

Volunteers saving lives on the water

# SUNDINGS

Merry  
Christmas  
from  
MARINE RESCUE  
NSW

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 45, Summer 2020

## AIR SEE RESCUE

Volunteer says high to the  
North Coast neighbours

## WE'RE READY

BUMPER SUMMER AHEAD

## SUPER BOATS

FLEET MUSCLES UP

**PLUS:** Catch MRTV | Master's Rotary award | Honour for Chaplain

# SOS RESCUE RING

A PORTABLE WATER FLOTATION DEVICE  
THAT YOU CAN THROW TO ASSIST  
IN EMERGENCY RESCUE

It is light and easy to operate, less complicated to deploy  
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## SOS Rescue Ring

SOS-6409

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THE SOS RECOVERY LADDER ANSWERS THE QUESTION FOR BOATERS

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Use rungs as ladder or use entire shape to horizontally lift victim, "Parbuckle" recovery style 2:1 Leverage with halyard or block & tackle

## SOS Recovery Ladder

SOS-5656

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# SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

## Cover Image

When he's not on duty as a Marine Rescue Cape Byron Radio Operator, Emiliano Cataldi lives the high life as a hot air balloon pilot. He rates his flight over the neighbouring Brunswick unit's rescue vessel and radio tower as his favourite of 2020. *Photo: Taylor Miller.*

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**Commissioner**  
Stacey Tannos ESM

## From the Commissioner

We are in a strong position, ready for a bumper season.

With the end of this challenging year nigh upon us, it is reassuring to be going through the familiar routines of making preparations to ensure we are ready for the peak demands of the summer holiday season.

After the horrific bushfires of last summer and the many difficulties throughout this pandemic year, we can all be forgiven for looking forward to a return toward a more “normal” carefree summer of beaches and boating.

Our COVID-19 responsibilities are now as central to our procedures as our other health and safety routines, giving us confidence in our mutual wellbeing as we work towards the resumption of business as usual.

Many more people are expected to holiday on our coastline this summer and the subsequent additional boating traffic is sure to increase demand on our volunteers' services. As we gear up for a bumper summer, we are in a strong position.

We have delivered a dozen purpose-built rescue vessels worth more than \$4.5 million to units over the past 18 months and another six are due to come online by the end of the season.

Our crews have put serious effort into ramping up their training since the easing of social distancing restrictions, increasing their collective qualifications and ensuring they are at the top of their search and rescue game. Our seasonal capability will, as usual, be boosted with additional patrols in high-traffic areas and pre-deployed resources in high-risk locations.

It is a significant achievement to be in this position after the challenges of 2020 and reflects strongly on the commitment and agility of our people. But we are not stopping here. We will enter 2021 with a full slate of plans to further advance our organisation and our services.

We will continue to upgrade our world-class fleet, we will open our State Communications Centre and continue our capital works program to provide our volunteers with upgraded operating conditions.

Our communications networks

will be reinforced with new telephone and online systems and upgraded marine radio infrastructure and we will release a new version of the *MarineRescue* App, incorporating additional safety features and information for users.

Our staff have again demonstrated their professionalism and dedication, adapting overnight to working remotely and always striving to meet new standards of achievement in supporting our volunteers. We, as an organisation, are fortunate that each of them has chosen to work with us.

Of course, it is the volunteers to whom we owe the greatest debt. Thank you to each of them for staying the course this year. I also want to recognise our members' employers and their families for their essential support.

I wish you all a merry Christmas with those you love and the very best for a healthy and safe 2021.

### We will enter 2021 with a full slate of plans to further advance our organisation and services.

Finalising plans and approvals for the Marine Rescue Training Academy also will be a major focus for Headquarters as we work to deliver this groundbreaking development to provide valuable training support to our units.

Our new Deputy Commissioner, Alex Barrell, has hit the ground running and will continue to traverse even more territory as he gets out to meet our members.

As the year closes, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge those who have supported us in our

operational and corporate level.

Our staff have again demonstrated their professionalism and dedication, adapting overnight to working remotely and always striving to meet new standards of achievement in supporting our volunteers. We, as an organisation, are fortunate that each of them has chosen to work with us.

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**Stacey Tannos ESM**  
Commissioner



The Commissioner inspects super boat *Botany Hacking 30* upon its arrival on its new home waters.

## Volunteers vote for status quo on Board

Virtual attendance at first live-streamed AGM meets COVID rules.

The 2020 MRNSW Board elections have resulted in an unchanged line-up in the organisation's strategic leadership.

The three Regional Directors due for re-election, Ken Edwards (Greater Sydney), Keven Marshall (Illawarra) and Glenn Felkin (Monaro), were elected unopposed.

Two nominations were received for the General Director's position, with Pat Fayers returned for her third three-year term. The other candidate was former MR Ballina Deputy Unit Commander Phil Causley.

With Regular and Life Members in all six regions eligible to participate, a total of 289 votes was cast in the eleventh Board election, which was the third conducted online.

The election was held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting on November 21. It was the first to be held concurrently at State Headquarters and on Zoom and also the first to be live-streamed



In the room ... Directors John Lynch, Keven Marshall, Bob Wilson, Pat Fayers, Glenn Felkin and Jim Wright with Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell (third left) and Company Secretary Todd Andrews (second right).

on YouTube, meeting COVID-19 requirements and enabling volunteers to follow proceedings.

Chair Jim Glissan, attending via Zoom along with Directors Ken Edwards and Darcy Henriksen, said it was "an unusual AGM in the most unusual year any of us have ever experienced".

"Our volunteers have been just extraordinary throughout the course of this year," he said.

"I have incredible respect for

each and every one of them and I am extraordinarily proud to be associated with this organisation."

He congratulated all four Directors on their re-election. The Board subsequently re-elected Mr Glissan as its Chair.

Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell said he was looking forward to getting out to meet more members.

"I'm really excited by the opportunity. I feel enormously privileged by what's been given

to me," he said. "I thank all the members for the commitment and effort they've shown over the last year. They've gone above and beyond and been adaptable and agile in a changing environment. We have continued to serve the boating community of NSW extremely well."

Auditor James Winter said new government revenue was being directed into bases, vessels communications and other resources, as intended.

## Senior Chaplain appointed a member for life

Reverend rendered 'unusually speechless' by unexpected honour.

Senior Chaplain Reverend Richard Wrightson has been made a Life Member of MRNSW in recognition of his contribution to the service and care for its people.

Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director Jim Wright presented Rev Wrightson, who is a member of MR Lake Macquarie, with his Life Membership at the opening of the unit's new \$1.8 million Search and Rescue Coordination Centre on November 13.

Mr Wright said Life Membership was the highest honour the service could bestow upon a member.

"We extend our thanks to Rev Wrightson for his lengthy service as a crew member and watch officer but perhaps more importantly, for his contribution to the pastoral care

of our members and their families, particularly during times of tragedy," he said. "He has extended great compassion and care to his fellow members, not only those who have lost their own loved ones but also those who have taken part in traumatic and troubling operations, available at all hours to provide careful counsel and support."

Rev Wrightson has announced his retirement from the Chaplain's role.

He said he was so surprised by the honour that he had been rendered unusually speechless.

"It really never entered my mind," he said.

"I've been privileged that so many people have shared their personal stories quietly with me. My mind is full of stories that can never be told



Senior Chaplain Reverend Richard Wrightson receives his Life Membership certificate from Regional Director Jim Wright.

- and will never be told."

He said Ministry was emotional.

"You switch from weeping with people in their loss to celebrating with a young couple preparing to marry," he said.

Rev Wrightson has represented

MRNSW at each annual Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service and aside from his Chaplaincy, has served as a crew member and radio operator and made a significant contribution to the unit's boat licence courses.



**Chair**  
James Glissan AM ESM QC

## From the Chair

We worked together and proved our mettle through 2020.

To liberally misquote Dickens, 2020 has been the worst of times and the proudest of times.

Like many, I look forward to turning a new leaf on January 1 but I will also look back at this year as one in which we truly worked together and proved our collective mettle.

We have been resilient, flexible and adaptable, changing our operations and corporate practices to accommodate a relentless string of challenges.

In the year of bushfires, COVID and Zoom, our volunteers have been just extraordinary. I have incredible respect for each and every one of our members and I am extraordinarily proud to be associated with this organisation.

We should all take pride in our achievements this year. The strong support we receive from the State Government has enabled us to upgrade our volunteer facilities, deliver 10 rescue vessels, including three new super boats, and move forward with our plans for the Marine Rescue Training Academy.

Our volunteers supported the massive bushfire emergency response on the water, in other agencies' communications centres and in comforting those evacuated. Through our COVID response, we kept our vessels on the water and

maintained our essential services.

As outlined in our Annual Report, our crews launched 2,541 rescue missions, returning almost 6,000 boaters home safely, and our radio teams managed almost a quarter of a million calls throughout 2019-20. While lower than in years of more favourable boating conditions, this is a remarkable work rate given the impact of the fires and pandemic on recreational boating.

Our 2020 Annual General Meeting was just one of our many innovations in response to necessity. It was certainly an unusual AGM in the most unusual year any of us have ever experienced.

It was the first held not only in person at State Headquarters but also via Zoom, which permitted Directors Ken Edwards and Darcy Henriksen and me to attend

online but the turn-out of 289 voters was a mere 11 per cent of about 2,500 eligible Regular and Life Members.

Regional Directors Ken Edwards (Greater Sydney), Keven Marshall (Illawarra) and Glenn Felkin (Monaro) were returned unopposed and General Director Pat Fayers remains the only woman present at the Board table.

It is pleasing that only the one nomination was received for each of the Regional Director positions, showing the confidence the membership has in the Directors. But it is equally as troubling, as we need people to be invested in the full operation of the company beyond their individual duties.

That said, however, I am delighted to have the Board we have and congratulate all four of my fellow

### In the year of bushfires, COVID and Zoom, our volunteers have been just extraordinary.

remotely. It was also the first to be live-streamed on YouTube, a measure which not only met COVID-19 requirements but also helped engage more members in the proceedings. Thirty people watched online, outstripping the numbers able to attend the meeting in person in previous years. The Board elections were again held

Directors on their success. I also thank the Board members for their confidence in yet again returning me as the Chair and reaffirm my commitment to working for the advancement of the organisation as a whole and the wellbeing of all our people.

As I say, I end the year reflecting on our successes. These are due in large part to the leadership of Commissioner Stacey Tannos and on behalf of the Board, I thank him and our staff for their professionalism in adapting the organisation to the manifest changes imposed by COVID. We welcome new Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell and look forward to seeing him out and about in coming months. As always, my greatest thanks are reserved for our volunteers, without whose admirable dedication, skill and effort we would be nothing.

*Good sailing*  
*Jim Glissan*



An unusual Annual General Meeting ... Chair Jim Glissan and two Directors attend the 2020 AGM remotely. It was the first held jointly in person, on Zoom and live-streamed on YouTube.

## Record summer expected on NSW waters

Safety message for boaters as volunteers prepare for surge in demand.

Boaters have been urged to exercise extra caution on the water this summer as MRNSW volunteers gear up for an expected record season along the coastline.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos said more people were likely to stay home in NSW and push the boat out more often this summer, given COVID-19 restrictions on overseas travel and extended uncertainty about interstate borders.

"Increased boating traffic means there is a heightened need for everyone to act safely and responsibly on the water but our volunteers are ready for a far greater demand on our services," he said.

"We saw 25 boating-related fatalities on NSW waters in 2019-20 and our members responded to many of those tragedies.

"I appeal to boaters not to risk their lives by acting irresponsibly on or by the water but rest assured, if you need help, our volunteers will be on watch and ready to respond."

Commissioner Tannos joined Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and



Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott and Commissioner Stacey Tannos address media about the need for boaters to be ready for summer.

representatives of the other NSW emergency services to urge the community to get ready for summer.

Mr Elliott encouraged people to talk to their friends and families about being prepared for seasonal hazards.

"Aussie summers are iconic but they can also be tragic. Last year, we had a horror bushfire season. This year, we're expecting a wet and wild summer. But bushfires and storms are not the only threats we face," he said.

Commissioner Tannos said MRNSW volunteers had been training hard and were rescue-ready for the height of the boating season.

He said plans had been put in place to support enhanced rescue capability. Additional patrols would be mounted in popular locations during the holiday peak, rapid-response assets would be pre-deployed in known areas of risk, such as hazardous coastal bars, and senior personnel would again be based in the NSW Police

Force Marine Area Command base to enhance emergency response coordination.

"Boaters should always Log On with MRNSW on VHF Channel 16 or the free *MarineRescue* App. It's quick and simple and gives you the reassurance that our volunteers are watching out for your safe return.

"It's also vital to ensure that everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket and to check the sea and weather conditions before and throughout your journey," he said.

## No charge for our services: Commissioner

Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos has assured the boating community that the service does not charge for any rescue operation, regardless of the cause or circumstances.

He said that as an accredited emergency service, Marine Rescue's responsibility was to provide rescue services to boaters on the State's coastline, the Alpine Lakes, Murray River at Moama and Lord Howe Island.

"Our volunteers' sole focus is to save lives on the water," Commissioner Tannos said.

"I want to send a strong message to boaters that we do not charge for our services and we have no

regulatory role to fine you or report you to the authorities. If you are caught in an emergency, we will rescue you, no questions asked."

Recent social media reports of boaters rescued after running out of fuel far offshore or failing to carry safety equipment have sparked volleys of comments from followers declaring MRNSW should charge for rescue services or claiming those in trouble on the water would have to pay.

Commissioner Tannos said this was wrong.

"Some services in other states, such as Queensland, have arrangements where people can join a supporters club and receive



A yacht comes to grief after trying to cross the Yamba bar in the dark.

one free tow a year, for instance, but this is not the case in NSW and never has been," he said. "MRNSW is a charity, however, and we rely on fundraising to help support our

operations. So if you are able, our volunteers are always grateful for a donation to assist them with their costs, particularly to help cover fuel on long missions offshore."



*Merry  
Christmas*

from

**MARINE RESCUE NSW**

Stay safe on the water this festive season.

## Fleet muscles up with new generation boats

Three super models have the speed and power to get to the scene fast.

The first of a new generation of MRNSW super boats arrived in Sydney in late September as the emergency service introduces larger, musclier rescue vessels to save lives on the water.

NSW Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott handed over the \$850,000 vessel *Botany Hacking 30* to volunteers from MR Botany Port Hacking.

*BH 30* is a new model in the MRNSW fleet - a 12 metre Naiad - specifically developed to provide more power, faster acceleration, greater range and a smoother passage through the ocean chop and swell, along with more cabin and deck space.

"This is the first of the big new Marine Rescue boats to be deployed in three prime boating destinations - Port Hacking, Jervis Bay and Lord Howe Island - in a \$2.4 million investment in boating safety," Mr Elliott said. "They will add much more grunt to the fleet. Every minute can mean the difference between life and death in an emergency on the water so it's important our Marine Rescue crews have the horsepower to be on the scene fast."



A new model in the MRNSW fleet, the 12 metre Naiad *Botany Hacking 30*, arrives in Sydney in September. Photo: Brad Whittaker.

The boats are among 38 funded under the State Government's \$37.6 million injection to MRNSW.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said Port Hacking, Jervis Bay and Lord Howe Island were high priorities for the muscle boats because they attracted huge numbers of boaters.

"Last year, our Botany Port Hacking volunteers launched 175 rescue missions and Jervis Bay crews deployed on 72 operations," he said. "Lord Howe is an incredibly popular boating destination. Super boats are definitely needed on these

coastal and offshore waters."

Built by Yamba Welding & Engineering, *BH 30* is bristling with a full suite of the latest technology and powered by three 325HP duo prop Suzuki outboards.

The three boats' larger size also expands their range, with the vessels able to travel between 250 and 350 nautical miles before refueling, extending the time that crews can spend at sea on large-scale search and rescue operations.

MR Botany Port Hacking Unit Commander Noel Parkinson

welcomed the delivery of the vessel for the unit's offshore work.

"The extra size and power will be a tremendous asset to our crews, particularly when they are heading offshore in poor weather and large seas," he said.

*Lord Howe 40*, a former NSW Police Force vessel that has undergone a \$700,000 refit, was deployed to the first offshore MRNSW unit in early December. The new \$850,000 *Jervis Bay 40*, built by Harwood Marine, is scheduled to arrive on the bay in January.

## Six more vessels on water by end of season

Another six new rescue vessels will enter operations by the end of the annual boating season.

Following the delivery of 10m Naiads to MR Newcastle and Broken Bay in the second half of this year, three more of the same model are due to be delivered to the Port Kembla, Port Jackson and Evans Head units by the end of February.

The boats are being built by Yamba Welding & Engineering on the Northern Rivers, which also is producing an Ocean Cylinder scheduled for delivery to MR Tuross

in January. The 13.5m *Jervis Bay 40* will arrive early in the new year and *Hawkesbury 30*, an 8.3m Sailfish catamaran, is expected to be completed in March.

Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin said MRNSW was continuing its momentum in the construction of a world-class rescue fleet.

"We delivered 101 safe, modern vessels over the decade to July, including 10 in 2019-20 alone. By the time these new vessels are on the water, we will have increased that tally to 109," he said.



The new *Jervis Bay 40*, nearing completion at Harwood Marine, ahead of its deployment early in 2021.

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## State Communications Centre opens in 2021

More space, upgraded technology to support marine radio operations hub.

Marine Rescue NSW is establishing a State Communications Centre at the hub of the organisation's marine radio operations.

The centre is scheduled to open in April 2021 when MR Terrey Hills moves into large new premises at Belrose in northern Sydney.

The new base will be officially designated as the MRNSW State Communications Centre, reflecting the unit's pivotal role in the organisation's marine radio network.

The move also will signal a change of name from MR Terrey Hills to MR Sydney, in keeping with the marine radio call sign by which the unit is known to boaters in Greater Sydney.

The 24-hour facility will include a dedicated search and rescue

coordination area, meeting rooms and more radio operator stations.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said the move would give the unit's radio operators far more space and upgraded technology for their important work.

"It will include a media wall displaying a range of information and technological tools to give the radio operators greater situational awareness and assist them in tasking resources in response to emergencies on the water," he said.

"They will have direct line of sight to our status board, the AIS vessel tracking system, Seahawk voyage logs and a range of other information, rather than having to toggle between various tabs on a computer for the details they need when coordinating an operation," he



Members of MR Terrey Hills at a strategic planning session for the new MRNSW State Communications Centre.

said. "The volunteers at MR Terrey Hills have been supporting units north and south on the coastline for almost a decade, monitoring their radio traffic overnight. This year they also took over communications for units impacted by bushfires or

closed during our strategic COVID response. These operations are crucial to the safety of boaters on the water because it means that when they call for help, no matter where they are, someone is listening to VHF Channel 16 and will answer."

## Dynamic online resource improving safety

Seahawk update provides live picture of ongoing emergency operations.

A new "live and dynamic" online Incident Management System is improving safety outcomes for boaters caught in emergencies on the State's waterways.

The new IMS was introduced in an update to the groundbreaking MRNSW Seahawk vessel tracking system in September. It is designed to improve the coordination of MRNSW emergency operations and deployment of rescue resources by providing increased visibility over ongoing incidents.

IT Director Florian Glajcar said the "live and dynamic" IMS provided greater situational awareness of operations under way.

"The system is a live and ongoing record of each stage of an emergency operation, from the initial call for help through to the eventual conclusion," he said.

"It means that our Regional Operations Managers and others

have the information they need to ensure the effective coordination of available and appropriate resources in response to an emergency on the water."

The IMS replaces former manual incident management processes that were only visible to the unit directing an operation.

The system also provides more detailed incident reports, recording information such as sea conditions, whether those on board a disabled vessel were wearing lifejackets when a rescue crew arrived on scene, any injuries sustained, what the vessel was doing when the emergency occurred, clearer details on who reported an emergency and whether the boat had Logged On.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said this information aided the effective allocation of rescue resources.

"Having accurate data about



The new MRNSW Incident Management System supports the effective coordination of emergency response operations.

emergencies is crucial to ensuring we have people and assets when and where they are needed. For instance, if we can see that there is a spike in incidents involving people heading out fishing over a hazardous coastal bar, we can pre-deploy a vessel or Rescue Water Craft to ensure we are on scene to provide a rapid response," he said.

"This information also is helpful in guiding our community engagement strategies.

"Again, if we can see that a lot of incidents are reported on 27MHz marine radios in a particular area, we can target our safety messaging in that region to highlight the greater range and clearer reception of VHF radio."

## Grants ease COVID fundraising shortfall

\$200,000 from State Government, IMB for new equipment and facilities.

They might not have been gift-wrapped but seven MRNSW units received more than \$200,000 in early Christmas presents this year.

Five units received a total of \$176,000 from the State Government's Community Building Partnerships (CBP) grants program and another two shared \$30,000 from the IMB Bank Community Foundation.

MRNSW Grants and Sponsorship Manager Mat Smith thanked the State Government and IMB for their welcome support.

Mr Smith said the grants were particularly valuable this year, given the impact of COVID-19 on units' fundraising activities.

"Despite all the difficulties imposed by fires, floods and the pandemic, our units still managed

to raise an incredible \$959,600 in 2019-20 but this was a fall of 21.5 per cent from the year before, making these grants all the more valuable to us," he said. "Funding like this helps supply the equipment and facilities our units need for their operations and volunteer training.

"These grants come at a great time, with our training activities scaling back up now that COVID restrictions have eased and with a bumper boating season ahead."

Attending the commissioning of rescue vessel *Broken Bay 30* on November 15, Planning and Public Spaces Minister, Pittwater MP Rob Stokes, announced MR Broken Bay would receive a CBP grant for \$100,000 towards the replacement of the unit's existing base.

The other four units to be



Pittwater MP Rob Stokes announces a \$100,000 grant toward a new MR Broken Bay base during the commissioning of *Broken Bay 30*.

awarded CBP funding are:

- MR Hawkesbury - replacement of pontoon gangway, \$13,750;
- MR Central Coast - smart board and printer, \$8,919;
- MR Tuross - new rescue base safety fence, \$12,500 and
- MR Lake Macquarie - repair foundations of Pelican boat base, \$40,719.

The IMB Bank Community

Foundation grants program

celebrates people and organisations for their dedication to make communities better, safer and more inclusive places.

The Foundation will provide MR Jervis Bay with \$20,000 towards the cost of replacement rescue vessel outboards and MR Middle Harbour \$10,000 towards the cost of a new vessel infra-red camera.



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## Unit coffers take a hit

More than \$2.5 million in revenue from grants, donations and fundraising helped improve facilities, support training and keep our units rescue-ready in 2019-20.

But our units were not spared the financial impact of the dual crises facing the State, with the combined effects of the devastating bushfire season and COVID-19 eliminating many opportunities for fundraising to support local operations.

Units overcame these challenges to still raise \$959,600 but this represented a significant 21.5 per cent decrease over the previous year.

Donations fell 16.7 per cent from 2018-19 to \$709,759.

MRNSW benefited from almost

\$1 million in grants from a range of government agencies, NSW Clubs and other funding bodies.

The State and Commonwealth governments announced the bulk of the funding, allocating \$784,000 to assist units and Headquarters with a number of capital works, equipment, training and recruitment activities and resources.

The downturn has not impacted core services, rescue vessel delivery or capital works, with units' capacity to contribute to costs factored into financing decisions. Full details of revenue and expenditure for the year are documented in the financial statements of the MRNSW 2019-20 Annual Report, published online at [mrnsw.com.au](http://mrnsw.com.au)

## Bermagui Master takes out Rotary award

Four finalists demonstrate versatility, resilience, dedication: Commissioner.

Marine Rescue Bermagui Master and former Unit Commander Alec Percival has been named MRNSW Officer of the Year in a Volunteer Capacity in the 2020 Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards.

The awards were announced by NSW Governor Margaret Beazley and dignitaries at a dinner in Sydney on October 30.

To maintain COVID-19 safety, the finalists attended a series of socially-distanced satellite events around the state. Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Board Directors Glenn Felkin and Keven Marshall joined the four MRNSW finalists at the Mollymook Golf Club event for South Coast nominees, while Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell represented the service at the Sydney function.

Along with Mr Percival, the MRNSW finalists were Allan Brook, from MR Ulladulla, Danielle Carter, from MR Shoalhaven and Steve Angelo, also from MR Bermagui.

Commissioner Tannos congratulated Alec and the MRNSW finalists for their commitment.

"This has been a long, hard year for many. Our four finalists demonstrate the versatility, resilience and dedication to serving their community that our volunteers have shown throughout the bushfire crisis, floods and COVID-19."

Mr Percival was nominated for his



MRNSW Rotary Award winner Alec Percival with finalists Danielle Carter, Steve Angelo and Allan Brook and (rear) Monaro Regional Director Glenn Felkin, Illawarra Regional Director Keven Marshall and Commissioner Stacey Tannos. Photos: Brad Whittaker.

role in many missions in hazardous conditions, including saving a yacht from smashing on to rocks in rough seas at night at Bingie Bingie in 2017, for which he was awarded the Commissioner's Commendation for Courage.

"Our unit in Bermagui is very well regarded by all who know us and thanks should go to all the members who give of their time so selflessly and with such great camaraderie," he said. "It's a great place to 'work'."

Mr Elliott said the awards were a fantastic opportunity to shine a light upon the enormous contribution of emergency services workers.

"This is an appropriate time to pause, reflect and congratulate the individual emergency services for the service that they have provided," he said. "As a state we are hugely

indebted to all our emergency services men and women. We should never take for granted their commitment to protecting us and it is important that we acknowledge

the unsung heroes." The Volunteer of the Year was RFS Rescue Operator Wendy Roberts and Officer of the Year Jessica Whittaker from NSW Ambulance.



Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Rotary District Governor Michael Moore and Elaine Lawler from Aware Super congratulate Rotary's MRNSW Volunteer of the Year, Alec Percival (left).



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## ON THE RADAR

We want you!

# Social media tools target new volunteers

Flexible recruitment campaign to help units build membership.

Marine Rescue NSW units keen to boost their membership now have a new suite of tools to help them recruit more volunteers.

A range of eye-catching social media assets is being rolled out, complemented by a series of postcards focusing on some of the many roles performed by our volunteers, as well as boating safety.

Member Services Manager Adrian Adam said the aim was to help units reach potential new members both online and when engaging face-to-face in the community.

"The online campaign assets take our recruitment message directly to units' social media followers and supporters," he said.

"There is already a deep well of support for our units in their local communities. Reaching out to their

followers online is a way to tap into that goodwill and convert it into action, encouraging people to join their local unit."

Mr Adam said while some units were keen to add to their ranks, others had waiting lists of people wanting to join up, making locally-targeted recruitment preferable to a one-size-fits-all campaign.

"These new assets are like a smorgasbord - units can pick and choose what suits their needs, when they need it," he said.

As well as individualised unit messages and general social media tiles, units are being issued with the full range of eight postcards.

The cards highlight roles including rescue vessel crew, radio operators and RWC operators and spell out the benefits of volunteering,



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For details, visit [mrnsw.com.au/become-a-volunteer](http://mrnsw.com.au/become-a-volunteer)

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

One of the series of eight MRNSW postcards to help units recruit new volunteers.

including learning new skills through nationally-recognised training, making new mates and serving the community. Each bears a QR Code

that links straight to the MRNSW website. Units can access the social media tools on Otter // Documents // Media & Communications.

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| <b>MCGRATHS HILL</b>   | 3 Curtis Rd                     | (02) 4577 8088 |
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## TV series shines spotlight on Sydney Harbour

International exposure for the teams who help keep our busiest waterway safe.

A new television documentary series being filmed on Sydney Harbour this summer is set to introduce MRNSW volunteers to the world, showing the important role they play in helping keep boaters safe on the water.

The Harbour Patrol documentary will showcase the workings of Sydney Harbour, featuring the organisations that work, often sight unseen, to keep the nation's busiest waterway safe and functioning for its many users, from kayakers to ocean liners.

Along with MRNSW, these include NSW Police, NSW Maritime, Transport for NSW, Sydney Ports, salvage operators, commercial fishers, the Royal Australian Navy and cruise ship operators.

Ten one-hour episodes of Harbour Patrol will be produced, with the show expected to air in Australia and internationally on the Discovery Channel late next year to



Vessels from MR Broken Bay, Middle Harbour and Port Jackson assemble on Sydney Harbour.

an expected audience of 900 million globally.

The show will feature big harbour events such as the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and New Year's Eve, along with MRNSW rescue operations.

Camera crews will follow our volunteers on board their vessels and in their bases. While our two

harbour units, MR Middle Harbour and MR Port Jackson, and MR Terrey Hills will be our primary subjects, other units may be featured if they are deployed on the harbour for operations during the filming period, from December to March.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said the series was an

opportunity for Marine Rescue to demonstrate the breadth of its operations and other activities, its collaborative work with other agencies and its professionally trained and resourced volunteers.

"This exposure will benefit our brand, profile, recruitment and sponsorship," he said.

*Phil Campbell*

## Action! Marine Rescue launches new show

I want my MRTV: Monthly video magazine promotes our service and people.

Marine Rescue NSW has embarked on an exciting new project to promote our volunteers and deliver important boating safety messages to a new, wider audience.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos launched our new online monthly video magazine, MRTV, showcasing our world-class vessels and equipment and skilled and dedicated volunteers, in early November.

Each episode will cover key events from across the organisation and include an interview with a staff member or volunteer and safety tips.

In the inaugural 12-minute episode, viewers got to meet new Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell, see super boat *Botany Hacking 30* in action and join the commissioning of Sussex Inlet's new vessel, *SI 20*.

Episode two featured the opening of the new MR Lake Macquarie Search and Rescue Coordination Centre, the commissioning of *Broken Bay 30*, plans for a new \$1.4 million MR Middle Harbour base and tips for kayakers.

Each episode will be available in the first week of the month on the Marine Rescue YouTube channel, with a link from the MRNSW website and Facebook page.

Commissioner Tannos welcomed the new initiative.

"MRTV is a great way to keep our members and the wider community informed of key events and developments across our service and also to provide the community with potentially life-saving safety and preparedness information," he said.



"Thanks to everyone involved in its production, particularly our Deputy Director of Training and talented camera operator and producer Brad Whittaker.

"I encourage all our members to

watch the show and share it with their family members and friends."

If you have events or stories you'd like MRTV to cover, contact the Headquarters Media team at [media@mrnsw.com.au](mailto:media@mrnsw.com.au)

## Sun rises on new summer boating season

Commissioner, volunteers line up on weekend breakfast TV program.

Marine Rescue NSW delivered vital safety messages directly to the public at the official start of the boating season via the popular Weekend Sunrise television program on the October long weekend.

The program provided television viewers around the nation with valuable safety and preparedness information and a glimpse into the NSW service's life-saving work on the water.

Weekend weather presenter James Tobin was joined by Commissioner Stacey Tannos and crews from MR Middle Harbour, Port Jackson and Broken Bay, on board *MH 30*, *PJ 20*, *PJ 30* and *BB 30* and MR Terrey Hills on radio.

After a dawn start at Rose Bay jetty and a quick briefing with the Sunrise team, crews headed out on the glassy waters of Sydney Harbour to shoot a series of five segments covering vital boating safety messages including wearing a lifejacket, Logging On and Logging Off, checking the weather before setting out and carrying the right

safety equipment on board.

A simulated rescue provided an opportunity to highlight the skill and capability of our volunteers and vessels, with MR Port Jackson volunteer Thosh Chege briefly braving the chilly waters off Shark Island before being 'rescued' by the crew of *BB 30*.

Commissioner Tannos said the morning had provided a national stage to showcase the great work of our volunteers and deliver essential safety messaging right at the start of the boating season.

"With COVID-19 keeping most people at home in Australia this summer, we're expecting the busiest boating season on record," he said.

"Being able to get fundamental messages out to such a wide audience is beneficial to all marine rescue services. A better informed boating community is more likely to be better prepared for safer boating and better equipped if something does go wrong.

"I urge all boaters to make safety their highest priority over summer."



Weekend Sunrise weather presenter James Tobin joins Commissioner Stacey Tannos and MR Middle Harbour volunteers Michael Watts and Ben McKeown on board *Middle Harbour 30*.



James Tobin interviews MR Port Jackson volunteer Thosh Chege about volunteering and safety on board.

## App trial to boost awareness of skill, courage

Technology helps crews easily transmit images of conditions, operations.

A trial of new technology over summer will help raise emergency managers' situational awareness of operating conditions and enable our volunteers to more easily demonstrate their vital work to save lives on the water.

Twelve units across all six regions will take part in the trial of a content-sharing app that quickly and easily distributes video and photos taken in the field.

This will not only enable crews to relay visual depictions of the sea and weather conditions to support operational coordination but also help bring to life the many activities our volunteers undertake daily.

MRNSW Media and Marketing Manager Phil Campbell said showcasing the work of our volunteers to the community would help build greater appreciation of their skill and courage.

"When other people head for shore in bad conditions, that's when our crews are often called to duty," he said. "Being able to promote our members' work more widely will potentially help boost our recruitment, fundraising and sponsorship as well as supporting our operational decision making."

The Andy Grace App - named after its developer - will enable crew to quickly send videos and photos



Crew members on *Evans Head 30*, Brad Burgess, Hanabeth O'Reilly and Ken Exley, were among the first to use the Andy Grace App.

by email to their unit executive, Regional Operations Manager and communications personnel.

The trial will run until February next year ahead of an evaluation of the app's suitability and usability.

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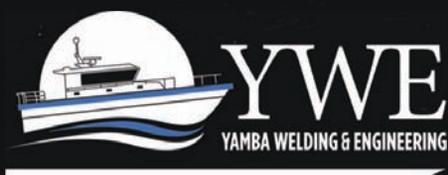


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## Memorial service honours 'the new Anzacs'

2020 ceremony live-streamed as COVID restrictions limit attendance.

The annual NSW Emergency Services Volunteer Memorial Service is always an event of great solemnity for the men and women who often put themselves in harm's way to serve our community.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, attendance at the 2020 service on October 11 was strictly limited, with priority given to the families of the eight NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers whose names were this year added to the memorial.

They included Geoffrey Keaton, Andrew O'Dwyer, Samuel McPaul and Colin Burns, who died during the Black Summer bushfires.

The ceremony was live-streamed for those unable to attend.

Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott said emergency services personnel had taken on the

stature of the new Anzacs.

"That spirit of service and sacrifice, of doing what is right, putting your life on the line without thought of recognition or reward on behalf of your fellow Australians," he said. "I don't think there would be a time in living memory where the people of Australia owed such a debt of gratitude to emergency services. We're not only commemorating the loss of life and remembering the sacrifice paid but we're also celebrating the valour of those who have fallen."

Commissioner Stacey Tanno said it was important to pause to reflect and remember all the volunteers who had made the ultimate sacrifice while on duty.

"We must not forget that these include three members of the



MRNSW Senior Chaplain Rev Richard Wrightson leads prayers at the 2020 NSW Emergency Services Memorial Service in Sydney.

rescue services that united to form Marine Rescue NSW in 2009: David Waddell, from the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association at Ballina, Ted Bristow, from the Port Stephens Coast Guard (now MR Lemon Tree Passage) and Dennis

Matthews from the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol at Lake Macquarie."

The service was the last for MRNSW Senior Chaplain Reverend Richard Wrightson, who led prayers on behalf of our service, before his retirement.



### WATER-ACTIVATED GPS EPIRB

The MT603 Series of water-activated, GPS-equipped EPIRBs from GME are the most advanced 406 MHz digital EPIRBs on the market today. Designed, engineered and manufactured in Australia, the MT603 Series of EPIRBs have obtained international Cospas-Sarsat approval. Boasting the latest advances in emergency beacon technology, the MT603 Series ensures the safety of your vessel and crew in emergency situations, regardless of your location.

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## Albert counts time on Statistics Officer role

Life Member has seen it all, from rescue under sail to chicken smuggling control.

Back in 1989, yachtsman Albert Morris got what he described as the boating equivalent of a flat tyre when one of the blades on his propeller broke.

Calling the then Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol for help, he was impressed by their work and decided to join.

Thirty one years on and closing in on his 90th birthday, Albert is a Life Member of MRNSW and still volunteers with MR Central Coast.

A Coxswain and Radio Operator, he also has served as a Divisional Commander and undertaken many rescues and other activities.

In the early RVCP days, when members used their own vessels to undertake rescues, he remembers sailing on Broken Bay when called to assist a broken down ski boat.

The owner of the vessel was less than impressed with being towed by a yacht and even less so when Albert took advantage of the wind to

raise sail as he headed back to port.

He also recalls his time as a chicken smuggling enforcer during the Newcastle Disease outbreak in 2002, with the unit's vessels being used to check boat movements, especially at night, in case anyone was trying to smuggle chickens out of the quarantine area.

Albert's most enduring legacy is as MRNSW Statistics Officer.

He initially took on the role for the Central Coast RVCP before assuming the state-wide RVCP position in 2006, looking after 26 divisions and greatly improving efficiency by computerising the system.

"When Marine Rescue was formed back in 2010, I became MRNSW Statistics Officer with responsibility for 44 units," he said.

"I liked the interaction with the units as I chased up the data, and it was very satisfying to get the reports completed. Recent changes

in gathering the data have, however, made me reflect that aged 89, it's time to pass the role on to someone new."

Chair Jim Glissan announced Albert's Life Membership in 2016.

"Without Albert's efforts, we wouldn't have been able to tell our story so comprehensively," he said.

Albert said he was honoured.

"All the things I've achieved, I couldn't have done without the support of my wife," he told those at the presentation, at the AGM.

IT Director Florian Glajcar said Albert had made an immense contribution to the organisation.

"Each month, Albert has consolidated information from each unit, such as the number of Log On and Log Offs, people on board and incidents, into the one document," he said. "The data he has diligently recorded has given us a clear picture of our volunteers' heavy workload. We will miss his



Immense contribution ... retiring Statistics Officer Albert Morris.

commitment and expertise in getting us this important information. I'd like to thank Albert for his efforts and wish him well in his continued volunteering with Marine Rescue."

## Podcast offers tips on snaring the big one

Reel Action hooks keen fishing audience to deliver our safety messages.

Taking the boat on holidays this summer? Looking for something entertaining to while away the hours in the car while you're heading to your favourite fishing spot?

The Reel Action Fishing podcast could be just the thing - not only will you pick up some tips for chasing the big one for Christmas dinner but you're sure to get a laugh and a safety message, too.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos was a special guest on the podcast in November, spending an hour chatting all things boating and safety with hosts Michael Guest and Jonathon Bleakley, who also appear on Reel Action TV.

The Commissioner highlighted the value of Logging On with MRNSW and spoke about common

problems that can end up in a rescue operation, the valuable work of our volunteers and his own fishing escapades with his brother and mates in the Northern Territory.

MRNSW is now a sponsor of the podcast, helping to take our safety messages directly to our key market of keen fishers and boaters.

The Reel Action Fishing podcast covers all things fishing, including technique, tackle and tips you might need when you're targeting your favourite fish. The duo interviews anglers and personalities in the fishing industry, while also reliving classic fishing moments.

Each episode focuses on a different species and technique, such as chasing flathead on prawn-style soft plastics, pursuing wild river



Commissioner Stacey Tannos records an episode of the Reel Action Fishing podcast with hosts Michael Guest and Jonathon Bleakley.

Australian bass, spinning for tailor off the beach and trolling live baits for Spanish mackerel.

Guesty is the popular host of Reel Action TV on Ten BOLD on Saturday afternoons, which features safety

messaging from MRNSW each week. You can catch Commissioner Tannos on Episode 35 of Reel Action Fishing, which you can download wherever you find your favourite podcasts.

# Check your safety gear before heading out

Lifejackets, beacons and marine radios can all help save lives in an emergency.

If you're planning on enjoying long days on the water over summer, you should first take the time to ensure your safety gear is in good working order.

It doesn't take long but it could help save your own and your loved ones' lives.

The most basic checks are to make sure your flares and EPIRB have not reached their expiry dates, your lifejacket has been serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions and your marine radio is working.

You can call your nearest MRNSW radio base when heading out and once you reach your destination to check you can be heard loud and clear. MRNSW encourages boaters to make every journey safer by switching to VHF from 27MHz.

VHF provides greater range and clearer reception. GPS-equipped models will guide rescuers to you in the event of an emergency.

A GPS-equipped EPIRB also will give you the best chance of being rescued quickly.

Ensure your EPIRB is registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and its batteries - which generally have a five to 10 year lifespan - have not reached their expiry date.

New laws for EPIRBs on some domestic commercial vessels take effect on January 1. Visit the AMSA website for details.

If you need to dispose of your old marine flares, NSW Maritime will be collecting expired devices at locations from Tweed Heads to Eden up to April 18, 2021. Most



Expired flares can be safely disposed of at a range of NSW Maritime collection points up to April 2021.

flares have a use-by date of three years and they must be replaced before the expiry date. They contain explosive matter, which makes safe and legal disposal difficult.

The collection program provides the boating community with an

opportunity to safely dispose of their out of date flares. Collection is no longer available at service centres, registries or NSW Maritime sites.

For a full list of collection centres near you and dates for disposal, visit [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au)



## Christmas gifts for you Support for us



Looking for the perfect gift for the boater in your life this Christmas? Visit the Marine Rescue NSW e-shop to show your support for our volunteers' work to save lives on the water.

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

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

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

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## What we've been up to



It might have been Friday the 13th but there was nothing unlucky about doing the dawn radio shift at Marine Rescue Cape Byron when this was the sunrise over the most easterly point on the Australian mainland. *Photo: Syl Reid.*



Back on the BBQ ... MR Tuggerah Lakes chefs Bob Sutton, Tim Macdonald, Ken Lawry, Ian White and Greg Gill resume duty behind the hotplate at Bunnings, raising valuable funds for their unit.



Leaders ... MRNSW Board Directors at the opening of the new MR Lake Macquarie base, Bob Wilson, Glenn Felkin, John Lynch, Keven Marshall, Ken Edwards, Pat Fayers and Jim Wright.



Thank you ... Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Deputy Alex Barrell visited MR Camden Haven to present members with NSW Government Bushfire Emergency Citations in November.



Safe ... MR Brunswick Rescue Water Craft operators training on the Tweed River came across a stranded boater on this disabled runabout, towing him back to the Kennedy Drive boat ramp.

## Wooli volunteers ready on and off water

Off-duty members respond quickly to medical emergency at local club.

In an isolated coastal village like Wooli, where the nearest NSW Ambulance is at least 40 minutes away, members of the local MRNSW unit need to be ready for a range of emergencies both on and off the water.

Three members of MR Wooli, Marty Hutchings and Jackie and Richard Taffs, were quick to respond when called to assist a patron at the local bowling club who had collapsed, unconscious and not breathing.

The three, who had only recently renewed their Advanced Resuscitation qualifications, rushed to the club, with Marty stopping to grab the oxygen kit from the unit's rescue vessel on the way.

They joined other volunteers at the club applying defibrillation and maintaining CPR for more than 40 minutes to give the casualty the best chance of survival.

The patient was airlifted to

hospital but sadly died.

With consistently high numbers of visitors to Wooli throughout the year, there has been no boating off-season and the unit has been putting in an extra effort to prepare for an even-busier Christmas holiday season.

Vessel and equipment maintenance has been completed and summer rosters put in place, with a priority on training to maintain, renew and upgrade skills and qualifications.

Matthew McLennan and Marty Hutchings have set themselves the goal of achieving their Leading Crew rating before Christmas.

Both were on board *Wooli 30* for the late afternoon 30nm return run after the boat's engines were serviced at Yamba.

When *Wooli 30* ran into a thunderstorm that had been brewing all afternoon, bringing heavy rain, lightning, hail and wind and



Deck work ... Richard Taffs and Kath Farrar secure a tow during an operation on board *Wooli 30*.

reducing visibility to a couple of boat lengths, it proved a great opportunity to complete their Skills Logs, demonstrating they could recognise and take appropriate action with restricted visibility.

Other activities included diverting from a night exercise to respond to a reported flare sighting and other incident response operations.

Both Marty and Matthew have stepped up to take a leadership role on the vessel and in the unit.

MR Wooli has run eight boat licence courses a month to meet demand since the courses resumed in July, keeping coordinator Jackie Taffs busy.

Radio Club members have been invited to a free sausage sizzle and open afternoon at the Wooli radio base as a way to thank them for their valuable support and extend best wishes for the festive season to all.

*Richard Taffs*

## More border boaters Log On for safety

36% jump in one month as Point Danger keeps watch over bar.

The decrease in COVID-19 numbers and the expanded Northern Rivers 'border bubble' has been encouraging for the boating community around the Tweed.

MR Point Danger has witnessed a month by month increase in the number of recreational boats on the water.

This has been accompanied by a pleasing rise in the number of boaters Logging On and Logging Off with the unit via marine radio and the *MarineRescue* App.

In October alone, the unit saw a record increase of 36 per cent in Logged On vessels. This was accompanied by a 13.8 per cent decline in the number of vessels crossing the often-hazardous Tweed bar without Logging On.

On October 10, the unit's radio operators took an emergency call at 6.15am from two people on board a 39 foot Beneteau that had suffered engine problems off Byron the previous night but managed to make it north under sail to moor at Cook Island overnight. *Point Danger 30* was quickly under way to return the boat to the safety of the river.

As well as keeping watch over our boating community, the unit has been focusing on training activities.

On October 31, two Point Danger volunteers, Tom Cullen and Marty Ritchie, joined 11 of their colleagues from five other Northern Rivers units in sea survival and fire fighting training exercises at Ballina.

The long day included briefings, a practical water survival skills



MR Point Danger member Marty Ritchie in a fire fighting training session hosted by MR Ballina.

exercise and group flare and fire fighting drills.

This was followed in November by two days of Watch Officer training for radio operators Alan Rowlandson, Graham Challender

and Terry Gunton, led by MR Wooli Unit Commander Richard Taffs, watch officer Jackie Taffs, Regional Training Manager Rodney Page and radio operator Sandra Bond.

*Phil Pickering*

## Come fly with me and meet the neighbours

Cape Byron radio operator living the high life as a hot air balloon pilot.

Marine Rescue Cape Byron has a bird's eye view over the surrounding coastline and offshore waters from its clifftop base but Radio Operator Emiliano Cataldi can claim the unit's best view of all.

When he's not on duty at the Cape, Emiliano is a hot air balloon pilot, flying over the stunning Byron coast and hinterland.

Emiliano's favourite flight of 2020 took him right over the top of the neighbouring MR Brunswick unit.

"On that day conditions were such that we could fly the balloons down the Brunswick River using the morning offshore (winds) after taking off from Billinudgel," he said.

"We flew over the marina where *Brunswick 30* is docked so I had a really good look at the harbour and all the boats, of course.

"The Marine Rescue tower that is home to the Brunswick unit is not far either so we got to fly directly over that as well. That was certainly

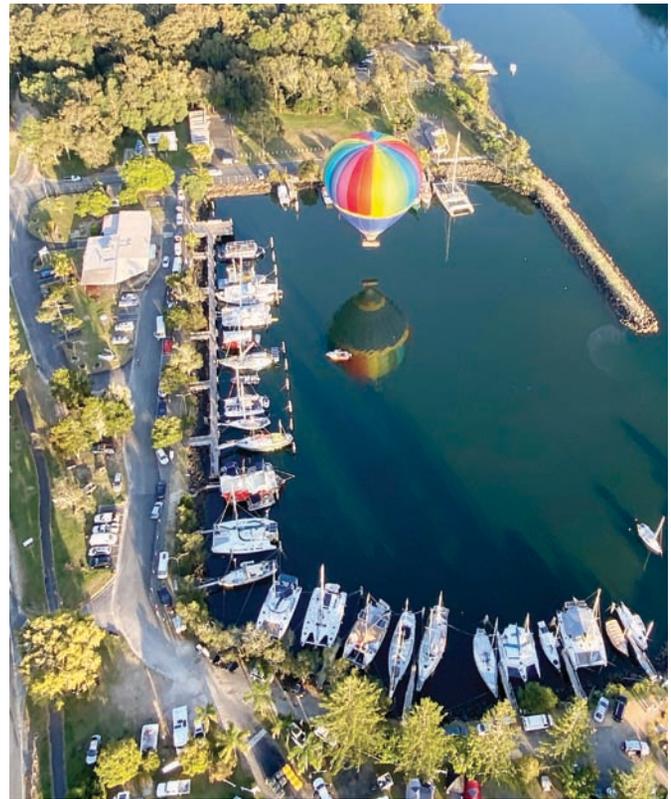
a special occasion. We do fly around Brunswick quite a bit during the spring and summer months but normally a bit further inland towards Mullumbimby.

"It really takes a very special set of circumstances to be able to pull off a flight like that. Needless to say the passengers were elated and so were the numerous bystanders at the harbour. And so was I.

"That was definitely my favourite flight of 2020."

Emiliano's partner and balloon Chief Crew Taylor Miller captured this edition's fantastic cover shot.

Emiliano has been a member of MR Cape Byron since 2016. As a keen surfer with some past experience on boats and a lot of common sense around the ocean, MRNSW was the right fit and four years later, he is now a trained radio operator, providing an essential service for local and visiting boaters on the Northern Rivers.



MR Cape Byron member Emiliano Cataldi's balloon soars over the marina where *Brunswick 30* is moored. Photo: Thomas Dattler.

## Lengthy search finds no trace of swimmer

Evans Head team's painstaking effort demonstrates value of training.

An air-sea search stretching over two days failed to find any trace of a swimmer feared missing at Evans Head on November 24 and 25.

Police were called to Shark Bay, near the entrance to the Evans River, about 7.20pm on Wednesday, November 24, in response to reports that a woman had been observed entering the water but had not been seen since.

A crew from MR Evans Head was quickly on the water, along with the NSW Police Marine Area Command and Surf Life Saving, supported from the air by the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter. The search was suspended at 10pm before resuming at 7.30am the next day.

*Evans Head 30* was again on the

water, crewed by Ian Murray, Rohan Shanahan, Hanabeth O'Reilly and Brad Burgess, with communications support from Watch Officer Karin Brown and Radio Operator Kerrie Exley.

The woman was described as being of Caucasian appearance with a slim build, aged between 30 and 40 years, with blonde dreadlocks.

With weather conditions deteriorating, the search was again suspended early in the afternoon.

No trace of the woman was found and nor had anyone been reported as missing.

Regional Operations Manager John Murray said the Evans Head crew's rapid response and professionalism demonstrated the commitment of the unit's volunteers



*Evans Head 30* crew members Brad Burgess and Ian Murray track their course as they search for a woman feared missing.

and the value of the service's search and rescue training.

"Our team put in a painstaking effort to try to locate the woman

who was seen in the water. The best outcome would be for her to have been safely at home the whole time," he said.

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

## Exercise tests skills, promotes teamwork

Brunswick quick off the mark to locate offshore search target.

An offshore search and rescue exercise has ensured members on the NSW North Coast are ready for the peak boating season.

Twelve volunteers from MR Brunswick took part in the live activation search and rescue exercise north of Brunswick Heads in response to a simulated report of a boat on fire with a severely injured crew member.

Water Police from Tweed Heads supported the exercise.

As part of the test, radio operators at the MR Brunswick radio base received a simulated Mayday call from a vessel off Pottsville. An EPIRB was also activated.

Rescue vessel *Brunswick 30*, already on the water after assisting a vessel in distress, was quickly under way to the scene.

Members of neighbouring MR Point Danger, who had been part of the planning for the exercise, also responded to the activation.

The crew of *BR 30* quickly located a rescue mannequin dropped in the water by the police, providing first aid to the "casualties" before returning them to shore.

MR Brunswick Unit Commander Jonathan Wilcock said the successful exercise had provided invaluable experience for all the volunteers involved.

"In addition to practicing vital



Right on target ... members of MR Brunswick, with Regional Training Manager Rodney Page (left) and Water Police officers, tested their skills during an exercise off the NSW North Coast.

skills on the water, the exercise has promoted the teamwork and coordination essential for any rescue operation," he said.

"With Australians holidaying at home this summer, we're expecting the boating season on the North Coast to be busier than ever this year.

"I urge boaters on our local waters to do their part to help us help them.

"Every minute counts in an emergency on the water.

"Taking simple safety precautions will help our volunteers reach you as quickly as possible if you run into trouble."

Boaters should ensure everyone on board wears a lifejacket; use a

VHF marine radio for greater range and clearer reception; Log On with Marine Rescue on VHF Channel 16

or the free *MarineRescue* App and always check the weather conditions before and during their voyage.



Crew members on board *Brunswick 30* provide first aid treatment to a "casualty" plucked from the ocean during a North Coast search exercise.

## Training success boosts Ballina capability

New recruits welcomed to MR Ballina in recent months are now working towards their radio operator accreditation or training as crew members.

Six unit members, Lee Finch, Angus Steeles, Geoff Hutchinson, Steve Evans, Graeme Gordon and Phillip Wilk, qualified as Crew members between September and November, boosting the unit's duty roster. All were well guided

by Training Officer Norm Lannoy, supported by crew member Tony Hensley and assessor Phil Causley.

Our vessel training successes have been enhanced by new facilities - the crew and training room on a pontoon alongside our vessel mooring and *Ballina 20*, a 6.25m fibreglass vessel.

The secondary response vessel has given us more flexibility in training as well as enabling us

to assist boaters in shallower waterways.

MR Ballina has also been working with volunteers from neighbouring units, recently hosting a fire fighting and sea survival training day coordinated by Regional Training Manager Rodney Page and MR Point Danger skipper Courtney Greenlade and assisted by Ballina skipper Ian Grimwood.

*Kath Begley*



MR Ballina hosts sea survival training for neighbouring units.

## Island throws support behind first rescue unit

Lord Howe vessel arrives before Christmas as volunteers start training.

Ten per cent of local residents have signed up as members of the new MR Lord Howe Island unit and have already embarked on their rescue training.

The unit's rescue vessel, *Lord Howe 40*, left Port Macquarie - where it had been based until the island's COVID-19 restrictions were eased - in early December for the overnight voyage to its new base.

Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell and Director Training and Education Chris Butler visited the island in November to meet members and inspect progress on new communications installations and the unit's base, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Deputy Commissioner Barrell said 33 residents had joined the unit, which was an impressive commitment from a population of about 300.

"The community is really

supportive of the establishment of the unit to provide the first dedicated marine rescue service for the large local and visiting boating population," he said. "Chris and I travelled over to meet with Unit Commander Jim McFadyen, check on the progress of the building works and, most importantly, meet with the members.

"Sixteen of them were able to come to a meeting so we could update them on progress with the construction of the base and the marine radio infrastructure being installed. After the meeting we had time for an informal catch-up, which was a great opportunity to meet our newest volunteers and hear their experiences of life on the island."

The pair also met representatives of the Lord Howe Island Board, Marine Park and police.

Mr Butler said unit training had begun on November 23, starting



Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell meets members of the new MR Lord Howe Island unit to brief them on training and operations.

with a first aid and advanced resuscitation course led by Regional Training Manager South Stuart Massey, who also had helped members start their Crew and Leading Crew course work.

"Stuart also worked with the Surf Life Saving NSW Academy to provide similar first aid training to members of the public at a discounted price

as a goodwill gesture," he said.

"Regional Training Manager North Rodney Page then began Coxswain training. Many of the members already hold commercial maritime qualifications and have experience on a range of vessels, so the plan was to complete their successful operational assessments within a fortnight."

## Recognition for fundraisers, radio operators

Crowdy Harrington members have full training calendar for new year.

Marine Rescue Crowdy Harrington members have been fully occupied with Radio Operator training and Crew drills recently.

Three assessments will mark the conclusion of our training schedule for the year before courses resume in the new year for our Watch Officer, Leading Crew and Coxswain trainees.

We will also have five new members ready to begin their radio and crew training.

Congratulations to Lyn Wright for successfully completing her Radio Operator Assessment.

Regional Training Manager Rodney Page recently presented members with service medals and newly-earned epaulettes.

Patricia Carberry received her 20-year Long Service Medal.

After serving first as a member of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, Pat became one of the foundation members of the new MR Crowdy Harrington and has been an outstanding fundraiser for the unit.

Wendy (Robyn) Hoare, another top-notch fundraiser, and Radio Operator Les Wynne were awarded their five-year service ribbons.

Newly-qualified Radio Operator Leona Jeffery was presented with her epaulettes and certificate.

We are looking forward to the commissioning of rescue vessel *Crowdy 20* as soon as restrictions allow our members, sponsors, and local community to gather in sufficient numbers.

Thank you to all our members for their efforts during this difficult year.

*Cheryl Rowe*



Regional Training Manager Rodney Page congratulates MR Crowdy Harrington's Pat Carberry for two decades of service.

## Respect and gratitude stand test of time

Mid North Coast manager applauded for 35 years' dedicated service.

Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager and MR Port Macquarie volunteer Randall Gawne has seen it all in his 35-year career but rather than the trauma and tragedy, what sticks in his mind is the gratitude of the families whose loved ones have been returned to their arms.

Randall's dedicated service was recognised when Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan presented him with the second clasp to the National Medal in a ceremony on November 17.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell, Director John Lynch, Port Macquarie-Hastings Mayor Peta Pinson and representatives of local emergency services also attended, along with many unit members keen to applaud the accolade for their highly regarded fellow volunteer.

Randall said some of the things that stood out the most in his memory were not the operations but the thanks from the family members of those he had saved and the mutual respect between the



Congratulations on 35 years of diligent service ... Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne surrounded by dignitaries who attended the presentation of his second clasp to the National Medal.

professionals he had met on the job.

Beginning his career as an original member of the ACT Police Force in 1977, Randall gained experience in traffic, training and breath analysis, rising through the ranks before joining a United Nations Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus for three years. By 1995, he had become a member of the Queensland Police, eventually spending 18 years in the Water Police. As Officer in Charge of Water Police on Thursday Island, he had

an area of responsibility for Search and Rescue of more than 300,000 square kilometres, with the 24 metre police vessel patrolling the region's islands on a one week out-one week in basis.

In the course of his duties, Randall was responsible for coordinating more than 2,000 search and rescue operations, delivering a scheme to give free lifejackets to every school child in the Torres Strait and through education, helping to reduce the

number of search and rescues from more than 200 a year to 80-90.

Randall joined MRNSW as the Mid North Coast ROM in 2016. He has responsibility for nine units and about 600 volunteers. Like all our ROMs, he is on call 24/7, coordinating search and rescue operations, inspecting units and boats for operational readiness and liaising with agencies including the NSW Police Marine Area Command, Surf Life Saving and NSW Maritime.

*Rob Breskal*

## Industrious team ready for summer action

Members of MR Forster-Tuncurry have been industriously preparing for a bumper boating season.

Our crews have successfully completed 12 rescue missions, including eight offshore, over the past three months - a comparatively low number given the influx of visitors to the area each weekend, eager for some time on the coast in the face of COVID restrictions on travel farther afield.

The unit has used this operational lull to ensure we have fully trained and qualified boat and radio crew ready for the tourist season ahead.

Three members have recently qualified as Radio Operators, three

more as Crew and another three as Leading Crew. Ten trainee Radio Operators are enhancing their skills under the watchful eyes of mentors.

A huge thanks goes not only to these members but also our training team, led by Michael O'Halloran and Ray Mazurek, for their unending commitment.

In addition to training our local volunteers, the team also travels to the neighbouring Crowdy Harrington unit to assist with its training needs.

Despite the pandemic difficulties, our support team members have maintained their diligence and dedication in supporting our crews on the water and airwaves, whether through training, fundraising,



Charting their progress ... MR Forster-Tuncurry trainees hard at work plotting a course with help from the unit's training team.

balancing the books or maintaining our base. Well done to members everywhere who volunteer hours to

support our mission to save lives on the water.

*Fran Breen*

# Volunteer first on scene to aid stricken yacht

Three sailors returned safely to land in marathon search and rescue operation.

Three yachtsmen were safely returned to shore following a joint search and rescue operation more than 220nm off the NSW coast in November.

The NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and Australian Maritime Safety Authority launched the operation after the crew of *Solar Coaster* issued a Mayday call when their 11.5m yacht was dismantled about 110nm west of Lord Howe Island.

But before the authorities arrived on scene, initial help was provided by another yacht, *Cool Change*, which had been sailing in company with *Solar Coaster* on the return journey from the island to the mainland. Its three-member crew included MR Port Macquarie volunteer, Larisa Trapeznikova, who relates the story:

The sailing trip from Lord Howe Island back to Port Macquarie happened to be quite interesting. The three of us left our mooring early morning at 5.30am on November 9. The first day was smooth, though with a quite big 3m swell and 20 knots of southerly wind on the beam reach, and by midnight we had covered almost 100nm.

We (then) received a disturbing message of *Solar Coaster* being dismantled. For safety, there are always a minimum of two people on the deck (of *Cool Change*). The rotation at night works this way: two hours on the helm, two hours on standby, two hours below in the cabin; this all works fine when everything is in order and calm.

But the message we received at midnight broke this routine. I imagined all possible horrible scenarios on how and why the mast would be broken.

*Solar Coaster*, being bigger and faster than us, was about 15nm ahead. We entered its position into GPS and pressed the GOTO button. It took us about 2.5 hours to find it



A NSW Police Marine Area Command vessel tows the dismantled *Solar Coaster* safely into Nelson Bay on November 14 after a 220nm rescue operation.

in the dark moonless night.

All three on *Solar Coaster* were safe and not injured and the yacht's electrical motor was in order, though with nowhere near enough petrol to motor 220nm to the closest point on the Australian shore at Port Macquarie.

Our first attempt to tow *Solar Coaster* was not successful. The rope was too short, no bridle on any end, the big swell caused a collision and minor damage to *Cool Change* and finally we could not make any way forward. We noticed that our position had remained practically unchanged in 30 minutes.

Skipper Teddy Clausen made a decision to disconnect the tow line, browse around *Solar Coaster* till morning and re-assess the situation in the daylight.

Morning had brought not only clear vision of the scene but clear heads and the towing operation was a success. This time, the *Solar Coaster* crew made the bridles on both ends of the tow line: well done, guys.

In the meantime, *Solar Coaster* had issued an alert and the NSW Police Marine Area Command, in a joint operation with AMSA, had commenced a rescue operation. By midday on Tuesday, November 10,

the Challenger SAR aircraft from Melbourne appeared in the sky and 80 litres of fuel and a satellite phone were dropped to *Solar Coaster*. It was done with such impressive precision that it was amazing to watch. After the successful AMSA operation drop about 3pm, with sad feelings towards *Solar Coaster*, we smoothly sailed off to the west, putting up both mainsail and the jib.

We couldn't do anything more for them. We wouldn't have enough fuel to tow it all 220nm. In fact, at that moment we had only 30 hours of fuel left and needed to use wind power to come back. After 85 hours, including our detour and a delay of 12 hours around the distressed

*Solar Coaster*, we successfully crossed the wild Port Macquarie bar at 2pm on November 12 and entered our dear safe harbour.

A Marine Area Command vessel met *Solar Coaster* on Thursday, November 12, taking it under tow for the 200nm journey back to the NSW coast.

Despite facing some unfavourable weather and sea conditions - which at times restricted their speed to just four knots - both vessels arrived safely at Nelson Bay on November 14. After five days at sea, the fatigued men were reunited with family members shortly after docking at Port Stephens Water Police.



MR Port Macquarie member Larisa Trapeznikova and skipper Teddy Clausen on board *Cool Change*, with *Solar Coaster* under tow.

## Father and son rated for family commitment

Nambucca ends difficult year stronger, with ambitious plans for 2021.

Looking back over 2020, it was difficult in many ways but MR Nambucca pleasingly ends the year in a stronger position, with growth in both our volunteer numbers and capability.

Congratulations to our father and son team Tim and Harry Milligan, who have both successfully attained their Crew ratings.

Not content to rest on their laurels, both have now enrolled in Rescue Water Craft training.

We have welcomed another new recruit, Max Englert, whom we're glad to have in our ranks.

A full schedule of unit training is being guided by Training Officer and Coxswain Vaughn Thompsett, who provides challenging scenarios as well as regular operating procedure reviews for our trainees.

The unit's 25-year-old RWC launch ramp has recently been repaired after the concrete end,



The family that trains together ... MR Nambucca father and son volunteers Tim and Harry Milligan receive their Crew epaulettes from Training Officer Vaughn Thompsett and Unit Commander Gary Nichols.

which was not steel-reinforced, snapped.

Launching and retrieval at low tides is now much easier and, more importantly, safer.

Our RWC operators will again be providing daily rescue coverage on the shallow Nambucca bar during the peak holiday season.

Once we bid 2020 farewell, we

have big plans for the New Year.

Our bucket list for 2021 includes gaining another Coxswain, two or three more accredited RWC operators and all our new members rated as Crew.

We also are looking to move forward with plans to obtain a site for a new boat shed where we can launch around the clock without

being limited by sand build-up.

Thank you to all the members of MR Nambucca for their enthusiasm and support and to our Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne and Regional Training Manager Rodney Page, both of whom have gone above and beyond in supporting and advising the unit.

*Gary Nichols*

## Parliamentary tribute for former commander

MP thanks Camden Haven member for contribution to unit and boating safety.

Tribute has been paid in the NSW Parliament to the contribution of long-serving MR Camden Haven volunteer Ken Rutledge, particularly during his six-year term as Unit Commander.

Addressing Parliament on October 13, Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams said it was a privilege to acknowledge Mr Rutledge for his exemplary commitment to Marine Rescue and the community since joining the organisation in 2007.

"During this time, Ken's dedication in educating the Camden Haven residents on water safety while recruiting additional volunteers has been at the forefront of his contribution to Marine Rescue," Ms Williams said.

"During his 13 years of service, Ken has held a number of positions

within the unit, including Watch Officer, Radio Operator and Coxswain, before being elevated to the Unit Commander's rank.

"In 2017, Ken led a rescue involving three men whose vessel capsized in the Camden Haven River, which tragically saw a 59-year-old man lose his life.

"It is during these circumstances that Ken reflects on how essential it is for boating enthusiasts to register their vessel on VHF Channel 16 so that swift action can be taken in the event of an emergency.

"On behalf of the community, I would like to sincerely thank Ken for his outstanding contribution to Marine Rescue," she said.

Mr Rutledge stood down as Unit Commander this year after completing the maximum three



Thanks Ken ... former MR Camden Haven Unit Commander Ken Rutledge and Fundraising and Uniform Officer Marie Roberts.

terms at the helm permitted under the MRNSW Constitution.

He remains with the unit and has been appointed Property and

Public Relations Officer. The unit's new Commander is Neville Adams, who was elected at the July Annual General Meeting.

# Members prove resilience and adaptability

Port Stephens resumes popular visitor services after COVID shutdowns.

The most impressive outcome of 2020 for MR Port Stephens has been the dedication of volunteers to continue saving lives on the water.

As the unit has grappled with a slowdown in training, recruitment and a temporary pause in our promotional and fundraising activities, all driven by COVID-19, the resilience and dedication of our volunteers has stood out across the unit's activities.

People have stepped up, adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic and worked within the restrictions imposed by health regulations to continue our operations.

Our boat crews and radio room have responded to a similar number of emergencies as last year, launching 181 rescue missions and

our radio team handled 22,870 radio transmissions.

As we prepare for the coming boating season, with expectations of a larger than usual number of boaters enjoying the waters of Port Stephens, our volunteers are ready. The boating community can continue to enjoy our waterways in the knowledge that our volunteers remain resolute.

Equally important as our frontline services are the valuable roles filled by our 'back office' volunteers.

MR Port Stephens is fortunate to have almost 200 active volunteers, with many involved in non-operational roles.

A dedicated band of members runs our main revenue source, the gift shop, that is supported by local residents and visitors who often



MR Port Stephens volunteer Cottage Guide Valerie Bennett talks about the Inner Light site's history with curious visitors.

travel from Sydney or beyond to enjoy the range of goods on offer.

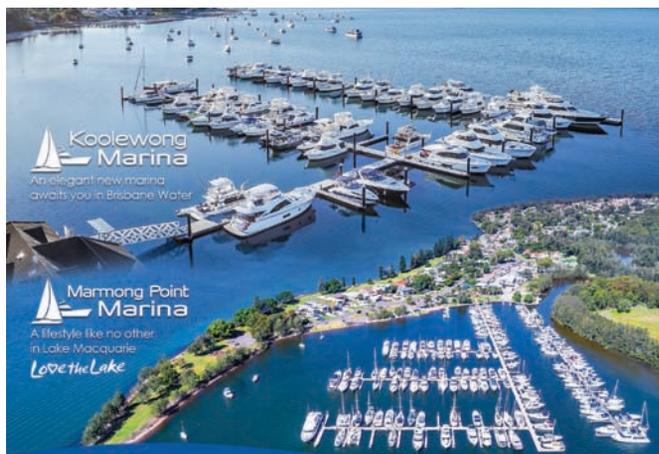
This group of volunteers has ensured the unit stays on a firm financial footing. Others train as volunteer guides to lead tours of the cottage, imparting their knowledge of the Inner Light and the early history of Nelson Bay. While closed for some time due to the COVID restrictions, the cottage has reopened and visitors are returning.

Yet others maintain our buildings and beautiful grounds, which attract

compliments from our many visitors.

With such a large membership operating in diverse areas, our administration team skilfully ensures the smooth running of the unit. Their day to day workload has expanded to include keeping up adequate COVID-related supplies to undertake additional cleaning, ensuring signage is maintained in line with government requirements and adjusting provision requirements for our volunteers.

*Iain Blackadder*



## A Lifestyle Like No Other

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

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



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

## Volunteer jumps ship



MR Central Coast volunteer Trevor Phipps on board a yacht under tow.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers are adept at operating on a variety of vessels, as MR Central Coast member Trevor Phipps showed during an October rescue.

Ted Leeson, Bob Knowles, Megan Looney and Trevor were on a training exercise on *Central Coast 22* when tasked to Ettalong to assist the skipper having trouble retrieving

her anchor in the strong current.

Trevor jumped on to the yacht to help as *CC 22* slowly pulled it forward enough to help loosen the anchor so Trevor could haul it on board.

The skipper then manoeuvred back to her mooring and once it was secured, *CC 22* came alongside to collect their crewmate.

# \$1.8M base ensures 'even greater service'

Lake Macquarie centre first developed thanks to enhanced State funding.

Friday the 13th of November proved lucky for members of MR Lake Macquarie, with the opening of their landmark new \$1.8 million Search and Rescue Coordination Centre.

The base is the first major development funded under the State Government's \$37.6 million four-year injection to MRNSW.

NSW Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott joined Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell, Board Directors and unit members to officially open the doors to the centre.

Swansea MP Yasmin Catley, Lake Macquarie MP Greg Piper, Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Kay Fraser and Carol Proctor, from the Bahtabah Aboriginal Land Council, also attended the event.

The base sits on land important to the local Awabakal Aboriginal people, with a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country marking the start of the ceremony.

MRNSW Senior Chaplain and MR Lake Macquarie member Reverend Richard Wrightson was surprised to be awarded Life Membership during the event.

Mr Elliott said the tremendous facility meant the volunteers now had an operations base that was specifically designed to support them in their work to keep watch over the boating community and save lives on the water.

"It is fitted with the very latest marine communications and search and rescue technology, significantly enhancing their ability to listen for distress calls from boaters in trouble and respond to emergencies around the clock," he said.

"The NSW Government is proud to support the volunteers from Marine Rescue NSW and especially to provide them with the facilities they need to provide an even greater service to the boating community on



A bird's eye view of the opening of the new \$1.8 million Lake Macquarie base. Photos: Brad Whittaker.

the Hunter and Central coasts and Lake Macquarie."

The new base, overlooking the lake, the hazardous Swansea Channel, Moon Island and the coastline, replaces the cramped and outdated radio tower in which the unit had operated for decades.

It is equipped with the latest generation of online marine radio technology for four radio operators and dedicated command and control facilities for planning, managing and coordinating extended and multi-agency search and rescue operations.

It also incorporates training and meeting space, storage for rescue equipment, offices, amenities, kitchen facilities, a viewing platform and a lift to improve access for volunteers living with disability.

Commissioner Tannos thanked the State Government for its four-year investment in new and refurbished operating facilities, 38 new rescue boats and upgrading of the marine radio network.

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

Unit Commander Malcolm Druce said the new building was the culmination of extensive planning and input by the unit's volunteers.

"This new centre is already enhancing our operations and

providing our members with a safe, secure working environment. We are confident that such first-rate facilities will also help us encourage new members to join the unit," he said.



Lake Macquarie MP Greg Piper, Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Swansea MP Yasmin Catley gather for the opening ceremony.



Radio operator Mick Norvill keeps watch from the new radio room, which provides panoramic views over the region's waterways.

# Rookie to training leader in just three years

Lemon Tree Passage officer encourages others to take the journey.

Training is fundamental to MRNSW volunteers' safety and maintaining our world-class service to the boating community. Our education program is delivered by the Headquarters training team and qualified volunteers in our units. Here, MR Lemon Tree Passage member Caroline Liddicoat recounts her journey from Provisional Member to unit Training Officer in three years and a pandemic.

I'm a Marine Rescue Watch Officer who is also the Training Officer for MR Lemon Tree Passage and, as if I didn't have enough to do, I'm also responsible for PR. But three years and four months ago, I had just joined the unit as a Provisional Member, setting my feet on the pathway to Radio Operator.

So how did I get from raw recruit to Training Officer? Opportunity,

determination and mentorship played a large part, along with some effort on my part.

The opportunity came in the form of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, offered by MRNSW to its members for the first time in 2019 and delivered by Forsythes Training. By this time, I had become a qualified Radio Operator and was studying the Watch Officer program.

Starting in October 2019, the course incorporated 10 units of study over six months, with a further six months to complete.

I have to admit I struggled with the absorption of so much new information but the nice bonus was meeting other people in the organisation who not only shared the same struggles but also the same ideals and dedication to Marine Rescue.



MR Lemon Tree Passage Training Officer Caroline Liddicoat.

The course was held over several weekends at either MR Hawkesbury or the Rural Fire Service Control Centre near Mooney Mooney. The Hawkesbury unit generously allowed some of us to bunk overnight at its base, which allowed us to network with more people.

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions meant training could no longer take place face-to-face, creating a new challenge to learn how to meet over Zoom for classroom discussion and training. Undeterred, I finally finished the work needed to complete all 10 units in March and in April the culmination of all that hard work arrived in the mail - my Certificate IV Training and Assessment.

At this point I expected to be tapped by the unit's Training Officer to help with training. Instead, he persuaded me to replace him, assuring me he would help with the training while I took care of the administration. He resigned a couple of weeks later and although he passed on a lot of information - as did our hard-working Regional Training Manager Jane Shirriff - both before and after my induction, I had a steep learning curve as I worked out what was involved to fill the role

effectively. We'd also just completed a recruitment drive, meaning lots of budding radio operators and boat crew needed induction and training. The support of many people reduced the anxiety I might otherwise have felt.

A full year has passed since I started the course. Yes, it was a lot of work and yes, I might have faltered if I'd realised what 2020 might throw at me but would I do it again? Absolutely. The journey was both fulfilling and enjoyable.

The end result? I've put a trainee through an operational assessment, I've run a few inductions, I've worked out training plans and paired up radio operators with trainees to fast track training and worked with skippers and the boat roster officer to optimise crew training.

I also completed my Watch Officer qualification to become the first and currently only WO at my unit for many years.

Thank you to the members of MR Hawkesbury, Newcastle and Lemon Tree Passage, Jane Shirriff and my husband for helping me across all the hurdles. To those of you contemplating the path, I encourage you to start the journey. The end destination makes it worthwhile.

If you're not a member of the **Boat Owners Association**, you should be!



**Boat ramp access**  
We have fought attempts to reduce trailer parking at metropolitan boat ramps.

**Don't lose your mooring**  
We are participating in the RMS moorings review, safeguarding your rights.

**Boating access to prized anchorages**  
We have fought attempts to introduce anchoring bans at Manly Cove West and Quarantine Beach.

**A fairer deal for street parking**  
Boat trailer parking rules that work for all.

**Keeping channels to our waterways open**  
We are working with the RMS & Lands Department to ensure that dredging is kept up to date.

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## \$2M for Newcastle base stimulus project

Unit Commander welcomes State Government grant for 'inspiring' facility.

Marine Rescue Newcastle's plans for a permanent new base on the Hunter River in Stockton are a step closer to reality after the State Government announced on November 11 that it would provide \$2 million towards the development.

Parliamentary Secretary Catherine Cusack said the funding was part of the government's COVID-19 stimulus program.

"This \$2 million funding is fantastic news for Marine Rescue Newcastle and the future of maritime safety in the Newcastle region - \$600,000 will be provided this financial year and \$1.4 million next financial year," she said.

"The funding will allow the local branch of Marine Rescue NSW to build a quality new permanent home on Crown land close to the water near South Stockton boat ramp."

Newcastle City Council voted in August to offer Crown land it manages at South Stockton to the unit for its new base on a peppercorn lease.

Water, Property and Housing Minister Melinda Pavey said the COVID-19 stimulus program was working to enhance important community infrastructure across the state, including the Newcastle marine rescue centre, while supporting jobs and local economies in regional areas.

Unit Commander Ron Calman said it would be inspiring for the unit's members to have a new building with dedicated training areas.

He said it would be the first time the unit's radio and vessel teams would share one location.

"It's fantastic. We've really come



An architect's impression of the new MR Newcastle base planned for the Stockton waterfront.

a long way," he said.

MRNSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos said he was thrilled by the stimulus funding.

"The Government's support will ensure our volunteers have a modern, purpose-built base with state-of-the-art facilities for their

emergency operations," he said.

"The base will be fitted out with the latest marine radio equipment along with training facilities, offices, volunteer amenities, a crew ready room and berthing facilities for the unit's new \$535,000 rescue vessel right at the door."

## Unit a 'second family' for mum, daughter

Lake Macquarie duo reflects on 55 years' volunteering experience.

Between them, Audrey Burgess and her daughter Kay have amassed an extraordinary 55 years of dedicated service to MR Lake Macquarie. For both of them, the unit has been their second family, a place of friendship and support.

Despite having no experience with boats, Audrey joined the then Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association in 1991, finding her niche as a radio operator with the occasional shift as a crew member and three years as purser.

She found the hardest thing back in those days was understanding the boating terminology and jargon.

"It was like learning another language," she said. "Fortunately, everyone was lovely and helped me to get through."

Reflecting on nearly three decades as a volunteer, Audrey said the best thing about being a

member was the camaraderie and family feel of the unit.

"Everyone knows each other, and looks after each other," she said.

"Kay grew up in the unit and the way everyone looked out for her, it made me feel really good. It has been wonderful to help people out as a volunteer and there's always been a bit of room to have something to laugh about."

Kay hung around the unit with her mum from a young age, helping out, until someone suggested she might as well join. So in 1993, aged just 16, she became the youngest woman to join the then RVCP.

A radio operator, Kay also headed out on crew duties and spent time as stores officer and fundraising.

Kay said while she enjoyed all these roles, she loved a bit of adventure and often found herself being used as the "casualty" in unit



Audrey and Kay Burgess (second and third from right) join other members to farewell the old MR Lake Macquarie radio base.

training exercises.

"There were several times I found myself dangling from a helicopter, playing a dead body or being thrown overboard," she said. "I also really enjoyed helping out on board doing exclusion zone control for the Sydney Olympics yachting.

"I've been so fortunate to have had many great experiences in my

time as a volunteer."

What is the best thing about being a volunteer at Lake Macquarie for her?

"The people, the atmosphere and helping the community. Knowing you are there to help people and having your Lake Macquarie unit family there when you need them."

*Phil Campbell*

## Crew pulls wet, cold paddlers to safety

Tuggerah Lakes members welcome return of Bunnings BBQ.

Four people suffering hypothermia were rescued by MR Tuggerah Lakes volunteers after they ran into trouble on a paddle boat and two kayaks in extremely poor conditions on the Tuggerah Lake.

With the chop on the lake up to two metres, the unit's duty crew quickly deployed on board *Tuggerah Lakes 20* on September 26 when they were called to rescue two people on a paddle boat that was reported to have capsized.

On arrival on scene, the crew found the boat immersed in water and two kayakers also needing help.

All four paddlers were taken on board *TL 20* and treated for mild hypothermia en route to the North Tacoma boat ramp, where they were met by local police.

The kayaks were taken under tow but the paddle boat had to be released as it was unsafe to tow.

Later that afternoon, *TL 20* was tasked to rescue a sailboard rider

unable to get back on his board but when the crew arrived, they found he had made it safely to shore.

The following afternoon, the unit again deployed to assist with a jet ski stranded on the mud flats just north of the Pelican Channel with two young boys on board.

Their father swam out and was able to get the ski working and eventually to extricate it safely.

The unit has maintained its operations and training within COVID-19 parameters during 2020 but our many dedicated fundraisers have been somewhat parked until lately.

We weren't the only ones pleased when the easing of restrictions at last allowed for the return of the Bunnings barbecue.

This has enabled all our members to contribute by being rostered for shifts behind the hotplate.

We have received unbelievable support from the community and



Two people from a paddle boat and two kayakers were treated for mild hypothermia on board *TL 20* after being rescued on Tuggerah Lake.

staff of Bunnings for this positive progression from the COVID lockdowns.

The teams at the Lake Haven and Tuggerah Bunnings stores have been professional and helpful in getting the good old Aussie

sausage sizzle back up and running to provide much needed income for our unit. Not only does this help with our costs but the socialisation around the barbecue plate has been a blessing.

*Tony Younglove & Bob Sutton*

## Mural transforms base into tourist attraction

Norah Head fishing families, natural history inspire colourful design.

Marine Rescue Norah Head is turning a bright new face to the world.

The unit's beachfront base now features a mural by local artist Angela Clark, commissioned by the Norah Head Boat Club, with which the unit shares the Cabbage Tree Bay building.

Club Vice Commodore John Hinks told the *Coast Community News* the mural had been well received and was becoming a popular backdrop for visitors taking photos.

"It has totally transformed the building and brought it to life," he said.

Ms Clark said the wealth of knowledge and history in the area had inspired the mural, which took eight days to paint, with rain

delaying its completion.

"We wanted to pay tribute to all the generations of fishing families, the ring of pines in the northern area, that's something that I've always associated with this area, and they've been a landmark for so long for people out on the water," she said.

"The mural depicts the nature of the area and some of its characters, like the mariner in the corner, and the resident stingray in the bay gets a look in, too, at the other corner of the mural."

In other news, the unit has acquired a new custom-built launch trailer for *Norah Head 20*, which is launched from the beach.

The trailer was made by Felk Engineering at Warner's Bay.



History in paint ... artist Angela Clark's mural on the MR Norah Head base depicts local characters and the surrounding environment.

# Naiad descended from famous local flagship

Investment creates opportunity for new generation of capability: Minister.

A ceremony to commission a new \$613,000 rescue vessel was an opportunity to recognise decades of fleet progress and reflect on the proud record of volunteer rescue on Sydney's northern waterways.

Members of MR Broken Bay gathered at the Royal Motor Yacht Club on Pittwater with Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, Planning and Public Spaces Minister, Pittwater MP Rob Stokes, and Federal Member for Mackellar Jason Falinski to commission *Broken Bay 30* on November 22.

Mr Elliott said the State Government had provided MRNSW with a record budget, the largest investment it had ever made in the organisation.

"I make no apology for that. It creates a unique opportunity for a new generation of facilities, equipment and capability," he said.

"This will be an extremely busy summer as Australians try to enjoy our own backyards and staycations.

"There will be more pressure on our waterways and more pressure on you. Australians are reassured you're out there."

Mr Stokes said it was in many



MR Broken Bay UC Jimmy Arteaga, Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, Mackellar MP Jason Falinski, Michael Seale, Minister David Elliott and Planning Minister, Pittwater MP Rob Stokes, welcome *Broken Bay 30* to the fleet.

ways a historic day, recognising where MRNSW had come from and where it was going.

He recalled the days when the *Krait* - famous for the Z Force raid on shipping in Singapore Harbour during World War II - had been the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol flagship on local waters.

Mr Stokes announced a \$100,000 Community Building Partnerships grant towards a replacement for the current Broken

Bay unit base, which he said was "held together with gaffer tape".

Commissioner Tannos thanked the State Government for its support, which was "recognition of how proud they are of the work of our volunteers".

He said *BB 30*, a 10m Naiad, was the 103rd boat delivered over the past decade.

Unit Commander Jimmy Arteaga announced the vessel would be named after Michael Seale, who had

committed 30,880 days or 38 years' service to the RVCP and MRNSW.

He said the naming recognised Mr Seale's record of service and input in many roles. Mr Seale said he was both surprised and honoured by the naming.

Unit Commander Citations were presented to Andrew Majewski, Vic Lawrence and Graham Weir, recognising their hard work to induct crew members and prepare *BB 30* for operational duty.

## 12 good volunteers join Broken Bay ranks

Marine Rescue Broken Bay has inducted 12 new volunteers ahead of its busiest months on duty.

The unit's new training team, spearheaded by Training Officer Andrew Palma and Training Systems Office Julie Derry, has implemented a new approach to our training program to give our new members the best chance to complete their course work and achieve their Crew ratings in a timely manner.

On September 20, both unit vessels responded to Sandy Point in Pittwater, where floating luxury B&B, *Lily Pad*, was on fire.

Our vessels set up a cordon

to keep the public at bay so the Scotland Island Rural Fire Service could attack the blaze. Unfortunately, *Lily Pad* burnt to the waterline.

The Royal Motor Yacht Club's boating season launch on September 30 was the first official engagement for our new vessel.

Congratulations to Mike Charlton and Ron Carr, who have recently been recognised for 10 and 15 years' service respectively and to Rob Chant and Barley Stewart, who have attained their Crew ratings.

My thanks to the 15 Broken Bay members who have been awarded the 2020 NSW Bushfire Citation



Spearheading change ... MR Broken Bay Training Systems Officer Julie Derry and Training Officer Andrew Palma.

award for their efforts in supporting the RFS during the unprecedented

bushfires at the start of the year.  
*Jimmy Arteaga*

Proud to support Marine Rescue NSW

## BERTH YOUR BOAT on the HAWKESBURY

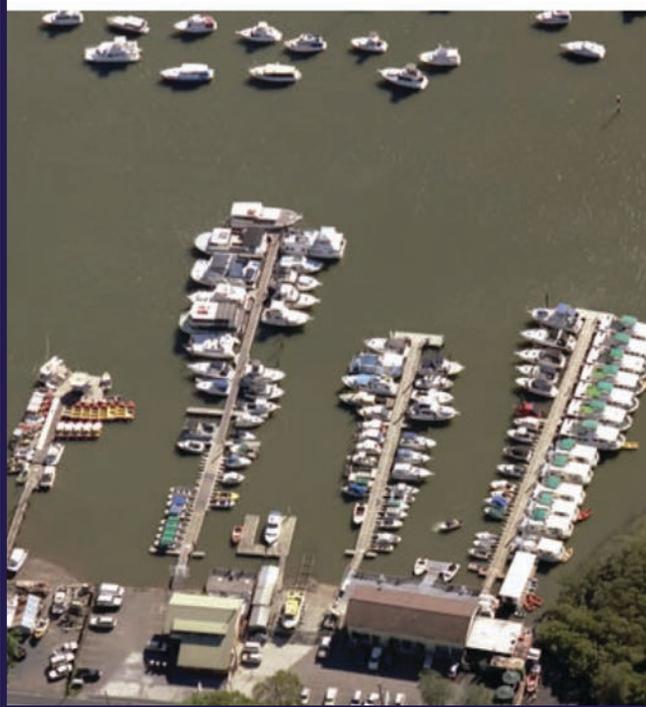


- 88 berths with power and water
- 23 swing moorings (free dinghy storage)
- Boom gate access to car park
- Toilets and showers
- Slipway to 15 tonnes
- Convenience store (Brooklyn Central)
- Unleaded fuel on wharf for marina clients
- Mechanic on site



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**MAKING WAVES**  
Greater Sydney News

## Boat plan gives way to 45 years' service

'I wouldn't trade my time for anything.'



Minister David Elliott and Commissioner Stacey Tannos congratulate MR Botany Port Hacking's Ian Baker on his 45 years' service.

Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking volunteer Ian Baker has been honoured for 45 years of dedicated service to the Sutherland Shire boating community.

Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott presented Mr Baker with the third clasp to the National Medal on the rear deck of the unit's new rescue vessel, *Botany Hacking 30*, to a round of applause from Commissioner Stacey Tannos and staff, Ian's wife Dianne and his fellow volunteers.

Back in 1975, Mr Baker was chatting to a neighbour about his plans to buy a boat.

The neighbour, a volunteer at the recently formed Port Hacking Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, convinced him to join the flotilla to learn more about boats before he purchased one.

Nearly half a century later, Mr Baker still hasn't got around to buying his own boat but he continues volunteering, giving his time to help the local boating community.

He reflected on the changes he had seen over the years.

"When I started with the unit we used to meet in halls and sailing clubs, our base was in a boat shed in Yowie Bay and we didn't have our

own vessel but used one provided by a member," he said.

"Over the years, our radio base has moved six times and changed from HF to 27MHz and finally to VHF.

"I've seen mobile phones come in, computers and GPS and the professionalisation of the service that's led to our own boats and equipment - all changes for the good that have made us better at what we do."

Mr Baker's proud record includes holding every position within the unit executive during his years of service, including time as the commander, deputy commander, training officer and treasurer.

Among the many rescue missions he had been involved in and the countless hours of training to develop the skills needed to do those rescues, he said one thing stood out - the many wonderful people he had met and made friends with.

"I wouldn't trade my time in Marine Rescue for anything," he said.

"I've enjoyed giving up my time to help the local community and in return have received the friendship of many wonderful people. It's been a great experience."

*Phil Campbell*

# Volunteers will be walking on sunshine

Grand new \$1.4M plans to replace crumbling Middle Harbour base.

A modern light-filled base will be developed in a grand \$1.4 million project to upgrade MR Middle Harbour's operating conditions.

Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, North Shore MP Felicity Wilson and Mosman Mayor Cr Carolyn Corrigan met volunteers at the unit's rundown base at The Spit on November 25 to announce funding for the development and inspect plans for its purpose-designed replacement.

"Ensuring these volunteers have the purpose-designed facilities and resources to support their vital work will improve boating safety on the harbour," Mr Elliott said.

"Sydney Harbour is the busiest waterway in the country, with thousands of commercial, passenger, sporting and recreational vessels out every day, along with ever-increasing numbers

of paddleboards, kayaks and similar craft. It's important for the community to know that if they're on the water and get into trouble, that we have a professional organisation like Marine Rescue to respond."

The architect's concept drawings for the development have already led unit wits to dub the new building the Grand Piano. Plans show an airy new building with floor to ceiling windows and a raked roofline. It will include training, meeting and store rooms, offices, a crew ready room, lockers, bathrooms and kitchen.

Planning discussions are currently under way with Mosman Council, with demolition work slated to begin in April. Cr Corrigan welcomed the funding announcement.

Ms Wilson said the modern base would ensure the volunteers had the facilities to plan and coordinate their operations to respond to



MR Middle Harbour members, Minister David Elliott, North Shore MP Felicity Wilson, Mayor Carolyn Corrigan and Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell welcome redevelopment plans.

emergencies and support the annual big events on the Harbour, as well as their training activities.

"The existing building has been home for more than four decades to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, Marine Rescue Middle Harbour and for a time, the MRNSW Headquarters. In fact, in years gone

by, volunteers would sleep upstairs during weekend shifts," she said.

"The age and advanced deterioration of the building now means it needs to be replaced and I am pleased the NSW Government has been able to invest the funding to ensure our volunteers have the facilities they deserve and need."

# Emergencies show value of radio knowledge

Terrey Hills specialists respond to calls from Sydney to Bass Strait.

The response to a series of emergencies from Sydney to Bass Strait in recent weeks highlights the value of boaters knowing to use VHF Channel 16 to contact MRNSW.

The communications specialists at MR Terrey Hills immediately picked up distress calls on the VHF channel reporting incidents both directly off Sydney Heads and far to the south, off the coast of Tasmania.

VHF marine radio offers boaters greater range and clearer reception.

Channel 16 is the international distress, safety and calling channel, which boaters should use to make contact with MRNSW, whether in need of emergency help or more routine assistance such as Logging On or seeking a weather report.

In November, a solo sailor in Bass Strait called MR Eden on VHF Ch

16, which was answered by MR Terrey Hills on its overnight border-to-border radio watch. The sailor advised his sails had been damaged in a storm and he planned to head into Eden after making rectifications in daylight. He failed to make his next scheduled radio call and his yacht was later located with no one on board.

Closer to home, the unit received a distress call on the morning of November 15 reporting two boats had collided off Sydney Harbour, immediately deploying two MR Middle Harbour crews to respond.

At 10.40am on October 17, the unit's radio operators received a Mayday call via a third party boater reporting that a boat was taking on water about 18nm east of Sydney with four people on board. The quick-thinking Good Samaritan



MR Terrey Hills Watch Officers Dorothy Lee and Mel Little outside the unit's new premises at Belrose.

called the unit to ensure help was on the way after hearing the Mayday on VHF repeater Channel 82, rather than Channel 16.

The unit activated a full response operation, involving vessels from MR Middle Harbour and the NSW Police Marine Area Command, and broadcasting a Mayday relay for

boaters in the vicinity to respond. A number of vessels raced up to 6nm to the scene to rescue the four men. Attempts by police to tow the half-submerged boat were abandoned in the 2.5m seas, with MR Terrey Hills then broadcasting regular Securite warnings to alert boaters to the potential navigation hazard.

# Hawkesbury fires up after long weekend

Unit joins emergency response to early morning house blaze on river.

Crews from MR Hawkesbury started their summer operations with seven rescue missions over the three days of the October long weekend - only to be jolted from bed for another deployment in the early hours of the following day.

Crew members received a call at 1.45am on Tuesday, October 6, to join the emergency response to a large structure fire at Bar Point on the Hawkesbury River.

The members of the call-out crews responded on board rescue vessels *Hawkesbury 21* and *Hawkesbury 22* to transport firefighters from a number of NSW Rural Fire Service brigades to the scene and stand by to provide whatever help was needed.

The two vessels remained on site until about 7am.

Fortunately, no one was injured and there was no need for any evacuations but two houses and a nearby shed were destroyed.



Crews from MR Hawkesbury joined the response to this early morning house fire at Bar Point in October.

Fittingly, 13 Hawkesbury members have been awarded the NSW Bushfire Emergency Citation in recognition of their assistance to the RFS during the Black Summer bushfires, including transporting equipment, assisting with logistics, patrolling closed National Parks and filling shifts on the Bush Fire

Information Line throughout the fire crisis.

Work has begun on the construction of our new rescue vessel. The 8.3m boat is being built by Sailfish Catamarans at Alstonville on the NSW North Coast.

Our crew members are eagerly awaiting its delivery, expected

around March next year.

The boat will be larger and more powerful than our existing Marlin Broadbill catamaran, while still maintaining a shallow draft, and will provide improved capabilities for our operations on the river and nearby waterways.

*Jamie Abnettt-Miller*

# Crews on scene, wherever trouble strikes

Crews from MR Middle Harbour have deployed on rescue missions in the deep blue and rocky shallows in recent months.

On November 15, MR Terrey Hills received an emergency call reporting that two boats had collided about 4nm offshore from Sydney Harbour, swiftly deploying *Middle Harbour 30* and *Middle Harbour 20* to respond.

The Middle Harbour crews escorted a fishing charter boat that had sustained significant damage back to Mosman Bay. The two crew members and 10 passengers on board were wearing lifejackets when the rescue vessels arrived on scene.

On October 17, four men returned safely to shore after their boat capsized almost 20nm off Sydney Heads. The boaters - a father and

son and two mates - had been on a fishing trip when one of their 8m boat's engines stopped. When they went to investigate, they found the engine bay rapidly filling with water.

Boaters in the area heard their Mayday call, racing up to 6nm to rescue the men, who were using cooler bags as flotation devices. They returned to shore on their rescuer's boat as the conditions were too hazardous to transfer them to a rescue vessel offshore. The crew of *MH 30* later tracked down the group near the unit base and ferried them back to their launch location at the Roseville boat ramp.

The previous week, the crew of *MH 20* was searching for a target that wasn't even on the water when three youths found themselves trapped in a perilous spot at the



Crews from MR Middle Harbour escorted this charter boat, damaged in a collision 4nm off Sydney Harbour, back to shore.

base of the cliff near North Head, close by Old Man's Hat. Out for a bushwalk on an idyllic stretch of coast, a relatively minor injury to one of the party, difficult terrain and the rising tide meant they could not complete their trek.

Calm conditions and good water

visibility allowed *MH 20* to closely approach the rock and transfer lifejackets to the three. The *MH 20* bow ladder was fitted to transfer the walkers one-by-one from the rock platform to the foredeck, where the crew provided basic first aid on the return journey to Manly Wharf.

# Honour for Sussex Inlet foundation member

\$343,000 vessel an investment in volunteer and boating safety on South Coast.

Marine rescue services in the isolated coastal hamlet of Sussex Inlet began in a butcher shop owned by local resident John Nicholas in 1974.

Almost 50 years after that fledgling service was established, its foundation member and commander has been honoured with a new rescue vessel named in recognition of his long and esteemed contribution to boating safety.

NSW Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott commissioned *Sussex Inlet 20 (John Nicholas)* on October 27, with Mr Nicholas' wife Dorothy christening the boat with champagne before trying out a seat at the helm for size.

Mr Elliott, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock, Shoalhaven Mayor Cr Amanda Findley, Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell joined members of the unit to officially welcome the \$343,000 vessel to the fleet.

"It's wonderful to be here with the Sussex Inlet unit to celebrate the commissioning of this new vessel, which will go a long way to ensuring the waterways of the South Coast are kept safe and secure, particularly in the coming summer," Mr Elliott said. "The NSW Government is a proud supporter of Marine Rescue volunteers, which is why we have invested an additional \$37.6 million to deliver 38 new rescue vessels, improve volunteer operating facilities and enhance the marine radio network."

Mrs Hancock said the Sussex Inlet volunteers did fantastic work to save people's lives.

She said the 7.5m Ocean Cylinder, fully-equipped with search and rescue, communications and navigation technology, was an investment in the safety of both the unit's volunteers and the region's many local and visiting boaters.

"The Government is committed



Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell, Commissioner Stacey Tannos, MR Sussex Inlet Unit Commander Karen Lowry, Emergency Services Minister David Elliott, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock and Deputy Unit Commander Greg Tuffy at the commissioning of *Sussex Inlet 20*. Photos: Brad Whittaker.

to ensuring our volunteers have the safe, fit-for-purpose equipment they need for their life-saving work," she said.

The vessel, which performed 31 rescues between its delivery and commissioning, can deploy to incidents on the Sussex Inlet, St Georges Basin and up to 15 nautical miles offshore.

Commissioner Tannos said *SI 20* was one of 103 vessels, worth more than \$25 million, delivered to units under the organisation's landmark Fleet Modernisation Program.

He thanked the boating public for its ongoing support for MRNSW and the State Government for its financial injection.

"This support means we are able to ensure our volunteers have safe, modern and reliable rescue vessels like this one for their work to assist and protect NSW boaters," he said.

The Commissioner paid tribute to Mr Nicholas' sustained service to the local boating community and determination to build a strong rescue service from its earliest days as part of the Greenwell Point Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol.

Mr Nicholas became the founding

Commander of the separate RVCP Sussex Inlet and St Georges Basin division when it was formed in 1982. It later became part of MRNSW.

Unit Commander Karen Lowry said the new vessel provided the unit's crews with valuable operational flexibility.

"The boat is manoeuvrable and durable, which makes it a great resource for operations on the river and also to support our primary response vessel offshore," she said.

"As well as the suite of search and rescue technology our crews need, it also carries advanced first aid equipment, including a cardiac defibrillator and oxygen kit, so we are ready to provide immediate assistance in a medical emergency."

Mr Elliott also presented two volunteers with long service awards during the visit.

Aaron Hayward received his 10-year Long Service Medal and Les Pataky AM CSC was presented with his five-year medal.



Sussex Inlet volunteers Les Pataky and Aaron Hayward, who were presented with Long Service Medals, with Commissioner Tannos.

## Kioloa team saves trio with minutes to spare

SAREX provides valuable learning opportunity for Illawarra members.

Three men in danger of smashing onto rocks on their disabled jet ski have a crew from MR Kioloa to thank for making it safely back to shore.

The crew of *Kioloa 20* was swiftly under way on October 17 when alerted to the plight of the men, near O'Hara Island, south of Kioloa.

Reaching the scene in record time, the volunteers found the jet ski within minutes of drifting into the surf crashing on to Dawson Rocks.

Two of the men were taken on board *KL 20*, with the third remaining on the jet ski for the journey to return the trio safely to the Kioloa boat ramp.

The crew turned out again in the early hours of the following morning to join crews from MR Jervis Bay, Ulladulla, Sussex Inlet, Shoalhaven

and Port Kembla in a Search and Rescue Exercise on Jervis Bay.

The exercise provided a valuable learning opportunity for the crews to practice their skills in multi-vessel search techniques in a different environment.

All teams worked hard in sometimes trying conditions to locate the "missing persons".

Tim Bogg stepped up as the acting skipper of *KL 20*, with crew members Len Gallina, Erik Adriaanse and new member Dane Pidgeon on board.

Coxswain Peter White was in overall charge, helping by mostly staying out of Tim's way.

The unit has added another qualified Crew member to its roster, with Erik successfully completing his operational assessment under trying



Two rescued men join Len Gallina on board *Kioloa 20* for the journey back to shore, with the third remaining on their jet ski under tow.

conditions in high seas off Ulladulla.

Although the vessel took a wave over the top just outside the heads, Erik kept his cool while the rest of the crew just got wet. Completing

all the tasks set for the assessment, he ably demonstrated his skills and knowledge on the water.

Congratulations, Erik.  
*Peter White*

## Public appeal helps find 'missing' kayaker

Larger Port Kembla boat will boost response times in new year.

With a predicted busy summer season just around the corner as many people opt for staycations, MR Port Kembla has been using the COVID lull to its fullest to undertake training and upgrade its facilities and equipment.

Our members and new rescue vessel *Port Kembla 20* joined five other units from the Illawarra region for a Search and Rescue Exercise on Jervis Bay in October.

Following a refresher on search and rescue theory, the crews took to the water, supported by radio operators at MR Jervis Bay.

Crews put their knowledge to the test in multi-vessel search patterns to locate four pre-deployed search targets.

The exercise was a great update after the COVID-19 induced downtime and proved a timely refresher when crews from MR Port Kembla and Shellharbour joined a

multi-agency search for a kayaker feared missing off Port Kembla on November 21.

An overturned blue and white kayak was located on rocks below the Hill 60 Search and Rescue Coordination Centre and a flotation bag containing car keys was recovered from the water.

Following a public appeal for help, a 35-year-old man was identified as the owner, telling police he had become separated from the kayak when using it the day before it was spotted on the rocks.

The unit is eagerly anticipating the delivery of our new rescue vessel, *PK 31*, in the new year.

The 10m Naiad will replace *PK 30*, which is reaching its operational retirement age after serving us well.

The new boat will boost our emergency response times along the Illawarra coastline.

Renovations are continuing at



The hull of the third 10m Naiad in the MRNSW fleet, the new *Port Kembla 31*, is rolled during construction at Yamba Welding & Engineering.

our Hill 60 base, with the building's ground floor now being refitted to make it a more useful space for our members and take better advantage of the available space.

Upgrades to fencing, lighting and storage areas around the base have improved our security and also

provided the ability to keep unit and regional assets safely on site.

Thanks to our members' relentless fundraising, the unit has purchased a multi-purpose trailer that can be configured for vessel re-fuelling or barbecues.

*Tom Dragutinovich*

# Rock fisherman dies south of Jervis Bay

Rescue vessel makes best time out of the heads to join search.

A rock fisherman died and a second was rescued after they were washed off rocks on the South Coast on November 8.

A crew from MR Jervis Bay, who had been patrolling the southern end of the bay, made full speed out of the heads and south to Moes Rock when the alarm was raised.

Arriving on the scene within 20 minutes, *Jervis Bay 40* began a search pattern.

Police were told three men had been rock fishing when two of them were swept into the water just after 3.15pm.

One was able to be assisted back on to the rocks and was taken to Shoalhaven Hospital for assessment.

The body of the second man, believed to be aged in his 20s, was found in the water and recovered.

Officers from the South Coast Police District launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The crew of *Jervis Bay 40* provided an important component for ensuring two separate search areas could be covered at the same time, with our volunteers making a major contribution to the overall effort.



*Jervis Bay 40* and a rescue helicopter en route to search for two rock fishermen washed into the ocean south of Jervis Bay on November 8.

*JB 40* was skippered by Greg Atkinson, with crew members John Dawson, Mike Barden, Craig Marsh and Ernie Panucci on board.

As the unit awaits the delivery of its new rescue vessel early in the new year, we are continuing to build our capability with regular night training to ensure our crew and radio teams are better prepared for operations under darkness.

The training includes extensive radar and infra-red work and steering courses on instrumentation

only in the pitch black.

Jervis Bay has recently been awarded a \$20,000 grant from the IMB Bank Community Foundation towards the cost of replacing the engines on its 7.5m Ocean Cylinder, *Jervis Bay 20*.

We have also been fortunate in securing sponsorship from Belle Property Vincentia for fuel for *JB 20* in 2021.

This is a most welcome outcome, considering the impact on our local economy from the disastrous

bushfires and COVID-19 and is an indication of the support the unit receives from the local community.

We are planning our fundraising events for 2021, including the return of the popular Duck Derby and the inaugural Jervis Bay in a Day kayak and canoe event that was postponed this year due to COVID restrictions.

A Development Application has been submitted to Shoalhaven Council for the redevelopment of the unit's base.

*Tony Dagger*

# Exercise ensures teams at peak readiness

Crews from six units put to the test in coordinated training event.

A fleet of MRNSW vessels swept across Jervis Bay on a search and rescue mission on a sunny Sunday morning in October.

The vessels and crews from six units in the Illawarra region were not responding to a life-threatening emergency but were staging a coordinated search exercise as part of their training to ensure they were at peak readiness for the summer boating season.

Almost 40 Leading Crew members and radio operators from

MR Port Kembla, Shoalhaven, Jervis Bay, Sussex Inlet, Ulladulla and Kioloa took part in the event.

The exercise began with a briefing at the MR Jervis Bay base before the crews headed out on the water, navigating in a parallel search pattern to locate four pre-deployed targets.

Regional Training Manager South Stuart Massey was stationed in the radio base to provide coordination support to the radio operators who were tasked to assist.



Crews from six Illawarra units joined a SAREX on Jervis Bay in October as part of their summer preparedness activities.

## Shoalhaven duo commended for rescue skill

Poisoned couple reaches medical help thanks to duty crew's search in dark.

Two volunteers from MR Shoalhaven who responded rapidly to rescue a couple suffering carbon monoxide poisoning on board their 28 foot cruiser on the Crookhaven River earlier this year have been awarded MRNSW Commissioner's Citations.

Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell presented Mike Boadle and Brian Earsman with their Citations at a unit skipper and crew meeting on November 8.

He thanked the two volunteers for their commitment, skill and service in locating the grounded cruiser in the dark, providing essential first aid to the couple and transporting them to medical teams for transfer to hospital.

As the unit's rostered crew members on May 17, Mike and Brian quickly activated rescue vessel

*Shoalhaven 30* when tasked to locate a boat with two ill passengers somewhere on the river between Greenwell Point and Nowra.

The skipper had called police to report his wife was unconscious on the deck but was unable to be more specific about their location.

Mike and Brian searched in the dark, locating the cruiser on rocks near the Comerong Island ferry.

Mike boarded the boat to provide immediate first aid for the couple, who had suffered carbon monoxide poisoning. The skipper, who was in shock, had also fallen on the engine and sustained serious burns to his left arm.

With Brian at the helm, *SA 30* pulled the boat clear of the rocks and took it under tow back to Greenwell Point, where it was met by a NSW Ambulance. The skipper



Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell congratulates Brian Earsman and Mike Boadle, who have been awarded Commissioner's Citations.

was airlifted to a Sydney burns unit and his wife transferred to Shoalhaven Hospital.

Deputy Commissioner Barrell also presented unit members with the NSW Government Bushfire

Emergency Citation, Graham Rickard with his Senior Crew rating and Paul Windfield his Leading Crew epaulettes, while Mike Boadle also received his 10-year Long Service Medal.

## Damp Ulladulla boater has a need for speed

Unit celebrates return of monthly harbour markets to replenish funds.

A boater 16nm off Ulladulla had a speedy but hair-raising trip back to shore when a seam on his alloy catamaran split.

The crew of *Ulladulla 30* quickly deployed offshore when the boater called MR Ulladulla to report he was taking on water through the parted seam in the hull.

He was using his bilge pump and another on board to keep the water at bay.

The boater reported that leak was below the waterline when the vessel was at rest but once it was under way, he could stem the ingress by managing to keep it above water.

Fortunately, the sea was flat and he was able to proceed at speed toward the harbour. *UL 30* met the vessel about 10nm from the coastline and escorted it back to shore, standing by until it was safely out of the water and on its trailer.

This incident was a week after a crew from the unit responded to rescue two people stranded on a disabled jet ski off Kioloa. The two riders were safe and wearing lifejackets but unable to provide rescuers with an accurate position.

Rescue vessel *UL 20* returned them to shore.

Six crew members, three watch officers and a radio operator travelled to Jervis Bay for the joint Search and Rescue Exercise for Leading Crew members from units in the Illawarra Region.

Like many units, the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic this year has impacted Ulladulla finances.

In good news for stallholders, locals and visitors, the unit's major fundraising activity, the monthly harbour-front markets, have now resumed on the second Sunday of each month, in a move that will help



Former members of the Ulladulla Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol get together at the Milton-Ulladulla Ex-Servos Club.

refill depleted unit coffers.

On November 13, 14 former members of the Ulladulla Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol held a get-together at the Milton-Ulladulla Ex-Servos Club.

All are still current members of MR Ulladulla and between them have given more than 200 years of

service to the boating community.

Richard Hargrave, former UC Doug Musker, Neil Atkins, Sam English, Kel Greathead, Ross O'Grady, Harry Hendriks, Ron Rynne, Peter Owen, former UC Ken Lambert, Di Lambert, Barrie Lovell-Davis, Joy Marshall and Illawarra Director Keven Marshall attended.

## Maintenance checks vital after long lay-up

Eden stays busy through long year of COVID restrictions and poor weather.

Boaters on the Far South Coast have been reminded to carry out full safety and mechanical checks on their vessels before heading out on the water for summer.

COVID restrictions and poor weather mean many boats would have had longer than usual lay-ups this year, making a full check-up essential.

While fuel and batteries are essential to a vessel's operations, skippers have also been urged to ensure their safety gear, including lifejackets, EPIRBs and radios, are in good working condition.

It has been a long, quiet year on the airwaves for MR Eden. Besides a lack of visitors to town as a result of pandemic lockdowns in Victoria and caution on the part of ACT and NSW residents, we have had fairly long periods of the type of weather that keeps most recreational fishermen at home.

It is hoped that the NSW

Government's lifting of the Victorian border restrictions on November 23 marks the start of the return of larger numbers of visitors.

The unit's members, however, have been far from idle, holding information stalls at the Quarantine Bay boat ramp and Fishing Club to publicise the work of MRNSW and the advantages of Logging On when heading out on the water.

Both events were successful, with 40 new members registering for the Radio Club and our work brought to the attention of the boating public.

Eden has also been fortunate in recruiting several new members, who have completed their training and are making a valuable contribution to our work.

The news that the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia will proceed with the 2020 Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race means that we will soon be starting preparations to provide the support to the race that has been a feature



Talking safety ... MR Eden's Greg Madden and Garry Thornton at the unit's information day at the Quarantine Bay boat ramp.

of our operations over many years.

During the race, CYCA personnel are based in our unit, monitoring the progress of the fleet down the coastline and conducting regular skeds with competitors.

Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan recently

presented service medals to two former MR Eden Unit Commanders.

Administration Officer Glenda Wood received the National Medal and Operations Officer John McKinnon his 10-year MRNSW Long Service Medal.

*John McKinnon*

## Batemans Bay ready around the clock

Members eagerly anticipating start of renovations to upgrade base.

Marine Rescue Batemans Bay is well placed to meet the challenges of a busy boating season, with a number of new recruits joining the unit and the good fortune of full vessel and radio rosters.

With boaters continuing to flock to our local waterways, our crews have responded to a steady flow of incidents on the water, of which thankfully none have been life-threatening: nine in September, 10 in October and six in the first three weeks of November.

After the Zoom processes introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown, face-to-face training is slowly resuming.

An ongoing focus on training has seen five of our volunteers recently qualify as Crew, three as Radio

Operators and another as a Watch Officer.

Vessel Master David Murn and Leading Crew Member John Clement have been pivotal in introducing night training to ensure our crews are ready to respond around the clock and mentoring our new members.

We have recently recognised our members' service to the unit and beyond, with Long Service Medals and Clasps awarded, along with the NSW Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation to the volunteers who put in a sterling effort to support the response to the bushfire crisis.

We are looking forward to the start of renovations to our base, adding a new training room, new amenities and a second entry point



MR Batemans Bay member Deb Everson White receives her Marine Rescue Crew rating from Unit Commander Richard Blundell.

to the building. Extensions to the garage will enable our RHIB to be permanently hooked up to the ute

to provide a faster response time to emergencies.

*Richard Blundell*

## Youngsters warm hearts of Tuross members

Unit rolls out red carpet for boys who helped repair vandalised boat.

Two young visitors to the small coastal village of Tuross were feted as celebrities when they dropped in to the local Marine Rescue NSW base over the October long weekend.

Darcy and Lachlan Marr, aged four and 10, and their parents Carlene and Matt received a warm welcome from the volunteers at MR Tuross to thank the boys for their generosity in chipping in their pocket money to help the unit fix its vandalised boat in September.

When Carlene showed her sons a social media post in August about *Tuross 20* being taken off the water after its windscreen had been smashed by a rock, the boys ran to get their piggy bank and wallet, each handing over \$5 of their pocket money to help.

The Carr family headed down to their holiday home on the coast for the long weekend, with unit members assembling to surprise the boys with a tour of the rescue base and a trip on the Moruya River on

the boat they had helped repair.

Unit Commander Alan Blessington said the unit's members were keen to give the boys the VIP treatment.

"We felt extremely proud, it was just gobsmacking that two young boys would donate their pocket money to us," he said.

Lachlan said he had been moved to donate because it wasn't nice of people to damage the rescue boat.

He said he was pleased to see it back on the water "because now you can help people".

Darcy agreed with his big brother.

"We wanted to fix your boat. The naughty boys threw rocks at it," he said.

Carlene said she had been very proud of the boys for giving up their pocket money.

"It's nice that they wanted to help and not buy chocolate with it," she said with a laugh.

The unit volunteers who took the boys out were impressed with their calm confidence around boats and familiarity with lifejackets.



Darcy and Lachlan Marr, ready for a tour on the MR Tuross boat they helped repair. Darcy explores the boat from top to bottom (below).

Darcy told *Soundings* in September that he knew he always had to wear his lifejacket whenever he was on the family's boat.

With the *Batemans Bay Post* and ABC South-East Radio reporting on the boys' day with the volunteers, Lachlan said his friends thought he was famous.

The family also enjoyed the unit's rescue demonstrations to mark the official start of the summer boating season.



## Public display marks start of boating season

Hands-on demonstration raises goodwill and water safety awareness.

Members of MR Tuross launched the summer boating season on the Far South Coast with a demonstration day to display their rescue capability.

The event, on the Saturday of the long weekend, was aimed at raising community awareness of the unit and much-needed funds.

It was a hands-on day for the whole unit, with one team on an information table at the Moruya markets and a second in front of the unit base on Tuross Lake.

In the meantime, crews and support personnel prepared rescue vessel *Tuross 12* and Rescue Water Craft *X-Ray 10* for two demonstrations for the public at the

Tuross wharf restaurants.

As crews showed their rescue and towing techniques, member Wayne Ellison provided a running commentary over the PA system from the busy Boat Shed Café wharf.

Wayne took the opportunity to promote MRNSW and explain some water safety basics.

The display met with great public acclaim, particularly some of the more spectacular manoeuvres by Vik Svarcs and Phillip Dowle on the RWC.

Many people expressed their thanks for the informative and entertaining sessions.

The day was a great success in raising public awareness and



Members of MR Tuross display their rescue and towing skill during a demonstration on the October long weekend.

goodwill for the unit. A total of \$260 was raised in raffle ticket sales and donations, with every dollar

appreciated in a year of curtailed fundraising opportunities.  
*Ilze Svarcs*

## Two new Coxswains gain stripes for summer

Community's gratitude for volunteers is the reward for Bermagui skipper.

Marine Rescue Bermagui has been working hard to train and upgrade the qualifications of its members in the lead-up to summer, ensuring it has additional volunteer power for the peak boating season.

After four months of solid training since COVID-19 restrictions lifted, we now have three new Radio Operators and seven members undertaking their Crew course.

Eleven recruits have completed their first aid and advanced resuscitation and a further two their fire fighting and sea survival.

Best of all, we have two brand new Coxswains, Babs Stephens and Volker Aebischer.

Earning a Coxswain qualification is no mean feat, with an extensive range of material to learn, including international collision regulations, operational procedures, the workings of a rescue vessel and electronic equipment, navigation, berthing, towing in all sea and

weather conditions, search patterns and incident management. These senior personnel also lead briefings and debriefings and complete required reports and documentation.

After arriving in Bermagui in 2014, Babs said she had looked around for something to do to give back to the community.

"Even though I didn't have a boating background, a friend at badminton - Alec Percival, the Bermagui Unit Commander at the time - mentioned Marine Rescue," she said. "I love being out on the water and the thought of helping people, plus I enjoy the training.

"It is very well structured and helped me to progress through the ratings. When I first started, I had no idea I would end up as a Coxswain and I am now enjoying the challenge that comes with this role.

"You never know what the day will bring. The members are from all different walks of life but when



Three-stripe volunteers ... MR Bermagui's new Coxswains, Babs Stephens and Volker Aebischer.

we all come together, we become a cohesive unit."

Volker has a lengthy yachting background, competing in offshore races and blue water regattas.

"When I moved to the hills of Quaama, I wanted to keep both lifestyles going, as well as share my knowledge and experience with others," he said. "I signed up to Marine Rescue. Being a Coxswain

is a great achievement for me. I never thought I would continue training this far but to have that level of trust and support of the other MR members is fantastic. The only reward I need is the gratitude you get from the community for being a volunteer and from those you help on the water."

Congratulations to both.  
*Debbie Worgan*

## Competitors angling for \$20,000 in prizes

Snowy Challenge extended to help keep High Country COVID-safe.

For many people, spring on the Alpine Lakes has always meant one thing - the Snowy Trout Challenge.

With more than \$20,000 in prizes, competitors from around the country and the globe are usually drawn to the week-long competition in early November.

Competition to bag one of the 430 specially tagged trout is so fierce that competitors in broken down boats have been known to keep fishing while adrift waiting for a tow from a crew from MR Alpine Lakes.

The Coronavirus pandemic, however, has resulted in changes to this year's competition to help keep the High Country region COVID-safe.

The Challenge will be confined

mainly to NSW residents and will run all through summer into autumn.

Steve Cuff, of *Snowy Mountains Magazine*, said the extended Challenge would not see a huge increase of boats.

"There might be a few more over the summer but it won't be packed," he said.

Over winter, MR Alpine Lakes members conducted a survey of the boat ramps in our area to understand where vessels of all sizes could be put in safely as lake levels fluctuated.

A wet spring and a dominant La Niña weather pattern are not only good for feed and livestock but also for lake levels, which are recovering from their winter lows.

In late August, storage levels on



Competitors in the Snowy Trout Challenge will be chasing 430 tagged fish. Photo: Steve Cuff, *Snowy Mountains Magazine*.

Lake Jindabyne were down to 54 per cent, with Lake Eucumbene at 29 per cent.

The Saint Columbkille Church on Church Island on Lake Jindabyne has now once again been consigned

to the deeps and Lake Eucumbene is already above 2019 levels.

We do have tides here in the high country. They just run on a six-monthly, not a six-hourly basis.

*Les Threlfo*

## Walkway project builds unit camaraderie

Merimbula volunteers take to the tools to complete three-year project.

Members of MR Merimbula have proven just as handy with a hammer and drill as a towline and radar, taking to a recent project to upgrade our facilities with gusto.

After replacing our pontoon wharf and installing a new AirBerth for *Merimbula 20*, we turned our attention to replacing our ageing access walkway.

With a materials budget of \$38,000 set aside from our fundraising efforts, we needed volunteer effort to install the new structure. Not surprisingly, we had far more volunteers that we had jobs for.

The enthusiastic response saw the existing timber frame disassembled on the first day of work, which had been planned as a preparation day. With temporary planking in place, work then started on the removal of the crossbeams and other timber structures.

A second team took on the task of placing 200mm plastic cylinders over each existing pile, at least 100mm deep into the sand bottom.

While this was done to prolong their life, the piles were in great shape, given they had been in place for more than 20 years.

Work then began on installing new cross-members. Use of a dumpy level and lines ensured that each was level and in line.

Our tired but still enthusiastic members started the fifth day on the tools determined to finish the task.

As one team put a base frame into position, others drilled and bolted it in place. Another team began installing the deck plates, which contain multiple holes allowing sunlight to penetrate and reducing the shadowing effect on sea life. Unit members then clamped, drilled and bolted the handrail into place.

The end result is a professional, sturdy walkway and pontoon that are the culmination of more than three years of planning, submissions, discussions and fundraising. Credit has to be given to Deputy Unit Commander Bill Blakeman, project manager Stewart Dietrich and construction manager



Look what we built ... members of MR Merimbula celebrate the completion of the unit's new walkway.

Shane Osta. Without their drive and determination this project would not have happened as quickly or effectively.

The most important aspect of the project was the camaraderie experienced by those involved, who walked away with sore muscles and a few blisters but knowing they were part of the unit's development. Thanks to Bob Ainsworth, Roger Barson, John Bartlett, Bill Blakeman, Matt Drummond, Walter Kleiner, Jeff Lawes, Terry Millington, Bernie Ryan,

Graham Smith and Andy Thorp for their hard work and to Maria Osta and Geraldine Wunderlich, who kept all fed and watered.

In other news, Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan has presented Peter Roberts with the National Medal, recognising his 15 years of service to volunteer marine rescue. Unit Commander Sonia Teston, DUC Bill Blakeman and Peter's wife, Libby Roberts, attended the presentation.

*Roger Barson*

## Ready for influx of Victorians over border

Visitors encouraged to Log On while on unfamiliar waterways.

Volunteers on the Far South Coast are rescue-ready for a summer influx of boaters after the border between NSW and Victoria re-opened on November 23.

MRNSW Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell said local units were set for one of the busiest summers yet on the southern NSW coastline, with more boaters from both NSW and Victoria likely to be headed to the region.

"With the border opening from November 23, we're looking forward to welcoming many Victorian boaters taking the opportunity to head north and enjoy our many beautiful waterways, particularly on the South

Coast," he said. "We urge all boaters to always Log On with Marine Rescue when they're heading out on the water via VHF Channel 16 or the free *MarineRescue* App.

"It's not just a service for NSW boaters, it's freely available to anyone on our waterways.

"It's a particularly sensible measure if you're heading out on unfamiliar waterways where you don't know the local conditions, hazards and landmarks.

"It's quick and simple. Tell us where you're going, how many people are on board and what time you plan to return.

"You can then get on with



MR Bermagui volunteers brushing up on their training in preparation for an expected influx of Victorian boaters. Photo: Caron Parfitt.

enjoying your day on the water, knowing a professionally trained emergency service is watching over you. If you don't Log Off as expected, our volunteers will start to search for you. If the worst has

happened, they'll be rapidly under way to your rescue."

He encouraged visitors to contact the nearest MRNSW unit, whose volunteers were keen to share their knowledge of local waterways.

## What we've been up to



If you're happy and you know it, wave your fin ... a migrating whale on the Humpback Highway puts on a show for the Marine Rescue Eden radio base, perched high on the cliffs overlooking Twofold Bay. As well as enjoying great vantage points to watch the giants of the sea, our volunteers work with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and ORCCA to free entangled whales. *Photo: Cat Balou Cruises.*



Learn from us ... Development Officer Sophie Galvin and Director of Training and Education Chris Butler feature in a video to promote the NSW Training Awards and MRNSW as an Employer of Choice.



Communications support ... MR Ulladulla Radio Operator Barbara Toivonen keeps crews on the water well informed during the Illawarra region Search and Rescue Exercise.



Derring-do ... MR Tuross Rescue Water Craft team Phillip Dowle and Vik Svarcs' spectacular manoeuvres delight crowds during the unit's demonstration day at the start of the summer boating season.



Welcome aboard ... Natalia Ledger and the crew of Hawkesbury 22 evacuate a group of picnickers from the twin beaches near Berowra Waters when their two boats fail to start after a day by the river.



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## Batemans Bay unit loses one of its best

Peter's passion for Marine Rescue never failed to rub off on others.

When I first met Peter Varkulevicius a little over six years ago I knew straight away that he was a man to be listened to.

He had a quiet presence with everything he did and was a person to look to for advice or encouragement.

When I first became the Unit Commander, Peter took me aside after the Annual General Meeting and the conversation started with something like, 'Are you sure you know what you are doing?'

But it ended with, 'If you ever need any help please call me'.

And that was Peter.

He was often the first person to put his hand up to help or he was just there without being asked.

As the Unit Commander I could not have asked for more in a volunteer.

Peter joined MR Batemans Bay in May 2010 and was recently awarded his 10-year Long Service Medal.

Peter was also awarded a Commissioner's Commendation for Courage in 2019 in recognition of a particularly arduous night time rescue that without doubt saved lives and the vessel concerned.

Peter was a Watch Officer and MR Coxswain and to say he loved volunteering for Marine Rescue is an understatement.

Peter was passionate about Marine Rescue and this passion never failed to rub off on others.

He was also a member of the State Emergency Service but he could not hold down both at the same time so he quit the SES and came to MRNSW – a huge gain for us and a huge loss for the SES.

Peter had been battling illness for a long time but would not let it deter him from filling gaps in rosters and helping out where he could, often to the detriment of his own health.

Two weeks before his death Peter visited the base and although very ill, he pulled himself up the stairs, refusing to take the chair lift.

I am sure I speak for all of us at Marine Rescue that to have known Peter is one of those rare pleasures in life where you feel 100 per cent comfortable with a person and talk of material things meant nothing.

Peter loved what he did and people loved him for it.

He was a good man - one of the best in our unit and a true gentleman and he will be very sadly missed. We are all privileged to be able to have called him a friend.

*Richard Blundell*



MR Batemans Bay volunteer Peter Varkulevicius, here with his dog Lora, was often the first person to put his hand up and to help without needing to be asked.

## Nance devoted 45 years to her community

Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie recently lost one of our longest serving members in Nance Adams.

Nance gave a quarter of a century of service to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and MRNSW.

A nurse, Nance began her career in 1952, progressing from general nursing to obstetrics and mothercraft nursing at Rankin Park and Belmont before retiring as an Occupational Health Nursing Sister

in 2004. She spent more than 45 years of her life volunteering with various organisations, including 47 years with Surf Life Saving, 44 with the Red Cross, 23 with Warners Bay Lions Club, 23 with St John Ambulance and 20 with Civil Defence (now the State Emergency Service).

In 2012, she was one of five acknowledged in the inaugural Helping Hand Awards, introduced in

National Volunteer Week to celebrate the contributions of local volunteers.

During her time with the RVCP, Nance took on roles as First Aid Officer and Treasurer, in addition to her duties as a Radio Operator.

Following the transition to MRNSW, Nance was a willing fundraiser and an active part of the team organising the unit's annual

open day for a number of years.

Australia exists and grows on the toil of volunteers and our country has now lost a volunteer who spent more than half of her life serving others.

After those many years of devoting her time to others, Nance can now rest in peace.

*Malcolm Druce*



A life of service... Nance Adams received a Helping Hand Award in 2012. Photo: Newcastle & Lake Macquarie Star.

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## IN MEMORIAM

Tributes to valued members

# Point Danger farewells mentor, fundraiser

Alan and Ruth gave three decades to Northern Rivers boating community.

Members of MR Point Danger have farewelled two former volunteers who gave three decades' combined service to the unit and the Northern Rivers boating community.

Alan Drochmann, who was born in Rockhampton in Queensland, crossed the bar in August, aged 82.

Alan joined the unit in January 2005 when it was part of Volunteer Marine Rescue Queensland and within two months had attained his Radio Operator qualification.

He progressed to become a Senior Radio Operator and then Controller, making him responsible for overseeing incidents, and soon began mentoring new radio recruits.

He remained active until October 2018 and was considered by all to be a great bloke, who enjoyed a joke, a beer and a bet.

His mantra was a cheeky "I don't have to be here, y'know!" with a smile on his face.

Ruth van de Pavert was a dedicated volunteer with both the Australian Red Cross and Marine Rescue NSW.

She joined the unit in 2001, serving for more than 17 years until her retirement in 2018 due to limited mobility, at age 96.

During her time with the unit she was awarded the MRNSW 10-year Long Service Medal.

Ruth worked tirelessly as a fundraiser in the unit's gift shop at its base beneath the Captain Cook Lighthouse.

She became the Unit Treasurer before changing roles to become the Welfare Officer, a role she held until her retirement.



Alan Drochmann.

Serving for 35 years as a Red Cross volunteer, Ruth received the Red Cross Service Award in 1996.

Unit members formed a Guard of Honour as Ruth crossed the bar for



Ruth van de Pavert.

the last time and were honoured to spread her ashes at sea.

Farewell friends, may you rest in peace.

*Phil Pickering*

# Merimbula's mascot a very good boy indeed

Marine Rescue Merimbula has lost its well known and loved mascot, Charlie.

The labradoodle-groodle cross, owned by former Merimbula and now Eden member Guy Illy and his wife Loretta, was eight and a half.

Charlie was a favourite in the Merimbula public relations team, attending markets and open days in his uniform, custom-made by

Loretta from an old MRNSW shirt.

Excelling in his "meet and greet" role, Charlie encouraged many a customer to purchase raffle tickets in exchange for a pat and a cuddle, particularly from children.

He also marched with unit members during the annual Merimbula Jazz Festival and was a great swimmer. Charlie was a very good boy and is missed by many.



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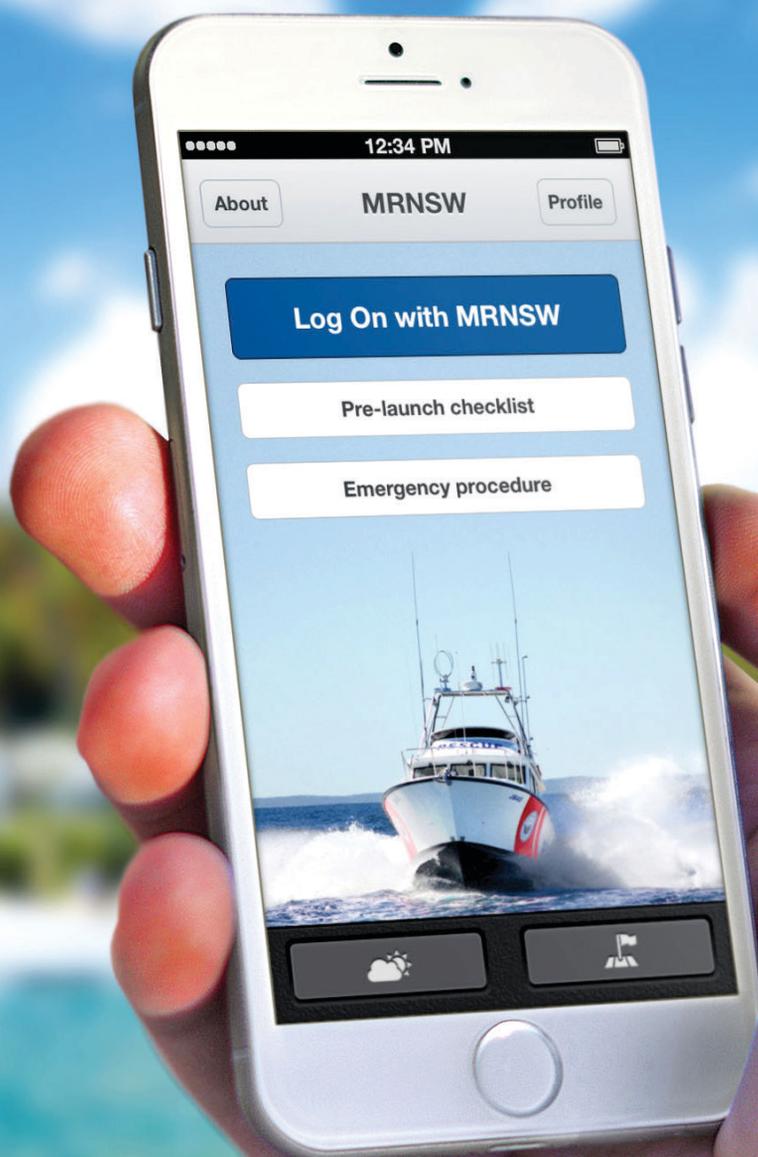
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