http://www.fenwicksmarina.com.au)

Phone: 02 9985 7633



Anzac Day  
Newcastle 2020



# Marine Rescue NSW lights up the dawn on Anzac Day 2020



Cape Byron Anzac Day 2020



## Our people stand together in isolation



Illuminating the early morning ... MR Terrey Hills Operations Officer Margaret Chu and Treasurer Gary Lightfoot stand together at 6am as the strains of the Last Post echo through their neighbourhood.



Far South Coast remembrance ... MR Eden Search and Rescue Support Officer, Lieutenant Commander RAN (Rtd) John Steele.



MR Lake Macquarie members, Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director Jim Wright and Zoe Wright, thank those who served.



Commissioner Stacey Tannos leads the Marine Rescue NSW commemorations from his driveway.

## Shutdown recruits look forward to office life

Remote workplace introductions for new Headquarters staff members.

Starting a new job can be challenging at any time but joining an organisation in the midst of a pandemic shutdown at least means you feel right at home in your new workplace.

Two of the newest members of the MRNSW staff, IT Developer/Project Manager Oscar Willems and Receptionist/Office Manager Stephanie Bruno, were appointed after Headquarters staff had begun working from home in mid-March.

The pair's initial introductions to their new colleagues were via Zoom.

New Stores Manager Daniel Gatt was the third to join, still during the head office shutdown, after the June long weekend.

Anyone who has caught a Sydney train and glanced up at the destination boards on the platform is familiar with Oscar's work.

He was the original architect of the software system for the rolling screens that keep passengers informed of approaching trains, destinations and delays.

He first worked for Sydney Trains in 1997 on the project to introduce the new indicator system before the 2000 Olympic Games.

"The technology has changed over time but the suite of applications still exists in all the big stations," he said.

After leaving to join the NASDAQ

stock exchange for a period, he returned to the public transport system, before joining MRNSW.

Originally from Holland, Oscar first came to Australia in 1991 as part of a planned working tour through a number of countries.

"I had a ball, moved to Cronulla, started attempting to surf, started playing soccer for the Cronulla Seagulls and all of a sudden I wake up and I've got a wife, a couple of kids, a house and a mortgage," he said.

Oscar said he was looking forward to working for a dynamic emergency service but although he had been keen to work closer to home, being "stuck at home" was much closer than he had expected.

Stephanie joins MRNSW from her previous role as the Customer Service Team Leader for the Beauty Chef, a largely online provider of inner beauty products.

Not only did the pandemic force Stephanie to start her work life with MRNSW from home, it also prevented her from farewelling her former colleagues in person.

"We'd already started working from home and people found out I was leaving online. I had a Zoom farewell and it was so strange that I couldn't hug people," she said.

Living an easy walk from the office, her new role provides



Joining MRNSW during shutdown ... new receptionist/office manager Stephanie Bruno and IT Developer/Project Manager Oscar Willems.

Stephanie with a greater work-life balance, replacing a three-hour daily commute.

She has been routinely spending mornings in the office to help keep processes functioning but is looking forward to staff returning to work.

"I'm very organised and I love that. I was in finance a year or so ago but I need to be interacting with people. It's nice to be able to come in and talk to my mates.

"I'm a people person, I like dealing with people and I'm looking forward to talking to our volunteers and hearing their perspectives."

Daniel, who comes to MRNSW after a lengthy career as a warehouse supervisor, storeman and stock controller, will spend his first

few weeks on the job at the existing Chatswood Stores, learning the MRNSW ropes with Graham Foy.

Daniel said he was looking forward to the move to the brand new set-up at the Cronulla Headquarters site, planned for July.

"It's always good when you get to put the warehouse together yourself because then you know where everything is," he said.

His previous role was with a Sydney audio-visual firm and while he had not had a passion for the technology involved, working with volunteers who saved lives was "100 per cent more meaningful".

"I'm privileged to be able to jump on board and add my little part where I can," he said.

## Deputy thanked for tireless commitment

Commissioner Stacey Tannos has thanked former Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey for his far-reaching contribution to the organisation over the past seven years.

"Dean has been tireless in his commitment to the professional development and reform of Marine Rescue NSW," he said.

"His key achievements since joining MRNSW in June 2013

include the development of industry-leading standard operating procedures, training programs and initiatives to enhance service delivery and personnel safety, qualifications and experience.

"He has steered the organisation's \$24.5 million Fleet Modernisation Program, enabling us to deliver safe, reliable and contemporary boats to our volunteers.

"He was also pivotal in the development of the MRNSW capital works program to guide the investment of an additional \$37.6 million in State Government funding announced last year."

Mr Storey was recognised with the Emergency Services Medal in 2019.

Commissioner Tannos wished him well in his future career endeavours following his departure in March.



Former Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey.



The *proven* choice for Government and Professional applications around the world  
**AirBerth Boat Lifts**



## Optimise vessel performance today by storing your boat out of the water

- ✓ Increase speed and fuel efficiency by eliminating anti-foul paints on the hull
- ✓ Launch and retrieve your vessel in minutes
- ✓ Maximise days on water; minimise maintenance time

## The AirBerth features:

- ▶ Quick, safe and easy to launch for quick deployment
- ▶ 9 different models suit vessels up to 15 metric tonnes
- ▶ UV stable Heavy Duty HDPE construction ensures AirBerth is environmentally friendly and maintenance free
- ▶ Vessel retrieval equally as fast so less time on dock post-rescue
- ▶ No submerged metal parts
- ▶ Isolates air and water for added safety

Proud member of:



AirBerth Boat Lifts  
 +61 7 5587 7888  
 info@airberth.com  
[www.airberth.com](http://www.airberth.com)



**LEAN BURN** 

**UP TO 45% FUEL SAVINGS.  
IT'S NO SECRET. JUST ASK.**



## \$24.5m invested in safety promise to crews

Largest vessel emerges in new livery as transformation nears completion.

Marine Rescue NSW is continuing to build a fleet that is the envy of rescue services throughout Australia and beyond.

More than \$24.5 million has now been invested in the fleet over 11 years.

New Naiad vessels have been delivered to the Sussex Inlet, Port Kembla, Lemon Tree Passage, Tuggerah Lakes, Merimbula and Newcastle units this financial year, at a total cost of \$2 million.

The 100th vessel added to the fleet under the landmark MRNSW Fleet Modernisation Program, the former NSW Police vessel *Fearless*, is undergoing a \$650,000 refit and facelift ahead of its delivery to the new MR Lord Howe Island unit.

The 16m boat, now *Lord Howe 40*, is the largest in the fleet, with a range of 200 nautical miles.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the organisation's momentum on the water was being maintained, with new vessels also due for delivery to the Jervis Bay and Broken Bay units in coming weeks and a continuing build schedule mapped out for the coming financial year.

"This work has been boosted by the State Government's \$37.6 million capital injection, which includes funding for 38 new vessels," he said.

Other fleet improvements include the recent refurbishment of *Batemans 30* and the delivery of Rescue Water Craft to Narooma and Nambucca, with MR Brunswick soon to deploy RWCs as a rapid response resource on its hazardous bar.

Commissioner Tannos said the quality of the MRNSW rescue fleet was unparalleled.

"Our boats are designed and built specifically to handle the heavy operational workload of search and rescue, whether offshore, on coastal bars or confined inshore waterways," he said. "Safety is always our highest priority and our



We got a bigger boat ... MRNSW livery is added to former NSW Police vessel *Fearless* during its make-over to become *Lord Howe 40*.

investment of \$24.5 million is proof that we are continuing to deliver on our promise to equip our volunteers with modern, safe and reliable vessels."

MRNSW boat builders are concentrated on the North Coast but with COVID-19 restrictions limiting flights to the region, Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin has spent hours on the road for his regular visits to oversee vessel builds and undertake sea trials with Yamba Welding & Engineering, which produces the various model Naiads in the fleet.

He has made routine inspections of progress on the build of the \$850,000 *Jervis Bay 40* at new MRNSW boat builder Harwood Marine and *Lord Howe 40*, being refurbished at Birdon Marine at Port Macquarie.

The new *JB 40* is the first to be crafted for MRNSW by Harwood Marine.

The 13.5m aluminium monohull is a prototype for MRNSW and will replace the current *JB 40*, a 13.5m Steber approaching the end of its operational life.

Mr Parkin said the extensive work on *Lord Howe 40* included



The new *Jervis Bay 40*, a 13m aluminium monohull prototype for MRNSW, being prepared for side hull plating at Harwood Marine.

gutting the interior, building a new wheelhouse console, renewing the fly bridge console, installing a full suite of Raymarine electronics, a mechanical overhaul and replacing bearings and corroded plates.

As part of a survey renewal, the shafts and propellers have been removed, aligned and inspected.

"The hull will be blasted, antifoul removed and the superstructure painted before the vessel is re-

launched in our livery," he said.

Mr Parkin said MRNSW was moving to more environmentally friendly and sustainable anti-foul protection, Jotun SeaQuantum Ultra, which would be applied to both *LH 40* and *JB 40*.

"It is designed to last for longer on idle days and the formula deters growth and supports a longer life, which maintains the fuel efficiency of these larger vessels," he said.

## Grants welcome as COVID hits fundraising

\$177,000 in government funding for unit upgrades, new equipment.

Seven MRNSW units have received a total of almost \$177,000 in NSW Government grants for new and upgraded operational equipment, technology and safety works.

The units have received the grants under the Government's 2019 Community Building Partnership program, which funds community infrastructure projects.

MRNSW projects funded under the grants program include a CCTV camera on the hazardous Brunswick River bar, new engines and upgraded electronic navigation systems for rescue vessels and works to make docks and pontoons safer.

Grants and Sponsorship Manager Mat Smith said the funding would be a welcome boost for the seven units.

"Marine Rescue NSW receives valuable funding from the NSW Government and our boating community but we also rely on our volunteers' fundraising and grants to help fund our mission to save lives on the water," he said.

"Unfortunately, our units have

been forced to cancel or postpone their public fundraising activities during the coronavirus pandemic so grant funding is of even greater assistance during these challenging times."

The units to receive funding are:

- Cape Byron: \$47,100 for CCTV camera equipment to provide vision of the Brunswick bar and an emergency generator to maintain power supply to the base during extreme weather events and other outages.

- Central Coast: \$14,183 for a floating pontoon to dock its training vessel at its Point Clare base and \$10,163 to install a new suite of electronic navigation systems on board *Central Coast 22*.

- Norah Head: \$26,000 for new twin Suzuki 150HP four-stroke engines for its rescue vessel.

- Evans Head: \$19,200 for a custom-made boat trailer to launch and recover its rescue vessel for servicing and maintenance.

- Port Stephens: \$50,000 to improve safety by replacing the badly-weathered dock where its



Work under way on MR Port Stephens' new dock, awarded a \$50,000 NSW Government grant.

rescue vessels are berthed.

- Port Macquarie: \$5,512 to install lighting on its Rescue Water Craft pontoon to maximise safety during night operations and upgrade

kitchen facilities at the unit's riverfront boat shed.

- Lake Macquarie: \$4,750 to upgrade the IT equipment at its Pelican boat base.

## \$100,000 to take radio training off the air

Trainee operators can hone skills in safe, realistic environment.

New training equipment is helping MRNSW radio operators to hone their on-air skills.

An Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant for almost \$100,000 has funded marine radio training kits to enable radio operators to practice off the public airwaves.

Training and Education Director Chris Butler said the joint State and Commonwealth government grant had funded 34 training kits to complete the roll-out of the equipment to all units.

"The kits are designed for our radio operators to train in a realistic environment, ensuring they have the

skills, knowledge and experience to provide calm and professional assistance to boaters in trouble on the water," Mr Butler said. "The benefit is that trainees can use these training kits instead of 'live' radios, confident that they can make mistakes in a safe environment without their exercises being widely broadcast to all boaters monitoring VHF Channel 16.

"This will help give people greater understanding of the marine radio equipment they will use on duty and surety that they can respond effectively to the radio traffic, particularly during peak periods."



Director of Operations Andrew Cribb and Training and Education Director Chris Butler with one of the new training radio kits delivered thanks to a government grant worth almost \$100,000.

# Online winners thrilled with new VHF radios

Help Us Help You campaign urges boaters to make every journey safer.

The Marine Rescue NSW Help Us Help You campaign, launched in early March, ended up encouraging boaters to stay safer in more ways than one.

The safety campaign urged boaters to make every journey safer by switching to VHF radio. It included a giveaway of 36 VHF radios, a prize pool valued at more than \$20,000.

The campaign ran until the traditional end of the boating season at Easter - but like the season itself, was hit front-on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The campaign was subsequently refocused to synchronise with Marine Rescue's coronavirus safety messaging, "Stay Safe. Stay Home."

It then became a useful vehicle to remind boaters of the value of social isolation, changing to taglines of "Winners stay home" and "Everyone wins when everyone is safe".

The campaign reached 79,000 people through the MRNSW Facebook page, with the radio giveaway attracting more than 3,000 entries.

The 36 winners - one from each MRNSW region each week for six weeks - received a Raymarine VHF marine radio valued from \$450.

MRNSW campaign coordinator Anya Slowenko said the campaign had achieved the aim of helping the

winners switch to safer boating.

"Of the 36 winners, 16 had no radio on their boat at all, another 12 had a 27MHz set and eight had an older VHF. Eleven of our winners were women," she said.

"Every one of the winners was thrilled with their prize and happy to receive good news, especially at the start of our social isolation."

Highlighting the superior range and reception provided by VHF radio, the online safety campaign was the latest step in the organisation's ongoing efforts to encourage boaters to make the switch to VHF for greater safety.

"We capitalised on our boating safety expertise and harnessed the power of advocacy of our own personnel, people we have rescued and members of the boating public," Ms Slowenko said.

Hunter/Central Coast winner Callan M said: "Thank you so much for the great news! I still can't believe it."

Illawarra winner Cathy B was equally pleased.

"Thank you to Raymarine & Barrenjoey Marine Electrics for sponsoring this great giveaway that could potentially save lives, and Marine Rescue for all the fabulous work that you do."

Everyone who entered the



Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray presents a VHF radio to week one winner Laura G, with MR Cape Byron Unit Commander Terry Sandon.

giveaway but did not win received a 20 per cent discount when they bought their own Raymarine radio through long-time MRNSW supplier Barrenjoey Marine Electrics.

In recognition that people may not have been in a position to buy a new radio during the pandemic, the offer will be extended again closer to the summer boating season.



Pandemic prize ... Jenny B was one of the 36 winners in the Help Us Help You VHF campaign and made sure she was COVID-safe when her Raymarine radio was delivered.



**Dreaming of that new:  
Jetty, Floating, Pontoon  
or Marina Pen**

**We are in your area and able to  
provide a free no obligation quote!**



**COPLEYMARINE**  
CONSULTING GROUP

Tel: 02 8091 1534 [www.cm-consulting.com.au](http://www.cm-consulting.com.au)

# Karera

## Radio Communication Solutions



- ◆ Marine Radios (HF, VHF and UHF)
- ◆ Antennas and accessories
- ◆ Navigation, GPS and Vessel Tracking
- ◆ EPIRBS and Safety Beacons
- ◆ Eflares ◆ Equipment Servicing

With years of marine radio experience, we can help you choose the right equipment for your situation and provide through-life maintenance for reliable, dependable operation.

If you need practical advice, quality workmanship and excellent service, you can rely on Karera.

- ◆ Fully equipped workshop and experienced technical staff for radio servicing & repairs.
- ◆ Engineering staff to help you create solutions specific to your needs.
- ◆ Trusted suppliers to Marine Rescue NSW.



 **02 4355 1599**

2 / 49 Gavenlock Road TUGGERAH NSW 2259



Visit our new website!  
[www.karera.com](http://www.karera.com) Or email us for a quote. [sales@karera.com](mailto:sales@karera.com)

**PROUD TO SUPPORT MARINE RESCUE NEW SOUTH WALES**

## What we've been up to



Waterfront evolution ... MR Botany Port Hacking unit members Tomek Zamencki, Ian Baker and Jesse Rowley with MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan and Commissioner Stacey Tannos in front of one of the dilapidated buildings on the Hungry Point Reserve to be restored and transformed as part of the \$12 million Marine Rescue NSW Training Academy. The Reserve also is home to the unit and State Headquarters.



Distanced congratulations ... Mid North Coast ROM Randall Gawne presents MR Crowdy Harrington coxswain, radio operator and former DUC Kevin Nicholls with his 10 year Long Service Medal.



More boats ... Attorney General, Cronulla MP Mark Speakman, and Commissioner Stacey Tannos beside the Port Hacking jetty that will be expanded to accommodate dedicated training vessels.



Sunset mission ... *Point Danger 30* barely makes a ripple on the Tweed River as it tows a disabled 5.2m vessel upstream to safety in fading light (story P 26). Photo: Courtney Greenslade.



Back on deck ... crew member Ray Thorpe returns to boat duty on *Evans Head 30* in time for a busy watch towing this fishing boat to shore before rescuing a yacht adrift near breakers (story P 24).

## Fishing proves irresistible, even in pandemic

Boating boom but few emergencies to trouble Evans Head crews.

Despite public health requirements to self-isolate, with fishing still permitted during the pandemic, boating out of Evans Head boomed.

Mostly perfect conditions and an abundance of fish resulted in some of the busiest days of the year on the water.

With fewer radio operators and adjusted operating days, MR Evans Head still was able to maintain a comprehensive coverage with help from our neighbours at MR Ballina. Thanks to the Ballina members for their support.

With no formal Anzac Day ceremonies, the local fishermen hit the water early. Our radio base recorded 62 Log Ons and Ballina more than 70 in the first two hours.

In spite of the large number of vessels on the water, we have only had a few calls for help, mostly to tow broken down boats to safety.

In early May, we joined the search for missing Evans Head woman Amber Christie, scouring the coast from the Evans bar to the Department of Defence bombing range. There was no outcome from



Offshore rendezvous ... *Ballina 30* (rear) approaches to take over the tow from *Evans Head 30* of a disabled 36 foot steel sloop too large to cross the Evans bar. Photo: Bill Bates.

a week-long multi-agency search.

On May 13, the crew of *Evans Head 30* was tasked by MR Ballina to rescue a disabled vessel drifting close to the beach at the bombing range with three people on board.

As the crew was towing the boat back through the bar, a transiting yacht drifting close to breakers at South Reef called for help.

We quickly deposited the fishing boat at the ramp and headed south to locate the yacht.

The 36 foot steel vessel had no electrics, no radio and the skipper had no idea of his position other than "I'm south of the big headland, you can't miss me!".

Once we explained how to access the Latitude and Longitude on Google maps on his mobile, we were able to locate him and take him in tow.

The yacht's draft was too deep to cross the bar so a rendezvous off Evans Head was arranged with the

crew of *Ballina 30*, who took over the tow for the next 12nm to Ballina.

Thanks to crew members Ian Murray, Scott Mohr, Brad Burgess, Ray Thorpe and Bill Bates, radio operator Rohan Shanahan and our mates at Ballina. This spate of activity marked Ian Murray's first shift as duty coxswain and also the welcome return of former Unit Commander and 25-year veteran Ray Thorpe as a crew member.

*Bill Bates*

## Brunswick first to deploy rapid rescue craft

Rollover highlights benefits of new equipment and vision of bar.

Marine Rescue Brunswick is to become the first unit in the Northern Rivers region to add Rescue Water Craft to its fleet.

The highly manoeuvrable assets will be a great benefit to the unit and local boating community, enabling a rapid and safe response to emergencies on and near the shallow and dangerous Brunswick bar, the river's tributaries and waters around Cape Byron.

Two RWCs have been deployed to the unit and an initial group of six trainees, who have extensive boating experience, have begun

their theoretical training via Zoom. Intensive on-water training sessions will follow before spring.

A family of four was thrown overboard when their 6.5m open runabout rolled on the bar early on March 19. The two adults and two children were rescued by a local surfer before their boat washed up on rocks at the southern end of New Brighton Beach. As well as demonstrating the value of the rapid response RWCs, the incident highlighted the benefit of the CCTV camera to be installed to stream vision of the bar to local units.



A boater inspects his upturned boat after it rolled on the Brunswick bar. Photo: Barry McIntosh.

# Pair saved in early morning Mayday mission

COVID surge pushes up demand on Ballina radio and vessel teams.

A man and woman were rescued in a multi-agency emergency operation after making a Mayday call and activating their EPIRB as their 45-foot cruiser sank in the early morning darkness 6nm south of Ballina on June 12.

The cruiser began taking on water and sinking bow-first offshore. The crew of *Ballina 30* and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter were activated when the Mayday was detected by MR Terrey Hills about 2.10am. With guidance from the helicopter crew, *BA 30* retrieved the pair and returned them across the bar, illuminated by the chopper, to a waiting NSW Ambulance.

This early morning rapid response followed a late season surge of activity from boaters attracted by perfect fishing conditions, a calm bar, beautiful weather and plentiful fish in mid-late April. Anzac week was the busiest for MR Ballina, Logging On 450, vessels, peaking at 172 on Anzac Day itself.

Under the MRNSW pandemic measures, the unit's base monitored radio traffic to MR Evans Head, Cape Byron and Brunswick Heads units on weekdays. The volume of traffic on the water increased the demand on the crew of *BA 30*, with a range of inshore assists and longer offshore missions, including a 12nm operation to rescue four people on



Successful handover ... *Ballina 30* takes over the tow of a disabled 36 foot steel sloop from *Evans Head 30*, returning it to safety at Ballina. Photo: Bill Bates.

a 6m cabin runabout whose engine caught on fire in late March. The boat was towed to safety in a two-hour return journey.

On May 13, our crew worked with our colleagues from MR Evans Head to return a disabled 36 foot sloop to safety. *BA 30* took over the tow of the vessel from *Evans Head 30*, bringing it over the Ballina bar in the dark about 6pm on a low tide and with a heavy wave over the stern.

The unit's new floating crew room was installed at the Ballina Trawler Harbour in early May, providing crew members with a ready room, storage for essential equipment and space

for training and debriefings. This will enhance unit response times, with crews able to be on standby alongside the vessel rather than travelling from the base further east.

The \$100,000 project was completed in two stages, with the pontoon first installed alongside the vessel berth, followed next day by a crane lowering the demountable building on to the pontoon. A \$4,000 Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant will assist with the facility's fit-out.

Long standing member Norm Lannoy was recently presented with his 20-year Long Service Medal. A

coxswain and radio operator, Norm has taken part in about 180 rescue missions, mentored many volunteers and as a former Commander and Deputy, was integral in the unit's long campaign to raise funding for our new base.

In April, Geoff Shepherd took the reins as the new Deputy Unit Commander. Geoff pursued his love of boating by joining MRNSW in 2017. After gaining his crew rating in 2018, he is training as a watch officer. Unit members have thanked our former Deputy Phil Causley for his hard work for the unit.

*Kath Begley*



Steady ... MR Ballina's David Jordan watches as the unit's new crew room is lifted over the water into place on its floating pontoon.



The new ready room, alongside rescue vessel *Ballina 30*, will enable crews to deploy more rapidly in emergencies.

## Camera latest tool in North Coast rescue kit

Grant funds new technology to keep boaters safer and Cape Byron on the air.

Boaters and surfers on the North Coast will be safer thanks to new equipment being installed with a \$47,000 grant.

Ballina MP Tamara Smith visited MR Cape Byron on May 12 to announce the Community Building Partnership grant.

The grant will fund the installation of a CCTV camera on the Brunswick bar to stream vision of the hazardous crossing to local units, along with a generator to keep the Cape Byron radio base operational in the event of storm damage or other power outages.

"What a privilege to be able to support Marine Rescue Cape Byron in the amazing work they do keeping people on our waterways safe," Ms Smith said.

"The equipment they will be able to purchase will save lives."



MR Cape Byron UC Terry Sandon, North Coast ROM John Murray, Carole Coffey, Guy Hastings, Rob Asquith and Pam Ditton welcome Ballina MP Tamara Smith to the unit's radio base

MR Cape Byron monitors radio communications to the MR Brunswick base on weekdays and the CCTV camera will provide its

operators with vision of conditions and traffic on the risky river bar.

Unit Commander Terry Sandon said a similar camera system would

be beneficial on the Cape to enable rescuers to locate surfers swept from Tallow Beach in a rip and washed around the rocky headland.

## Social distancing the rule on state border

Point Danger members maintain services and stay rescue ready.

Marine Rescue Point Danger has continued to provide our services to the members of the boating community who have been out on the water during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our radio operators have maintained radio communications while observing the social distancing rules and our crews have been on alert to respond to emergencies from home 24/7.

While our vessels have been tasked to few operations, the boaters who have headed out have appreciated that the volunteers have been able to continue with their duties during these uncertain times.

The unit's crews performed three offshore operations in April, returning four boaters to safety.

On Easter Monday, two people on board a 4-5m runabout called for help after breaking down at the Nine

Mile Reef fishing grounds. *Point Danger 30* took the runabout under tow, returning it across the bar to the Kennedy Drive boat ramp.

Nine days later, our crew was again deployed offshore to rescue a boater stranded on a 5.2m centre console vessel with a flat battery off Kirra.

Just one rescue was performed in the first fortnight of May.

Our Training Officer Courtney Greenslade and member Kendall Holbert have conducted weekly maintenance checks on our vessels to ensure they remained online during the pandemic.

A number of socially distanced members put in a hard day's work on various maintenance tasks on the boats, including re-gluing the rubber bumper on the sponsons of *PD 30*.

Congratulations to a lucky



The crew of *Point Danger 30* returns a runabout that broke down offshore to safety on the Tweed River on Easter Monday.

Northern Rivers boater, Jack, from Fingal, who was the winner of a VHF radio in week two of the MRNSW Help Us Help You campaign.

Although Anzac Day services were cancelled this year, Unit Commander Glenda Ashby, Administration Officer Dale Leo and

member Gary Ashby laid a wreath at the Tweed Heads War Memorial.

We want all our boaters to stay safe and are particularly encouraging them to make sure to Log On when on the water, especially offshore.

*Dale Leo*

# Isolated radio operators, crew hold the fort

Boaters head out, not home, in record numbers around Woolli.

This has been a testing time for MR Woolli, maintaining our emergency service in a pandemic while protecting the health and wellbeing of our members.

Just four of our radio operators, who were able to self-isolate in Woolli, have provided our radio coverage, working in isolation and with thorough cleaning of the base between shifts.

While we anticipated the “Stay Home” message would result in a reduced workload, the opposite occurred.

The authorities also decreed that people were allowed to go fishing and there was no confusion in the minds of many fishermen.

On some days there were 60-plus vehicle/trailer outfits parked on the beach at the Minnie Water launch site and another 40 out of Woolli. These are unprecedented numbers for our isolated location.

For our rescue vessel crew, the more boats at sea, the greater the chances our services would be required. In another first, we were called to two assists in one day!

The *Woolli 30* vessel master reported: “It was a busy day for us, made harder because, like everyone else we must minimise contact and apply physical/social distancing rules even on board our own rescue vessel. In the morning we went out to a vessel a mile north east of North West Rock. Their outboard was overheating, so we took them in tow and returned to the main boat ramp.

“Back at Woolli wharf and another call came in, this time from a vessel with mechanical failure. Their position was roughly off the north eastern tip of North Solitary Island. We were able to locate them, take them in tow and bring them back to Woolli.

“Yes, we will always come out to assist you, but please carefully consider your need to go to sea in these difficult times.”



Stranded ... the crew of *Woolli 30* helped the skipper of this trimaran, damaged on a sand bank in the river, with pumps, supplies and a tender. Photo: Jackie Taffs.

Some of our rescue vessel procedures had to be modified to minimise contact and maintain social distancing. Our third crew member remained on the aft deck and, when safe to do so, crew of the assisted vessel remained on their vessel for the tow.

Maintaining social distancing was not so easy when we assisted a trimaran that entered the river, grounded on a sand bank, damaged its main hull and flooded.

*Woolli 30* assisted with pumps, however, due to the neap tides, it was almost a week before there was

a tide with sufficient water to float the trimaran on its outer hulls and move it for inspection and repairs.

In the meantime, the person on board had no means of getting ashore so our members helped out, obtaining and delivering medical and other supplies and eventually organising a tender. The owner now has a demanding task ahead to repair the vessel and ensure it is seaworthy to continue his voyage north. Thank you to the members of the Woolli community who aided a stranded sailor.

While training opportunities might

have been diminished, our unit administration has been busier than ever. Unit Commander Richard Taffs has agreed to extend his tenure after a decade at the helm, with Nic Firth taking the reins as Deputy. Thank you to Marty Hutchens for his service in this role. Anzac Day was not forgotten, we have purchased new IT equipment with an Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme grant, a new fuel trailer has been delivered and a vehicle ordered, with a new generator to go on its tray for our AirBerth operation.

*Richard Taffs*



Boaters got the message loud and clear that fishing was allowed ... unprecedented numbers of vessels and trailers parked on the beach at Minnie Waters during the pandemic. Photo: Matthew McLennan.

# Hikers show heart to thank Forster-Tuncurry

Grateful family praises crew for lengthy Easter rescue mission.

Marine Rescue Forster-Tuncurry's supporters showed a lot of heart to raise funds for the unit in an event held just days before the introduction of the public and MRNSW coronavirus restrictions.

The Big Heart Hike is held each year in memory of local boater Henry Perram, whose life was saved by two quick-thinking unit members, Grant Maxwell and Milton Shaw, after he suffered a cardiac arrest while fishing with his son in 2013.

More than 100 participants joined in this year's 28km hike on March 14, raising \$5,400. Thank you to Henry's family for organising this event and donating all entry fees to the unit.

Despite the pandemic restrictions, the unit Logged On more than 620

vessels and launched eight rescue missions in March and April.

On Easter Monday, *Forster 30* was deployed to rescue a runabout broken down 10nm north-east of Forster with four people, including a young child, on board. Skipper Ray Mazurek and crew Peter Jelfs, Gary Dickson and Richard Neal headed out, with communications support from radio operator Robyn O'Meara.

The vessel was floundering with a disabled motor and the child was suffering from sea sickness.

After a successful two-hour return journey to harbour, the relieved family expressed their gratitude: "A small message to say an enormous thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time and effort on Monday to tow us back



A sign of the socially distanced times outside the MR Forster-Tuncurry base on the Forster breakwall.

to Forster boat harbour. We are so grateful for your assistance, keeping us safe and your kindness."

"The service you provide is an

outstanding example of community looking after community," another Facebook comment read.

*Fran Breen*

**BME**  
BARRENJOEY MARINE ELECTRICS

9997 6822 | bme.net.au  
sales@bme.net.au

Barrenjoey Marine Electrics has provided complete expert sales, service & refit solutions for over 35 years and in this time has been a proud supporter of Marine Rescue NSW.

To celebrate the strength of this relationship, BME would like to offer members of Marine Rescue NSW significant discounts and support on a variety of Marine Electronics.

Get in touch today

FLIR Raymarine FURUNO

## Volunteers maintain COVID vigilance

New UC proud of members' conduct.

Four newly qualified radio operators helped keep the MR Crowdy Harrington radio base operational amid the many changes to protocols and procedures throughout the COVID-19 shutdown.

The new operators qualified at the start of the pandemic restrictions, undertaking their assessment at the unit's training shed, rather than the base, to ensure compliance with all social distancing precautions.

The unit's boat crews have been unable to train on the water but have kept up the vessels' maintenance, with a few minor repairs and other tasks completed.

We have learnt how to hold meetings via Zoom, how to interact with members via phone and email and most importantly, the value of being in a small vulnerable community.

We are extremely lucky to have had no cases of COVID-19 in our community and are doing the best we can to stay virus-free at our base, shed and aboard the vessels.

Now that we are able to begin training again, we will maintain our vigilance. Thank you to the residents of Harrington and surrounds for doing the right things to keep us all safe during this crisis.

I am proud of how our members have conducted themselves during this time. Late 2019 and 2020 have thrown a lot at us, with the loss of our Unit Commander Leon Elelman and radio operator Mike Hyland in recent weeks.

Our wonderful volunteers look after each other extremely well, with quite a few extending that care to friends and neighbours as well.

*Cheryl Rowe*

## Members reeling after second fire in year

Work begins to repair serious damage to Port Macquarie radio base.

Members of MR Port Macquarie have been rocked by a second fire at their Town Beach radio base in less than a year.

A major blaze started in the public women's toilets beneath the base last September caused significant damage to the building, forcing the unit to relocate its radio operations to its boat shed on the Hastings River.

Work was about to begin on repairs when nearby residents spotted smoke coming from the beachfront building, which also houses a ground floor cafe, about 11pm on April 17.

A fire lit in a garbage bin against the side of the building was fortunately extinguished by Fire + Rescue NSW before it could cause extensive damage.

Unit Commander Greg Davies said the damage was superficial, with the walls and eaves scorched and the security camera melted in the heat.

"This is a real concern. We are about to start works on repairing the building," he told the *Port Macquarie News* the next morning.

"If it had been any worse it could set it back by months.



Work under way to repair fire damage to the MR Port Macquarie radio base on Town Beach. Photo: Yolanda Bosschieter.

"We've spent a lot of money to get this up and going again. The fireies did a fantastic job to extinguish it after residents reported it in."

Police are investigating.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council contractors began repairs to the building in late April.

The work, expected to take about three months, includes replacing the roof and adding a new fire exit.

New state of the art software also will be installed, including 24/7 surveillance cameras with night

vision, as well as a bar camera to show conditions on the crossing day and night.

Two crews from the unit were deployed in response to a report of a body in the water about 1.5km offshore on April 21. After an extensive search, no sign of a body was found. On May 15, *Port Macquarie 30* was activated at 7.30am to rescue two people on board a 26 foot yacht 2nm offshore.

The yacht had no motor, radio or anchor, its boom was broken and

mobile phone dead. With the bar at 4m, the crew bided their time at sea until 11am, waiting for conditions to improve before towing the vessel back to safety.

Four members have been recognised for their lengthy and dedicated service. Reg McGlashan has received his 20 year Long Service Medal, Rob Curtis his 15 year service medal and both Chris Condon and Bill Richardson their five year service medals.

*Yolanda Bosschieter*

## Sloop rescued in late night offshore mission

A 25 foot sloop in trouble offshore and unable to make its way to safe refuge at Coffs Harbour saw crew members from MR Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga deploy together on a late night rescue mission.

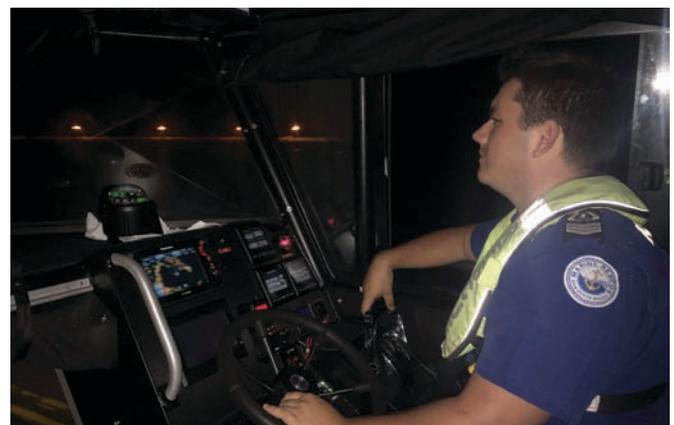
The sailing vessel called the MR Coffs Harbour radio base at 10.45pm on April 29, seeking help to navigate into the harbour as it was experiencing intermittent motor problems. The skipper subsequently reported a fouled anchor.

*Coffs 30* was activated, with

MR Woolgoolga Unit Commander Mitch Harvey the skipper and crew members Paul McLeod and Ken McNeil, from MR Coffs Harbour.

The rescue team located the vessel south of Coffs Harbour, taking it under tow just after midnight and safely guiding it into Coffs marina before logging off about 3.20am.

Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne said operations under darkness carried inherent risks and praised the crew members for their professional response.



Dark ops ... MR Woolgoolga UC Mitch Harvey at the helm of *Coffs 30* on a late night mission to rescue a sloop with mechanical issues.

## Renewed effort to encourage Logging On

Large numbers head out from Camden Haven on two holiday weekends.

Members of MR Camden-Haven have maintained their responsiveness despite the operational restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with other a number of others, the unit's radio base was offline from March 31 to May 4 under the MRNSW risk management procedures introduced to protect members. A rostered rescue vessel crew remained on call to respond to emergencies on our local waterways.

This enabled us to respond to two incidents when boaters found themselves in trouble.

On March 31, the crew returned a boat that broke down about 5nm north-east of the bar with one person on board to the safety of

the boat ramp. This was followed a week later when two boaters needed help when their vessel overheated 4nm south-east of the bar.

While observing the health and safety procedures during the pandemic, members have been keeping in contact online.

Three crew members also have been studying for their Leading Crew qualification via Zoom, with four radio operators also training online.

The unit will redouble its efforts to encourage local boaters to Log On and Log Off after large numbers of vessels headed out on the water over the Easter and Anzac Day weekends.

Numerous cars and trailers filled our local boat ramps with only a



Camden Haven 30 returns a boat that broke down 5nm offshore back across the bar to safety on March 31.

small number of boats Logging On.

We are now working on reminding the locals of the safety

benefits of this free service when they are going out to sea.

*Ken Rutledge*



## Value for you. Support for us.



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

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

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

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

Shop at the MRNSW e-shop  
[shopmrnsw.com.au](http://shopmrnsw.com.au)

# New Steel City rescue asset shows its mettle

Unit Commander happiest man in NSW at helm of Newcastle Naiad.

Marine Rescue Newcastle's new \$535,000 vessel arrived in the Steel City on May 19 and it wasn't long before it was out on its new home waters.

*Newcastle 30*, a 10m Naiad, was built by Yamba Welding & Engineering on the Northern Rivers.

The vessel performed strongly in its sea trials on the Clarence River and offshore and we are confident it will prove a powerful and reliable new rescue asset on our local waterways: the Hunter River, Newcastle Harbour and offshore.

After being trucked down the Pacific Highway, the vessel was gently lowered into the water at the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club, where its predecessor, the retiring *NC 30*, is berthed.

Unit Commander Ron Calman, Bill Johnston and Rick Nevile soon had the new vessel out for its first spin, accompanied by MRNSW Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin and Hunter/Central Coast Regional Operations Manager Steve Raymond.

Mr Raymond rated the Unit Commander the happiest man in all of NSW as he took the helm.

Crew members are undergoing their induction and familiarisation before the vessel enters service.

The unit's Kevlacat workhorse has completed a range of operations before its looming retirement.



*Newcastle 30*, a 10m Naiad, ready for its sea trials before its delivery south from Yamba to the Steel City.

Late on March 27, *NC 30* was activated to rescue an 11m yacht with a solo sailor on board that had run out of fuel 3nm off Bar Beach. It was safely towed to Carrington.

In another evening operation on April 26, the boat's crew was activated to rescue four people on board a 5.3m half-cabin runabout with engine failure.

The vessel was located about 250m off the Big Ben Reef and successfully towed to the North Stockton ramp.

In mid-April, unit member Dianne Hammond was presented with her Radio Operator certificate.

Dianne is a stalwart of the unit,

who is always prepared to help when necessary.

In other developments, MRNSW Headquarters is liaising with local

and government agencies in relation to plans for a new base for the unit on the Stockton riverfront.

*Terry Reynolds*



Guess which is his favourite ... MR Newcastle UC Ron Calman surveys the new *NC 30*, dwarfed by *HMAS Sydney*.

## Crewman lost overboard from bulk carrier

A large scale air and sea search was mounted for a crew member lost overboard from a bulk carrier off the Hunter coastline on April 15.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Toll Ambulance Rescue and Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service joined the operation.

The Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie radio base broadcast all ships alerts for vessels in the region

to keep a lookout for the missing crewman.

The 28-year-old man fell overboard from the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier, *MV Western Marine*, about 7.40am, 27 nautical miles east of Tuggerah Lakes.

Authorities held grave concerns for the man with a 2.5m swell in the vicinity of the ship.

AMSA announced it had suspended search operations late

on the same day.

"The decision is based on expert medical advice that the time frame for survival ended at last light today," a statement from the agency said.

"AMSA would like to express its sincere condolences to the family of the seafarer and their crew mates aboard the *Western Marine*."

AMSA thanked all search and rescue crews for their valiant efforts in searching more than 130 square

kilometres of ocean for any sign of the lost man.

Crews included AMSA's Challenger jet from Essendon, a NSW Ambulance Helicopter, Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter, a third helicopter from Camden and NSW Police vessels.

The eight-year-old bulk carrier is 255m long and 43m wide. The ship was bound for Newcastle from Korea.

# Sod turning marks start on new \$1.7m base

Important investment in safety of local, visiting boating community.

Construction began in late April on a new \$1.7 million communications centre to provide Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie with a world-class emergency operations base for its work to save lives on the water.

Lake Macquarie MP Greg Piper turned the first sod on April 28 to kick off the building works.

Mr Piper said the new modern radio base and unit headquarters was an important investment in the safety of the region's large local and visiting boating community.

"This is a great day for the 150 volunteer members of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, who provide an invaluable service to our community," Mr Piper said.

"This new centre, with upgraded facilities and equipment, will significantly enhance their ability to respond to emergencies on our local waterways 24 hours a day, every day. The volunteers have been operating in outdated and cramped conditions for a long time and I was very pleased to see the State Government announce funding to provide this new world-class facility as part of a \$37.6 million four-year funding boost to MRNSW."

Replacing the unit's existing facility on Swansea Heads, the landmark base will be equipped with the latest generation marine



Regional Operations Manager Steve Raymond, Unit Commander Mal Wardrop and Deputy Mal Druce watch as Lake Macquarie MP Greg Piper turns the first sod for the unit's new radio base.

communications technology.

It will provide dedicated command and control facilities for planning, managing and coordinating extended and multi-agency search and rescue operations. The two-storey building also will incorporate training/meeting space, storage for rescue equipment, offices, amenities and kitchen facilities, a viewing platform and a lift to improve access for volunteers living with a disability.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said Lake Macquarie was consistently the busiest marine rescue unit in NSW, launching 396 rescue missions, including 50 in response to life-threatening emergencies and responding to 21,743 radio calls from boaters in 2019.

He again thanked the State

Government for its welcome \$37.6 million investment in new and refurbished operating facilities, 38 new rescue boats and continued upgrading of the State's marine radio network.

"This funding is boosting our rescue capability and ensuring our volunteers have fit-for-purpose facilities designed and equipped for modern emergency services operations – and that means greater safety for our boating community," he said.

MR Lake Macquarie Unit Commander Mal Wardrop said the start of work on the project was the culmination of extensive planning and input by unit members.

"Our current base has served us well but it was not built to cater to

the modern, professional emergency response and management needs of our members," he said.

"This new centre will enhance our operations and provide our members with a safe, secure working environment. We are confident that first-rate facilities such as this will also encourage new members to join the unit."

The new base was designed by TorrenBell Building Design and is being built by Cowyn Building Group, which has a base at Charmhaven.

The project is scheduled for completion by the end of the year, depending on weather. The unit can continue its radio operations in the current base until October, when it will temporarily relocate to its Pelican boat base.

## **CMS** CALLAGHANS MARINE SERVICES

- » SERVICING ALL DIESEL, PETROL & STERNDRIVES
- » REPOWER & REFIT SPECIALIST
- » ENGINEERING & FABRICATION
- » PROPULSION & STEERING SYSTEMS
- » ONBOARD SYSTEMS
- » SALES, SERVICE & PARTS for



Located @ Fenwicks Marina, 31 Brooklyn Rd, Brooklyn NSW 2083  
 P: 02 9985 7885 | F: 02 9985 7991  
 E: info@callaghansmarine.com.au | W: www.callaghansmarine.com.au



Artist's impression of the new MR Lake Macquarie unit headquarters and radio base, designed by TorrenBell Building Design.

## Sad, dark fate for trawler on hazardous bar

Lake Macquarie crews return skipper and his sofa safely to shore.

The perilous Swansea bar claimed another victim in the early morning darkness of May 19, when a disabled trawler ran aground and sank as it tried to make its way off the coastline to safety.

The skipper, travelling north to Newcastle, reported just after midnight that the 16m timber boat was having electrical issues and taking on water near Moon Island, off Swansea Heads and that he would divert into the channel.

Radio Operator Paul Webb, on duty in the MR Lake Macquarie radio base overlooking the coast and channel, helped guide the skipper over the bar, which he had never crossed before.

As Paul watched, he saw the trawler stop dead in the water.

The skipper confirmed the boat had run aground and the motors had cut out.

The unit's night crew was activated on board *Lake Macquarie 30*, arriving on scene just before 2am to find the boat had sunk, with water over its gunwales. The crew took the skipper on board and returned to their Pelican boat base,



Daylight reveals the sad fate of a trawler that ran aground in the dark on the Swansea bar as *Lake Macquarie 20* ferries the skipper out to assess the damage. Photo: Peter Lorimer.

where they gave him dry clothes and a bunk for the rest of the night.

Later in the morning, the crew of *LM 20* took the skipper back out to assess the damage to his boat and help retrieve gear and debris.

Crew member Jim Wright said he had done many rescues over the years but never to save a two-seater lounge.

He said the crew had been alerted to an unidentified object,

possibly a fuel tank, from the boat so headed to the coordinates given, 5nm offshore from the base.

"When we got there we found the two-seater lounge floating. The owner of the boat was with us and confirmed it was off his boat.

"We pulled it on board which was a bugger of a job as the cushions were water logged, and brought it back to our base."

Mal Wardrop



SOS: the skipper pulls his sofa on to *LM 20*. Photo: Jim Wright

## Second container spill a risk for boaters

Floating containers and debris are posing dangers to boaters from the Hunter/Central Coast south to Montague Island following the second major cargo spill off the NSW coastline in two years.

Fifty containers fell from the *APL England* in rough weather 36nm east of Port Botany early on May 24. The incident followed the loss of 81 containers from the *YM Efficiency* in June 2018.

Containers have been sighted at various locations between Port Stephens and Narooma, including off Norah Head, Bateau Bay, Port Kembla, Tathra Head and between

Narooma and Montague Island. Twenty-four were empty refrigerated containers and 26 contained a variety of goods.

MRNSW radio bases are broadcasting regular Securite warnings to alert boaters to keep a careful lookout and travel at a safe speed.

NSW Maritime Acting Executive Director Alex Barrell said crews had been working hard at multiple salvage sites between Port Stephens and the Illawarra to remove debris as quickly as possible to minimise risks to boaters and the environment.



Five of the 50 containers lost overboard from the *APL England* wash ashore on the Central Coast. Photo: Skaie Hull, NBN News.

"The safety of boaters is paramount and we ask that caution is taken if heading out on the water as floating debris can be

a navigational risk," he said. The clean-up is expected to take weeks.

Sightings of containers or debris should be reported to 13 12 36.

## Modern dock safer for Port Stephens crews

Quiet times as pandemic ramp closures reduce boating traffic.

Work on a major project to improve crew safety at MR Port Stephens was completed just ahead of the introduction of local restrictions to discourage boating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unit has developed a \$170,000 modern new vessel dock to replace its old, deteriorated jetty.

In service for more than 18 years and apparently second hand when the unit took ownership, the dock had been starting to break down, with some of the edges unstable and constant maintenance needed to prevent trip hazards for crew members from lifting plates.

Funding for the project came from a \$50,000 Community Development Program grant and a \$40,000 allocation from MRNSW Headquarters, with the balance from a generous benefactor and donations.

The development was completed in just five days, with the unit's rescue vessels and floating crew room temporarily relocated, thanks

to the help of the Water Police, Marine Parks and D'Albora Marina.

The unit is proud of the modern and functional facility, which has provided a safe, stable platform, with solar-powered electrical supply, to dock and deploy its boats.

The local response to the pandemic saw Port Stephens Council close boat ramps to discourage non-essential travel to the area and limit the need for emergency services personnel to respond to incidents on the water.

While this did not stop boating traffic altogether, it was quiet on the water until mid-May, including over the Easter long weekend.

The unit's boats were tasked only a few times during March and April. In one lengthy mission, *Port Stephens 30* was deployed to assist a vessel with a family, including young children, on board that was in trouble on the Myall River. The boat had fouled its prop with a crab trap and could not free it.

It was already mid-afternoon and



Work under way on MR Port Stephens' new \$170,000 dock.

while the boat was only 18kms to the unit's north as the crow flies, it was a much longer journey for the crew to reach the stranded vessel on a twisting river with severe speed limits.

Our friends at MR Lemon Tree Passage are familiar with the Myall River and Lakes.

*PS 30* led the vessel down the river back to its boat ramp in a four-hour operation completed in the dark.

We are pleased to announce that our new Unit Commander is Ben van der Wijngaart and Deputy Unit Commander Colin Couper. We wish them every success and thank them for taking on their respective roles.

A big thank you to retiring Commander Colin Foote for a super human effort over the past two years. Who would have thought that his final job would be to guide the unit through a pandemic?

*Tony O'Donnell*

## Socially distanced funding? Cheque, mate!

An over-sized cheque is the perfect prop for a funding announcement in socially distanced times.

Terrigal MP Adam Crouch joined members of MR Central Coast on May 14 to announce grant funding of more than \$10,000 for the unit.

Mr Crouch presented Unit Commander Duncan Coles a cheque that was conveniently 1.5m in length, ensuring the pair stayed the requisite COVID-19 distance apart.

The 2019 Community Building Partnership grant is to install a new suite of electronic navigation systems on rescue vessel *Central Coast 22* to match the unit's other two vessels, *CC 30* and *CC 21*.

The unit also received a \$14,183

grant under the same program for a floating pontoon to dock its training vessel at its Point Clare base.

Despite requirements for people to stay home during the pandemic, many boaters headed out on local waters. On Easter Sunday, the unit received a report that Brisbane Water was "full of boaters ... last count was at least 10 yachts having a race and countless jet skiers, fishing boats, wind surfers and motorboats", along with a 50 foot yacht dropping off passengers at the Kooilewong jetty.

The unit performed 13 rescue operations, including two in response to emergencies, in the six weeks from the start of April.

On Anzac Day, the crew of *CC*



Terrigal MP Adam Crouch presents MR Central Coast Commander Duncan Coles, Grants Officer Mal Ralston (left) and Hunter/Central Coast ROM Steve Raymond (right) with a \$10,000 grant.

*30* responded to a disabled 5.4m runabout with two people on board stranded 2nm off Terrigal, returning it safely to Palm Beach boat ramp.

This followed an earlier operation by *CC 21* to rescue a 5.5m vessel stuck in reverse at Tallow Beach and return it to Woy Woy.

# New boat ideal for shallow water operations

Tuggerah Lakes Naiad performs beyond expectations from first mission.

Marine Rescue Tuggerah Lakes has welcomed the arrival of a new vessel purpose-designed for rescue operations in the lakes' deceptive shallows, which claim many unwitting boaters.

The delivery of *Tuggerah Lakes 20*, a 6.8m Naiad, was the culmination of a rigorous selection and fit-out process.

Modified from a 7.5m model, it has an increased beam of 3m, resulting in a draft of just 500mm, ideal for conditions on the lakes.

It performed beyond our expectations during its first operation, returning an unmanned work boat full of tools floating adrift to the site of restoration works on Toulkey Bridge.

The vessel selection process was led by Unit Commander Tony Younglove, Deputy Bob Sutton, Operations Officer Steve Corbett and boat master Greg McNab, with support from Regional Operations Managers Steve Raymond and Glenn Evans. The team conducted trials on vessels from MR Norah Head, Middle Harbour and Central



*Tuggerah Lakes 20* on its sea trials off Yamba ... 'it was obvious the somewhat extended selection process had been worthwhile'.

being under way.

Coronavirus restrictions have prevented all our crew members being inducted on *TL 20* but sufficient numbers had completed the process to allow it to enter service. It has already given us additional confidence in our ability

'It has already given us additional confidence in our ability to serve our community safely.'

Coast and sought their crews' fit out reviews to develop a design brief in consultation with the unit executive and skippers.

The boat was built by Yamba Welding & Engineering and from our initial trial of the vessel at Yamba, it was obvious that the somewhat extended selection process had been worthwhile.

The vessel arrived at our South Base on March 13 and was placed on our newly installed float lift.

This infrastructure is an absolute delight to operate, not only safely storing the vessel but also greatly increasing our response times, with only 50 seconds elapsing between the crew boarding and the boat

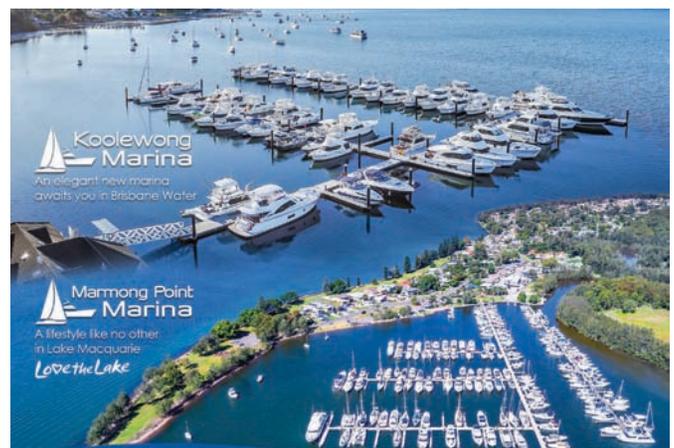
to serve our community safely and provide our trainees with up-to-date equipment on which to learn.

We cannot wait until we are again able to operate at our full capacity.

After our successful recruitment program and with greater interest in volunteering following recent disasters, we now have 32 trainees who are receiving one-on-one telephone support and undertaking virtual training, led by Training Officer Jim Davidson.

Everything might be different but we are approaching it as just being new and making sure that we all stay safe and ready for when we are needed.

*Bob Sutton*



## 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.

Koolowong Marina is the Central Coast's newest marina. With 50 berths for vessels up to 25 meters, 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 Boatouse Bar & Dining, easy access to public transport by land and stunning cruising areas, such as Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury by water. Koolowong Marina is the ideal location to berth your pride and joy.



[marmongpointmarina.com.au](http://marmongpointmarina.com.au)

1 Nanda Street, Marmong Point NSW  
Ph: (02) 4958 3333

[koolowongmarina.com.au](http://koolowongmarina.com.au)

19 Brisbane Water Drive Koolowong NSW  
Ph: (02) 4341 4000

Proud to support Marine Rescue NSW

## BERTH YOUR BOAT on the HAWKESBURY



- 88 berths with power and water
- 23 swing moorings (free dinghy storage)
- Boom gate access to car park
- Toilets and showers
- Slipway to 15 tonnes
- Convenience store (Brooklyn Central)
- Unleaded fuel on wharf for marina clients
- Mechanic on site



# SANDBROOK INLET MARINA

## Brooklyn 9985 5500



**MAKING WAVES**  
Greater Sydney News

## Members find silver linings in isolation

Some pleasures among the frustrations.



MR Middle Harbour member Ben McKeown and his wife Anne faced a 'long, expensive and surreal' challenge to get out of Cuba and home in the midst of the pandemic.

As the nation adjusted to a new way of life forced upon us in a fight with an enemy we couldn't see, MR Middle Harbour newsletter editor Howard Gipps polled unit members about their life in isolation.

The volunteers pinpointed some upsides among the frustrations of social distancing and missing family, friends and time on the water.

*Frans de Wilde:* I miss actual contact with family and friends, especially grandkids. I dislike the way in which some of the locals are taking their frustrations out on people who are only doing their jobs in the best way they can. Working from home means I can have longer in the surf before work in the morning.

*Joanna Mycroft:* If I am honest, my life probably hasn't changed as much as most people. I am still working (although office is now at home) and am able to catch up with people online. I love being at home on my own, always have. I am getting so much done, and enjoying picking up some new hobbies, or re-starting old ones.

*Brett Eagle:* I miss most the quick sit-down at a cafe on a work day, unplanned lunch at a bistro, or a breakfast catch up at a restaurant. Life at present is most surprising with rediscovering the simple and

how enjoyable it is, the new routines and adjusting to them, easier than I would have thought. Evening walks, bicycle rides, planting a herb garden, things that I don't think I want to give up once we get back to a more normalised routine. More of the life balance side on the work-life balance scale.

*Ben McKeown:* Missing paddling with the surf ski crew, early morning coffee conversations, beers at the bar. I think age gives one the insight that nothing goes on forever and that ideally one should try to adapt to the situation you are in for however long it lasts.

*Howard Gipps:* I miss the guilt-free ease of going out whenever I want without having to think about it. I feel so sorry for people who have lost their job and income. In a couple of years, will we wonder why we were so worried now? Will we learn anything lasting from this?

*Stan Watson:* The thing I miss most is going out for a feed, be it breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner. We sit on the front verandah, have a cup of tea and people watch (walking, running, taking dogs for walks). The best so far was a 50-60-year-old riding a skateboard down the street (flat terrain, not hilly) reading things on his mobile. What a belter.

## Injured fisher airlifted from rock platform

Botany Port Hacking thanks generous supporters for donating funds, tools.

A crew from MR Botany Port Hacking was rapidly on the scene when a fisherman fell on to rocks below the Hungry Point Reserve at Cronulla, where the unit and MRNSW Headquarters are located, on May 16.

The man, in his 40s, suffered a leg injury and subsequently an asthma attack when he fell on to the platform. The crew of *Port Hacking 30*, Surf Life Saving, NSW Police and the Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter converged on the site before the patient was airlifted to St George Hospital.

A month earlier, both unit vessels were deployed in the search for a fisherman swept off rocks at Kurnell.

Emergency services were called to Potter Point following reports two rockfishermen were in difficulty after falling into the water. One of the men was retrieved, however, he died at the scene. Searchers located the second man's body late on April 18.

The coronavirus isolation measures put in place posed a



Emergency services converge below the Hungry Point Reserve to treat and extricate a fisherman who was injured when he fell on to the rock platform. *Photo: Steve Bigeni.*

number of challenges for the unit.

The most important questions were how to continue training, particularly for our 25 new provisional members and, most importantly, how to keep in regular touch with all 153 members while large gatherings were not permitted.

Unit IT officers Mark Moretti and Phil Pearce quickly identified Zoom as the virtual tool that would allow us to meet those challenges.

Just a week after the introduction of the MRNSW COVID-19 level

three measures, the unit executive held its first virtual meeting and decided to proceed with regular unit meetings using the Zoom platform. We also began online training for our provisional members, covering the workbook material for both the marine radio and crew courses.

Two unit members, Kerry Surace and Jesse Rowley, have become the first in MRNSW to be awarded the new Senior Crew rating, a new qualification mid-way between Crew and Leading Crew. Congratulations

to both, along with watch officer and base manager Allan Russell, who has received his 20 year Long Service Medal and crew member Dereck Turner, presented with his 10 year medal.

A huge shout out to our friends at Ramsgate RSL Club for their generous \$10,000 donation to help us cover operational costs like fuel and vessel maintenance and Bunnings Kirrawee, which has kindly donated a cordless jigsaw to the unit.

## Terrey Hills operators keep wider watch

Rigorous cleaning, social distancing enforced to protect volunteers.

The members of MR Terrey Hills have expanded their radio watch to support their colleagues from other units during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a number of radio bases closed or on restricted operations due to the escalating MRNSW risk management procedures, MR Terrey Hills took on the weekday radio responsibilities for units including Central Coast, Newcastle and Botany Port Hacking.

Our operators maintained social distancing and a rigorous cleaning program was enforced to protect members, including using the services of a professional cleaner, who sanitised the base each day

and ensured all incoming watch keepers cleaned their respective work stations.

Many thanks must go to our roster officer, Lynne Wyatt, who continues to work tirelessly to ensure our operational staffing each week.

A number of our members commemorated Anzac Day by joining the RSL Light Up the Dawn initiative, lighting a candle in their driveway or on their veranda at 6am.

Great respect was shown to our fallen military personnel and for the work of our medical and emergency personnel, who have given selflessly in recent times.

The unit's training officer has



Radio operators Lynne Wyatt and Mark Eames on socially-distanced duty at MR Terrey Hills.

undertaken a comprehensive review of training material. Revised trainer guidelines for watch officer and provisional member training have

been completed, along with an archive of past records of training initiatives over the past five years.

*Denis Comber*



# Make every journey safer. Switch to VHF.



## VHF Channel 16 is the international distress channel

It's constantly monitored by MRNSW and your calls for help can also be heard by other boats nearby. With better range, quality and help at the push of a button, make today the day you switch from 27MHz to VHF.

Find out more at [marinerescuensw.com.au](http://marinerescuensw.com.au)

## Three lost in emergencies off Illawarra coast

Port Kembla, Shellharbour crews thanked for compassionate response.

Crews from MR Port Kembla launched searches under darkness in response to two separate emergencies when members of the public reported hearing calls for help from the water.

A major air and sea search was mounted by NSW Police, MR Port Kembla, the Toll Ambulance Helicopter and Surf Life Saving on June 6 when screams were heard near Bulli Point.

A runabout with four people on board had capsized about 6.20pm. The helicopter pulled two men, aged 31 and 23, from the water about 8pm, transporting them to Wollongong Hospital, while the search continued for a missing boy, aged five, and a man, 28.

The crew of *Port Kembla 30* towed the runabout back to harbour about 10pm, where Police Divers found the small boy's body.

Three crews from MR Port Kembla and Shellharbour joined the

ongoing operation the next morning, searching up to 6nm offshore from Bellambi to Austinmer. The crew of *Shellharbour 30* recovered the man's body about 1.10pm.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb and Illawarra Regional Operations Manager Bruce Mitchell held a critical incident debrief with both crews the following day.

"This was a terrible tragedy and we are holding the families of this very small boy and the man who also died in our thoughts today," Mr Cribb said. "Operations in traumatic circumstances such as this also take a heavy toll on the members of the emergency services who respond and we thank not only our own members but all those who worked professionally and compassionately to rescue the two men on Saturday night and return the two victims to their families."

The alarm was raised in similar circumstances about 6.30pm on



MR Port Kembla's Graeme McCrudden, Trevor Brownlee and UC Kevin Bradley debrief with ROM Bruce Mitchell (third from left).

April 16, when people heard a man yelling from Rocky Island at Port Kembla. This was followed by reports of a second man and a capsized boat in the water.

*PK 30* was quickly on the scene, along with police, the Toll helicopter and the State Emergency Service.

The man was located on the island about 7.30pm and airlifted to safety.

The search for the missing man

was suspended at 10.30pm before resuming the next day, when police located the 68-year-old's body. The uncle and nephew had been fishing but their boat capsized as they returned to the boat ramp.

Family member Matt Campbell thanked the Port Kembla rescue crew online: "Thanks for your efforts today and always, (love) the Campbell family."

## Wind, reefs cause chaos and fear on water

While MR Sussex Inlet activities have been curtailed during the pandemic, operations responding to rash catamaran sailors and a fearful boater highlighted the need for caution on local waterways.

The Sussex Inlet base was closed for a month and our vessel operations restricted to call outs for assistance and emergencies.

Boating activity was moderate but our crews still responded to nine incidents, including searches for vessels reported adrift, mechanical failures, help crossing the sand bar and overturned catamarans.

Only brave sailors try their luck on St Georges Basin while ignoring forecasts of high winds. On one afternoon alone, three catamarans flipped and were unable to be righted. *Sussex 20* towed one back to our base and the other two were

helped by nearby boaters.

Our crews' detailed knowledge of our local waterways enabled us to assist a vessel with two people on board that needed our help to approach and cross the sand bar from Wreck Bay into Sussex Inlet.

The boat was located seaward of the barrier islands to the south of the river entrance. The two islands have a rocky reef between them and another stretching from the southern island to the mainland. On this occasion, the boater requested a tow as he was afraid to cross the reef between the island and headland and then the bar.

*SI 20* took the vessel under tow, travelling to the east and counter clockwise around the islands to make an approach to the sand bar from the east. The boater expressed surprise at this course, indicating



Flipped out ... *Sussex 20* tows a dismantled catamaran from St Georges Basin to its base in the Sussex Inlet river.

he would have gone between the islands to make a direct approach to the sand bar, hence his fear.

The implication was that on his outward passage, he had indeed crossed the reef between the island and headland which is dangerous in the best of conditions. The reefs

are only passable on a high tide in good sea conditions. Experience has taught the unit's crews never to cross over the reefs but to instead take the safer course of turning left from the bar into Wreck Bay and then proceeding around the islands.

*Les Pataky*

## Boaters knew they were not alone on water

Ulladulla volunteers on alert as fishing activity continued through autumn.



Marine Rescue Ulladulla Unit Commander Dave Hall captures the beauty of the NSW coastline as the sun sets on a perfect autumn day.

Despite the need for COVID distancing, members of the Ulladulla boating community knew they were not alone on the water, with MR Ulladulla volunteers on alert to respond at a moment's notice.

While fishing was ruled one of four reasonable excuses to be out on the water during the pandemic, recreational boating was not.

MR Ulladulla noted a decline in general boating traffic over March and April but only a minimal

reduction in fishing activity. With a strong fishing community in Ulladulla, the unit's radio operators and crew members were conscious of the need to maintain our essential services under the MRNSW risk management measures and the local community had confidence that help was nearby if needed.

Our members' commitment was warranted, with *Ulladulla 30* and *UL 20* undertaking several rescue operations over autumn.

Most were in response to vessels experiencing mechanical problems, ranging from fuel intake issues to flat batteries and engine trouble.

All were towed backed to the safety of Ulladulla Harbour.

Our crews were deployed to search for a possible missing yacht and a person feared lost at sea after an empty canoe was found adrift. Both operations ended with no result.

While our monthly markets and

other fundraising activities were cancelled and visitors were not able to visit the base, people embraced other forms of contact, with a steady number of calls to the unit and messages on Facebook.

The unit has been keen to resume training activities for new members under the relevant MRNSW guidelines and in a new development, we will hold the annual general meeting over Zoom.

*Raine O'Keeffe*

## Jervis Bay eagerly awaiting fleet prototype

Rush to boost practical skills training when COVID restrictions ease.

Exciting times are on the horizon for MR Jervis Bay, with the imminent delivery of its new rescue vessel.

The state of the art boat, being built at Harwood Marine, is a 13.5m prototype in the MRNSW fleet.

Unlike the current *JB 40*, it will have a flybridge, providing extra height above the water to assist in search operations both day and night. Along with the latest electronics, it will have a removable carbon-fibre davit to help lift people and objects on board. The aft duckboard can be raised or lowered hydraulically and the vessel is also equipped with a Zipwake Interceptor Dynamic Trim System.

Planning is under way to induct

and train new members on the new *JB 40* when COVID restrictions permit.

Unit Training Officer Steve Hutchison said the pandemic restrictions had impacted on the unit's scheduled training in preparation for the installation of its new Redi-Talk radio communications system in March. Training and radio rostering was rearranged so that 28 members could be trained while the unit continued its radio coverage and was ready to operate the new system on March 28. The unit's training has since shifted online.

"We are using Zoom to provide training for radio licences and radio operators and leading crew with plans in place to assist watch



The new 13.5m *Jervis Bay 40* under construction at Harwood Marine.

officers and crew. Participants are working hard on completing their Learner Activity Workbooks during our isolation," Steve said. "Radio licence testing will also go ahead on line. When we eventually come

out of COVID restrictions, we are going to be flat out ensuring that the practical skills necessary on our vessels and radios are put into place."

*Ron Walsh*

## Crew first on scene to aid poisoned couple

Shoalhaven members respond to medical emergencies on land, water.

Members of MR Shoalhaven have demonstrated their emergency versatility both on and off the water in recent weeks.

The COVID-19 restrictions did not diminish the unit's ability to respond to incidents on the water, with both rescue vessels maintained in a high state of readiness under the supervision of Vessel Operations Manager Mike Boadle.

The crews of both *Shoalhaven 30* and *SA 20* were rostered on-call and ready to respond at short notice.

Mike Boadle and Brian Earsman were quickly on the water on May 17 when tasked to locate a boat with two ill passengers on board somewhere between Greenwell Point and Nowra.

A man had called police to report his wife was vomiting and unconscious on the deck of their 28 foot cruiser but was unable to be more specific about their location.

*Shoalhaven 30* headed out in the

dark and located the boat just south of the Comerong Island ferry.

Mike transferred on board to provide first aid to the pair, who had suffered carbon monoxide poisoning. He administered oxygen to the woman, who responded well.

The man, who was in shock, had fallen on the engine and sustained serious burns to his left arm.

*SA 30* towed the boat to Greenwell Point, where it was met by a NSW Ambulance, rescue helicopter and police. The man was transferred to a Sydney burns unit and his wife to Shoalhaven hospital.

When lifejackets and a vessel's fuel tank were found washed up onshore at Currarong on April 11, *SA 30* was deployed to search for a possible missing boat.

The crew, Mike Boadle, Brian Earsman and Marty Kaye, were eventually stood down after the boater was located at home and reported he had lost the equipment



The crew of *Shoalhaven 30* transported two people suffering carbon monoxide poisoning on board this cruiser to waiting paramedics.

during a storm the previous night.

On May 2, two members were stopped on the street in Nowra by a member of the public who alerted them to an 18-year-old male showing obvious signs of distress.

The young man had been working under his vehicle when the jack collapsed, trapping his head between the fuel tank and ground.

Although able to free himself, he needed treatment to a head injury. Our members gave first aid until a NSW Ambulance arrived on scene.

The unit's annual raffle was drawn on April 12. About 17,000 \$1 tickets were sold, with first prize - a boat, trailer, motor and safety equipment - won by a local resident.

*Bill Carter*

## Pandemic gives life to new commemoration

Small ceremony on Kioloa waterfront marks inaugural Anzac Dawn Service.

A new tradition of respect has been born from the social restrictions of COVID-19.

In past years, members of MR Kioloa have taken part in our local community Anzac Day service, held at the Kioloa Community Centre at 10.30am.

This year's ceremony, like others around the nation, was cancelled due to the need for social isolation and distancing.

The unit instead held our own small Dawn Service at our base as a sign of remembrance.

Unit Commander Peter White, Administration Officer Joan Noble, unit member Neil Brown and his wife Judith assembled on the waterfront in the darkness before the dawn. Our memorial for the

ceremony was a large ship's anchor mounted on a rock in front of the base.

The anchor dates from the early 20th century when a sawmill occupied the land on which MR Kioloa now sits and ships would come in to collect the milled timber.

The anchor, recovered from the water in front of the base, is an appropriate symbol of our maritime connections and particularly of thanks to our Naval and merchant marine servicemen and women.

It was decided that this small event was in keeping with the spirit of the day and that the unit would continue to hold a Dawn Service each Anzac Day.

And so 2020 will not only be remembered for the difficulties of



MR Kioloa Commander Peter White presents Joan Noble with her mounted medals after the unit's Anzac Day Dawn Service.

the pandemic but also as the year of the inaugural Kioloa Dawn Service.

The small gathering also marked the presentation to Mrs Noble of her court mounted National Medal and Emergency Service Medal.

Joan had been awarded these medals some years ago and their formal mounting was a gift from the unit in recognition of her service and dedication.

*Peter White*

## Dramatic drop in Eden radio base workload

\$205,000 facelift improves working environment for members.

What a difference a year makes. The impact of a terrifying bushfire season followed by a pandemic can be clearly seen in the workload of MR Eden.

As with other coastal holiday destinations, Eden has been hard hit by the COVID-19 travel restrictions, impacting the number of boaters on the water and the subsequent demand on the unit's services.

In the first four and a half months of 2019, the unit Logged On 2,459 boats with 15,981 people on board.

This workload has fallen by more than two-thirds over the same period this year, with our radio operators Logging On just 665 boats with 2,497 people on board from New Year to May 13.

Having put the threat of the bushfires behind us in January, the unit pivoted to manage the social distancing impacts of the pandemic in March.

Radio operations have continued

as normal, with the added benefit of our channels on Mt Imlay being brought back on line after the restoration of essential network infrastructure severely damaged or destroyed by the bushfires that tore through the National Park south of Eden. Interim repairs to install temporary VHF radios were completed in early March but we are now operating fully across the huge range provided by this site.

A major project to update the unit base has been completed.

The exterior of the building was fully clad and the interior gutted, refurbished and painted, with a new bathroom and kitchen, wall linings and floor coverings installed, all computer equipment replaced and radios upgraded or replaced where needed.

The \$130,000 project, funded through the MRNSW Facility Development Program, followed the extension and new external



MR Eden has undergone a \$205,000 facelift. Photo: John Steele.

disabled access completed last year with a \$75,000 NSW Government Infrastructure Grant.

The upgrading project was planned and overseen by a house committee of Deputy Unit Commander Stuart Manson, Glenda Wood, Peter Smith, Jessica Wyers, Kent Farrell, Nancy Weatherman and Robert Van Den Helm. Thank you to Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan for his assistance during the planning

approval process. The improvement in our work environment has made a big difference to volunteer comfort and the base's general atmosphere.

We also replaced our Davis weather station, which had started playing up after almost six years' exposure to the sometimes fierce weather conditions of our cliff-top location, leading to worn bearings and corrosion of some of the electronics in the anemometer.

*John McKinnon*

## Batemans Bay planning for life after COVID

It has been a catastrophic start to 2020, with bushfires devastating our region, followed by severe flooding from an East Coast Low and then COVID-19.

While a range of MRNSW risk management strategies was implemented to restrict activities to safeguard our volunteers, it seemed the 'Stay Safe. Stay Home' message did not reach the Batemans Bay boating community.

The autumn weather was extraordinarily warm and settled and the boaties made the most of it, with more than 30 vessels Logged On most weekends. The unit responded to 18 emergencies from the start of the year to mid-May, half during the pandemic restrictions.

Most resulted from mechanical failures, requiring vessels to be

towed back to the boat ramp.

In line with the risk management procedures, only essential personnel have been attending the unit's base, with training limited to Zoom and online resources. A maintenance routine ensured the unit's vessels were always ready to respond.

The world has not stopped turning altogether in our neck of the woods though; the bar has been dredged, new sector lights have been installed in the bay and the leading lights have been replaced. The electronics suite on rescue vessel *Batemans 20* was upgraded during essential repairs.

Attention is now turning to life after COVID-19 and how the unit manages the process of returning to training, getting marine drills back in date and ensuring we are



*Batemans 30* returns a runabout with four on board to safety in May.

at the same pre-pandemic level of competency for a seamless transition back to full operations.

Unit elections and the Annual General Meeting are taking place in June. Voting will be conducted online and the meeting most likely held via Zoom in a first for most, if not all, our members.

It would be fair to say most of our volunteers are keen to get back on the job but with everyone's safety first and foremost there is still a need for us all to exercise caution to avoid a second wave of coronavirus.

Let's hope the second half of 2020 is far less stressful.

*Richard Blundell*

# Agile new asset boosts Merimbula capability

Vessel and jetty a \$600,000 investment in volunteer and boating safety.

Marine Rescue Merimbula has boosted its capability with the arrival of a new rescue vessel that has expanded the unit's operational range and flexibility.

*Merimbula 20*, a \$337,000 6.8m Naiad powered by twin 140hp Suzuki outboards, arrived on April 3 with little fanfare due to the COVID-19 restrictions but not without a cheer from members and local boaters alike.

The boat crew members are just itching to familiarise themselves with their new boat, which will be put to work as soon as the pandemic precautions are lifted.

In addition to its search and rescue and towing capabilities, *MB 20* will thankfully be able to operate under the Merimbula road bridge to return vessels to the boat ramp in the lake. *MB 30* is too large to clear the bridge even on the lowest tide.

Highly-maneuvrable and able to be transported by trailer, this new addition to our fleet also gives the unit the flexibility to respond to waterborne incidents off Merimbula Airport and emergencies on other waterways in the area.

The new boat's arrival has been accompanied by significant work to upgrade the unit's ramp and pontoon. In a \$258,000 project, the old structure has been replaced with a new U-shaped pontoon to



Crew itching to get on board ... the new *Merimbula 20*, delivered during the COVID-19 restrictions.

accommodate both vessels and provide a much safer access area for crews. A new AirBerth for *MB 20* was installed on June 3.

These works and the delivery of *MB 20* would not have been possible without the tenacity of Unit Commander Bill Blakeman, Grants Officer Stewart Dietrich and Administration Officer Bernie Ryan, who have ensured the unit is ready for the future and in the best position to help our local community.

One of the obvious side effects of the COVID-19 restrictions is that people have had more leisure time and like other units, MR Merimbula has recorded a higher number of vessels Logging On during what would normally be a quiet time

of year. The increased boating traffic has also led to more rescue missions.

Operations have been hampered by a false channel that has formed adjacent to the Merimbula bar, reducing the water flow and preventing the normal ebb and flow of water from scouring the bar.

Unfortunately, this has seen at least three vessels capsize.

Luckily, the bar is shallow enough for most boaters to stand up and wade to the safety of the shoreline.

One vessel, after throwing out its hapless sole occupant, spun in circles at full speed until it beached on Merimbula Main Beach. The occupant made it safely to the shore



*Merimbula 30* returns a boater to safety across the hazardous bar at dusk.

and his vessel was retrieved at high tide. Two vessels broke down within days of each other off Short Point, with the crew of *MB 30* facing a challenging crossing to return one of them back over the bar to safety in rapidly fading light.

*Sonia Teston*

**Poly Flex AUSTRALIA**  
CNC Machined Steel Half Couplings

Poly Flex half couplings come in a range of models including 424, 434, 464, 524, 534, 546 & 616. The first number of the model specifies the flange OD being either 4", 5" or 6". These accommodate shaft sizes ranging from 3/4" - 3". Please ask one of our trained staff for more info.

Custom Half Couplings & Cotton Reel Adaptors Available on Request!!  
Better By Design

Poly Flex Group Pty Ltd  
26 - 28 Tubbs Street Clontarf, Queensland 4019  
Ph (07) 3284 2799 . Fax (07) 3284 2672  
Email [info@polyflex.com.au](mailto:info@polyflex.com.au) Web [www.polyflex.com.au](http://www.polyflex.com.au)

**HELP INJURED WILDLIFE**

WIRES

Every year thousands of marine birds and animals are injured by plastic bags, fishing line, hooks and sinkers.

If you see an injured bird or native animal please call WIRES on 1300 094 737 or Australian Seabird Rescue on 0428 862 852.

DONATE to WIRES at [WIRES.ORG.AU](http://WIRES.ORG.AU) or to Australian Seabird Rescue at [SEABIRDRESCUE.ORG](http://SEABIRDRESCUE.ORG)

# Accidental member leads unit's development

Former Tuross commander reflects on a decade of volunteering on the water.

**B**laise Madden has been a teacher and educational leader throughout his professional life but he has always found the time to volunteer his service as well, starting as a volunteer teacher in Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s.

After spending years raising funds, taking disadvantaged students on adventure camps and coaching sports teams, he was awarded Life Membership of Apex.

Blaise and his wife Dorothy retired to the quiet life in Tuross Head, where he joined the local Volunteer Rescue Association in 2010, just as it made the move to MRNSW.

In 2013, he was elected Unit Commander and during his six-year term the unit saw marked growth in both membership and facilities. He emphasises that it is a team effort.

*Why did you join Marine Rescue?*

It was a misunderstanding! Volunteering has always been a part of my life, mostly leading outdoor activities, including abseiling, rock climbing, bushwalking and scuba diving. When we arrived at Tuross, I learnt that there was a Volunteer Rescue Association unit looking for new members. I assumed that the organisation was a land-based rescue organisation, in which I thought I could use my skills, so I went down to check it out. But it was all about the water! However, I was welcomed to join.

It was a very steep learning curve, as I had limited marine vessel experience. I trained on the water on a weekly basis and undertook the mandatory courses. It was a small unit, some key people moved on and by 2013, I found myself Unit Commander. I continued my



Team effort ... MR Tuross Training Officer and former UC Blaise Madden (rear) with fellow unit members.

learning, completing two years at TAFE to become a Coxswain, as well as an additional year to qualify as Master 5. I have undertaken extra courses including a Cert IV in Training and Assessment, a Cert III in Front Line Management, Invigilator for VHF radio courses and Rescue Water Craft Operator.

*What were your main responsibilities as Unit Commander?*

MRNSW was only launched in 2010 and a great deal of work was required to restructure from the old VRA and implement new guidelines to ensure the safety of all concerned, as well as the fair allocation and use of government and community funding.

I particularly valued attending the regional Unit Commanders' meetings, where I could learn from what others were doing. Our unit is responsible for the waters from Broulee Island to Potato Point. As Tuross Bar is charted as non-navigable, MRNSW does not allow vessels to be towed across it. I therefore started planning for an MR vessel to be located on the Moruya River because on any holiday weekend there are at least 30 vessels heading out over the bar. The need for a rescue vessel close by was obvious, as was proved soon after by a bar fatality. We can (now) action call-outs from either location.

*Why did you step down as UC?*



Blaise Madden

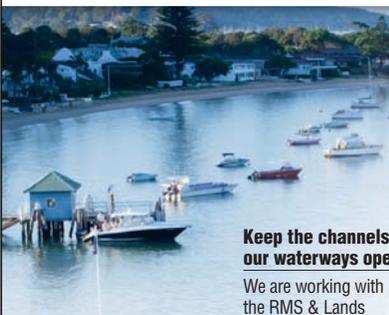
MRNSW statutes decree that a Unit Commander can only serve for six years in 10. The new UC is Alan Blessington, who is doing a great job! I am continuing to serve as Training Officer. Before the dramas of 2020, I was running training sessions two to three times a week on the Tuross and Moruya rivers, Coila Lake and offshore, as well as training several new members in the evenings. There are maintenance projects to be involved with and I'm looking at being a Regional Trainer.

*What are you most pleased about having achieved?*

Getting more people involved. It's a big ask and sometimes people move on, which is sad, but we do now have 25 members, and at least 15 of them are really active. I'm also pleased to have organised a new AirBerth at the Tuross base and also a permanent berth on the Moruya River. That took three years in planning, Development Approval and then the actual building.

*Ilze Svarcs*

If you're not a member of the  
**Boat Owners Association,**  
you should be!




**Don't lose your mooring**

We are participating in the RMS moorings review.

**Keep Little Manly Cove Open**

We successfully lobbied to give boaters continued access.

**Keep the channels to our waterways open**

We are working with the RMS & Lands Department to ensure that dredging is kept up to date.

**Batemans Bay new bridge**

We are working with RMS to ensure boat owners will have safe access to town and mooring facilities.

**Nowra Bridge**

A new bridge is proposed, we are working with the relevant Government departments to ensure boating NSW is well looked after.

**We do cover all of NSW**

Complacency and apathy are our own worst enemies. Maintain your boating rights.

Contact us today

Telephone: 9960 1859 | E-Mail: [admin@boatowners.org.au](mailto:admin@boatowners.org.au)

Website: [www.boatowners.org.au/](http://www.boatowners.org.au/)

# Boaters save two men from peril on rocks

It's what you do: altruistic radio club members respond to all ships appeal.

Two Good Samaritans have been praised for their altruism and quick response to rescue two men whose boat had crashed onto rocks at Eden.

Rob and Pam Schroeder were preparing to head home after a day's fishing in the Eden Amateur Fishing Club competition on March 11 when the emergency unfolded late in the afternoon.

Rob, a semi-retired boater who is a member of Marine Rescue Eden's Radio Club, said he and Pam were about to head back to shore on their 6.5m McLay half-cabin runabout when they heard an all ships bulletin broadcast from the MR Eden radio base.

"We were anchored off Ben Boyd Beach near the Seahorse Inn in Quarantine Bay and in the process of cleaning up to go home when everyone got a call from Marine Rescue saying there was a boat in distress, drifting, taking on water near North Head and was there anyone who could help," Rob said.

"No one responded and we weren't that far away so we drew anchor and quickly headed off. At first we couldn't find them but then the police got us on the phone and Eden Marine Rescue on the two-way (radio) and they gave us more directions."

Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan and Eden Water Police Coordinator Sergeant Steven Judd relayed directions from the MR Eden radio operator over the phone to Rob to guide him to the boaters' location.

"MRNSW and NSW Water Police vessels in the area had been deployed north to Narooma on a multi-agency search for a boater missing in a fatal roll-over on the Narooma bar," Mr Sullivan said.

"The Eden base put out an all ships call for nearby boaters to assist. Rob didn't hesitate to go to the aid of the two men. His altruism

and quick response saved them from a perilous situation."

Rob said as he approached North Head he spotted the upturned boat on the rocks towards Aslings Beach, taking on a lot of water and two men on the rock ledge. As he drew closer, he realised he knew the two men.

"Thankfully, they had put on their lifejackets when their vessel started taking on water but they got into trouble really quickly. Having been in the water for some time, somehow they managed to get to the rocks."

The men had sustained lacerations from clambering on to the rocks and one was in shock. They were reluctant to get back in the water to swim out to Robert's boat, forcing him to skilfully navigate through the rocks and swell to nudge in close.

"I nosed the boat right up on to the rocks and got one on to the back of the boat on the ladder. I was watching the swells and came back in with the swell and the other one jumped in on the front."

While Pam, an experienced nursing assistant, tended to one of the men, now in deep shock, Robert set off for the Quarantine Bay boat ramp, where a NSW Ambulance and police were waiting, soon followed by the Toll Ambulance rescue helicopter.

This wasn't Rob's first act to save others, having also been awarded a VIC Ambulance award for performing CPR on a hockey player who collapsed on the field.

He encouraged other boaters to listen out to their marine radios and be ready to respond in emergencies.

"It's what you do. Boaters were going past us, going back to the ramp. They mightn't have had their radios on," he said. "You should always follow up because you don't know how serious it is until you get there. This one was initially said to be a boat disabled and drifting so people probably thought 'they'll be



Two boaters are treated by paramedics after being returned to shore at Quarantine Bay boat ramp. Photos: Rob & Pam Schroeder.



Good Samaritans ... Rob and Pam Schroeder. Below: The boat smashed onto rocks near Aslings Beach, Eden.

right, someone will look after it' but it was a lot more serious when we got there."

He said the other lesson was that situations on the water could change in an instant and that wearing a lifejacket or at least having them within arm's reach saved lives.

He also encouraged local boaters to join their unit's Radio Club.

Mr Sullivan said Radio Club members, whose membership fees supported local units' operations, were a valuable auxiliary rescue resource on the water, able to assist boaters in trouble while a rescue crew was on the way.

"Our Radio Club members are safety-conscious boaters who



appreciate the efforts of their local volunteers to save lives on the water. As Rob so ably demonstrated, they are willing to support our operations both on and off the water and we thank them all."

## What we've been up to



Training in all weather ... rain, wind, hail or shine, our volunteers are out honing their skills so they can continue to save lives on the water. The crew of *Middle Harbour 30* headed out in misty rain on to the country's busiest waterway for a winch training exercise with the Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter on May 26, manoeuvring around Sydney Harbour traffic, including the Manly Fast Ferry. Photo: Dan Irwin.



Slow journey home ... Lindsay Rawson watches over the line as *Broken Bay 20* tows a 12m disabled yacht from Coasters Retreat to safe harbour in Winnererremy Bay on the June long weekend.



Support ... MR Shellharbour's Gerard Kelly, Unit Commander Richard O'Connor, Peter Anderson and Gary Ferrier assemble with ROM Bruce Mitchell (centre) for a debrief after a taxing search operation.



Life before social distancing ... MR Bermagui's DUC Alex Percival, Denise Page, Steve Angelo, UC Caron Parfitt, Babs Stephens, Greg Jones and Volker Aebischer raise funds from recycling.



Pawsome! The crew of *Ulladulla 20* deserved a treat after rescuing Ned, a safety-conscious pup clad in his own lifejacket, when the motor on his human's boat caught fire south of Green Island.

## Lost at different points on MRNSW journey

Crowdy Harrington grieves inspiring commander, proud new radio operator.

Marine Rescue Crowdy Harrington has sadly lost two members at different waypoints on their MRNSW journey in recent weeks.

Unit Commander Leon Elelman lost his long battle with ill health in early April and Mike Hyland, who qualified as a radio operator at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown, passed away unexpectedly due to complications from surgery.

Leon was the embodiment of all things Marine Rescue. He served as a Radio Operator, Deputy Unit Commander and Membership Officer before taking on the role of Unit Commander last December.

Leon loved Marine Rescue,

especially the Crowdy Harrington unit, was a long-standing member of Rotary and was a well respected member of our community.

A thorough gentleman with a quirky sense of humour, his biggest disappointment right till the end was that he couldn't get into the base to do his radio shift. He was an inspiration to many and will be sorely missed.

Mike was another gentleman and although being a relative newcomer, he quickly became involved in all aspects of our base operations and fundraising during his year with us. He was to serve as the returning officer for this year's unit elections.

Mike was one of the unit's new



Leon Elelman

radio operators to qualify at the start of the lockdown period and excelled on the air. His first shift proved to be one of the busiest ever, looking after both MR Camden Haven and our base.



Mike Hyland

He was beaming after his first shift and so proud of his achievement, as were we all.

Unfortunately, he passed away just two weeks later after surgery.

*Cheryl Rowe*

## Base affectionately known as Ron's Building



Former MR Sussex Inlet Unit Commander, Ron Ford.

Members of MR Sussex Inlet fondly remember the significant and understated contribution made by Ron Ford.

Ron joined the Royal Merchant Navy in 1957 and on one of his many voyages to Australia met Dell, whom he married in the UK. In 1972, the couple and their two sons migrated to Australia to start their new life.

Ron started his community service with the Lions Club and joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal

Patrol in 1997. Starting as a radio operator, he next qualified as a rescue vessel skipper.

Ron served as Division Commander of the Sussex Inlet RVCP before being recruited as Senior Regional Officer Captain South for the area covering Kioloa, Ulladulla, Sussex Inlet and Jervis Bay.

Among his other achievements, Ron will be particularly remembered for his tireless work to secure funding for the unit's new base and

his contribution to the building's design and construction.

Indeed, it is colloquially known to members as Ron's Building.

Soon after the transition to MRNSW, Ron served as the MR Sussex Inlet Unit Commander and continued his duties as a radio operator until his health prevented him from continuing.

Ron remained a welcome visitor at the base, always showing an interest in unit activities.

*Les Pataky*

## Better communications thanks to former UC



Terry Watson

Former MR Shoalhaven Unit Commander Terry Watson passed away on April 28 after a lengthy illness.

Terry had been a long-standing member, joining the then Volunteer Rescue Association in 2006.

Terry served as MR Shoalhaven Unit Commander from February 2016 to June 2017 and held several

other key positions, including Deputy Unit Commander and Stores Officer.

A dedicated radio operator and watchkeeper, Terry not only performed his rostered shifts at the Pilot House but also filled in whenever needed.

He was responsible for securing a Veolia-Mulwaree Trust grant for a new radio aerial to be installed

at Point Perpendicular to improve communications for the MR Shoalhaven, Jervis Bay and Port Kembla radio bases and eliminate black spots in reception.

Terry was much admired by the unit membership, whose condolences are extended to his wife and fellow MR Shoalhaven member, Helen.

## IN MEMORIAM

Tributes to valued members

# Port Stephens mourns volunteers, friends

Members form guard of honour at one service but attend second online.

The passing of Peter Baldwin and Peter Fitzsimons has deprived MR Port Stephens of two highly valued volunteers and friends.

Pete Baldwin passed away suddenly and with the restrictions on the number people permitted to attend funerals during the COVID-19 pandemic, his partner Darrell invited unit members to join him on Zoom for the funeral service. Had we been able to attend, the venue would have been overflowing and Pete would have been given a full guard of honour.

Pete was a person who gave everything to every task he took on. He quickly progressed through his radio operator and watch officer assessments while taking on the roles of roster officer and duty call out officer, arduous tasks he fulfilled with his customary smile.

Pete was especially proud to be awarded the Commissioner's

Citation as a member of the team that assisted in the rescue and retrieval of several yachts during an East Coast Low in January, 2016.

He was also proud of his work with the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service and Gay and Married Men's Association, which he said was a way to give back to the LGBT community. We will hold a remembrance ceremony when we can all get together again.

After being diagnosed with cancer last August, Peter Fitzsimons died on March 10, with members able to form a guard of honour at his funeral on March 20.

Born in England in 1939, Peter served with the Royal Engineers in the British Army in Cyprus. He migrated to NSW in 1970. After moving to Nelson Bay in 1997, Peter lost his first wife in 2003, before meeting Jenny, whom he married in 2007.



Pete Baldwin

Jenny has been a unit member since 2009. Peter joined the next year, taking a role as Museum Attendant in the retired Inner Lighthouse and Lighthouse Keepers Cottage, where he loved greeting visitors and answering their questions. He also joined the maintenance team that cares for the beautiful grounds and buildings on site. He particularly loved mowing the grounds, only apprenticing another member to assist with this



Jenny and Peter Fitzsimons

task after he became too ill.

In 2016, Peter joined the Nelson Head Lighthouse and Search and Rescue Trust to help ensure the site complied with Crown Lands regulations.

Always the gentleman, Peter loved to catch up with everyone and ask after their families. He will be sadly missed by his colleagues and by regular visitors, school children and the Tea Rooms staff.

*Colin Foote*

# Keren happy to share his marine experience



Keren Muir-McCarey

Marine Rescue Broken Bay has farewelled a dedicated member of its team after Keren Muir-McCarey lost his final battle in May.

After joining the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2009, Keren dedicated his time and effort to serving the community, especially the boating public.

He achieved his Coxswain rating,

participating in numerous rescues and sharing his marine experience with many a new starter.

Over his 10 years he held several executive positions, including Treasurer, Administration Officer, Training Officer and Unit Commander for three years from 2013.

These roles provided Keren with

insight into the needs of the unit and its members, whom he vigorously represented.

Keren's passing on May 18 is a sad loss, not just for Broken Bay but also for MRNSW.

Our thoughts are with his wife Liz, sons Steve and Ryan and step-daughter Kristen.

*Stuart Sperduti & Ken Edwards*

# Mainstay of Kioloa fundraising sorely missed



Harry Fog

Volunteers from Marine Rescue Kioloa are mourning the loss of a much loved and valued member with the passing of Harry Fog.

Harry joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2003, along with his wife Yvonne and they became mainstays in our fundraising activities, always there to help out in

any way possible.

Harry will be remembered for his cheerful, friendly personality and dedication to doing anything he could to make the unit better for everyone.

In addition to his fundraising efforts over many years, Harry turned his hand to operating the unit

tow tractor, needed to launch and recover our rescue vessel, *Kioloa 20*, across the beachfront

He earned the respect of all members of the unit and will be sorely missed. The members of MR Kioloa extend their condolences and thoughts to Yvonne and family.

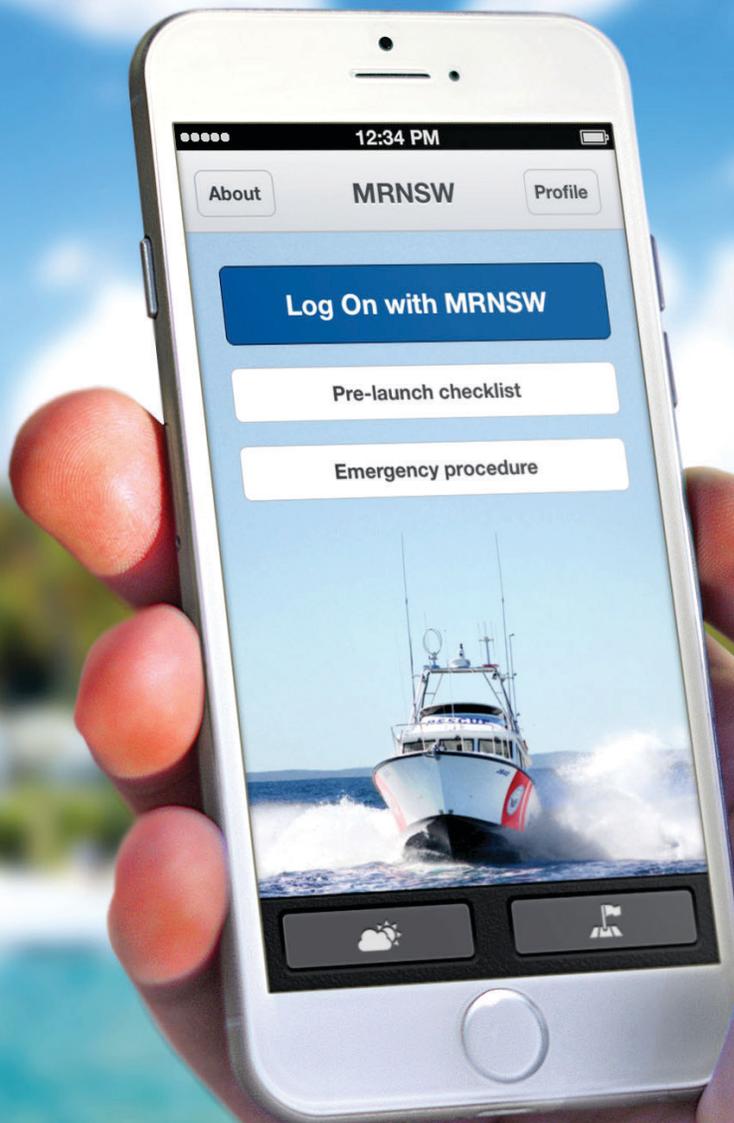
*Peter White*

*Safer boating at your fingertips*



## MARINE RESCUE NSW

*Download the FREE  
MarineRescue App!*



*Volunteers saving lives on the water*

# LET'S TURN UP THE RESOLUTION



RAYMARINE PRO AMBASSADOR  
**JASE ANDREWS** HOST OF  
ALL 4 ADVENTURE



## WITH ELEMENT™ AND HYPERVISION™ LIFELIKE SONAR IMAGING

- ▶ BRIGHT AND RUGGED
- ▶ SUPERIOR 1.2 MEGAHERTZ HYPERVISION™
- ▶ REALVISION™ 3D BUILT-IN
- ▶ REALBATHY™ PERSONAL SONAR MAPPING
- ▶ ALL-IN-ONE CHIRP TRANSDUCER
- ▶ FAST QUAD-CORE PROCESSOR



ELEMENT

See the power of Element at [raymarine.com/element](http://raymarine.com/element)

**Raymarine**

SIMPLY SUPERIOR™