

Volunteers saving lives on the water

SOUNDINGS



Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 35, Winter 2018

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Log On for life

Fisherman thanks rescue team

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Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

Cover Image

The Vivid Festival illuminates Sydney's waterfront each winter, drawing thousands of boaters on to Sydney Harbour to enjoy the colourful vista. The extra marine traffic and changing lightscape created valuable navigation and night operation training opportunities for the crew of *Port Jackson 30* in June. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

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From the Commissioner

\$18 million investment in NSW boat building industry delivers jobs and safety.



Commissioner
Stacey Tannos ESM

Marine Rescue NSW has invested more than \$18 million in the State's boat building industry since our establishment in July 2009.

Under the Fleet Modernisation Program, we have delivered more than 80 new and refurbished vessels to our units to date, with more to come.

By any measure, that is a substantial commitment to supporting NSW businesses and workers.

With *Alpine Lakes 21*, *Norah Head 20* and *Central Coast 30* either recently delivered or nearing completion, another five boats are due to be on the water at Tuross, Forster-Tuncurry, Iluka Yamba, Central Coast and Port Jackson by the end of this year. More will follow in 2019.

While it is true we could source vessels more cheaply elsewhere, through grey imports for instance, we are serious in our dual commitment to our home industry and to maintaining the highest standards of construction and safety. The added benefit is that we are supporting employment and sustaining valuable skills in regional communities.

Our experience with our builders and suppliers has given us strong levels of confidence in the standards of construction, fit-out

and equipment our NSW companies deliver.

Our sound professional relationships enable us to work collaboratively with the builders to ensure our vessels are tailor-made to meet our safety and operational requirements. Proximity also gives us ease of access for ongoing maintenance and repairs.

Many of you will already have seen the first chapter in our new online video series 'How to build a cutting edge search and rescue vessel' on our Facebook page and website, tracking the production of the new *Central Coast 30* from

its own boat-building centre at Poole, bringing every stage of its construction process in-house under one roof.

RNLI Operations Director George Rawlinson showed us through the impressive facilities. The ship building operation includes two boat halls with flexible bays for manufacturing and maintaining lifeboats, a component manufacturing area, workshop, tools and equipment storage and a visitors' viewing area.

While it operates on a scale and budget far beyond our State-based practice, the RNLI shares our

Their craftsmanship and professional skill contribute to our mission of saving lives.

the factory floor at Yamba Welding & Engineering through to its commissioning.

Produced by Media and Marketing Manager Brendan Trembath, the series is an interesting introduction not only to the construction process but also to the members of the workforce who take pride in the fact their craftsmanship and professional skill contribute to our mission of saving lives on the water. Learn more on Pages 6 and 7.

In mid-May, MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan and I had the opportunity to visit the headquarters of the United Kingdom's Royal National Lifeboat Institution at Poole in England.

Established in 1824, the RNLI provides water safety services including lifeboat rescue, a seasonal lifeguard service and flood response. Its lifeboat crews protect hundreds of communities around the UK and Ireland through its 24-hour search and rescue service.

The RNLI fleet of more than 350 all-weather and inshore lifeboats covers 19,000 miles of coastline and some busy inland stretches of water. The organisation has

reliance on the commitment and skill of its volunteers.

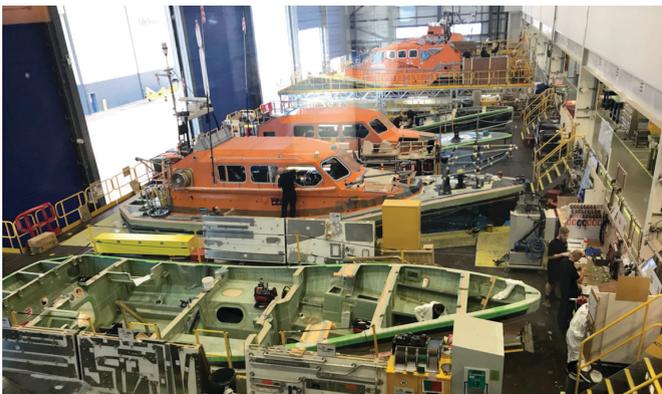
I left Poole proud to be part of the international marine rescue community that exists to save those in peril on the water and no less impressed by the service of our own members and what we have achieved as an organisation.

I want to particularly commend Michael Kelly and Peter May, who have been awarded the Emergency Services Medal, along with our Rotary Awards winner Jackie Taffs and finalists Richard Wrightson, Paul Robinson and Paul Ballard.

With the news that we have reached the finals of the State Training Awards, congratulations also are in order for all our training personnel and the members who have devoted time beyond their operational and unit responsibilities to participate in our demanding training courses.

As this recognition shows, our volunteers are highly prized in our State and nation. I assure you that you also hold your own on the international stage.

Stacey Tannos ESM
Commissioner



The boat building hall at the RNLI Headquarters in Poole ... all its vessel construction in-house under one roof.

'I wouldn't be here without Marine Rescue'

Fisherman credits Logging On with Ulladulla unit and lifejacket for saving him.

A rescued fisherman and his wife have publicly thanked the Marine Rescue NSW volunteers who helped save his life.

The State's leaders also acknowledged the volunteers' life-saving efforts during a visit to the NSW Parliament during National Volunteer Week to highlight our members' skill and dedication.

Martin Field made two wise decisions before an early morning South Coast fishing trip on April 6.

He called Marine Rescue Ulladulla to Log On and he put on a lifejacket.

"If it wasn't for the lifejacket and Marine Rescue I wouldn't be here today to tell the story," Mr Field said.

Early in the outing he caught a big snapper and phoned his wife, son and a grandson to tell them.

Not long after that, about 6.45am, his world turned upside down.

"Something came underneath the boat," he said.

His runabout, *She Shall Reign*, tipped over and Mr Field was flung into the water, swimming to a bombora, where he sustained deep cuts to his body.

By this stage I had to crawl because I couldn't walk. I was just a total mess.

"I was cut to pieces. I was hoping the sharks wouldn't get me," he said.

Deciding to swim to the shore, he managed to get out of the water.

"By this stage I had to crawl because I couldn't walk," he said.

"I was just a total mess."

When Mr Field did not Log Off with MR Ulladulla at noon as scheduled, the unit alerted the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and a major search was mounted.

"As soon it was obvious that Martin was not returning at his nominated time we went to look for him," MR Ulladulla Unit Commander David Hall said.

Mr Hall helmed rescue vessel



NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian meets MRNSW Illawarra Regional Director Keven Marshall, MR Ulladulla Deputy Unit Commander Gabrielle Boermans, Unit Commander David Hall and rescued fisherman Martin Field and his wife Melanie at State Parliament during National Volunteer Week. Photo: Brendan Trembath.

Ulladulla 30 with crew members David Lindley and Allan Brook, while *Ulladulla 20* was skippered by Brian Harrison and crewed by Kel Greathead and Lesley Kelly.

Watch Officer George Cross and Radio Operator Chuck L'Heureux monitored communications.

The volunteer crews headed to Burrill Rocks, south of Ulladulla,

member Keven Marshall.

The group was acknowledged by Deputy Speaker Thomas George before Question Time in the Legislative Assembly and later met Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant.

Mr Grant praised the unit's skilled volunteers.

"Marine Rescue Ulladulla did what they do best, save lives," he said.

"Their quick response really put the organisation at the front of mind

about how special they are and how important they are to saving lives on our waterways."

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey praised Mr Field as a responsible boater and the Ulladulla unit for its swift response.

"This rescue proved yet again that Logging On with Marine Rescue saves lives," he said.

"Mr Field is safely home with his family and has resumed his regular fishing trips on our magnificent South Coast. How good is that?"

Brendan Trembath

where Mr Field had said he would be fishing.

He was located on nearby Racecourse Beach in distress.

A crew officer was winched down from a Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter on to the beach to provide first aid and NSW Ambulance paramedics and police also provided assistance.

The fisherman had hypothermia and abrasions on his back, arms and legs.

Mr Field and his wife Melanie visited State Parliament on May 22 with Mr Hall, MR Ulladulla Deputy Unit Commander Gabrielle Boermans and MRNSW Illawarra Regional Director and MR Ulladulla



Mr Field is given first aid for hypothermia and abrasions on Racecourse Beach. Photo: Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopters.

From the Chair

Online voting will save costs and increase participation in leadership elections.



Chair
James Glissan ESM, QC

The Marine Rescue NSW ballot box is about to be consigned to our organisation's past.

In an initiative aimed at increasing our democratic participation and reducing our costs and environmental footprint, MRNSW is introducing online voting in the annual Board elections.

The transition to paperless voting was approved at the April Board meeting, bringing our organisation into line with many others in the community. As members have been advised, the new system takes effect from this year's elections, in November, when eligible members will elect a General Director and the Greater Sydney, Illawarra and Monaro Regional Directors.

While some of us may lament the loss of yet another paper-based process to the relentless march of technology, it is the case that our existing election system has reached its use-by date.

Currently, election information, candidate statements and ballot papers are forwarded to members through a somewhat cumbersome combination of email and post that may have dissuaded some eligible members from participating in the democratic process to elect their organisational leadership. As I have

frequently stated, all democracies depend on widespread participation from their people and ours is no different. If our Board is to remain representative and effective, it is essential that our volunteers exercise their right to nominate for election and to subsequently vote for those who stand for a position as a MRNSW Director.

In a bid to streamline the flow of information and speed up the process, election information and voting instructions will this year be emailed to members, who will be able to cast their vote quickly and easily via computer. Materials for the Annual General Meeting and general MRNSW correspondence also will be emailed as standard process.

Not only will this help reduce the inherent cost of printing and posting this material, it also removes the risk of eligible members not receiving their voting papers in the post and potential delays in mail deliveries resulting in ballots arriving too late for the poll count.

Members can be assured their vote will remain secret, as their identity will not be recorded with their ballot. Votes will be able to be counted automatically.

The limited number of members who may not have a personal email

account or have a strong reason for not wishing to use this for MRNSW correspondence will be able to access election information via their unit's standard information channels. In the interests of helping ensure this transition is smooth and successful, I would encourage all members to make sure they take the time to log into the Otter database before July 1 to check that all their contact details, most especially their personal email addresses, are up-to-date and accurate.

As you know, The Prince of Wales has a strong link with volunteer marine rescue in our State as our organisation's Patron in Chief.

MRNSW was honoured to be invited to attend an event to mark His Royal Highness' 70th birthday and celebrate the work of his Patronages, Charities and Military affiliations and others involved in public service. The Commissioner and I attended the Buckingham Palace function, which also was a collective opportunity to thank Prince Charles, whose involvement and support is valuable recognition of these many groups and our work.

In recent weeks, it has been pleasing to observe a number of our members receive welcome public acknowledgment of their contribution to the safety of the community. Michael Kelly, from MR Batemans Bay and Peter May, from MR Shellharbour, were awarded the Emergency Services Medal in the Queen's Birthday honours.

Jackie Taffs, from MR Woolli, was named the MRNSW Volunteer of the Year in the Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards. Senior Chaplain Richard Wrightson, from MR Lake Macquarie and MR Port Jackson members Paul Ballard and Paul Robinson were our other finalists. Congratulations and thank you to you all for your commitment.

Good sailing
Jim Glissan



As The Prince of Wales, Duchess of Cornwall and Duchess of Sussex look on, Prince Harry addresses guests at His Royal Highness' 70th Birthday Patronage Celebration.

Prized recognition for service to community

Emergency Services Medal Australia's way of saying 'job extremely well done'.

Two long-standing members of Marine Rescue NSW on the Illawarra and South Coasts have been recognised with the prestigious Emergency Services Medal in the Queen's Birthday honours.

The ESM was awarded to MR Shellharbour Deputy Unit Commander, Trainer and Assessor Peter May and MR Batemans Bay Operations Officer and Assessor Michael Kelly.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey congratulated the pair on the well-deserved recognition of their selfless service to the community.

"The Emergency Services Medal is highly prized recognition of the contribution members such as Michael and Peter make to our community," he said. "This is the nation's way of saying 'thank you, job extremely well done' to people who give their time and effort to assist and protect others in trouble."

MICHAEL KELLY joined the Batemans Bay Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2001, rising to the rank of Master Coxswain. Taking to the sea in hazardous conditions on many search and rescue operations, he has also acted as On Scene Coordinator on several occasions.

Michael served as Deputy Unit Commander from 2012 until April this year. He contributed to the selection of the MR Batemans Bay fleet and as Operations Manager he is responsible for the control, deployment, care and maintenance of the unit's three vessels. He has made a wider contribution to training, completing training induction programs for surrounding units as MRNSW progressed with its Fleet Modernisation Program. His assistance to other volunteers with navigational training is renowned and he continues to mentor current Coxswains and Masters.



Michael Kelly.



Peter May.

PETER MAY joined his local Shellharbour marine rescue unit, then part of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, in 1994. As a Master Coxswain, he is one of the unit's more experienced rescue crew members and has taken part in numerous search and rescue operations over the years, often in extreme conditions.

He has saved many lives on water through his operational skill and experience garnered from his long

service and also has acted as local On Water Coordinator for several Sydney to Hobart Yacht Races.

He has been tireless in his efforts as a trainer for his unit, others in the Illawarra Region - acting as a senior trainer for many years - and the boating community. As Deputy Unit Commander, he plays a vital role in the management of the unit and has built strong relationships with stakeholders across the emergency services sector and the community.

Jackie our Rotary Volunteer of the Year

Plaudits for 'four of our best' at annual awards presentation.

Marine Rescue Woolli Watch Officer Jackie Taffs has been named the MRNSW 2018 Rotary Emergency Services Officer of the Year in a Volunteer Capacity.

The Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards were announced at a gala dinner at the Bankstown Sports Club on June 1.

The other three MRNSW finalists were Senior Chaplain Richard Wrightson, from MR Lake Macquarie and MR Port Jackson members Paul Ballard and Paul Robinson.

The event was attended by awards patron, Governor of NSW General David Hurley and Mrs Linda Hurley, Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant, MRNSW Directors Pat Fayes, John Lynch, Jim Wright, Keven Marshall and Glenn Felkin, Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey

and staff members. The awards, which recognise the 'service above self' of members of the emergency services, this year included ACT services as well as those from NSW.

Mr Grant said that as Minister, he got to witness the remarkable feats and contribution of emergency services personnel in NSW every day.

"The 24/7 effort, the remarkable contribution you make day in and day out, not just on the front line, but right throughout the emergency service chain," he said. "You see the impact of an event or incident and the devastation it can play. What you don't always get to see is the impact you have on people's lives that contributes to their recovery."

Deputy Commissioner Storey congratulated Mrs Taffs and said he



Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey (centre) with Rotary award finalists, Paul Robinson, Richard Wrightson, Jackie Taffs and Paul Ballard.

was "proud to see four of our best here tonight as finalists for these fantastic awards".

"Success is built on strong

partnerships," he said. "The full spectrum of those partnerships is on show here tonight."

See *In their own words*, Page 9.

Sculptures in aluminium: skilled craftsmen

Commitment to local industry sustains valued jobs in regional centres.

In the Northern Rivers seaside town of Yamba, skilled workers are creating a cutting edge search and rescue vessel for Marine Rescue Central Coast.

Sparks fly in the vast factory at Yamba Welding & Engineering (YW&E) as the boat's aluminium ribs are welded together.

"It's like a sculpture," Project Manager Peter Sanderson said.

"It starts off with a bit of aluminium and we get to the end and it's a great looking boat."

Central Coast 30, a 10 metre Naiad rigid-hulled boat with twin outboard engines, is being built under the MRNSW Fleet Modernisation Program.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the program benefitted MRNSW volunteers, the boating community

and the state's boat building industry.

"Since 2011, MRNSW has delivered some 80 new and refurbished rescue vessels into our fleet at a cost of about \$18 million," he said. "We have been able to fund this program with the generous support we receive from the NSW Government and the boating community through a levy on recreational boat licences and registrations, along with our units' enthusiastic fundraising activities."

The commitment of MRNSW to supporting the local boat building industry is helping sustain high-skill jobs in regional areas, providing skills development in trades such as drafting, welding, metal fabrication and fit out, including instruments and soft furnishings. Along with the



Skeleton exposed ... the frame of *Central Coast 30* under construction at Yamba Welding & Engineering. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

Naiads and Ocean Cylinders built at YW&E, other models are built by Steber International and Sailfish Catamarans, both also based in regional NSW.

The building process for a Naiad such as *CC 30* begins with MRNSW specifying its vessel requirements.

A boat's future operating conditions and necessary response

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build cutting edge search and rescue vessels

capabilities influence how it is built.

Next, detailed plans are prepared by Naiad, the vessel designers.

The plans include a cut file which looks like a jigsaw puzzle and shows the cut parts that make up a boat. Cutting out and assembling the pieces takes eight to 12 weeks at the Yamba factory.

Mr Sanderson said the following steps were polishing the boat to make sure there were no sharp edges and acid washing to prepare for internal painting and the livery wrap application.

In the fit out stage, components such as electronic search and rescue and navigation instruments and marine radios are fitted.

"It's very satisfying building these boats," YW&E draftsman Isaac Edwards said. "You know they're going to a good purpose."

MR Central Coast Unit Commander Roger Palmer said the construction of the unit's new boat had increased volunteer morale.

"People are quite excited about this boat arriving later on this year," he said. "It's our biggest one."

CC 30 will be based out of Terrigal Haven, servicing offshore



Keeping valuable regional skills alive ... Senior Tradesperson Dylan Campbell at work on the framework of *Central Coast 30* at the Yamba Welding & Engineering factory in northern NSW.

waters up to 30 nautical miles.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said it would enhance operational capability.

"This vessel will provide a vital offshore search and rescue capacity to the organisation," he said.

"CC 30 will serve the boating community of the local area and the wider coastal region."

YW&E Managing Director Bill Collingburn said the company worked closely with Commissioner Tannos, Deputy Commissioner

Storey, Fleet Manager Jody Hollow and the MRNSW volunteers.

"We're very proud of the relationship we have with Marine Rescue," he said.

"I take my hat off to them. The organisation, since it became Marine Rescue, it's just gone from strength to strength. There's been more money, there's been better direction, there's been better training and I've seen Marine Rescue grow to a really professional organisation."

He said YW&E would probably be

the coastal town's biggest employer.

"With the influx of work including Marine Rescue we've been able to increase our staff from about 20 to 35. In that 35 we have 10 young apprentices," he said.

Brendan Trembath

Follow the construction of Central Coast 30 through our online series 'How to build a cutting edge search and rescue vessel' on the Marine Rescue NSW Facebook page and website.

Retiring technician's handiwork in every boat

All the Marine Rescue NSW boats built at Yamba Welding & Engineering have one thing in common: Greg Leth worked on all of them.

The Senior Engineering Technician retired from YW&E on May 29 after 16 years with the company.

"I started building fire trucks, landing barges, SES rescue boats and pilot boats," he said.

His last vessels included the 10m Naiad *Central Coast 30*.

Mr Leth said he enjoyed building boats for MRNSW volunteers.

"They're a good crew to

work with," he said. "They come around and visit us in their boats. They come and ask all the right questions."

He said the vessel orders from MRNSW and other agencies were "brilliant" for YW&E and regional employment.

"Bill's done a lot of hard work to keep jobs in this area," he said. "It's a good company to work for."

Mr Leth is a boilermaker by trade and has been around boats all his life. Boating now features in his retirement plans.

"Hopefully a bit of fishing, a bit of travelling and renovate my house."



Senior Engineering Technician Greg Leth is retiring from YW&E after working on every MRNSW boat produced at the North Coast factory.

“IT’S JUST FLAWLESS”

Dan Gatkowski - fisherman



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Jackie Taffs

MRNSW Rotary Emergency Services Officer of the Year.



Radio is our shopfront ... Marine Rescue Woolli's Jackie Taffs on duty in the isolated unit's radio base and at the 2018 Rotary Awards with Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Governor of NSW, General David Hurley (top) and MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey and Woolli Unit Commander Richard Taffs.

Jackie Taffs is the Radio Base Coordinator and a Watch Officer at Marine Rescue Woolli in the Northern Rivers Region. A member since 2002, Jackie was named the MRNSW Officer of the Year in a Volunteer Capacity at this year's Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Awards.

■ **My Marine Rescue life began with a challenge 16 years ago.**

The challenges have gained momentum and the rewards have followed close behind.

■ **Like many of us back then, I was thrown in at the deep end.**

Challenge number one came on my second duty: "This is a radio and that is a Mayday call for you to attend to. I'm crew, bye," I was told. The challenge was quickly followed by reward number one when the missing divers were located and returned to their families.

■ **It was obvious that for the preservation of others and for me, I needed to be trained.** Coffs Harbour was the nearest well-

established radio base for training support. That it was from the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and I was from the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association was meaningless to me and to the Coffs Division Commander at that time. This training experience began the inter-unit training programs that former MR Ballina volunteer Meg Luckie and I facilitated for members of units in the Northern Rivers Region.

■ **Radio is the shopfront of Marine Rescue NSW.** With the establishment of the organisation in 2009, units were seeking training to unify and progress radio operations. In our region, we built up a support team of local qualified and experienced members with training expertise and implemented programs for Radio Operators, Watch Officers and Emergency Centre Personnel, as well as in Peer Group Support. MRNSW Headquarters training and IT staff, including Chris Butler and Florian Glajcar, headed north from Sydney

to share their expertise in their fields.

■ **As a member of the smallest Marine Rescue unit, covering a remote length of coastline from Red Rock to Brooms Head and with a permanent village population of 350, each Woolli member covers multiple roles both within the unit and the community.** Cooperation with the Woolli State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service and sharing facilities and skills are integral for our village to remain resilient.

■ **Our unit assisted with the initial establishment of a First Responders group.** Vital when our village is so far from any medical assistance, this group is trained to carry out primary first aid and also flood reconnaissance to assist the SES. In these ways, it's been a privilege being able to contribute to the Woolli community and represent Marine Rescue NSW.

■ **As a member of the Woolli unit, part of my role has been to**

provide 24/7 radio coverage for the area from a stand-by base in our home.

The new Radio over Internet Protocol (RoIP) technology introduced to support small units such as Woolli now provides this coverage but the hours on call and keeping an ear tuned in have not changed. Contributing to Woolli and the safety of the boating community on the Northern Rivers as a radio operator, emergency worker in many fields and part of the boat licence team has given me many challenges and rewards. Providing critical incident support, for both members and casualties, is an ongoing challenge and interest.

■ **It has been an honour to receive peer recognition for these experiences but the recognition is for all the Marine Rescue NSW personnel who put "service above self" and for their supportive families.** Thank you to Rotary for acknowledging the services of emergency workers and facilitating these awards.

Six units win \$182,000 in new grants

Funding for training and facilities helps boost boating safety.

Six MRNSW units have reaped a total of more than \$182,000 in grants funding over the past three months, led by two Sydney and Illawarra units receiving \$80,000 for major projects from the IMB Community Foundation.

The funding comes hot on the heels of the completion of the regional grants training program.

The IMB Foundation has awarded MR Port Kembla \$70,000 to upgrade its Search and Rescue Coordination Centre radio equipment and network. The enhanced radio coverage on the Illawarra coastline will boost boating safety by helping improve emergency response times.

IMB also has provided MR Botany Port Hacking with a \$10,000 grant to upgrade its unit training program, which also was boosted by a \$5,350

grant from Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant for new training equipment. The unit also received \$7,231 under the Georges River Council Community Grants Program to replace vessel equipment.

The IMB Foundation announced its latest grants at a function in Cronulla in June. MR Botany Port Hacking Grants Officer Kevin Thompson addressed the event.

Other recent successes include \$75,000 in funding under the NSW Government's Infrastructure Grants Program to upgrade search coordination facilities and access to the MR Eden base (see Page 40).

MR Lemon Tree Passage was awarded \$5,000 through AGL Corporate Sponsorship to improve the unit's facilities for volunteers, including a new air conditioner at



Seeking funding success ... Grants Manager Siobhán Moran-McFarlane with unit Grants Officers and members at the Northern Rivers regional grants training session held at the MR Ballina base.

the base. MR Ballina received a \$5,000 ClubGrant from Ballina's Cherry Street Bowling Club towards the cost of replacement engines for *Ballina 30* and MR Port Stephens will use a \$5,000 State Government Stronger Communities Program

grant to build a new fence around the lighthouse on its site.

Grants Manager Siobhán Moran-McFarlane said units were seeing the financial benefits of submitting more strategic, high-quality funding applications.



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Team effort to free tangled giants of the sea

Volunteers train with wildlife experts ahead of whale migration season.

Each year thousands of whales migrate north to the warm coastal waters of Queensland and the Coral Sea.

If the protected animals become entangled in fishing gear and marine debris along their way, a team effort is needed to free them.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service prepares for the winter migration season by conducting regular whale rescue exercises with agencies including Marine Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, NSW Maritime, Surf Life Saving NSW, DPI Fisheries and ORRCA.

MRNSW crews from the Cottage Point, Hawkesbury and Port Macquarie units have recently joined the exercises, including one on Broken Bay on May 10.

For this training session, rescue vessels *Cottage Point 30* and *Hawkesbury 22* served as mother ships for the NPWS Greater Sydney Large Whale Disentanglement Team.

NPWS Team Leader Natasha Funke said there was no set formula for releasing a whale.

“Each case is unique and will require patience, planning and ingenuity,” she said. “Releasing a distressed, entangled whale while working with a professional, dedicated and efficient team on the water is an amazing experience.”



A NPWS team prepares to deploy “kegs”, used to slow a whale down, during a training exercise with MRNSW on Broken Bay.

MR Cottage Point Unit Commander Paul Millar said it was wonderful to work with the NPWS members and other agencies.

“We’ve now got more of an understanding of what they need,” he said.

Ms Funke said the MRNSW volunteers were great to work with, thanking them for their assistance.

“They are so professional,” she said. The *CP 30* crew for the day was Tony Gordon, Neil Jones, Mike Evans and Mr Millar, with Greg Groppenbacher and David Stocks aboard *HW 22*.

The whale rescuers brought on board long lances with sharp blades and large round orange fenders called “kegs” used to slow an animal down. The whale was represented

by a long plastic float.

Not too long after the exercise a whale was spotted tangled in ropes off North Bondi.

“We were put on alert if they could locate the animal but

unfortunately they weren’t able to,” Mr Millar said. “You can only hope that perhaps it’s freed itself in some way and was able to continue on its migration north.”

Brendan Trembath

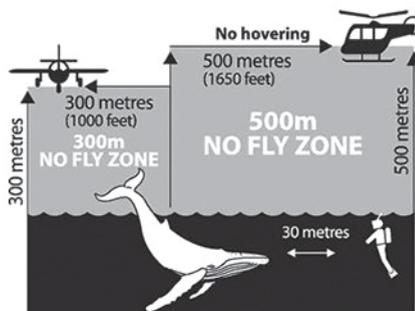


Whale of a time ... MR Cottage Point members Paul Millar and Mike Evans, with NPWS staff Kim Waterhouse and Natasha Funke.

Basic rule for boaters: do not disturb!

Boaters must avoid disturbing whales by keeping at least 100m from an adult and 300m from an adult and calf. Tips for safe, enjoyable whale watching include:

- Go slow when within 300m of whales.
- No more than three vessels at a time should approach the animals. Wait your turn and don’t barge in.
- Don’t approach from directly in front of or behind the animals but start your approach at an angle of at least 30 degrees to their path of travel.
- If a whale approaches your vessel, slow down to no wash speed; move away or disengage your gears.
- Make no sudden movements and minimise noise.



Simulator proves value of emergency drills

Deputy Commissioner escapes 'confronting' underwater helicopter dunking.

Marine Rescue volunteers are well accustomed to the dynamic nature of the ocean and the fine margin for error it tolerates.

There are definite parallels with the risks our airborne colleagues manage when operating over water and the need for consistent training for those worst case scenario situations.

To prepare air crews for an emergency ditching into water, Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) is conducted at the Toll and NSW Ambulance Sydney Helicopter Base at Bankstown Airport. Crew members are blindfolded and strapped into a cabin resembling the interior of a helicopter. It's a confronting experience when the cabin is suddenly dunked in a deep pool.

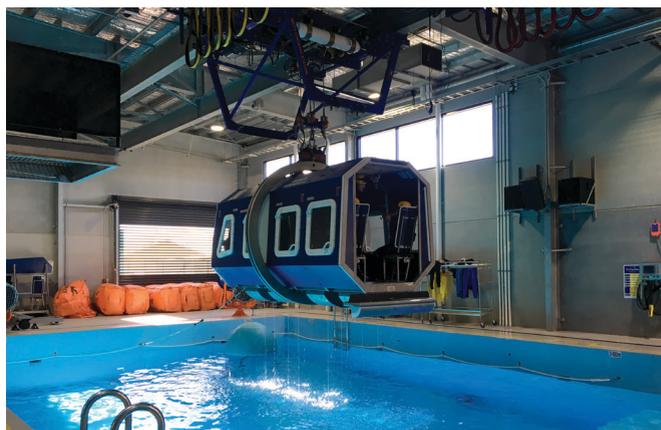
MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey accepted an invitation from Toll to participate in a HUET course at the Sydney base as part of an orientation of its training facility.

He said the key was to focus on what needed to be done, rather than getting distracted by stress and panic.

"Being inverted underwater within an enclosed airframe, while wearing a blindfold and needing to 'pop out' Perspex windows to escape is a bit of a mental challenge," he said.

"The instructors were excellent and the procedural dry-drills we repeated again and again prior to getting in the pool really made the difference once underwater."

He said MRNSW also employed a systematic step-by-step approach to training in its emergency drills.



Still upright ... crews are blindfolded and turned upside down in this cabin to simulate a helicopter crash.

"People hope that if faced with a major emergency they will rally and perform to the best of their ability. This is rarely the case and rather, when faced with an extremely stressful situation, people often revert to their most basic level of core skill," he said. "It is through consistent drilling and training that we lift that core skill level."

Mr Storey came well prepared for the course after his years as a SLS lifeguard and volunteer helicopter rescue swimmer in New Zealand, during which he undertook a number of HUET courses.

A member of Garie Surf Life Saving Club, Mr Storey has just completed his 25th consecutive year

as a patrolling Surf Life Saver.

"The Toll experience provided as real-life a training scenario as you would want to experience, including wave and wind machines and simulated thunder and lightning," he said.

Toll Air and NSW Ambulance conduct regular helicopter winch training with MRNSW crews. Mr Storey said the training partnership was important to build and maintain skills, experience and confidence.

"MRNSW regularly responds to on-water medical emergencies which may require helicopter extraction and interagency coordination," he said.

Brendan Trembath



The key is to focus ... Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey ready to be dunked at the Toll and NSW Ambulance base at Bankstown.



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MRNSW a finalist in State training awards

Recognition of our volunteers' amazing commitment to learning.

Marine Rescue NSW has been named as a finalist in the NSW Training Awards for its rigorous volunteer training program.

The annual awards are conducted by Training Services NSW to recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector.

Assistant Director Training and Education Chris Butler said with a volunteer workforce of more than 3,000 members, MRNSW had been listed as a finalist in the 2018 Large Employer of the Year category.

"It's a significant feather in our cap to be named as a finalist in our first entry in the awards," Mr Butler said.

"This State recognition is due to the amazing commitment to learning of our volunteers, who give so much time and energy to their training activities.

"It also rewards the contribution

of all our training personnel, including our 196 unit Trainers and Assessors and Headquarters staff."

MRNSW is a Registered Training Organisation, meaning it develops and delivers its members' training.

Mr Butler said the learner-centred training curriculum and accompanying learning materials and resources had been specifically developed to meet MRNSW operational and volunteer needs.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said MRNSW was a noted innovator and leader in the national volunteer marine sector.

"We have invested significant funding and resources to strengthen our organisational capability by helping our volunteers build their skills and experience," he said.

"We are committed to ensuring our people receive the high-quality professional training they need to carry out their specific roles safely



Volunteers righting a life raft in the open waters off Shellharbour during a sea survival training course.

and effectively, while also meeting our regulatory requirements," he said.

The MRNSW entry in the awards showcased two members, MR Port Kembla Master Tom Dragutinovich and MR Bermagui Radio Officer and Crew Member Olivia Ford,

who acclaimed the benefits of their training and volunteer activities.

Mr Butler said the awards were an ideal showcase to raise the education sector's awareness of MRNSW accomplishments.

The NSW Training Awards will be announced on September 12.

Educators learn from each other's experience

Policy and reform on the agenda for peak body meeting at Headquarters.

MRNSW was given the opportunity to exchange valuable information and experience with members of Australia's peak body for the vocational education and training sector when they met at our State Headquarters in May.

Representatives of 16 major corporations, public sector agencies and other bodies attended the Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association (ERTO) State meeting at the Cronulla site.

Assistant Director of Training and Education Chris Butler is the president of ERTOA, of which MRNSW has been a member for the past four years.

"Representatives of each ERTOA member attend regular forums, such as the State meetings, which bring together leading vocational

training and education personnel," Mr Butler said. "These meetings give the representatives the chance to learn about what has changed or is changing in the sector, learn something new, share practice and advice and network with others who manage a Registered Training Organisation within an enterprise, as we do at MRNSW.

"It's a great opportunity for us to stay up to date on developments that could benefit our volunteers in their training activities."

Representatives of Surf Life Saving Australia and NSW, the NSW Police Force, Department of Health, Office of Environment and Heritage, Roads and Maritime Services, State Emergency Service, Transport for NSW, Ausgrid, Qantas, McDonalds, Scouts and Telstra attended the May



Representatives of major public and private sector organisations at the Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association State meeting at MRNSW Headquarters in May.

meeting, along with the National Measurement Institute and National Electrical and Communications Association.

Matters discussed included changes to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, training

package reform, policy changes and professional development.

Mr Butler said the association fostered a collaborative environment and sought opportunities to bring items of interest across the sector to government attention.

Sunrise enjoys breakfast with Marine Rescue

Early morning shout out to thank volunteers for their important service.

Television viewers around Australia have gained an insight into the life-saving work of MRNSW volunteers thanks to a crew from the Port Jackson unit spending a morning on the water with a team from Channel 7's Sunrise program.

The show's weather presenter Sam Mac joined the crew in the pre-dawn darkness at their Birkenhead Point base at Drummoyne before boarding *Port Jackson 30* as the sun rose to learn more about marine radios, Logging On and rescuing people from the water.

As the vessel headed to nearby Cockatoo Island, Sam adopted the call sign "Sunrise Salty Seadog" to Log On with MR Terrey Hills during a live cross back to the program's Brekky Central studio in Sydney's Martin Place.

Sydney Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans then put Sam to the test throwing tow lines and



Sunrise weather presenter Sam Mac joins Marine Rescue NSW before dawn, broadcasting live from the Port Jackson unit base and vessel for the Channel 7 breakfast program.

taking part in a man overboard drill, hauling rescue mannequin 'Pablo' back on board.

"A big shout out and a thank you to all the volunteers who give up their time and share their skills, who help save lives," Sam said.

"That's what it's all about. It's a really important service so we're really glad to be spending time with

them this morning and sharing it with people around Australia.

"It's pretty amazing what they do. They give up their own time and a lot of them are on call to help people who really need it when they're out on the water and find themselves in strife."

Watching at home, MRNSW Chair Jim Glissan said the lighthearted

morning's viewing was a valuable promotion that had helped raised the profile of the organisation and its members with a large audience.

"Thanks to the volunteers from the Port Jackson unit who were prepared to get up extra early for a 4am start and to Sam and the Sunrise team for taking our safety messages to the nation," he said.

Meet our safety advocates at boat show

Learn about our work and the rewards of saving lives on the water.

Visitors to the Southern Hemisphere's premier boat show will be able to learn about the rewards of volunteering to save lives on the water.

MRNSW will again have a presence at the annual Sydney International Boat Show at the International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour from August 2 to 6.

As well as a stand in the Safety Zone with other marine safety agencies, MRNSW also will have a rescue vessel open for public inspection on Darling Harbour.

Thousands of visitors attend the show every year and many are keen to take the chance to get on board a rescue vessel and talk to the crew members about their operations on the water.

Our volunteers will be on hand to

tell visitors about their volunteering experience, answer questions about our services to assist and protect the boating community and provide boating safety advice.

Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey said MRNSW members were noted boating safety advocates and keen to share their knowledge and experience with the boating community.

"Our volunteers are passionate about our mission to save lives on the water," he said. "They're always keen to encourage boaters to take simple safety precautions to help prevent problems that can escalate into major emergencies.

"Our people will be able to share their first-hand experience about the benefits of wearing lifejackets, carrying the required safety gear,



Middle Harbour 30 makes its way past spectacular pleasure craft on the marina for the 2017 Sydney International Boat Show.

knowing how operate a marine radio and Logging On and Logging Off with MRNSW via marine radio, phone or the free *MarineRescue* app.

"They'll also be keen to

encourage interested people to join our volunteer ranks."

Information will be sent to MRNSW units encouraging volunteers who would like to take part in SIBS to register their interest.



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IT review to map out blueprint for future

Planning for the next stage of our continuous online innovation.

Marine Rescue NSW has embarked on a comprehensive review of its Information Technology to ensure it remains at the forefront of online innovation.

IT and Business Development Director Florian Glajcar said the review would help identify any new technologies and improvements to existing systems that would ensure the organisation's IT remained fit-for-purpose into the future.

"We have led the way across the sector in embracing the benefits of technology for our volunteers and the boating community," he said.

"The Seahawk vessel tracking system remains the leading safety system in Australia and beyond and the *MarineRescue* and Risk Management apps have enabled our volunteers to work smarter,

not harder. We have had a process of ongoing improvement over the years as our IT needs have grown and matured but this means some of our earliest IT, such as the Otter database, now is starting to age.

"We want to make sure we have an integrated, holistic plan for the future. There are new developments in IT every day and we want to ensure we are embracing the best available technology for our needs."

Volunteers and staff will be given input over three months in a process led by consultant Gary Daly.

A key focus will be on improving the quality and standardisation of information kept by Headquarters and units and streamlining processes so that information only needs to be entered once before transferring across systems as



MR Botany Port Hacking radio operator Allan Russell, IT Support Officer Matt Sims and IT Director Florian Glajcar demonstrate Seahawk to WA Marine Services Manager Mark Eatts.

needed. Attention also will be paid to storing all operational information in one location.

Mr Glajcar said the roll out of any new IT would depend on funding.

He said the organisation's technology continued to attract

national interest, with Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services Marine Services Manager Mark Eatts visiting Headquarters in May for detailed inspections of Seahawk, which WA is looking to introduce.



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By dawn's early light ... Port Macquarie 30 heads out to assist a catamaran stranded in the shallows on the low tide after diverting from the main channel of the Hastings River to steer clear of competitors preparing for the swim leg of the Ironman 70.3 Port Macquarie triathlon on May 6. The catamaran continued on its way on a higher tide after the swimmers left the water (see Page 25). Photo: Gaz White.



Applying for success ... members of Hunter/Central Coast units attend their regional Grants Training session with MRNSW Grants Manager Siobhán Moran-McFarlane in May (see story Page 10).



Paddle patrol ... MR Camden Haven members Neville Adams and Tony Noakes provide a safety watch for entrants in the annual Mullum2Bruns Paddle on the Brunswick River (see Page 19).



Turf 'n' Surf ... MR Evans Head's Bill Bates, Sue Kennedy, Brad Burgess, Scott Mohr, Karin Brown, Kira Hartland, Nev Hamilton and Andy Adams, ready for the Beef Meets Reef parade (see Page 20).



Swansea MP Yasmin Catley joins Bryony Cooke, Graeme Person, Malcolm Druce and Roland Bennett on Lake Macquarie 30 to inspect sand build-up that trapped 29 yachts on Swansea Channel at Easter.

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PROUD TO SUPPORT MARINE RESCUE NEW SOUTH WALES

Teamwork the key to keeping paddlers safe

Crews go the distance to support their Brunswick unit colleagues.

The Marine Rescue NSW volunteers watching over the Mullum2Brunns Paddle on May 27 went to great lengths to get to the event on the Brunswick River.

The crew of *Point Danger 20* crossed the challenging Tweed and Brunswick bars, while the crew of *Camden Haven 10* had a five-hour road trip up the Pacific Highway from the Mid North Coast.

Northern Rivers Regional Operations Manager John Murray thanked the visiting volunteers for backing up Marine Rescue Brunswick

"It was good to have other units come in and fill in as the Brunswick vessel is offline at the moment for repairs to its sponsons," he said.

"To have other units travel the distance they did was terrific and showed the good team work of our units.

"This year's event was again conducted safely, thanks to the organisers working closely with our volunteers, NSW Maritime, the State Emergency Service and Surf Life Saving NSW."

The annual Mullum2Brunns Paddle raises money for three local organisations: MR Brunswick, the Brunswick Visitor Centre and Brunswick Surf Life Saving Club.

It's the biggest fundraiser of the year for MR Brunswick.

The unit's barbecue near the finish line was hugely popular, with



The crew of *Point Danger 20*, including Courtney Greenslade and Gary Pick, crossed two challenging bars to watch over entrants in the Mullum2Brunns Paddle. Photos: Brendan Trembath.

long lines of locals and visitors, hungry for Marine Rescue sausage sandwiches and hamburgers while they were entertained by local musicians.

MR Brunswick Unit Commander Andrea Danvers led the volunteer cooking crew, assisted by Deputy Unit Commander Owen Danvers on the cash box.

"It was very successful," Mr Danvers said. "We raised nearly \$9,000."

More than 1,200 paddlers and a few pets completed the 10km course down the picturesque Brunswick River, starting in the hinterland at Mullumbimby's Heritage Park and finishing on the

coast at the Scout hall in Brunswick Heads. The fleet included all sorts of craft such as kayaks, canoes, stand up paddle boards and dragon boats.

A band of Vikings paddling surf skis and kayaks won the award for best decorated craft.

MR Camden Haven volunteers Tony Noakes and Neville Adams on the Inflatable Rescue Boat *CH 10* patrolled upstream, while MR Point Danger volunteers Jan Trueman, Gary Pick and Courtney Greenslade on *PD 20* were stationed downstream below the Pacific Motorway Bridge.

Mr Murray rode the Rescue Water Craft *X-Ray 10* up and down the river, with a portable marine radio

tucked inside a waterproof pouch to keep in contact with the two crews on the water and the MR Brunswick radio base.

Mullum2Brunns Paddle coordinator and MR Brunswick volunteer Jo-Ann Spiteri said the event attracted competitors from across Australia.

"It's great to see so many Mullum2Brunns competitors stay in Brunswick Heads for the weekend," she said.

"It is really good that other Marine Rescue units come to Brunswick Heads to support the annual event.

"The presence of Marine Rescue assists the paddlers to be safe on the local waterways."

Brendan Trembath



Viking invasion ... the pointy helmet crew on course to win the award for the best decorated craft on the Brunswick River.



MR Brunswick's Sylvia Van Rossum, ready at the finish line with a sausage sandwich for hungry paddlers.

Wooli out in force for Anzac Day services

Members congratulate Radio Base Coordinator on Rotary award.

Unit members have congratulated MR Wooli Radio Base Coordinator and Watch Officer Jackie Taffs on being named the MRNSW Volunteer of the Year in the 2018 Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards.

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant said the awards were a fantastic opportunity to shine a light upon the enormous contribution of emergency services workers.

"It is important that we take the time to acknowledge and thank volunteers and personnel who give so much of themselves and ask so little in return," Mr Grant said.

Jackie has earned this recognition with a sustained commitment to operations, training and community education for MR Wooli, other Northern Rivers units and the boating community. She has fostered our public image by promoting high standards of radio operations.

The unit was well represented at Anzac Day services at the Wooli

Cenotaph. Members marched, laid a wreath, led the prayers and even helped with the traditional two-up game. Unit Commander Richard Taffs gave the commemorative address, acknowledging the peace time service of the village's emergency service volunteers and their response in times of need.

"In times of war we have relied upon the same Australian spirit of service for men and women to enlist for overseas service at great risk to life," he said. "My purpose today is to join with you in keeping alive our memory of their service, their sacrifice and our gratitude."

Wooli 30 was recently activated to locate and assist a Personal Water Craft rider who had phoned for assistance when his PWC ingested a line offshore from the village of Red Rock.

This can be a lonely stretch of coast, especially midweek and late afternoon, so it was fortunate the rider had a mobile phone on board.

Late in the afternoon the PWC



Their sacrifice, our gratitude ... MR Wooli Unit Commander Richard Taffs delivers the commemorative address on Anzac Day.

and rider were located near North Rock, securely "anchored" to a lobster trap – his lobster trap. While setting the trap a bight of trap line was sucked into the jet and pulled up tight to the trap by the impeller, disabling the machine.

With some difficulty the trap was retrieved - no lobsters, unfortunately - and cut free, before the rider was taken on board *WI 30* and a tow set up to Arrawarra Headland.

The PWC and rider were safely put ashore through a low surf, followed by a fast run back to Wooli in the gathering darkness on a calm sea.

WI 30 crew members Nic Firth, Michael Hammond and Richard Taffs and radio operators Kath Farrar and Jackie Taffs again demonstrated the value of our training, assets and operational procedures to assist the boating community.

Richard Taffs

\$11,000 grant to modernise radio base

New but familiar leadership team set to take the helm at Evans Head.

A major refurbishment of the MR Evans Head radio base has been funded with an \$11,000 State Government Community Building Partnership grant.

Clarence MP Chris Gulaptis recently visited the base, ahead of the start of work to boost the efficiency of the radio room and modernise the space with new operator work stations, storage and cabinetry. Securing this much-needed funding was a great achievement for our grants officers Ian and Donna Murray.

After joining the unit a little more than two years ago, Ian gained his Crew rating about the same time as his six-month provisional period

ended and he has now gained his Leading Crew qualification.

Two of our most experienced skippers, Tony McNally and Scott Mohr, have been presented with their 10-year Long Service Medals.

With more than 40 years' experience fishing out of Evans Head, Tony is retiring this year. We wish him all the best and thank him for his years of service, along with fellow skipper Justin Crisp, who has stepped down to devote more time to his business interests and family.

We have continued our regular training with our neighbours at MR Ballina and Iluka Yamba.

Our members again took part in the Beef Meets Reef parade, one



Clarence MP Chris Gulaptis meets Acting Unit Commander Karin Brown and radio operator Sue Kennedy at the MR Evans Head base.

of the highlights of the Richmond Valley's annual Beef Week festival.

The unit has wished retiring leaders Steve and Julie Cooper well, with a new but familiar unit leadership team set to take the helm in late June: Unit Commander

Kira Hartland and Deputy UC Karin Brown. The pair recently took part in a Local Emergency Operations Centre Exercise conducted for the Northern Rivers Local Emergency Management Committee.

Bill Bates

Divers, capsized boater located offshore

Emergency services work together in major operations over two days.

Two major emergencies in two days sparked large-scale search and rescue operations off the State's Far North Coast in early May.

The NSW Police Marine Area Command tasked rescue vessel *Point Danger 30* to head to Nine Mile Reef to search for two divers reported missing from their dive boat just before 9am on May 2.

A Roads and Maritime Services boat and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter also responded, along with three private vessels in answer to a Mayday call from the unit's radio base.

The freedivers, spearfishing at the reef about 8km offshore, were located drifting in the current about four miles south of their original location. They were winched to safety aboard the chopper and transferred to Tweed Hospital for observation. Both were unharmed.

MR Point Danger Deputy Unit Commander Nick Wythe expressed his pride in the response by the unit's radio and vessel team: radio operators John McGovern, Rick Vaughan, Gary Burch and trainee



A crew member on board the Westpac Rescue Helicopter watches over *Point Danger 30* and a dive boat from which two divers were reported missing offshore. Photo: Westpac Rescue Helicopters.

Keri Moore and *PD 30* crew Kerry Kane, Craig Bilbrough and Gary Pick.

At 7.40am the next day, a member of the public reported seeing a flare and orange V sheet 2km east of Cudgen Headland to police, who advised the unit's radio operators Rick Vaughan and Darrell Todd.

With the Westpac helicopter crew observing an overturned boat, *PD 30*

was deployed to assist.

The helicopter crew advised that a private vessel had arrived at the scene, righting the distressed vessel, retrieving the person overboard and putting out a tow line.

PD 30, with Kerry Kane, Nick Wythe and Craig Bilbrough on board, soon arrived on the scene, escorting the two vessels to the mouth of Cudgen Creek to ensure

they entered the narrow waterway safely.

Unit members attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Chris Cunningham Park, with Unit Commander Glenda Ashby and member, RAAF Warrant Officer Darcy Henriksen, laying a wreath. Thanks to all who supported us at the Bunnings BBQ that afternoon.

Dale Leo

Unit has front row seat for Games festivities

Our northern-most unit was front and centre for the celebrations as the Queen's Baton Relay crossed the border into Queensland ahead of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in April.

MR Point Danger was in pole position as the Queen's Baton was winched safely from a hovering LifeFlight helicopter to the base of the Captain Cook Lighthouse, home to the unit's radio room, shortly after dawn on April 3.

With the event being broadcast live, unit members were behind the hotplate to cook a breakfast BBQ for the large crowd gathered.

The unit then welcomed Games

mascot Borobi into the radio room.

Unit Coxswain Nicole Lockie later had the privilege of carrying the Queen's Baton in the relay along the North Kirra beachfront.

Nicole was nominated to take part in the relay to recognise her lengthy volunteer service.

"My involvement in volunteering started after I moved to Queensland at the beginning of 1993, when I joined Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club to do my bronze and become an active patrolling member," she said.

"Due to my interest in blue water activities, I switched to Air Sea Rescue (now MRNSW) in May



MR Point Danger coxswain Nicole Lockie in the Queen's Baton Relay.

1995. Since then I have been an active member and I also am a member at Volunteer Marine Rescue Queensland Currumbin,

which I joined in 2005. All up, I have been an active volunteer in rescue services for 25 years, over half my life."

North Coast units on whale watching duty

Ballina and Cape Byron look out for winter ocean swimmers.

Two Northern Rivers units marked the start of the winter whale watching season in early May.

More than a thousand entrants in the Byron Bay Winter Whales ocean swim event swam the two kilometres from Wategos to Main Beach on May 6 under the watchful eyes of a crew from MR Ballina on the water and the radio team at MR Cape Byron on the air high above.

MR Ballina Unit Commander Doug Hunter said *Ballina 30* had patrolled the course on the ocean side of the swimmers of all ages, keeping watch for those in difficulty as well as for sharks and other hazards.

"We were continually on the move and maintained radio communications with the organisers and Surf Life Saving by channelling communications through our neighbours at the Cape Byron unit," he said.

Local waters have stayed



A crew with a view ... *Ballina 30* watches over the annual Byron Bay Winter Whales swim as entrants pass below MR Cape Byron, based at the foot of the lighthouse.

generally safe of late. With 175 Log Ons with the Ballina unit in April alone, no incidents were recorded over the corresponding period.

Members of the MRNSW Board met at the Ballina base in early May, enjoying an inspection of the facilities and lunch with volunteers.

The unit is running an intensive fundraising campaign to replace the twin Suzuki engines on *BA 30*, at an estimated cost of about \$50,000.

"The Ballina community is right behind our wonderful team of volunteer members," UC Hunter said. Fundraising activities have included barbecues at the Ballina Bunnings store and unit base, bingo, tours through the base, donation collection boats and a charity bowls day, with a \$5,000 ClubGrant from the Cherry Street Bowling Club.

Training on board *BA 30* is progressing well, alternating

between exercises offshore and on the Richmond River. Ian Grimwood is now a rescue vessel Coxswain after successfully completing his operational assessment, while Geoff Shepherd is the unit's newest Crew member.

The unit has been supported by skippers from MR Evans Head and MR Brunswick in a great show of team spirit and Ballina members offer their thanks to both units.

Crews steer careful course around river work

New Harwood Bridge a boon for navigation and radar training.

The construction of the new Harwood Bridge over the Clarence River is providing valuable opportunities for radar and navigation training for rescue vessel crews.

A crew from MR Iluka Yamba recently headed upstream on board *Iluka Yamba 30* for a training exercise around the bridge, part of the \$4.3 billion Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade.

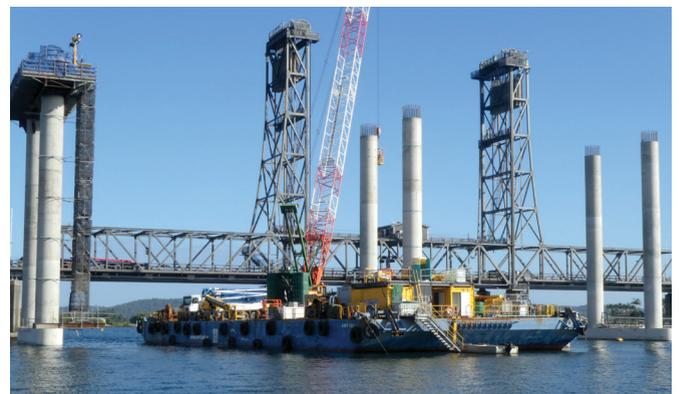
The project involves land cranes and support vehicles moving materials from the land to a temporary jetty on the river. Supporting marine vessels then transfer the materials from the jetty to the main barges on the water, which support two to three cranes to insert the bridge piles into the river.

The tugs and barges working

on the project all are fitted with Automatic Identification System equipment that can be detected using the Multi-Function Display fitted on board *IY 30*, giving crew members additional experience in using this equipment.

The works also provide good radar training on approach as crews navigate around the original opening bridge, the new 1.5km long structure being built about 20m to its east and the attending construction craft, all of which combine to present a unique radar display.

Vessels also have to be able to identify the safe passage to get under the bridge as this changes on a day to day basis to keep marine through traffic away from heavy lifts, for example when the 168 ton



Restrictions are in place on the Clarence River to protect marine traffic during the construction of the new Harwood Bridge.

girders are lifted into position.

A navigation channel is being maintained for vessels to pass under the existing bridge, with a reduced speed limit of four knots and 'no towing' restrictions in place about 200m upstream and downstream.

This should not affect our crews if we need to tow a boat downstream, due to the nature of our operations and our good working relationship with the construction contractors. The bridge is due to open in 2019.

Frank Bond

Stricken cruiser saved in marathon operation

Forster-Tuncurry crew launches early mission to rescue relieved boaters.

A call for help from a vessel foundering in rough seas in the dark early hours of the morning saw a crew from MR Forster-Tuncurry embark on a marathon rescue operation in late May.

The crew of *Forster 30* was activated at 4am on May 25 to rescue a 32-foot Riviera cruiser with a fuel blockage that had left it adrift in 4-5m seas south of Seal Rocks.

Due to the heavy seas and the age of the vessel in distress, the crew undertook a slow tow back to harbour, arriving at Tuncurry seven-and-a-half hours after departure.

The four somewhat inexperienced but relieved boaters were delivered safely to shore by skipper Ray Mazurek, Graeme Rudd, Richard Neal and Shane Griffith.

This operation followed a generally calm period on our local waters.

Local and visiting boaters heeded our unit's safety warnings and our crews were not called to any major incidents over the Easter holiday period.

The second annual Big Heart Hike was held on April 7.

This event is organised by the family of Henry Perram to thank the volunteers who helped give their father three more years of life by administering CPR when he suffered a cardiac arrest while boating in 2013.

Unit members Milton Shaw and Grant Maxwell kept Henry alive until paramedics arrived and transported him to hospital.

The unit cooked breakfast for more than 40 Big Heart participants, who hiked 40km from Red Head to Cape Hawke.

All proceeds of the event were donated to our unit as a show of gratitude.

On the same day, we took part in the Enjoy Life Expo as part of Seniors Week 2018.

The rain came down on Anzac Day, forcing the Dawn Service to be moved indoors. Unit Commander Fran Breen laid a wreath.

MR Forster-Tuncurry is honoured each year to transport school



Local school captains, vice captains and teachers join the crew of *Forster 30* to lay wreaths at sea on Anzac Day.

captains, vice captains and teachers out to sea to lay a wreath to remember those who perished at sea during wartime. With a bugler and our chaplain present, this made for a special tribute.

In recent months we have focused on working with members of our neighbouring units on combined training and search and rescue exercises. A joint survival at

sea and firefighting training session with MR Crowdy Harrington was followed by a combined Search and Rescue Exercise with that unit and MR Camden Haven, resulting in many worthwhile lessons for all crews involved. Congratulations to Kathie Kent, Shane Griffith and Geoff Anderson, who have achieved their Crew ratings.

Fran Breen

Leadership team returned at Nambucca

Couple recognised for 40 years' service to volunteer marine rescue.

The members of MR Nambucca have returned Unit Commander Graham Horne and Deputy Unit Commander Gary Nichols as their leadership team for the coming two years.

The unit's election was held at its Annual General Meeting, attended by Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne, on June 4.

Both UC Horne and Sandra Horne, who is the unit's administration officer, have been presented with the 20 year clasp to their MRNSW Long Service Medals, recognising their extensive volunteer service.

Mr Gawne presented the couple

with their clasps and framed certificates on April 27.

The pair joined the Nambucca Volunteer Rescue Association marine unit in February 1998, when it was based in a small timber shed housing a rubber duck with a 25hp outboard motor.

As more members joined, fundraising started in earnest, enabling the unit to purchase "a bigger boat".

The unit has gone from strength to strength.

Graham bought his first sea-going boat in 1967, with Sandra keeping radio watch as there was no rescue service to keep watch on fishers at



Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne congratulates MR Nambucca administration officer Sandra Horne on 20 years' service.

sea. After moving to Nambucca 32 years ago, Graham still has a boat

and still goes to sea fishing.

Graham Horne

Rescue exercise skills put to real-life test

Engine, fuel troubles beset boaters as hot rods heat up the beach.

A search and rescue exercise for three Mid North Coast units took a realistic twist when a crew from MR Crowdy Harrington was diverted to assist a stranded 8m runabout.

Crews from the Camden Haven, Crowdy Harrington and Forster-Tuncurry units were taking part in the exercise on May 8 when a member of the public walked into the Crowdy Harrington radio base to report to Watch Officer Mary Thomas that the runabout was having engine trouble offshore from Crowdy Lighthouse.

Crowdy 20, with John Peers, Keith Richardson, Kevin Bailey and trainee Pete Ward on board, towed the boat back to harbour while *Crowdy 30* continued in the SAREX.

With our local boaters remaining generally safe, *CB 30* towed a 3.6m

half-cabin with engine failure back to the harbour from Curphys Shoal on April 22. John Peers, Aaron Orton and Michelle Bennett were crew, with Bek Brown the Watch Officer.

On May 6, the skipper of a 6.1m Stacer with three people on board radioed our base to report to Watch Officer Michelle Bennett that it was out of fuel about 2km out of the harbour on its way to Mermaid Reef.

Keith Richardson, John Single and Kevin Bailey, on *CB 30*, located the boat after it raised its V-sheet as those on board could not provide an accurate latitude and longitude.

For the second year in a row, the Sydney Drag-Ens Hot Rod Club held its beach sprint event, Rattle Trap, at Crowdy Head, attracting even larger crowds and more entrants.

All cars taking part in the event



This is not a drill ... *Crowdy 20* peeled away from a Mid North Coast search and rescue exercise to return this 8m runabout to safety.

were built before 1941 and all motorcycles were pre-1960.

Our volunteers again did a great job on the BBQ and the organisers

provided a donation to thank us for what was a massive job at a spectacular event.

Mary Thomas



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Stranded catamaran in slow trip over bar



Trial Bay 30 tows a large catamaran with engine failure to safety.

A catamaran took an unplanned detour at the end of a tow rope on April 23 when both its engines failed as it travelled the coastline.

The crew of *Trial Bay 30* responded, taking the vessel under tow, navigating the bar and rafting up the much larger vessel.

Two days later the unit attended the annual Anzac Day ceremonies before being called out at 5.20pm to rescue a boat with a flat battery and

two people on board in fading light a nautical mile off Middle Head.

TB 30 headed out on a 20nm voyage to reach the boat, which was under way again after a jump start.

The unit drew its raffle on April 30.

P Hepi, of Lalor Park, won the first prize of a boat, motor and trailer, with J Norman, of South West Rocks, winning five nights' family accommodation.

Autumn showcase of value and versatility

Top job by new skipper to help disabled ketch find safe harbour.

Over autumn, members of MR Coffs Harbour again demonstrated our versatility as a valued part of our community through our routine work as a 24/7 Search and Rescue Coordination Centre and our support for local events, both on and off the water.

Our rescue crews responded to 14 incidents between March and May, with *Coffs 30* helping disabled vessels find safe harbour or moving them into or around the city's marina.

In one such situation, an 18m ketch weighing about 40 tonnes with a failed engine was towed into the harbour then carefully manoeuvred by *CO 30* into a berth in the marina to facilitate access for repairs.

This was a really good job by new skipper Bernie Tight and crew with an appreciative boat owner making

a significant, gratefully-received donation.

In another incident, we were tasked by the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command to search an area just off Sawtell in the early evening for a lone kayaker feared missing without any means of communication.

The search turned up no result but neither was any person confirmed missing; an increasingly familiar scenario with kayakers.

As a community partner, our unit supported the Coffs Harbour Rotary Club's Bookfest 2018, with a number of our members helping to set up, sell and pack up thousands of books for the local fundraiser, from which we received a benefit.

We also worked with MAC officers and Surf Lifesaving volunteers to assist with water safety and marshalling duties to keep boats



Coffs 30 and NSW Police Rescue Water Craft watch over participants in the 2018 Coffs Harbour ocean swims. Photo: Russell Shelton.

clear of the course for the 2018 Coffs Harbour ocean swims.

With more than 600 competitors on a 2km swim course taking in most of our harbour, boating was restricted until everyone finished safely.

Over the Easter period of very low tides, the passage into the Coffs Harbour boat ramp became

problematic with several boats bottoming out and being washed onto the rocky foreshore in the prevailing swell.

Unfortunately, this is a continuing issue when tides are below 0.3m despite periodic dredging and regular local navigation warnings broadcast by Marine Rescue.

Graeme King

International mission to save damaged drone

Port Macquarie works with CSIRO and US team to retrieve research equipment.

Marine Rescue Port Macquarie was quick to agree to a request from the CSIRO to join an international mission to recover a damaged Saildrone and return it to shore for repairs.

The bright orange Saildrone was launched in Tasmania in March but damaged in large swells in the Southern Ocean.

Senior technician officer with the CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere Rob Gregor told the *Port Macquarie News* the unmanned vessel, which had been collecting data for meteorological purposes and ocean research, had needed to be retrieved for repairs. The drone had been 30nm offshore before a crew from San Francisco remotely guided it closer to land overnight on May 31.

Port Macquarie 30 headed out at 7.30am on June 1 to tow the 6m

long equipment, weighing more than 300kg, back to port by 9.30am.

Unit Commander Greg Davies said he was proud the unit had safely retrieved the valuable equipment, which would remain at the local marina until a team arrived from the USA to carry out repairs and return it to sea.

Two of the unit's vessels, Rescue Water Craft *Port Macquarie 10* and RIB *PM 20*, provided safety support for competitors in the swim leg of the annual Ironman 70.3 Port Macquarie triathlon on May 6.

While Surf Life Saving members on paddle boards provided course guidance and immediate relief for tired swimmers, *PM 10* was on patrol ready for rapid emergency deployment. *PM 20* held station nearby with first aid equipment including a defibrillator and space



Crew member Scott Saunders watches over the towline as *PM 30* retrieves a damaged CSIRO Saildrone. Photo: Alex McNaught.

blankets on board and to provide transport to land if needed.

In another example of the unit's inter-agency support and cooperation, the crew of *PM 30* joined National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel for a whale disentanglement exercise ahead of

the annual migration season. Using a "whale tail" towed behind *PM 30*, the exercise on the Hastings River was aimed at honing the NPWS crew's methods for disentangling whales trapped in fishing lines and nets or other detritus in the ocean.

Alex McNaught

Boaters warned of risk from lost containers

Massive clean-up operation under way as wave of debris hits shoreline.

Boaters were warned to keep watch for navigation hazards after 83 containers fell overboard from a cargo ship in rough conditions about 30km off the Hunter/Central Coast on June 1.

MRNSW radio bases at Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Forster-Tuncurry and Terrey Hills began issuing hourly Securite messages to all ships warning that the 40-foot containers could be adrift in coastal waters after spilling from the *YM Efficiency*.

The alerts advised boaters to travel at safe speed to avoid sudden danger posed by floating or semi-submerged containers, a number of which were sighted around the entrance to Port Stephens.

Piles of debris, including plastic, printer cartridges, clocks, nappies

and car parts quickly began washing up along the coastline. NSW Roads and Maritime Services launched a major clean-up operation between Coffs Harbour and North Stockton, with a shoreline response by crews removing garbage and divers taking debris from the water. Helicopters pinpointed remote areas of coastline impacted.

Executive Director Maritime Angus Mitchell said RMS was liaising with other NSW and Australian Government agencies and other stakeholders to determine the next steps of the operation.

He said while weather and sea conditions had not been entirely favourable, beaches and bays were mostly clear of debris on June 12.

"The difficult part now is to retrieve debris from rocky outcrops



Divers retrieved pieces of a second container from the water near Fingal Island, off Port Stephens. Photo: NSW RMS.

and shoreline which is only accessible by boat," he said.

Two of the 83 containers had been recovered, with Australian Maritime Safety Authority modelling and weather indicating that most of the remaining containers were likely to have sunk close to the site of the incident off the coast between Newcastle and Crowdy Heads or

washed ashore on local beaches.

Given the potential risk to vessel safety, particularly trawling operations, AMSA reported it would pursue options to locate the containers on the sea floor where they could pose a risk to safety.

Visit amsa.gov.au for a map of potential hazards to mariners.

To report debris, call 13 12 36.



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Safety the focus for rapid response team

Operators hone skills on challenging weekend training course.



Participants in the most recent MRNSW Rescue Water Craft Operators professional development weekend assemble for tasking instructions on Lake Macquarie. Photos: Jane Shirriff and Chris Butler.

Safety above all was the theme of the most recent Rescue Water Craft training weekend for MRNSW volunteers.

Hosted by MR Lake Macquarie on May 25 and 26, the event was attended by 13 RWC Operators from the Trial Bay, Port Macquarie, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast units.

MRNSW Assistant Director of Training and Education Chris Butler said RWCs were ideal resources to provide a rapid response to boating emergencies, particularly on coastal river mouths and bars.

“They also are helpful in supporting search and rescue operations and assisting boaters in trouble in tidal and shallow-water locations,” he said.

“The primary objective of the RWC operator is to secure any patients in-water or secure small

vessels in distress until additional rescue support arrives, such as a rescue vessel or even a helicopter.

“While the speed, manoeuvrability and versatility of the RWC is well suited to operations on choppy and shallow waterways, this demands a high focus on safety from the operator in conditions that can change rapidly and unpredictably,” he said.

“Our RWC crew members are trained in the specialist rescue techniques required to operate these vessels safely and effectively. It is important to maintain these skills through continued practice and drilling, which is why we stage these regular professional development weekends.”

Led by Regional Training Managers Stuart Massey and Rodney Page, the participants in the

Lake Macquarie event undertook a series of drills on the lake and offshore, responding to various search and rescue scenarios.

“These events are challenging but a great opportunity for RWC operators across our regions to

practice together and learn from each other,” Mr Butler said.

“The feedback at the exercise debrief was positive, with the volunteers nominating working with operators from other units as a highlight of the weekend.”



Help is on the way Joshua Woodhead on a tasking to retrieve his fellow MR Trial Bay member Malcolm Green from the water.



Warren Collins, from MR Lake Macquarie and Phillip McDonald from MR Port Macquarie head offshore for a new training environment.



Got you! RWC operators practice retrieving a patient from the inshore waters.

Season ends in dramatic overnight operation

Newcastle crew saves cruiser stranded in rough seas among bulk carriers.

A volunteer crew from MR Newcastle launched a late night rescue mission to save a 40-foot cruiser in potential danger adrift among three bulk carriers in rough seas off the coastline.

The flybridge cruiser, with two people on board, was travelling from Port Macquarie to the Central Coast when it experienced steering issues 10nm east south east of Nobbys Head.

MRNSW radio bases at Lake Macquarie and Terrey Hills received a call from the vessel requesting urgent assistance about 11.15pm on Easter Monday.

Newcastle 30, with skipper Ron Calman, Lynette Van Homrigh and Rick Neville on board, reached the disabled vessel shortly before midnight. The crew took the boat



Late night rescue ... Newcastle 30 crew Rick Neville, Unit Commander Ron Calman and Lynette Van Homrigh return a stricken cruiser to safety at 4am. Photo: Ian Morrow.

under tow, returning it safely to a berth at the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club by 4am.

Acting Hunter/Central Coast Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans praised the volunteers for

their efforts to reach the cruiser in rough seas and tow it safely into Newcastle Harbour.

"The crew faced two metre seas and a 20 knot wind," he said.

"This overnight rescue brought a dramatic end to the peak boating season."

Mr Evans said boaters in the Hunter/Central Coast region were well served by their local MRNSW boat crews and radio operators.

Three people on board a 5.2m runabout that suffered engine failure about 6nm offshore three weeks later was also rescued by the same crew on *NC 30*.

With a sea of about one metre and swell up to 1.5 metres, *NC 30* successfully towed the vessel safely back into the harbour.

Unit members have congratulated

two members on their commitment and success.

Helen Carter has successfully completed her Marine Rescue Radio Operator operational assessment and Irene Berry has received the second clasp to the National Medal.

Unit Commander Ron Calman presented Irene with the clasp, recognising her remarkable record of 35 years of dedicated service to the volunteer marine rescue sector and the safety of the boating community.

The unit was pleased to host Grants Manager Siobhán Moran-McFarlane and Grants Officers from other units for the Hunter/Central Coast regional grants training session in May.

Lynette Van Homrigh & Ian Morrow

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MR Newcastle's newest Radio Operator, Helen Carter (rear), with Training Officer Lynette Van Homrigh after passing her assessment.

Injured patient evacuated in twilight rescue

Services work together to safely extract girl from Central Coast beach.

A multi-agency response was launched to safely extract an injured young girl from a Central Coast beach in an operation complicated by falling darkness, a rocky foreshore and tree cover that prevented easy access to winch the patient to a rescue helicopter.

MR Central Coast was tasked just before 5pm on April 29 to transport NSW Ambulance paramedics from the Ettalong ferry wharf to Lobster Beach to treat the girl, believed to have sustained an ankle or leg injury.

Central Coast 21, with skipper Norm Smith, Robert M Smith, Kevin Sullivan and Mitch Giles on board, was activated, while skipper Ted Leeson and Bob Knowles provided back-up support on *X-Ray 21*.

With the paramedics instead transported to the beach on board a Broken Bay Police Marine Area Command vessel, *CC 21* arrived on scene soon after, along with a Toll Air Ambulance helicopter.

The police vessel was able to get its bow close to the rocks on the



Twilight operation ... Ted Leeson and Bob Knowles provide back-up support on *X-Ray 21* as a Toll Air Ambulance prepares for a medical evacuation from Lobster Beach.

southern end of the beach near the patient to disembark the paramedics while the helicopter crew searched for a suitable winching location among the large number of trees in the area. Once a suitable site was found, a crew member was winched down to the beach to stabilise the patient before she was winched on to the helicopter and transferred to

Gosford Hospital. Both MR Central Coast boats returned to base about 7.15pm. Watch Officer Penny Booth provided valuable communications support throughout the incident.

Our team has been busy with fundraising activities, running frequent barbecues at the West Gosford Bunnings store and launching the unit's winter runabout

raffle, to be drawn at the Brisbane Water Oyster Festival in November.

In welcome news, Central Coast Council has applied for funding for emergency dredging of the channel from Broken Bay into Brisbane Water. The channel is becoming increasingly hazardous every time the sand shifts.

Mitch Giles

Robust new asset on the road to Norah Head

Crew members at MR Norah Head are set for their induction on their new rescue vessel following its successful sea trials at Yamba in early June.

MRNSW Fleet Manager Jody Hollow and unit members inspected *Norah Head 20* at the Yamba Welding & Engineering factory on the Northern Rivers.

They then took to the water to put the \$272,000 Ocean Cylinder through its paces, testing its handling, fit-out and performance.

Mr Hollow said the 6.8 metre vessel, which had hard alloy sponsons, would be a robust and durable asset for the unit in its work to assist and protect the boating

community on its local waterways.

NR 20 will be trucked down the Pacific Highway for delivery to the unit in late June. This will be a very busy and exciting time for boat crew members, who are looking forward to starting their induction and training on board.

The unit and Norah Head Boat Club have installed solar panels on their shared waterfront premises in a bid to reduce rising power costs.

Jointly funded by both organisations, the installation of the 10kw system is now complete. Thanks to all who assisted in the organisation of this cost-saving equipment.

A development application also



Ready for service ... new \$272,000 Ocean Cylinder, *Norah Head 20*, takes to the water for its sea trials at Yamba on the North Coast.

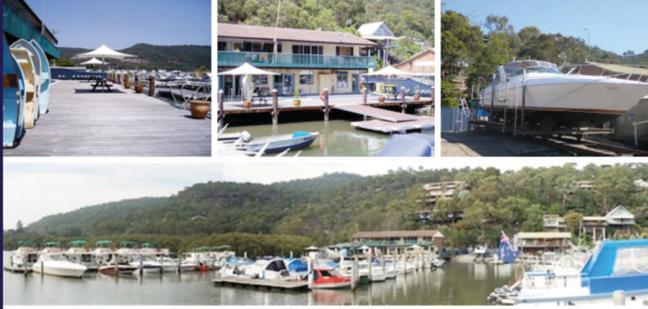
has been submitted to Wyong Shire Council for the unit's proposed new boat and tractor shed. All going well, we hope construction will begin

soon to provide our new rescue vessel with protection from the elements in our coastal climate.

Lee Deacon

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MAKING WAVES

Hunter/Central Coast News

Stuck on you: jet skis come to grief in mud

Riders urged to learn navigation rules.



Well suited to work in shallow waterways ... Tuggerah Lakes 20 and Tuggerah Lakes 21, here on the Wyong River.

Jet ski riders have been encouraged to familiarise themselves with the shallow conditions on Tuggerah Lakes and maritime navigation rules before taking to the water.

While it has been quiet on the lakes in recent months, MR Tuggerah Lakes crews have been called to rescue five jet ski riders stranded in the shallows.

In the first incident, a visitor from Queensland borrowed a jet ski to explore Budgewoi Lake.

Not knowing the lakes or the rules, he veered off the channel and attempted to ride across the very shallow mudflats.

After becoming stuck in the mud, he spent several hours pulling and pushing the PWC in an attempt to get it off the mud before giving up, completely exhausted, and phoning for help about 8pm.

Skipper Steve Corbett and John Sheehan headed out on board Tuggerah Lakes 21, locating the jet ski firmly stuck in about 5cm of water in the dark. Local police were called to provide additional lighting to illuminate the site to enable the crew to attach a tow rope to the craft.

The man's day took a further downhill turn when he was fined

for not having a PWC licence, being in control of an unregistered PWC and driving an unregistered motor vehicle.

In the second incident, a young English couple and their two children ventured into the Chittaway Bay area on their jet skis early on a Sunday afternoon.

Despite being licensed, the couple was under the misapprehension that they had to steer between two green channel marker poles, instead of keeping to one side of the navigation posts, and consequently both riders became stuck. They were churning up the bottom, sucking mud and sand into their motors, which both then failed.

TL 21 was again activated, with Steve Corbett and John Sheehan ferrying the family to a boat ramp before towing the jet skis to shore.

Unit Commander Tony Younglove urged jet ski riders and boaters to take extra caution in the notoriously shallow lakes system.

"All boaters must also ensure they are aware of the various navigation markers," he said.

"You wouldn't start driving on the road without knowing the difference between a Give Way and Stop sign and it's no different on the water."

Sue Younglove

Parliament commends Port Stephens' service

Premier acknowledges volunteers' contribution to their community.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens has received a commendation from the NSW Parliament in recognition of its outstanding service to the community and its 35th anniversary.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Hunter Scot MacDonald presented the Certificate of Commendation to the unit at a function on June 1 to acknowledge the contribution of 12 groups and individuals to the region's community.

Ms Berejiklian said the event was not "about the politicians, it's about you, the volunteers ... doing the things that governments can't see and don't do".

MR Port Stephens Unit Commander Lee Uebergang accepted the award, along with Deputy Unit Commander Neil Hansford and members Colin Foote and Monica Thompson.



MR Port Stephens' Colin Foote, Unit Commander Lee Uebergang, Monica Thompson and Deputy UC Neil Hansford after receiving their commendation with Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer, Cr Jaimie Abbott, Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Hunter Scot MacDonald.

MRNSW Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director Jim Wright also attended the event.

Mr Uebergang said he was proud to be able to accept such a prestigious award on behalf of the hundreds of past and present unit volunteers, who had been saving

lives at sea and serving the boating community for more than 35 years.

The unit commendation follows a motion by Mr MacDonald passed by the Legislative Council last November congratulating the unit on its 35th anniversary and acknowledging unit founders John

and Monica Thompson, its current leaders, the first recipient of the MRNSW Medal of Valour Laurie Nolan and the 245 MR Port Stephen volunteers for their outstanding service to MRNSW and keeping waters safe.

Lee Uebergang

Search exercise targets located off island

Four units work with police on mock emergency response operation.

Two targets reported missing overboard from an overdue vessel were successfully located in a Search and Rescue Exercise for four Hunter/Central Coast units in May.

More than 30 personnel and four vessels from MR Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Lemon Tree Passage and Port Stephens took part in the exercise, coordinated from the MR Port Stephens radio base, from May 18 to 20.

The exercise scenario centred on a vessel that was many hours overdue to Log Off with MR Port Stephens on a Friday night.

A mock search operation was activated, with the MRNSW vessels and another from the Port Stephens Police Marina Area Command heading offshore to locate two



Crews ready Lemon Tree 30, Port Stephens 30, Central Coast 22 and Lake Macquarie 30 for deployment in the Hunter/Central Coast SAREX.

people in the water. The two targets were found in the frequently-hazardous waters around Broughton Island.

Hunter/Central Coast Regional Operations Manager Steve Raymond said the exercise had been a

practical opportunity for rescue vessel crew members and radio operators to hone their skills.

He said NSW Police Marine Area Command Search and Rescue Coordinator Sergeant Paul Farquharson had provided

instruction on search patterns and navigation. The exercise ended with a full operational debrief on the Sunday, identifying the lessons learned for all operational and support personnel involved in emergency response.

Crews primed for the best shows in town

Whales and seaplane all in a day's work for Hawkesbury volunteers.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers sometimes find themselves with front row seats to the best shows on the water.

Crews from MR Hawkesbury have recently been treated to some spectacular sights.

While undertaking his operational assessment for his Coxswain rating, David Hytche proceeded to a vessel's last known position a nautical mile east of Palm Beach.

With *Hawkesbury 22* stopped to survey the area for the vessel, to the crew's surprise a mother whale suddenly appeared with her calf, paused for a few minutes and then with a quick flick of her huge tail, disappeared back into the deep.

David completed his assessment and secured his Coxswain rating.

The weekend of April 21 and

22 was one of the unit's busiest in some time, with crews responding to eight incidents, including an offshore activation that took *HW 22* on a round trip of 45nm.

The unit was alerted to a 6m half cabin vessel adrift off Broken Bay.

As it headed towards the scene, *HW 22* intercepted the vessel, which had made some slow progress back towards land. The crew escorted the boat most of the way back at a slow five knots before the engine gave up again near Juno Point and the boat was towed back to Apple Tree Bay.

The weekend's other assists included six tows and a jump start. While on one tow to Berowra Waters, the crew was in prime position to watch a seaplane landing on the narrow waterway, touching down about 50m to starboard.



A seaplane glides smoothly on to the Hawkesbury River, 50m to starboard of *Hawkesbury 22* towing a runabout to Berowra Waters.

The unit again took part in the annual Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Council Volunteer Day in the Hornsby Mall to promote our organisation and our services to the community.

Ken Edwards, David Hytche, Tim Fawcett, John Milne and Jamie Abnett-Miller provided information about boating safety and offered an

insight into MRNSW volunteering.

Members have maintained a busy training schedule, including a refresher on COLREGS, the international regulations to prevent collisions at sea, chart work and radio training for newer members.

Ken Edwards & Jamie Abnett-Miller

Unit plates up a new fundraising project

Botany Port Hacking members contribute favourite recipes to cookbook.

Move over MasterChef Australia and My Kitchen Rules.

Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking volunteers have entered the competitive cooking stakes with their own cookbook to raise funds for the unit.

Volunteer Bronwyn Daniels cooked up the idea after seeing a community recipe book during a trip to the Southern Highlands.

"Years ago I was in Berry and noticed nearly every shop stocked a beautiful cookbook called 'My Berry Kitchen'," she said. "It turned out it was a fundraising initiative of Berry Public School.

"As an Assistant Principal, I'm always on the lookout for fundraising opportunities and thought it would be a great initiative for Botany Port Hacking unit due to the diversity of members and their culinary skills."

The Crew's Kitchen features a range of members' favourite recipes,

from light lunches, dinners and delicious desserts through to easy entertaining and even cocktails.

Ms Daniels and her colleagues have organised for a number of local businesses to stock the book.

"We will also sell them at the many fetes, fairs and boat shows our unit members attend every year, as well as being available online on our unit website," she said.

Police were called after vandals set the vessel *Port Hacking 30* free from its safe mooring in April. All the lines were cut and the boat drifted to a rest on the sand at Darook Park.

On March 28 a surprise party was held for retiring unit member Bruce Byatt, with just about everything in sight branded with his smiling face, from a cake to the hot water urn. Fellow volunteer David Whitney played a tribute on his ukulele.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos and BPH Unit Commander



Tooled up ... MR Botany Port Hacking members Bronwyn Daniels, Jesse Rowley, Diane Castro and Grahame Aulbury.

Craig Horner congratulated Mr Byatt on his 40 years of volunteer service.

In recent years Mr Byatt was one of the regular "Wednesday Workers" who carry out gardening and building maintenance around the Hungry Point site shared by the unit and MRNSW headquarters.

Their work was recently acknowledged by Bunnings at Taren Point, which donated the unit an

impressive collection of Ryobi power tools, including a bench drill press.

Operationally, the unit has been kept busy with increased marine radio monitoring and patrols and search and rescue operations. In March, the unit assisted police with a search for a missing woman last seen at Cape Solander. Despite repeated sweeps of the choppy seas in the area, she was not located.

Middle Harbour vessel proves its power

Crew hauls beached yacht free in rough conditions at Manly.

The power of rescue vessel *Middle Harbour 30* proved the key to freeing a yacht that had broken free of its mooring and beached on the east side of Manly Wharf on June 2.

On arrival at the scene, the crew of the Steber rescue vessel found the yacht lying on the beach parallel to the sea wall and leaning towards the shore. With the tide going out, waves breaking on the beach and washing around the hull were insufficient to float the boat off the sand.

The rough conditions meant it was not possible to put crew members ashore to attach a tow line to the yacht. A NSW Maritime vessel joined *MH 30* as the yacht's owner arrived and boarded his vessel.

MH 30 stood by while the

Maritime crew passed a towline to the owner and pulled the yacht through 90 degrees so its bow was pointing seawards before requesting the more powerful *MH 30* to attempt to tow the yacht off the beach.

MH 30 approached bow-in to within 4m of the vessel so a crew member could throw a heaving line with the tow line attached to the owner, who secured it to a strong point on the bow.

MH 30 then reversed to deeper water and spun to face a southerly direction away from the beach.

Once the tow line had been shortened up and made fast, the slack was taken up and sufficient power applied to pull the yacht off the beach.

Again, the rescue vessel hove to and the towline was shortened



The owner of a beached yacht transfers on board *MH 30* after the rescue vessel crew successfully freed his vessel. Photo: Pietre Smit.

to safely tow the yacht between a moored vessel and the wharf. Once the yacht was clear of the moored vessels the tow line was lengthened.

With its owner on board *MH 30*, the yacht was towed to a police mooring off Forty Baskets Bay.

Brian Roberts

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Crackers about all creatures great and small

Cottage Point crews the Dr Dolittles of marine wildlife rescue.

In a stand-out operation over a busy autumn, MR Cottage Point has surely recorded the tiniest and most unusual rescue operation ever undertaken by Marine Rescue NSW.

On April 1, the unit received a call from a concerned member of the public about an animal in trouble in Americas Bay.

Cottage Point 30 was dispatched to rescue Jatz, a 10 gram Southern Myotis Microbat that had become tangled in a sailboat's rigging. Jatz is a juvenile Australian fishing bat, otherwise known as the vulnerable Southern Myotis, which skims waterways using its extra-long toes to catch small fish and insects.

Jatz was distressed and in very poor condition when she was rescued. She was gently placed in an empty biscuit box - hence her name - and taken on board the rescue vessel to rendezvous with a WIRES representative back at our base. Our two agencies

worked hand in glove on the rescue operation and Jatz was soon on her way to receiving WIRES' expert care.

Happily, we can report the little bat has recuperated well, gaining weight and resuming flying but poor weather and the onset of winter have delayed her release until spring.

Ahead of the traditional June 1 start of the whale migration season, crew members joined a team from MR Hawkesbury, Greater Sydney Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Roads and Maritime Services for a training exercise on disentangling whales caught in fishing lines and nets.

NPWS rangers instructed the vessel teams through a series of simulated entanglement exercises.

Aside from our animal adventures, it has been another busy quarter for MR Cottage Point, with multiple operations to assist boaters in trouble and members successfully achieving new ratings, including Tony Gordon qualifying as Coxswain and Peter Lewis as Leading Crew.



Micro-rescue ... the crew of *Cottage Point 30* delivered Jatz, a tiny Australian fishing bat caught in sailboat rigging, safely to WIRES.

Peter won particular kudos when his already-challenging assessment twice transformed from a simulated exercise to an actual response.

While finalising chart work in the base as part of his assessment, he heard a nearby cry of "help" followed by a splash. Springing into action, Peter found himself rescuing an elderly man who had fallen in the water while trying to bring his vessel alongside the wharf.

Once on the water, his simulated towing event was abandoned to provide assistance to a runabout floundering off Barrenjoey Point.

Tim Pike

Rock fishers now risk lifejacket fines

\$100 penalty applies for ignoring rule on Randwick coastline.

As part of an increased focus on rock fishing safety, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has reminded fishers they must now wear a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Randwick Local Government Area.

Anyone not wearing a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Randwick area after June 1 risks a \$100 fine.

Deputy Director General of DPI Fisheries, Dr Geoff Allan, said the department wanted anglers to continue to enjoy their rock fishing but also to return home safely.

"In the 18 months since the *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016* was introduced in Randwick, the NSW Government has worked to educate fishers on lifejacket laws and other important safety tips to help

minimise risks when rock fishing," Dr Allan said. "We are currently working with partner agencies and stakeholders to review lifejackets and associated products to provide anglers with more choice when selecting safety gear."

As well as always wearing a lifejacket, rock fishers in Randwick and other coastal rock fishing locations are urged to reduce the risks associated with their sport by considering the following safety tips:

- Check the weather and tide conditions before you leave home and stay alert to the weather conditions while you're out fishing.
- Wear non-slip shoes and light clothing.
- Do not rock fish when the conditions are dangerous. Never fish alone or



Since 2004, 158 rock fishers have died and 99 per cent were not wearing a lifejacket.

- turn your back on the sea.
- Do not jump in if someone is washed into the ocean; throw them a lifebuoy, call Triple Zero or go get help.

"We are initiating a long-term campaign to promote rock safety

along the NSW coast and are working with the recreational fishing community to encourage all rock fishers to enjoy their sport safely and responsibly," Dr Allan said.

For more information, visit <http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au>

Early risers meet Port Jackson volunteers

Unit welcomes the nation's viewers, Minister and MP on board at sun up.

You have to get up early to catch the members of MR Port Jackson.

Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Drummoyne MP John Sidoti recently visited the base not long after dawn to meet our members and join the crew of *Port Jackson 30* for a trip on the Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour before heading to State Parliament.

Mr Grant and Mr Sidoti were interested to learn about the challenges of operating on the country's premier waterway.

Thousands of boaters have taken to Sydney Harbour to enjoy the recent Vivid Festival, with the extra marine traffic and changing lightscape creating valuable navigation and night operation training opportunities for our crews.

"A beautiful autumn morning on Sydney Harbour and an absolute pleasure to spend time with volunteers from the Marine Rescue Port Jackson Unit," Mr Grant said on social media.



Early watch ... Paul Robinson, Sydney Regional Operations Manager Glenn Evans, Unit Commander Greg Urand, Drummoyne MP John Sidoti, Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant and Paul Ballard on *PJ 30*.

"It was great to see how the crew works on the water. I look forward to returning when the new unit headquarters are finished."

The following week we welcomed viewers from across Australia when Channel 7's Sunrise breakfast program broadcast from our base and vessel. Weather presenter Sam Mac joined us at a chilly 4am, carrying out four live crosses to Brekky Central during the program.

In April, Australian Maritime Safety Authority Liaison Officer

Robyn Eales attended our April unit meeting. Robyn kept us enthralled as she spoke about AMSA's operations and her own experience. Since beginning her marine career as a coxswain on a cruise ship on the Great Barrier Reef 20 years ago, she has worked around the world on various craft and most recently as a Marine Pilot and Superintendent on WA's Pilbara coast.

As an AMSA Liaison Officer she assists domestic commercial vessel operators to complete risk

assessments and develop their safety management systems.

Congratulations to our two members Paul Ballard and Paul Robinson who were both finalists in the Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards.

The unit is participating in regular joint exercises with MR Middle Harbour. We are looking forward to the imminent opening of our new base and the arrival of our new vessel later in the year.

Greg Urand

Terrey Hills reaching out for new members

Marine Rescue Terrey Hills is reaching out into the community to promote MRNSW and recruit new volunteers.

The unit has established a Marketing, Fundraising and Membership Committee under the leadership of Peter Dally, which is rolling out recruitment and promotional strategies.

The committee is developing plans to engage with members of the boating community and encourage them to both support and use MRNSW services, along with initiatives to recruit new members for a range of roles, including radio operations, fundraising, promotions and administrative support.

One of the first steps has been to cement a strong bond with the St Ives Lions Club to promote our work in the community. We recently supported the club's Monster Garage Sale raising money for the victims of the Tathra bushfires. Our members helped sort items for sale before taking part in the event the following day.

We have also assisted the club with a fundraising barbecue on the St Ives Village Green.

The Lions have welcomed our collaboration and invited us to take part in future events.

In a strong start to the year, we have been successful in attracting boaters to our radio licence courses.



MR Terrey Hills members Brian West and Helen Manifold with St Ives Lions Club president Paul Doman at the club's Monster Garage Sale.

Since January, we have delivered courses to 50 members of the public.

Credit must be given to our skilled

trainers for their commitment and work in delivering these high-quality training courses.

Denis Comber

Unit helps develop national rescue capability

Experienced Jervis Bay crew joins RAAF for air deployment training exercise.

Several times a year MR Jervis Bay assists the Royal Australian Air Force with training exercises for air crew to practice deploying Air Sea Rescue Kits from C-130J Hercules transport aircraft.

The rescue kits include two life rafts and two containers with emergency supplies deployed in extreme-range operations within Australia's enormous search and rescue region.

Using large wooden logs roped together rather than actual rescue kits for training, the air crews practice dropping the equipment within reach of a target vessel or life raft. MR Jervis Bay performs a dual role, simulating the rescue target and recovering the logs, giving its crews valuable coordination practice and the satisfaction of helping to develop a capability that adds to the national search and rescue response.

Unit Commander Kevin Hill reflects on the most recent exercise:

Preparations start the day before, with *Jervis Bay 40* (Colin Woods) fuelled and provisioned and the target life raft checked and operational, ready for four airdrops five miles due east of Point Perpendicular.

On the day, the crew - skipper John Gallimore, Kevin Hill, Ross Harlen, Russell Pauley and Robert Zivkovic - musters on board at 7am. We carry out our pre-operational checks, prepare the life raft and brief the crew, ready for departure to reach the rendezvous point at 9am.

The day is perfect, with a clear sky, light breeze and calm seas. With military precision, the skipper has us on scene precisely at 9am.

All eyes are looking skyward for the Hercules to come in from the west before we are advised it has been delayed.

As I look around the cabin, I realise the crew has more than 40 years' combined commitment,



As the sun sets over Point Perpendicular, MR Jervis Bay crew member Ross Harlen retrieves a life raft deployed as a rescue target in an airdrop training exercise with the RAAF. Photo: Kevin Hill.

dedication and experience. Waiting for the plane to arrive, stories unfold of past missions: high seas, strong winds, difficulties in locating the logs in rough conditions, looking out for each other as the boat pitches and rolls.

Over the radio we hear "Colin Woods, Colin Woods, this is Trojan" and with the Hercules coming straight at us, we deploy the life raft.

The plane makes a series of passes, lowers, the rear loading ramp opens and three smoke flares tumble out.

Grey smoke hangs over the water. The plane comes in for another flare drop, this time five.

"Colin Woods, Colin Woods this is Trojan, would you please move 100 metres to the west as you will be directly in the drop zone."

The Hercules comes in low and fast above us, the loading ramp is down and we can see figures moving inside before the huge plane flies off into the distance.

Then we spot it low on the horizon, starting another run. It passes directly over the life raft on another loop. We wait for its return.

It thunders in towards us, the cargo door is open, dropping one

log, two, three, a jerk and the rope snaps, four and five. The logs are on target.

The Hercules comes around again, higher, with the cargo door closed, surveying the drop zone, flies off and then returns, coming in low and fast, ejecting two canisters. The medivac kit is on target.

We are cleared to retrieve the equipment and move in, taking care not to overrun the rope connecting the logs.

Carefully, we back up to the first log, weighing 60kgs, and drag it on to the back deck of *JB 40*.

It's hard work. We collect three more logs and are mindful not to entangle the props with broken rope, which is where it snapped when the

logs exited the aircraft. We locate and retrieve the remaining logs and medivac kit. Once all is safely aboard, we distance ourselves in preparation for the next drop.

All goes well and we retrieve this gear, as well as the life raft.

At the end of the day, with the sun setting and *JB 40* laden with almost half a tonne of equipment, we head back to HMAS Creswell to unload and return the logs to the airfield.

We are satisfied with the work and commitment we have made today.

I am constantly in awe of the skill of MRNSW members and their dedication to the cause of saving lives on the water.



Smoke hangs over the water after a RAAF C-130J Hercules drops smoke flares during a training exercise with *Jervis Bay 40*.

Ulladulla applauds upturn in lifejacket use

Crews deployed to nine emergencies and a string of false alarms.

Rescue crews from MR Ulladulla have welcomed an upturn in local boaters and anglers wearing lifejackets, with two men caught in separate emergencies crediting the vital safety gear for helping to save their lives.

MR Ulladulla Radio Club member Martin Field was found washed up on Racecourse Beach after his boat capsized 300m east of Burrill Rocks on April 6. Mr Field had Logged On with our radio base as he headed out but was overdue for his scheduled return, sparking a full emergency response operation involving *Ulladulla 30* and *Ulladulla 20*, NSW Police and the Westpac Life Saver Rescue helicopter.

Mr Field attributed his survival to his lifejacket keeping him afloat in the rough surf and Logging On with our unit, which meant rescue services were alerted to his plight (see Page 3).

A local rock fisherman washed

off rocks at Dolphin Point in April likewise said his lifejacket had contributed to saving his life. The fisherman had made it safely to shore by the time our crew arrived on the scene.

With warm weather continuing through April and early May and a number of popular events on the calendar, we saw an increase in visiting vessels and tourists.

Crews responded to nine emergencies over five weeks but also were deployed to a string of false alarms, including an EPIRB activation, flashing lights on a vessel thought to be in distress, a possible flare sighting and a recovered life raft later reported lost from a passing yacht.

The Blessing of the Fleet on Easter Sunday again attracted large crowds. Deputy Unit Commander David Lindley towed *UL 10* in the festival parade, followed by members' children wearing



Youngsters Molly, Eli and Chase, accompanied by MR Ulladulla member Judy Van Der Zwet, remind the crowd at the Blessing of the Fleet parade that lifejackets save lives.

T-shirts emblazoned with the safety message 'lifejackets save lives'.

UL 30 again ferried members of the clergy around the harbour for the ceremony to bless the fishing fleet and unit members assisted with road closures and crowd control, sold raffle tickets and handed out information on MRNSW services and boating safety.

The unit's annual golf tournament

in May was sold out, with 35 teams, including unit members, business people and community members, enjoying the social atmosphere and the challenging golf course and conditions.

MR Ulladulla is grateful for the donations and sponsorship we received for this important fundraising event.

Raine O'Keeffe

Ocean kayakers urged to Log On for safety

Marine Rescue Port Kembla Unit Commander Graeme McCrudden has urged ocean kayakers to Log On with the unit's Hill 60 radio base following an extensive search for a paddler feared to be in distress on May 13.

Lake Illawarra Police and the Westpac Rescue Life Saver Helicopter launched a major search between Kiama and Minnamurra after emergency services received reports of a man in a fishing kayak in trouble near the Blowhole Point Rockpool at Kiama.

NSW Police appealed for help on social media, asking the public to report any sightings of a man with a black kayak leaving the water or information to help identify the man.

UC McCrudden's son Jamie, also an ocean paddler, recognised

the description as fitting that of a local man well known for testing his speed against the sea and wind conditions.

The unit passed the details of his suggested identity to police, who later reported they had spoken to the kayaker, who was safe and well.

UC McCrudden urged kayakers to Log On so that a responsible emergency service knew they were on the water.

"Logging On is not just for boaters. If we know a kayaker is out on the water, we can search for them if they are late back to shore or if we receive reports they are in trouble," he said. "Being able to contact them to check their wellbeing can also help prevent searches being mounted needlessly if they are in no trouble."



MR Port Kembla Unit Commander Graeme McCrudden presents Bre Potter with her Leading Crew certificate of attainment.

Another large-scale search was launched in April when a member of the public reported that a runabout with two people on board appeared in need of help in strong winds.

Port Kembla 30 joined the

Port Kembla Police Marine Area Command and the PoAir and Westpac helicopters in an operation to locate the vessel. After an extensive air and sea search with no result, the crews were stood down.

Fish auction nets unit a generous donation

Bowling Club support for Shoalhaven volunteers tops \$59,000 over 20 years.

Competitors in an Easter fishing competition netted some good catches over the Easter weekend, resulting in a most welcome donation to MR Shoalhaven.

Keen anglers headed on to the Shoalhaven River and offshore in the Greenwell Point Bowling Club Fishing Club Easter Open Carnival. With a rescue vessel standing by, the unit's Pilot Station radio base Logged On 84 vessels.

Fish caught during the competition were auctioned on Easter Sunday, with unit members on hand to assist with the weigh in. About 120 trays of fish went under the hammer, some several times as the winners donated their prizes back to help raise about \$2,900 for the unit.

This was generously supplemented by the club and on May 11, President Steve Brien presented Unit Commander Bill Carter with a cheque for \$3,600. This takes the club's total donations to the unit to more than \$59,000 over 20 years.

The unit also holds a weekly meat raffle and Starball draw at the club, grossing more than \$30,000 a year.



Shoalhaven 30 ... ready to assist in an emergency during the popular Easter Open fishing club carnival. Photo: Danielle Carter.

In April, the Shoalhaven Heads Hotel presented the unit with the \$5,500 proceeds of its annual charity day in January.

The week after Easter, a 6-7m runabout that Logged On with MR Port Kembla as it launched at the Kiama Boat Harbour ramp at 6.34am called the unit at 12.17pm to report it was experiencing engine problems 14nm off Greenwell Point.

MR Port Kembla relayed the call to the nearer MR Shoalhaven.

The crew of *Shoalhaven 30* located the vessel and took it under

tow, arriving at Crookhaven Heads at 5.12pm.

Grateful boater David Griffin wrote to thank both units for the rescue.

"My friend and I signed out with Port Kembla who we contacted once we confirmed we had an engine shutdown," he said. "The transfer through to the closest Marine Rescue at Shoalhaven was seamless and in a very short space of time we were contacted and it was confirmed that help was on the way. A great relief to hear!"

"From the regular updates from

the base to the seamanship shown by the rescue crew, we witnessed an exemplary service in action.

"I cannot begin to express the depths of my gratitude, at one knot through the water (and three knots backwards according to the base tracking) it was going to be a long ride home without you.

"No amount of raffle tickets purchased will do justice to the service provided! Keep up the great work, we'll be trumpeting on your behalf to anyone that will listen."

Bill Carter

Sussex Inlet welcomes visitors to Open Day

Event generates a buzz around town as holidaymakers inspect base and boat.

The Sussex Inlet unit held its first Open Day on Easter Sunday, showcasing its base and rescue vessels to a large crowd of visitors.

The Easter holidays are always busy in this area, with many visitors enjoying a coastal break before the winter chill sets in.

Our members had an enjoyable day meeting local residents and holidaymakers from around NSW, interstate and overseas.

Visitors were offered children's lucky dips, a sausage sizzle and a chance to view rescue vessel

operations on board *Sussex 30*.

The rescue vessel's crew undertook 10 journeys along the river with about 80 adults, children and toddlers enjoying the experience.

The Open Day proved a valuable fundraising opportunity and a great way for the unit to engage with the public, as illustrated by the buzz around town in the lead up to the event and the appreciative comments from visitors as they inspected our facilities and vessel.

Les Pataky



A job well done ... MR Sussex Inlet members enjoy the last journey of the afternoon at the end of the unit's inaugural Open Day.

Disciplined response to Moruya bar tragedy

Operation highlights value of rescue crews' regular intensive training.

The value of MR Narooma's intensive training regime was driven home for rescue vessel crew members called to respond to a tragedy on the Moruya bar in late March.

A 13-year-old girl drowned after the 6m open runabout on which she was a passenger capsized on the bar on March 24.

Three men and two other children on board survived but the Canberra teenager was trapped under the upturned boat.

A nearby boat and Surf Life Saving members rushed to help.

None of those on board was reported to have been wearing a lifejacket.

MR Narooma crew members were activated at 7am by the Telstra Desktop Messaging Service the unit has used for the past three years.

The system allowed duty radio operator Eric Hibbett to generate a group text message that included a 'Mayday' prefix and the situation, timing and geographical position data of the overturned vessel to all operational unit members.

Available crew responded with their estimated time of arrival at the boat or base.

This data was automatically logged by the system, enabling the radio operator to advise the first responding master of the names and arrival times of the other crew members.

Narooma 30 was on the water under lights by 7.20am, with Ross Constable, Ben Woolnough, Megan Fraser and David Swilks on board.

Encountering rough conditions south of Tuross on the 20nm voyage to the Moruya River, NA 30 was the first MRNSW vessel on-scene 500m east of the bar, along with the Toll Rescue Helicopter.

An MR Batemans Bay crew on Batemans 30 and an MR Tuross crew on Tuross 20 arrived shortly after.



Narooma 30 on a training run in choppy conditions across the Narooma bar.

NA 30 held the capsized vessel alongside on a short tow to prevent it from sinking and took the girl's father on board from a small Surf Life Saving RHIB for hypothermia treatment and transport to a landing point.

NA 30 later returned to the overturned vessel and assisted the BM 30 crew to set up for a seven-hour tow operation back to Batemans Bay.

MR Narooma now holds two boat training days a week and a Rescue Water Craft training day every fortnight for its 22 rescue vessel crew and six RWC operators.

Joint training sessions are held with our neighbours at MR Bermagui on Wednesdays, involving personnel and equipment transfers at sea, towing, search pattern navigation, cross vessel familiarisation, close quarters vessel handling and day and night search exercises.

The bar tragedy highlighted the worth of this regular training but what was most apparent was the disciplined and professional conduct of all MRNSW members involved in this operation, in particular Megan Fraser for her assistance to the bereaved father, Eric Hibbett and



Joint benefits ... crews from MR Narooma and Bermagui come together for regular training sessions to build their operational skills.

Watch Officer Brian Gunter, the crew of BM 30 who persevered in getting a very difficult tow into Batemans

Bay safely and Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan.
Ross Constable

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Minister thanks Eden for Mayday response

Unit welcomes \$75,000 State Government grant to upgrade facilities.

Shortly after 4.30pm on May 29, MR Eden received a Mayday call from a timber runabout taking on water and sinking about 10 nautical miles to the south.

Unit Commander John McKinnon was the radio operator on duty in the base, instructing the boater to activate his EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) to give rescuers a more accurate position.

The Eden Police Marine Area Command deployed a launch to rescue the man. While in contact with emergency services the boater managed to beach the vessel.

Police and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant later called UC McKinnon.

"I just wanted to call to thank you and congratulate you on an outstanding job. Good cooperation with the Marine Area Command again," Mr Grant said.

"I saw the alert come up and I was wondering how it all panned out but you did a great job and I'm really

appreciative."

The Eden unit has welcomed a \$75,000 NSW Government grant to fund a substantial upgrade of its radio base overlooking Twofold Bay.

The Liquor and Gaming NSW Infrastructure Grant will enable the unit to expand its facilities for the coordination of major search and rescue operations and provide improved access to the base.

Bega MP Andrew Constance said the Marine Rescue base was a valuable community asset.

"A \$75,000 upgrade will only enhance the daily work done by our tireless Marine Rescue Eden volunteers and allow them to better protect the boating fraternity," he said.

"We have a magical coastline that attracts boaters from near and far."

UC McKinnon said the centrepiece of the renovations to the 30-year-old building would be a new search and rescue coordination area beside the existing radio communications room.



MR Eden Search and Rescue Support Officer John Steele in the unit's radio base, to be upgraded thanks to a \$75,000 grant.

"Our emergency response planning is currently carried out in our radio room, which can become quite congested in peak periods such as during the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race," he said "This new facility will provide a dedicated area for personnel from various agencies to plan and coordinate major search and rescue emergency operations to assist boaters in distress."

The project also will include a new external staircase, fitted with a stair-lift suitable for people with limited mobility, to improve access for members and visitors to the radio room and observation deck overlooking the bay.

UC McKinnon said the upgraded operating environment and easier access also would help the unit attract new volunteer members.

Black Friday proves unlucky for yacht crew

Rescuers log six-hour voyage to return stranded vessel to safety.

Friday the 13th proved unlucky indeed for the crew of a yacht forced to call for help after suffering engine trouble south of Tathra on the NSW South Coast.

But their bad fortune was reversed when a crew from MR Bermagui came to their rescue, logging six hours' sea time to reach the disabled yacht and return it to safety.

The 38-foot yacht made two calls, received by unit radio operators Lynda Bailey and Denise Page, to report it was in trouble and confirm it needed help on April 13.

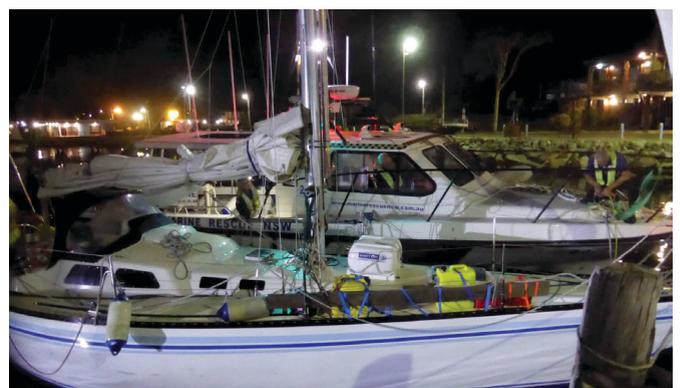
The yacht was asked to sail north towards Bermagui as rescue vessel *Bermagui 30* was activated.

Radio operator Peter Hanks was called in to take over radio duty and free Denise Page to act as Master on the rescue operation, along with crew members Steve Angelo, Volker Aebischer and Doug Hodges.

Departing the harbour at 2.50pm, *BG 30* had taken the yacht under tow by 4.20pm in a weak wind but strong current that had pushed the stranded vessel further south. After six hours at sea, *BG 30* returned the yacht to harbour at 8.45pm.

A magnificent rainbow emerged while the vessels were out at sea and this one had a pot of gold, or at least a generous donation, at the end.

Unit Commander Alec Percival



Not so unlucky in the end *Bermagui 30* (rear) returned this disabled yacht to safety in a six-hour operation ending in darkness.

has thanked the yacht owners and those of another rescued vessel for their donations to the unit.

Crews have also maintained our

Wednesday training regime, joining forces with MR Narooma for a towing exercise in May.

Denise Page

New base and boat cause for celebration

Double take for Unit Commander as rescue vessel name is revealed.

There's a new landmark on Lake Jindabyne, which you can't miss on the drive to the snow.

It's the Marine Rescue Alpine Lakes base at the Jindabyne Boat Ramp, built and fitted out at a cost of \$140,000, including a \$40,000 State Government Community Building Partnership Grant.

The base and new rescue vessel *Alpine Lakes 21* were officially commissioned in March, with the MRNSW Board, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey joining unit members, emergency services personnel and community representatives for the celebration.

Unit Commander Les Threlfo said it was a "magnificent" day. He did a double take when he found *AL 21* had been named *Les Threlfo*.

"That was a huge surprise," he said. "I thought you had to be dead to be named on a boat."

Commissioner Tannos said the robust \$265,000 6.8m Ocean Cylinder was well suited to the operating conditions on the Alpine Lakes.



Dual celebration ... Snowy Mountains community members join MRNSW personnel for the commissioning of the new MR Alpine Lakes base and vessel, *Alpine Lakes 21 (Les Threlfo)*.

"It is also fitted with an array of search and rescue, navigation and advanced first aid equipment, significantly boosting the capability of the unit's volunteers," he said.

Mr Threlfo said the new vessel was a great asset.

"It handles beautifully, we're very, very pleased with it," he said. "It will help us reach people more rapidly in the event of an emergency. Time is

always of the essence on the lakes, given the high risk of hypothermia for anyone who falls overboard."

He said the new base provided the 38 unit members with a safe working environment and protection for their essential equipment.

The vessel and base are a welcome investment in marine safety for locals and visitors.

"The weather can turn nasty on

the lake pretty quickly," said Bob Pieper, from Jindabyne, who takes his 5.5m boat out a couple of times a month.

Canberra's Damion Percival, who brings his 5.5m vessel to Lake Jindabyne three or four times a year, approved of the visible Marine Rescue presence.

"It's good to know it's here."

Brendan Trembath

Merimbula showcases its volunteer diversity

Andrew Dessent was all at sea when he won first prize in the annual MR Merimbula raffle.

The Victorian had won a runabout, trailer, motor and safety gear but telling him the good news proved difficult.

Unknown to the unit, Andrew and his wife Michelle were on a cruise to Vanuatu. Thrilled to eventually hear the news when they reached port, the couple drove to Merimbula on their return to pick up their new boat. Ben Holding, from Sapphire Marine and Automotive, provided a detailed handover and we were delighted to thank Andrew and Michelle for their support. Thanks, too, to member Gary Baker for all

his hard work to make this raffle a great success.

The unit held a barbecue to celebrate National Volunteer Week and show our appreciation to our members and their families. We also posted profiles of a number of our members on our Facebook page, showcasing our volunteers' diversity.

The annual Merimbula Jazz Festival is held over the Queen's Birthday long weekend.

Unit members took part in the parade that is a highlight of the event, while others sold raffle tickets and also cooked two barbecues to feed crowds watching the parade and enjoying the music. Our rescue vessel, *Merimbula 30*, was open for



MR Merimbula member Jan Dabinett made this tiny uniform for her grandson to join the unit's contingent in the Jazz Festival Parade.

display at Merimbula Marina, with crew members on board to answer questions and explain our roles to the public. This was a fulfilling day

for the members who took part, showcasing MR Merimbula as a proud and efficient unit.

Fay Cousins

What we've been up to



High country rescue team ... MR Alpine Lakes volunteers Ann Foster, Deputy Unit Commander Karin Davies, Tanya Casey and Karina Hermeston at the dual celebrations for the opening of the unit's new base beside Lake Jindabyne and the commissioning of *Alpine Lakes 21* (Les Threlfo). Photo: Brendan Trembath.



All the best, Bruce ... Commissioner Stacey Tannos farewells MR Botany Port Hacking member Bruce Byatt, retiring after 40 years' volunteer service, in April.



Read all about us ... MR Port Jackson member Mirko Djakovic was one of the MRNSW members on hand to provide volunteering and boating safety information at the Rosehill Trailer Boat Show in March.



Come join us ... MR Hawkesbury's Tim Fawcett, David Hytche, Ken Edwards, Jamie Abnett-Miller and John Milne with Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff at the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Volunteer Day.



Widely condemned ... MR Shellharbour volunteers were shocked to find a shark's head impaled on the base fence. Reported around the world, the incident prompted an outpouring of support for the unit.

Ron had the recipe for volunteering success

Watch Officer remembered for his skills, service and Sunday lunches.



Ron Jackson.

Over 11 years as a member of Marine Rescue Central Coast, Ron Jackson undertook a range of formal duties but he will be equally

remembered by his fellow volunteers for his handyman and culinary skills.

Ron passed away suddenly on April 24, just five days after his last radio shift at the Point Clare base.

After joining the unit in 2007, Ron enthusiastically embraced his volunteering roles.

He quickly became a competent and popular Radio Operator, progressing to become a Watch Officer and performing regular Thursday and weekend watches.

The Sunday team would particularly look forward to their duty, knowing the keen cook would produce something special for

lunch, often experimenting with a new recipe he had found.

In addition to his rostered duties, Ron helped the unit in many other ways.

He was always among the first to volunteer for fundraising duties and also served as unit Administration Officer over four years from July 2013 to 2017, using his workplace skills to ensure that the office records were kept in proper order.

He also was the unit's Marine Radio Safety Service Officer, liaising with our Radio Club members and maintaining our database to ensure the accuracy and currency of each

member's information.

As one of the unit's handymen, Ron was often 'on the tools', helping with or initiating maintenance tasks necessary to ensure the base was operationally safe and efficient.

Ron will be sorely missed by his brother John, sister Pauline, his children, Kylie, Scott and Craig and his six grandchildren, as well as the unit members who have worked with him over the years.

Ron's ashes will be scattered at sea. The unit will hold a dedication ceremony to place a plaque on its Ceremonial stone.

Shea Wicks

Radio listeners missing a familiar voice

Music lover was on the air for Narooma boaters and FM audience.



Jeff Roll

Jeff Roll was a familiar voice on the airwaves on the South Coast.

The MR Narooma member, who passed away in mid-May, was known to local boaters on the marine radio network and also to the wider community as a presenter on a local FM radio station.

Jeff joined the Narooma unit in 2013, becoming a Radio Operator before qualifying as a Watch Officer in early 2016.

Personable and unassuming, he

was born in Buffalo. His career as an engineer included time working for companies sub-contracted to NASA, working on the Hubble Space Telescope.

As well as radio, his passions were astronomy/cosmology and music, particularly jazz. He was an accomplished guitar player and had a prodigious music collection.

He and his wife Bronwyn last year travelled around NSW observatories, including the Paul

Wild Observatory near Narrabri where the Australia Telescope Compact Array is located.

Jeff had been a radio presenter in the USA as well as on the Moruya-based community FM radio station, 2EAR FM.

His wry sense of humour and expertise will be sorely missed in the unit and we extend our condolences to Bronwyn and Jeff's family both here in Australia and in the USA.

Eric Hibbett

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Equipment installed in Mark's memory

Everyone took to this 'really nice bloke'.



Mark Donnelly inspects a Navy helicopter during a Monaro Regional Search and Rescue Exercise.

A well loved and valued member of Marine Rescue Bermagui, Mark Donnelly, has passed away at the early age of 61.

Mark joined the unit in 2012, throwing himself wholeheartedly into volunteering, quickly becoming a Radio Operator and then moving on to train as a Crew and Leading Crew member on board rescue vessel *Bermagui 30*.

Mark was a fully contributing member in all aspects of our service, performing a regular radio shift and attending boat training every Wednesday, as well as being our "go to" IT person and a frontline fundraiser.

One of his many achievements was researching, ordering and training us in the use of the pneumatic rescue line launcher the unit purchased for *BG 30*.

This valuable asset will remind us of Mark whenever we use it.

He was as pleased as punch when Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan and a number of his fellow members gathered to present his five year

Long Service Medal at his bedside.

Mark was someone everybody took to straight away. He had a great sense of humour and a willingness to help anyone he could.

Following his passing, a wonderful celebration of his life at his lakeside home was well attended by friends and family, together with a large contingent of volunteers in blue. The unit has used donations offered at the event to purchase a powerful set of binoculars on a tripod to enable radio officers in our radio base to monitor vessels entering and departing Bermagui Harbour. A plaque inscribed with the words, "In memory of Mark, a really nice bloke" has been installed on the binoculars.

Mark's request to us all was to spread the message widely of the need for people to undergo regular colonoscopies to help detect bowel cancer, with which he struggled for 18 months before his death.

Mark's ashes are to be scattered at sea from *BG 30*, the rescue vessel he enjoyed so much.

Alec Percival

Thanks to Newcastle crew, 'our lighthouse'

We felt very cared for: boaters.



Mandy Rowe painted this picture to thank the members of MR Newcastle for rescuing her family (see story Page 28).

To Marine Rescue Newcastle

I can't thank you enough for rescuing Shane and Sam on the 3rd April. They are everything to me. And a special thank you to Ran Calman for calling into the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club to check up on us.

We felt very cared for. You were our lighthouse in a time of need.

Eternally thankful

Mandy Rowe

To all the Volunteers (at Marine Rescue Central Coast)

On the 6th May in response to my request for assistance due to a gearbox failure you came 9-plus nautical miles out from Box Head and towed me back up to Gosford. Really appreciated the help.

I have had a CC Number (MR Central Coast Radio Club call sign) for my fishing boat for well over 20 years and also for my sailing boat for about 10 years. I really appreciate the work you guys and gals do. Every year when renewing I like to include a reasonable donation as finances allow.

I do my best to maintain my boats for reliable service and fortunately over the 20 years this is only the second call for assistance I have had to make.

But you know boats and motors ... the best laid plans of mice and men. Or Murphy's Law? Once again, I really appreciate the valuable safety back-up Marine Rescue provides, only made possible by the selfless volunteering of you guys and gals.

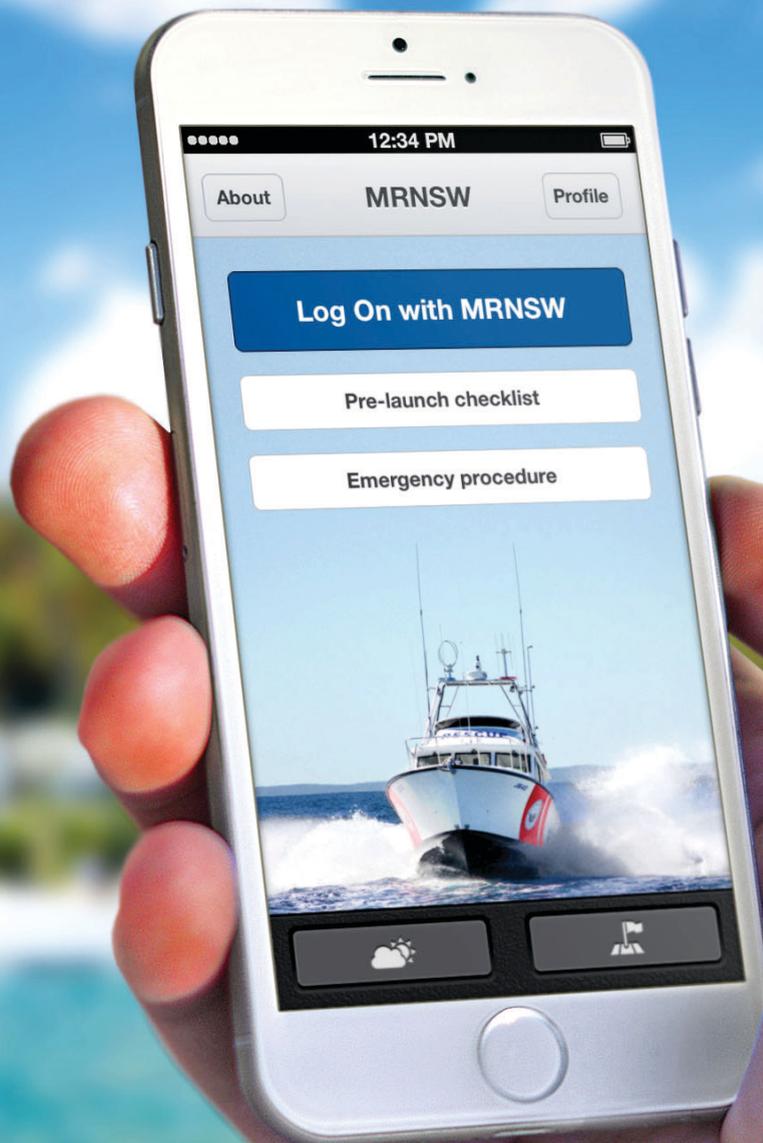
Graham Maxwell

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