

Volunteers saving lives on the water

# SOUNDINGS



Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW | Issue 44, Spring 2020

## KIDS CHIP IN

Boys raid piggy bank to help fix vandalised boat

## 'DEAD LUCKY'

FISHERMEN PLUCKED FROM SEA

## NEW FACE

DEPUTY ON BOARD



**PLUS:** Our building boom | Premier's bushfire thanks | BIG boats on way



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NOTHING  
IS FASTER  
THAN DISASTER"**

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# SOUNDINGS

Quarterly Journal of Marine Rescue NSW

## Cover Image

When Lachlan and Darcy Marr heard about vandalism to the Marine Rescue Tuross rescue vessel, they dipped into their pocket money to help our volunteers repair the damage. See their story on Page 5.

Photo: The Marr Family.

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

## From the Commissioner

Preparations well under way for a busy summer on the water.

We are now on the home run to what could potentially be our busiest boating season yet.

With international travel off the radar and many people likely to change their holiday plans around the nation, we could see a large COVID-19 uptick in the number of people enjoying a holiday by the water here in NSW and pushing the boat out more often than usual.

Many new boat owners also are likely to be heading out for the first time, perhaps in holiday destinations where they might not be familiar with local conditions, hazards and waterways.

All of which adds up to the potential for an increased workload for our units. More traffic on the water increases the incidence of boaters needing our help to make it safely back to shore and first time boaters finding themselves unsure of how to get out of a sticky situation.

The week leading up to the start of the boating season, on the October long weekend, is now designated as the annual National Boating Safety Week to help focus attention on safe and responsible boating.

Our key messages for Safety Week - and every week - will be our Three for Safety: ensure everyone

on board is wearing a lifejacket, Log On and Log Off with MRNSW and make every journey safer by switching to VHF.

But it's not only boaters who are getting ready for summer on the water at this time of year.

Spring is traditionally the season when we are at the height of our own preparations, with a calendar of Regional Search and Rescue Exercises scheduled to ensure our teams are rescue-ready for the demanding months ahead.

Unfortunately, these exercises have become another victim of the strictures of COVID-19 and have had to be postponed until it is possible to safely assemble a large gathering of members of our own and other agencies.

I know this hasn't stopped our units scheduling their own intensive training activities on the water and in the radio rooms to make up for the time lost at the height of the pandemic earlier in the year and

an additional commitment of time and energy from our volunteers on top of your operational and other unit duties and I thank not only you, our members, but also your families, without whose support you would not be able to maintain your discipline and passion.

It is this dedication that has helped make Marine Rescue NSW such a strong leader in the national marine rescue sector.

Our well-earned reputation for professionalism and advancement resulted in a strong field of candidates for the senior role of MRNSW Deputy Commissioner.

I am very pleased to welcome Alex Barrell to our organisation in this influential position.

Alex was the outstanding contender from 145 applicants, who came from a range of professions and fields of interest.

I'm sure many of you already will know Alex, with whom you will have crossed paths during his career in

### Our volunteers remain resolute in building and honing their individual and team skills.

ensure their preparedness.

Our volunteers remain resolute in building and honing their individual and team skills and knowledge so they can continue to provide a world class service to the boating community.

The enthusiasm with which our trainees have taken to our E-Learning platform is another sign of our volunteer workforce's adaptability and perseverance.

The Headquarters Training team has been working to support units' training activities by expanding the range of available educational resources and programs, including the delivery of our marine radio training kits, new assessment tools and the continuing program of Zoom courses and targeted tutorials.

Training and education requires

both the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command and NSW Maritime.

He has a wealth of operational experience across maritime and rescue services and in the foundations of emergency service policy and procedures, making him an ideal fit for MRNSW.

Alex will join us in October and will make it a priority to get out to visit our units. I know you will make him welcome - with an elbow bump.

While we all hope that the worst of the pandemic is now behind us, at least for the time being, maintaining your social distancing and hygiene requirements needs to be as much a part of your safety routine as putting on your lifejacket. Stay safe and healthy on the water.

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



The Commissioner has welcomed the award of Bushfire Emergency Citations to personnel including MR Evans Head UC Andy Adams.



## New Deputy Commissioner appointed

Stand out candidate's career path tailor made for important position.

Marine Rescue NSW has appointed a new Deputy Commissioner to lead the organisation's operations.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos announced Alex Barrell would take up the position in October.

"Alex's career path, most recently as the Acting Executive Director of NSW Maritime and with 20 years in the NSW Police Force, particularly in the Marine Area Command (MAC) and emergency management, is tailor made for this important role in our organisation," he said.

"Alex was the stand out candidate from a very strong field. He brings a mixture of skills and experience - including as a volunteer - that is ideally suited for our vital work to save lives on the water. I have no doubt he will be a strong advocate for our volunteers and will hit the ground running with energy and enthusiasm."

Mr Barrell said he was looking forward to joining the organisation. "It feels a little bit natural. I've

had a long association with Marine Rescue over the years, both before Marine Rescue and since," he said.

He has frequently worked alongside our members both on operations and during the peak season deployment of MRNSW liaison personnel to the MAC.

He said his priorities would be getting to know the volunteers and understanding the challenges for the operational teams across the State.

"That's the style of leadership I like to embrace, getting out and engaging with people. It will be a high priority for me to get to know the Regional Operations Managers and the volunteers," he said.

Mr Barrell joined the NSW Police Force in 1994, initially serving in general duties before becoming a Police Diver. He then moved to the boats, being posted to the Eden Water Police before returning to Sydney, coordinating Botany Bay and Sydney Water Police sectors and leading Search and Rescue for the MAC. He has spent time with the



New Marine Rescue NSW Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell brings career and volunteer experience to the position.

Police Emergency Management Unit, supporting the State Emergency Operations Controller and developing the Force's emergency management capacity.

Moving across White Bay from MAC to NSW Maritime, he worked across recreational and commercial boating safety, and legislation and policy areas, before stepping in as Acting Executive Director.

"I was fortunate to grow up on and around the water and that's where I really got my passion for

it. I didn't really join the police with the goal to get into marine but then I went into the Diving Unit and opportunities came to move and I find myself still in the maritime sector 25 years later," he said.

Mr Barrell is married with three children and lives on Sydney's Northern Beaches. He has a lengthy association with Surf Life Saving as a volunteer at the North Curl Curl and Pambula clubs and also worked as a lifeguard in Warringah and the Channel Islands.

## Premier recognises our help in Black Summer

Three hundred and sixty-five MRNSW volunteers and staff are being awarded a NSW Government citation to recognise their contribution to the Black Summer bushfire emergency.

A total of 355 volunteers from 25 units across all regions and 10 staff are to be presented with the award.

The unprecedented fire season began in the State's north in July 2019 and did not end until March.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian is awarding the Bushfire Emergency Citation to recognise the outstanding contribution of volunteers and service agency personnel who played a significant role in the emergency response effort. Recipients also will be presented

with a certificate and letter from the Premier and a commemorative cap.

The Citations are to be presented to MRNSW members at their units.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos welcomed the recognition of the contribution by MRNSW personnel.

"I want to thank the volunteers in every region and our staff who willingly stepped in to assist where they were needed," he said. "I am proud that our people responded so professionally, with such empathy."

MRNSW members' efforts included staffing Emergency Operations Centres, conducting Rural Fire Service communications, predeploying vessels for potential evacuations, resupply missions, assisting in evacuation centres and



The Bushfire Emergency Citation will be presented to 365 MRNSW volunteers and staff members. Photo: Brad Whittaker.

opening their own bases to people in harm's way. Members assembled daily for weeks to answer public calls to the Bush Fire Information

Line and Public Information and Inquiry Centre. Staff coordinated our assistance and were based at RFS Headquarters as liaison officers.



**Chair**  
James Glissan AM ESM QC

## From the Chair

We are keen to harness members' talents on the Board.

It is both pleasing and reassuring to see our units resuming their regular operations and training activities as we all adjust to the "new normal" of life with COVID-19.

At the height of the pandemic, hard decisions needed to be made that allowed us to continue our essential services but at the same time, protect the health of our members and the boating community as best we were able.

Crews were restricted to operating on demand, training was out, more radio operations were carried out remotely and we stayed home to stay safe. I know many found this challenging and I must admit to being surprised at how much I missed being out on the water with my fellow crew members. It is a pleasure to again be turning over the engines and heading out. I'm sure many of you feel the same.

I want to thank all our members for your forbearance and cooperation throughout the trying months since March. While the "new normal" is not as carefree as our old ways, our acceptance of the need to maintain our social distance and awareness of our individual health and hygiene has ensured we can resume our operations and training on the airwaves and water.

As advised by our political and health officials, if you have any

symptoms and feel unwell, please do not report for duty but stay home and get tested, both for your own and your colleagues' wellbeing.

If we had been asked at this time last year whether we thought it was possible to train, hold unit meetings and elections and socialise online, I suspect most of us would have been dismissive of the notion. We have, however, adjusted to this element of our Covid lifestyle and Zoom has become a useful resource for many.

We introduced online voting in the MRNSW Board elections two years ago and this year, circumstances dictated that this be extended to unit elections. Thank you to our unit returning officers and Headquarters IT team for ensuring this process ran smoothly. Congratulations to all our newly-elected Unit Commanders and Deputy Unit Commanders. The

the rewards of leading a team of committed volunteers to provide a world-class service to our boating community and achieve their own individual goals.

The satisfactions of leadership are amplified for those of us who are privileged to serve on our Board of Directors. We are trusted with a direct role in the strategic leadership of our organisation, with the interests of our members always at the forefront of our decision-making.

Elections for the Board will be held in conjunction with the AGM and I would encourage any member with an interest in contributing to the long-term capability of our entire organisation to consider nominating for election. We are keen to harness the talent, experience and knowledge we know exists across our service and we need

**Thanks to all our members for your forbearance and cooperation through these trying months.**

Board looks forward to working with each of you and your members throughout your tenure. Thank you, too, to our outgoing unit leaders, many of whom had served the maximum three terms permitted under the MRNSW Constitution. Anyone who has held one of these positions will attest to the demanding nature of the role but

more members to participate in our own democratic process. In order for the Board to be more representative of our organisation, it would be desirable to have a more diverse composition, with greater representation of women and younger people and a broader range of experience. If you fall within any of those categories, I particularly urge you to give serious consideration to seeking election.

The Board, naturally, works closely with our Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and staff.

On behalf of the Board Directors, I extend a warm welcome to new Deputy Commissioner Alex Barrell.

Alex brings a breadth of experience in maritime and rescue operations and I am confident he will make a worthy and lasting contribution to our organisation in the years ahead.

*Good sailing*  
*Jim Glissan*



Chair Jim Glissan and crew on duty on board *Port Hacking 30* as the unit ramps up its training ahead of the peak summer season and the delivery of its new 12m Naiad rescue vessel.

## Boys raid pocket money to help volunteers

Fishing family's generous kids chip in to fix vandalised Tuross rescue vessel.

When Darcy Marr heard that someone had thrown a rock through the windscreen of the Marine Rescue Tuross rescue vessel, the four-year-old ran straight to his room to get his piggy bank.

In a move to warm the hearts of the unit's disillusioned members, Darcy and his big brother, Lachlan, 10, selflessly pulled out half their pocket money and handed it to their mum to help our volunteers fix their boat.

"I don't know why people would do that. When I saw it I thought I should help," Lachlan said.

*Tuross 20* was forced off the water for urgent repairs, potentially placing lives at risk, after vandals hurled a rock through the screen on August 19 (see story, page 43).

The boys' mum, Carlene Marr, read about the vandalism to *Tuross 20* on Facebook.

"I showed the boys what had happened and they asked why someone would do that because Marine Rescue are the good guys," Carlene said.

"I said I'm going to see if I can

donate some money and the four-year-old went straight up to his room and got his piggy bank. He had about \$8 in there and he took out \$5."

Not to be outdone, Lachlan grabbed his wallet and also handed over \$5.

The Marr family donated \$30 through the MRNSW website, with a message for the MR Tuross members: "Thank you for the amazing work you all do. It's not much, but a little bit towards a new windscreen."

Carlene said the family enjoyed getting out on their 5m cuddy cabin to go fishing on the Tuross and Moruya rivers when they could make it away from Canberra to their holiday home at Tuross.

"The boys absolutely love being able to get out on the boat and love catching fish and getting outside," she said.

She was proud of her sons' generosity: "We've taught them to make sure they help other people out if they can."

Carlene said the family had



Lachlan and Darcy Marr gave up their pocket money to help pay for repairs to vandalised rescue vessel *Tuross 20*.

fortunately never needed to call on MR Tuross but she felt better knowing help was close at hand, especially when her husband Matt was fishing offshore with his mates.

"We're really appreciative of knowing somebody is there who can help us out," she said. "There's definitely a need for you guys. It's a bit sad to see someone do this. We've chatted to the Marine Rescue fellows at the breakfast they have every Australia Day and we say hello when we see them around town."

Darcy said he knew he always had to wear his lifejacket whenever he was on the boat and his favourite fish to catch was flathead.

Unit Commander Alan Blessington was blown away by the boys' kindness. He said the members had been disappointed that someone would damage the boat but would be incredibly touched by Darcy and Lachlan's kindness.

"Next time they're in town, we'd absolutely love to have them down and give them a tour," he said.

## Pair rescued in Mayday mission give thanks

A couple who were rescued in a multi-agency emergency operation after making a Mayday call as their 45-foot cruiser sank in the dark 6nm south of Ballina have generously thanked their rescuers.

When the boat began sinking bow-first on June 12, Guy Peluso and his wife activated their EPIRB and grabbed life rings, a fender and phone, put on their lifejackets and tied everything together.

The crew of *Ballina 30* and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter were activated when the Mayday was detected by MR Terrey Hills about 2.10am. With guidance from the helicopter crew, *BA 30* retrieved the

pair and returned them across the bar, illuminated by the chopper, to a waiting NSW Ambulance.

Mr Peluso has since made a generous donation to the Ballina unit to express his thanks.

"I have a very clear memory of the four members that saved us standing shoulder to shoulder smiling as we were escorted to the ambulance," he said. "A happy ending to a rescue, given it was pitch black and a 2m swell (was) breaking across that bar. (They were) proud members of Marine Rescue who had trained and developed their skills over years to pull off an amazing rescue. We are



Guy Peluso and his wife with the mobile phone in a waterproof case they used to ring for help when their boat sank off Ballina in June..

very thankful!"

A boater towed to safety across Sydney Harbour recently donated \$1,000 to MR Middle Harbour and MR Terrey Hills and Newcastle have

each received \$5,000 contributions.

The Gum Tree Foundation has given MRNSW \$10,000 this year. Donations to our units can be made on our website at [mrnsw.com.au](http://mrnsw.com.au)



# Marine Rescue set to kick off \$5m building

Regional construction projects an economic stimulus in wake of COVID-19.

Marine Rescue NSW is embarking on the next stage of a construction program that will ensure more of our volunteers have modern, safe, fit-for-purpose facilities for their emergency operations.

Our own building boom, worth more than \$5 million, also will provide an economic stimulus to the construction industry in communities hard-hit by the impact of COVID-19.

With the new \$1.8 million MR Lake Macquarie headquarters and radio base on Swansea Head expected to be completed ahead of schedule, plans are now being finalised for our next series of projects, including new bases for MR Newcastle, Middle Harbour and Lord Howe Island.

Work on these projects is expected to begin at various points over the coming year or so.

MR Terrey Hills, a vital hub in our marine radio network, is planning a move to new premises, a new over-water ready room is planned for MR Narooma crews and the Batemans Bay unit is preparing for a major extension.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said the construction program had been made possible thanks to the State Government's investment of \$37.6 million over four years in MRNSW, including more than \$13 million for new and improved volunteer facilities.

"For the first time, we are able to invest in a major capital works program to provide our units with purpose-designed and built facilities and a safe working environment for their members," he said.

"Many of our facilities are ageing and in a deteriorating condition, lacking the space and fit-for-purpose facilities for search and rescue coordination, training and equipment storage.

"Upgraded facilities will not only support our current volunteers but



Architects' concept designs for the new MR Middle Harbour base, an airy, light-filled facility in keeping with surrounding development at The Spit.

also help our units attract new members.

"This is an exciting program and we are working hard to get the maximum value out of every dollar the Government has invested so we can spread the benefits as widely as possible.

"We also are pleased that our building projects, most of which are in regional areas, will provide valuable employment and income for local families."

The members of MR Newcastle have been without a permanent home since the wild East Coast Low storms in April 2015 caused severe damage to their Shepherds Hill base.

The unit has since operated from a series of temporary facilities.

The City of Newcastle has now assigned the unit a long-term peppercorn lease over a waterfront block of Crown Land it manages at Stockton for a brand new base.

"This is a fantastic development that will provide the unit with a secure home that will have the space to bring together its rescue vessel and radio operations for the first time," Commissioner Tannos said.

The Stockton site gives the unit's volunteers uninterrupted sight lines along the Hunter River to Newcastle

in the east and Kooragang to the west.

Plans for the new facility include a garage, crew ready room, drying yard and amenities on the ground floor and a search and rescue coordination room, radio room for three operators, training space, office, bathroom and kitchen upstairs.

Commissioner Tannos thanked both the State Government and City of Newcastle for their generous support for the unit's volunteers.

The same storms that thrashed the Shepherds Hill base also struck Sydney, leaving the MR Middle Harbour base at The Spit at risk of being undermined by the severe

erosion of sand and soil under the northern end of the weatherboard building. The adjoining foreshore parkland was eaten away and a retaining wall underneath the building collapsed, leaving electrical cabling and equipment exposed.

The base, which has been home for more than four decades to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, MR Middle Harbour and for a time the MRNSW Headquarters, is now to be rebuilt in a project estimated to cost up to \$1.3 million.

Architects' concept drawings propose an airy, light-filled base offering panoramic views across the water through floor to ceiling windows.



A move to much larger premises at nearby Belrose is being negotiated for MR Terrey Hills.



## boom to upgrade volunteer conditions

The building would include dedicated training, meeting and store rooms, offices, a communications area, a crew ready room, boat store, lockers and drying area, bathrooms and kitchen.

With development approval processes under way, work is not expected to begin until mid-2021.

MR Terrey Hills has operated since July 1989 in a small space in the combined Emergency Services Centre at Terrey Hills.

A move for the unit to more spacious premises in an ecologically sustainable development at nearby Belrose is being negotiated. The commercial building features external solar activated blinds, natural cross ventilation, energy efficient individual inverter air conditioning systems, common area grey water use and water tanks.

Three adjoining suites have been fitted out as one expansive space that would accommodate six radio operator consoles, a training room, offices, kitchen, server room and balcony. The office would come with 10 car spaces, including two caged off for secure storage.

MRNSW Property and Projects Manager Mark Cooper said the space was four times the size of the unit's existing radio base.

He said the purchase and fit out cost would be about \$900,000.

"The fit out would also include a state of the art media wall to assist the radio operators and watch officers in their work, which involves monitoring up to 27 radio bases remotely online overnight," he said.

"This technology would enable everyone operating in the base to see Seahawk, our Status Board and weather and AIS feeds at a glance."

Construction timetables on Lord Howe Island are currently dictated by strict COVID-19 restrictions under a Health Order in place until November and the delivery of materials on the *Island Trader* supply boat to the island.

The \$325,000 base for the



A place to call home ... Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes announces a site for a purpose-built base for MR Newcastle, with ROM Steve Raymond, UC Ron Calman, Stuart Lawson and Bill Johnston.

newest MRNSW unit - and the first offshore - is expected to take about 12 weeks to build, depending on the timely delivery of materials, including concrete and the steel framework.

The building will include a radio room, office, shed for the unit's tender to reach the 16m *Lord Howe 40* moored offshore and change and bathrooms - but not air conditioning, which is not permitted on the island.

The mooring for *LH 40* has been purpose-designed in line with the strict controls imposed under Lord Howe's World Heritage listing.

Thirty 2.4sq/m steel plates have been produced by Birdon Marine at Port Macquarie and will be transported on the *Island Trader* before being sunk in the harbour by a barge and diver at a cost of another \$100,000.

Work on the island also includes radio infrastructure (see page 11).

Mr Cooper said the Batemans Bay extension, costing an estimated \$700,000, would add disabled bathrooms, a lift and boat storage area to the Hanging Rock base.

The proposed construction of an over-water crew room alongside rescue vessel *Narooma 30*, would help improve the unit's response times, enabling crews to respond immediately rather than driving from

the unit's base 10 minutes away.

MR Broken Bay is awaiting Northern Beaches Council and State Government approval for its plans to build a purpose-designed \$800,000 facility.

Planning also is under way for the next stage of the MRNSW capital works program in the medium-term, with design and approval processes on foot for MR Central Coast and Tuggerah Lakes.

Mr Cooper said MRNSW also was working with Government agencies to investigate potential new locations, including at Brooklyn and Deerubbin Reserve, for a new base for MR Hawkesbury.

The unit's existing base has grown from its original operation in a tin shed in the grounds of the Mooney Mooney Club in 1986

but is ageing and in deteriorating condition.

Tweed Shire Council will carry out structural repairs and a redevelopment of the MR Point Danger base in the Captain Cook Lighthouse in 2021.

Repairs to the MR Port Macquarie radio base, seriously damaged by a fire in the ground floor public bathrooms, have been completed, enabling the unit's radio operators to return to the Town Beach facility.

The first project to be completed with the \$37.6 million State Government funding, the new MR Lake Macquarie base provides additional space for radio operators, a dedicated search and rescue coordination room, coastal viewing platform, meeting room, kitchen and disabled access.



An artist's impression of MR Narooma's new over-water crew ready room, planned to be built alongside rescue vessel *Narooma 30*.

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# Naiad



## Volunteers to elect four Directors to Board

More women, younger members encouraged to put their names forward.

Volunteers will this year cast their votes to elect four Directors to the MRNSW Board.

Elections will be held for the positions of Greater Sydney, Illawarra and Monaro Regional Directors and a General Director.

The incumbent Directors are Ken Edwards, Keven Marshall, Glenn Felkin and Pat Fayers, respectively.

The eleventh Board elections will be held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting at State Headquarters on November 21.

The meeting will be held in line with COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene requirements.

Nominations for the elections open on September 14 and will close on October 9, with voting from October 19 to November 13.

The General Director will be elected for a three-year term.

The three Regional Directors will be elected for two years.

Chair Jim Glissan encouraged eligible volunteers with the interest,

time and commitment to stand for election.

"The strategic leadership of our organisation is vested in the Board, working together with the Commissioner, staff and our talented volunteers," he said.

"We enthusiastically encourage members who have the skills to bring to the table, a sound knowledge of the organisation, its people, assets and services and the dedication to give the time, energy and due consideration required for the Board's decision-making processes to put their names forward."

Mr Glissan encouraged more women and younger members to stand for election to help make the Board more representative of the broader membership.

He said the sole duty of the Directors was to act always and only in the interests of the company as a whole.

Volunteers nominating for election



Commissioner Stacey Tannos and the 2020 Marine Rescue NSW Board after last year's Annual General Meeting. Inset: Pat Fayers.



must have been an active member for at least two years, possess knowledge and experience of MRNSW and bring relevant skill sets such as professional qualifications or board, governance, fundraising or management experience.

Regular and Life Members are

eligible to vote but not Provisional Members.

This will be the third MRNSW Board election conducted online.

Members should make sure their correct personal email address is listed on the Otter system to ensure they receive their voting materials.

## New leaders step up to demanding roles

Thank you all for shouldering extra responsibilities: Commissioner.

Twenty-nine new leaders are at the helm of MRNSW units for the coming two years.

Members have elected 11 new Unit Commanders and 18 new Deputy Unit Commanders.

These include three new female Commanders and one new Deputy, taking the total number of women in leadership positions to nine.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos congratulated the newly-elected leaders and thanked the outgoing Commanders and Deputies.

"These roles are demanding and time-consuming," he said.

"I thank them all for their willingness to shoulder these additional responsibilities."

While some may have been

acting in their roles or previously elected for shorter tenures following changes in personnel, new Unit Commanders have been elected for full terms at Woolgoolga (Mitch Harvey), Coffs Harbour (Graeme King), Camden Haven (Neville Adams), Crowdy Harrington (Cheryl Rowe), Port Stephens (Ben Van Der Wijngaart), Lemon Tree Passage (Stephen Vautier), Lake Macquarie (Malcolm Druce), Hawkesbury (Derek Whorlow), Terrey Hills (Matt King), Sussex Inlet (Karen Lowry) and Merimbula (Sonia Teston).

New Deputies are on deck at Point Danger (Peter McCulkin), Woolli (Matthew McLennan), Woolgoolga (David Forge), Coffs Harbour (Bernie Tight), Trial Bay (Lorraine Rider),



MR Woolgoolga Deputy Unit Commander David Forge, Unit Commander Mitch Harvey and former UC Tony Skalla, who stood down in December.

Camden Haven (Peter Cameron), Crowdy Harrington (Wayne Seach), Port Stephens (Colin Couper), Lemon Tree Passage (Richard Osborne), Lake Macquarie (Warren Collins), Hawkesbury (Peter Moore),

Broken Bay (Andrew Majewski), Terrey Hills (Sandy Howard), Sussex Inlet (Greg Duffy), Ulladulla (David Lindley), Bermagui (Stephen Knight), Merimbula (Bill Blakeman) and Alpine Lakes (Cain Hopwood).

## Virtual announcement of Rotary finalists

Four Illawarra, Monaro nominees recognised for Service Above Self.

Continuing COVID-19 restrictions saw the finalists in this year's Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards announced online, with recorded messages of congratulations from NSW Governor Margaret Beazley and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott.

The four MRNSW finalists are Allan Brook, from MR Ulladulla, Danielle Carter, from MR Shoalhaven and Steve Angelo and Alec Percival, both from MR Bermagui.

The awards, recognising members of MRNSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire + Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance Service, the Volunteer Rescue Association and Surf Life

Saving NSW, will be announced on October 30.

Governor Beazley congratulated all the finalists and nominees in a message recorded in her Government House office.

"All of you have been recognised as people who reflect Rotary's motto, Service Above Self," she said.

"Today we celebrate the contribution you have made to the welfare and safety of the people of NSW.

"As the Governor of our State, I thank you for your service, particularly in these challenging times."

This year's awards attracted the highest number of nominations in



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, congratulates Rotary award finalists.

their five-year history.

Mr Elliott said the awards were an important way to recognise the sacrifice and tenacity shown by the 200,000 volunteer and salaried members of the emergency services

across the State.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said all four MRNSW finalists were deserving of recognition for their sustained contribution to the mission of saving lives on the water.



When Allan Brook was diagnosed with cancer in 2018, he was given only three months to live. Not only has he defied that prognosis, he has continued to serve as an enthusiastic member of MR

Ulladulla. Allan has taken part in 72 rescue missions in eight years, 18 after his diagnosis, including when he and Unit Commander David Hall evacuated a family who had sought refuge from the Currowan bushfire on the Bawley Point beach

on December 5. Allan regaled the family with stories to detract from their seasickness and stress. He is always cheerful and supportive of others, including his fellow Milton Church members, cancer sufferers and volunteers.



Danielle Carter is a fundraising coordinator with MR Shoalhaven. Since joining the unit 15 years ago, she has served as a radio operator, vessel crew member and on the executive, as well as undertaking many administrative

and fundraising tasks. She is the coordinator of the annual Emergency Services Open Day to showcase the skill of numerous services. Danielle has been an adult volunteer with Australian Navy Cadets, operating from HMAS Albatross, Nowra, since

2014. She commits more than 60 days a year to working as a Cadet Instructor for up to 50 cadets from 12 to 18 years and has undertaken Youth Mental Health First Aid, Leadership and Management and Power Boat Instructor training.



A member of MR Bermagui for 12 years, Steve Angelo has dedicated himself to the safety of the boating community and his fellow volunteers. He is an experienced rescue vessel Master and Watch Officer and gained a

Cert IV in Training and Assessment to become a unit trainer. With a natural ability to communicate complex matters clearly, he uses his experience to demonstrate the application of operating procedures, helping ensure the unit continues to

provide an effective rescue service. Despite losing stock, sheds and fencing in the summer fires, Steve devotes about 30 hours a week to unit activities and is always available for operations. He has forged strong unit links with Surf Life Saving.



Marine Rescue Bermagui vessel Master and Watch Officer Alec Percival has taken part in many missions in hazardous conditions, including saving a yacht from smashing on to rocks at night in rough seas in 2017, for which he

was awarded a Commissioner's Commendation for Courage. Serving as Unit Commander for eight years and Deputy for a further two, Alec was responsible for upgrading the unit's working environment by relocating its base to a high-profile

waterfront location. He always puts the needs of boaters and MRNSW first. Despite losing his home to a bushfire on New Year's Eve, Alec still coordinated the transportation of the unit's rescue vessel 200km by road to Nowra for essential repairs.



## Robust communications vital to saving lives

New partnership to deliver priority support, upgraded unit hardware.

Marine Rescue NSW has signed a major new communications agreement to underpin our work to save lives on the water.

The agreement, signed on June 30, is for the development of a new robust and stable Telstra communications platform to ensure that when a boater is in trouble on the water, our crews will get the call to action fast.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Chief Financial Officer Todd Andrews signed the agreement with Managing Director Vivek Trivedi and Sales Director Niten Devalia, of Exigo Tech Pty Ltd, Telstra Platinum partners, who will manage the network project.

The project also includes an upgrade to the mobile network by Telstra Platinum Mobility partner, MobileCorp, led by Sales Director Gavin Lo.

Commissioner Tannos said the project would provide the service with essential communications surety.

"We work closely with Telstra and our technology partners ExigoTech Pty Ltd and MobileCorp to ensure

we have reliable networks and IT solutions so that we can be certain we can activate our crews, answer boaters' calls for help and access our online vessel tracking and other systems 24/7," he said.

Mr Devalia welcomed the new agreement.

"The agreement made today marks the beginning of a project that was driven from a conversation about how we can ensure a more reliable, secure and agile approach to the way MRNSW engages with its communication and network across all sites," he said.

"Working with Telstra, we will be able to deliver a service that will not only meet today's requirements but pave the way for an adaptation to technology and innovation.

"We look forward to building a strong relationship with such an honourable organisation that's dedicated to helping save lives."

The new agreement is for the development of a communications platform to support all the service's needs, including phones, internet data and even satellite links for our first offshore unit on Lord Howe



Deal sealed ... MRNSW Director of Operations Andrew Cribb and Commissioner Stacey Tannos with Exigo Tech partners Managing Director Vivek Trivedi and Sales Director Niten Devalia.

Island. The project will see a suite of standard new telephone hardware and connection devices rolled out to every one of the 45 MRNSW units along the NSW coastline and on the Alpine Lakes, Murray River and Lord Howe.

Importantly, it provides all units with NBN and Telstra LANES 4G back-up, meaning they will have priority access to the network in peak traffic periods and 24/7 priority support for the repair and management of outages.

The project was named the

winner of the Telstra Enterprise Australian Deal of the Year award, which recognises Telstra Enterprise Partners who, in co-operation with Telstra, have signed a new Customer or a significant new solution with an existing Australian customer.

The win was hailed as an excellent example of collaboration between two complementary Telstra partners delivering a comprehensive 'whole of business' solution designed for a customer whose mission it is to save lives on NSW waterways.

## Projects reinforce marine radio safety net

Boating safety on the Mid North Coast has been boosted with the commissioning of new marine radio infrastructure at Coolongolook, inland from Forster-Tuncurry.

A new VHF radio installation 430m above sea level has eliminated a black spot in reception for boaters along the coastline, 20 to 30nm out to sea, and particularly over Wallis Lake, a popular location for boating and water skiing and scene of numerous emergency response operations.

Director of Operations Andrew Cribb said the extended VHF Channel 16 coverage provided

by the new infrastructure was an excellent investment that would provide boaters with improved reception and greater range.

"It has improved the reach of the MR Forster-Tuncurry radio base over a greater area of coastal waters and the lake, which means there's a far greater chance our volunteers will hear a call from help from a boater in trouble," he said.

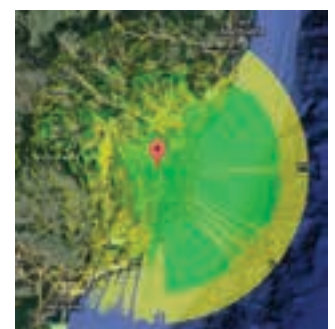
The Coolongolook VHF radio and repeater infrastructure was one of a series of upgrades funded by a State Government \$750,000 Blackspots Program grant to help secure the marine radio safety net on the Mid

North Coast and North Coast.

Mr Cribb said the next major communications project would be to install marine radio equipment on Lord Howe Island.

This comprises a VHF repeater and VHF remote radio that will be controlled from the mainland for emergency and search and rescue communications via a satellite link.

"We need to pour a cement slab for the installation so we've taken all the gear over - 120 bags of cement, a cement mixer, the radio equipment," he said. "It's all sitting in sealed waterproof wrapping on Intermediate Mountain, waiting until



A VHF upgrade has expanded the Mid North Coast footprint.

we can get our technicians from Karera to the island to do the work."

The island is subject to COVID-19 restrictions until November.

## Devices to help save lives on land and water

State Government funds new defibrillators for seven unit bases.

Volunteers from seven MRNSW units will be better equipped to respond to medical emergencies in the course of their duties, with the State Government equipping them with new defibrillators.

The life-saving equipment is being presented to MR Ballina, Central Coast, Cottage Point, Middle Harbour, Newcastle, Port Kembla and Port Macquarie.

With advanced first aid equipment, including defibrillators and oxygen kits, standard issue on MRNSW boats, the new devices, worth \$2,500 each, will be installed in the units' bases.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said this would help the volunteers save lives on both the water and shore when a patient needed to be revived in a serious medical emergency.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott presented volunteers from MR Ballina with their device in early September. Member for Terrigal Adam Crouch handed another to volunteers from MR Central Coast to install in their Terrigal Haven facility and North Shore MP Felicity Wilson visited MR Middle Harbour on July 7.

The NSW Government has invested \$37.6 million over four years to deliver MRNSW 38 new rescue vessels, improve volunteer facilities and continue upgrading the marine radio network.

MR Port Macquarie will receive two of the defibrillators for its boat shed on the riverfront in Westport Park and its Town Beach radio base, repaired after significant damage from a fire last year.



MR Middle Harbour crew member Steph Mayoh demonstrates the use of a defibrillator to North Shore MP Felicity Wilson.

"Both our boat shed and radio base are in prominent locations in riverside parkland and on the beachfront so this new equipment is a valuable asset for members of our community and tourists enjoying

these areas for exercise and recreation," Unit Commander Greg Davies said.

Additional units are in line for defibrillators supplied by the State Government from 2020-21 funding.

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# Boaters urged to get ready for safer summer

Simple precautions now can prevent many emergencies: Commissioner.

Boaters around Australia and New Zealand are being encouraged to get ready for a safer summer on the water.

Marine Rescue NSW is a key partner in the new National Safe Boating Week in the lead-up to the traditional start to the peak boating season on the October long weekend.

As the weather warms up and the days get longer with the start of daylight saving, boaters will be taking the covers off and getting the boat out on the water along the coastline.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos said National Safe Boating Week was aimed at encouraging boaters to act responsibly and safely on the water.

"Rescue services and maritime agencies around Australia and New Zealand are working together with the sole aim of improving boating safety," he said.

"We will be seeking to engage

with the boating community to help people make safe choices, particularly new boaters who may be heading out on the water for the first time because their usual travel plans have had to be changed due to COVID-19."

Commissioner Tannos said MRNSW crews had been training hard since Covid restrictions eased to ensure they were rescue-ready for summer.

"The majority of the operations we will launch throughout summer are likely to be in response to problems such as flat batteries, contaminated fuel and engine failures - all problems that could be easily prevented if boaters take the time to carry out basic maintenance checks and repairs now," he said.

He said it was also important for people to take simple precautions that would ensure they could summon help and increase the chances of their survival in a serious



Making sure everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket is the simplest precaution for a safer boating summer. Photos: Brad Whittaker.

emergency on the water.

"These include making sure their EPIRB and flares have not expired, their lifejackets have been serviced and that everyone on board is wearing an appropriate lifejacket.

"This is also the ideal time to make the switch to safer boating by swapping your older 27MHz radio for a new VHF set, which will give you far greater range and clearer reception."

The Safety Week campaign focuses on specific aspects of boating, such as choosing and maintaining a suitable boat, wearing lifejackets, checking the weather and tides, knowing the on-water rules and trip planning.

Marine Rescue NSW encourages all boaters on the State's waterways to plan their trip by taking advantage of its free, quick and simple Log On service.

## Learn from the people who put you first

Marine Rescue expertise and resources on offer to boating public.

Boaters looking for information on how to stay safe on the water or to brush up on their boating know-how and skills before the peak season can tap into the expertise and experience on offer from MRNSW.

Director of Training and Education Chris Butler said helping boaters stay safe on the water was one of the service's fundamental roles.

"We are committed to helping boaters gain the skills and knowledge they need to operate safely and enjoyably on our State's glorious waterways," he said.

"We are a Registered Training Organisation and our members are professionally trained to national standards for their roles.

"Boaters can benefit from

their training and experience by undertaking a range of courses with MRNSW. Whether you need a General Boat or PWC licence or want to do a marine radio course, learn from the people who put your safety first."

Details of our public education courses can be found on the MRNSW website, [mrnsw.com.au](http://mrnsw.com.au)

Mr Butler said boaters who wanted to know more about local conditions and hazards could also drop in to their nearest Marine Rescue base to speak to the volunteers who operated year-round on their area's waterways.

The website also has a range of helpful safety information, including how to Log On with your nearest MRNSW base, the safety benefits



A marine radio is an essential piece of safety kit on board a boat - if you know how to use it when you need help.

of lifejackets and the features of different marine radios and how to summon help in an emergency.

Navionics maps and a link to Marine Traffic can be found under the Boating Resources tab.

Check out the series of short

videos produced by MRNSW partner Michael Guest, from Reel Action TV, for bite-size chunks of safety information on the website and MRNSW Facebook page. You'll also find a safety checklist and weather on the *MarineRescue* App.

## New Media Manager swaps orange for blue

Keen to keep our boaters the best prepared and informed in the nation.

New Marine Rescue NSW Media and Marketing Manager Phil Campbell needs no introduction to working with emergency services volunteers or marine weather.

Phil joins the organisation from the Bureau of Meteorology, where he was NSW Media Manager.

He previously spent 16 years with the NSW State Emergency Service, including eight as its Media and Communications Manager.

Now making the change from orange to blue, Phil said he was looking forward to working with emergency services volunteers again.

"At the SES, I had the privilege of working with volunteers through some of our state's most significant natural disasters, telling their inspiring stories and helping them

to keep their communities better prepared and informed," he said.

"I'm looking forward to bringing this experience to Marine Rescue and helping our members continue keeping our boating community the best prepared and informed in the nation."

Phil brings experience in internal and external communications, public relations, government relations, media, social media, community engagement and capacity building, stakeholder engagement and inter-agency cooperation.

He has been a member of the NSW Public Information Functional Area Committee, Chair of the Australian Council of State Emergency Services Communications Group and Senior End-user with the Communications



Looking forward to learning more about boats ... new MRNSW Media and Marketing Manager and lifelong landlubber, Phil Campbell.

and Warnings Sub-Group of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Committee. He is a Churchill Fellow and Fellow of Emergency Media and Public Affairs.

A lifelong landlubber, Phil is

looking forward to learning more about boats and the sea. Married with three children and two Border Collies, he shares his name with a small American town where he attended the International Phil Campbell convention in 2011.



### 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.

[gme.net.au](http://gme.net.au)





## Flash tools to test trainees' core knowledge

E-Learning platform helps volunteers to learn when and where it suits them.

More than 1,000 volunteers have undertaken online training on the MRNSW E-Learning platform in recent months.

The E-Learning platform has been specifically developed for the MRNSW curriculum by the Training and IT departments.

Easily-accessible via the Member Services page on the MRNSW website, the platform covers Core Coursework, Foundations Training and Prerequisite Courses and provides access to Learning Support via Zoom conferences.

This enables members to better balance their training and other responsibilities by accessing training course materials at a time and place of their choosing.

The standardised online learning resources are now being

complimented by a new tool for Leading Crew and Coxswain operational assessments.

Assistant Director Training and Education Brad Whittaker has worked with a group of experienced members to design a set of 58 flash cards based on the International Collision Regulations (COLREGS) for safe vessel handling and separation.

Each card depicts the symbols for a specific regulation relating to lights, sounds, flags, shapes or vessel handling rules that are relevant to MRNSW operations.

Mr Whittaker said the COLREGS were core knowledge for Leading Crew members and Coxswains.

"Our assessors will use the flash cards to confirm a candidate's understanding of the COLREGS and other key operational knowledge,"



Full marks if you know what this flashcard depicts (answer below).  
Photo: Brad Whittaker.

he said. "This will help raise the standard of knowledge and ensure consistency across all units, meaning that a member could relocate from Alpine Lakes to Port Hacking and have the same knowledge."

Trainees can familiarise themselves with the diagrams on the E-Learning COLREG modules.

## Info at your fingertips on modern website



Modern and clear ... the new MRNSW website went live on July 2.

Boaters and potential new Marine Rescue NSW volunteers are able to find information more easily than ever on the new MRNSW website.

The website, which went live early on July 2, is more modern in its look and functionality than the original, which was almost a decade old.

The layout is clean and clear,

information is presented simply and concisely, with a number of quick links to essential information and the functionality is logical and easy to follow. The site provides vital safety information to boaters and encourages visitors to support MRNSW, whether as donors, sponsors or new members.

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



# Boat builder set to stand back from the helm

New owners continue commitment to jobs and growth in regional NSW.

One of Marine Rescue NSW's key rescue vessel builders, Yamba Welding & Engineering, is to be acquired by Australian watercraft company The Whiskey Project as founder Bill Collingburn prepares to hand over the reins of his 46-year-old family company.

YWE and naval architecture firm Naiad, which YWE bought earlier this year, will join with The Whiskey Project to form The Whiskey Project Group watercraft design and manufacturing company.

The Group, co-founded by Royal Australian Navy veterans Darren Schuback and Ryan Carmichael, is committed to securing local jobs and boosting the region's COVID-19 impacted economy by continuing YWE's local boat building legacy.

The Group is named after the military callsign 'Whiskey', which denotes specialist water operators. The contract was announced on September 2, with completion later this year.

Chief Operating Officer Ryan Carmichael said: "It's business as usual at YWE and we are looking forward to continuing our long partnership with Marine Rescue, providing vessels that offer the optimum performance and protection for the volunteers who risk their lives in the maritime environment."

He said all three of The Whiskey Project Group's businesses were committed to providing the highest level of performance and protection to the end-user.

Founded by Mr Collingburn in 1974, YWE has evolved into a thriving operation employing 36 locals, numerous apprentices and a trusted local supply chain.

Over the past decade, the company has either completed or has under construction a total of 41 Naiad and Ocean Cylinder vessels for MRNSW, along with boats for the NSW Police Force, other maritime



A new 12m model Naiad, *Botany Hacking 30*, is manoeuvred out of the Yamba Welding & Engineering plant for its first time in the water.

and rescue organisations and more recently, the Australian Defence Force and Australian Border Force.

Mr Collingburn said the change could not have come at a better time for the Clarence Valley.

"At a time when economic uncertainty is high, Government investment in our local Defence industry and the manufacturing sector is robust," he said.

"YWE is now in a unique position to be talking about growth opportunities, creating jobs and developing long lasting training and skills programs for the people of this region and their children.

"I'm in my seventies and I wanted to hand the reins to people I like and trust.

"The Whiskey Project Group are whole-heartedly committed to the continued growth of YWE and the Clarence Valley's maritime industry."

Mr Collingburn, now a shareholder in The Whiskey Project Group, is staying on with YWE as a Technical Advisor as the business moves into its next phase.

"The local community has supported YWE for many years and we in turn need to keep supporting them," he said.

"I have no doubt that under the guidance of The Whiskey Project Group, YWE will continue to play a

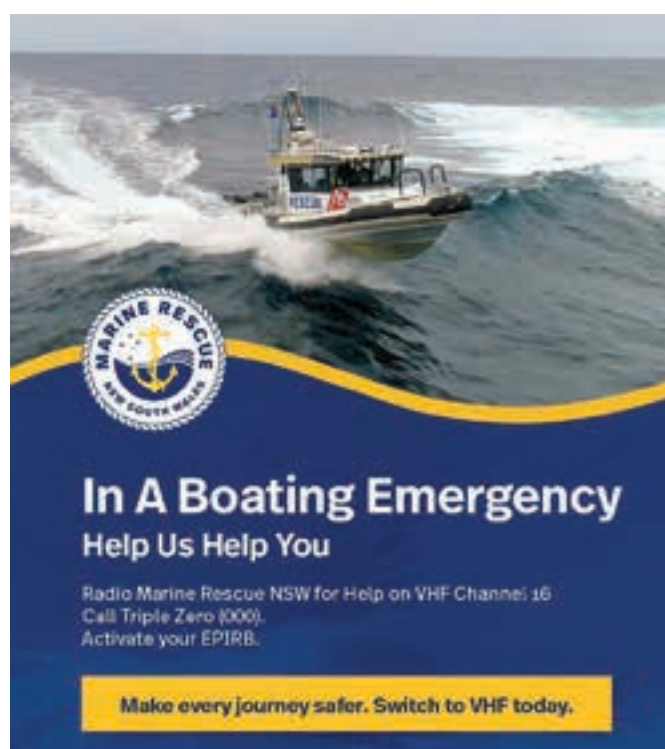
significant role in seeing this region prosper as it deserves to."

Mr Schuback said the acquisition of YWE and Naiad marked the coming together of three great Australian and New Zealand businesses, heralding an exciting future for Australian watercraft design and manufacturing in the northern NSW coastal town.

The Whiskey Project is a supporter of Veterans Employment.



YWE founder Bill Collingburn.





# Make every journey safer. Switch to VHF.



## VHF Channel 16 is the international distress channel

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

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## What we've been up to



Ready for its next deployment ... Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams inspects the new *Lord Howe 40 (Fearless)* ahead of its sea and crew trials following a \$700,000 refit, with MR Port Macquarie members Alison Cameron Brown, Unit Commander Greg Davies and Yolanda Bosschieter, Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin (front left) and MR Lord Howe Island Unit Commander Jim McFadyen (front right).



Maiden voyage ... MR Point Danger Radio Operator Carmel Jones joins the crew of *PD 30* on patrol on the Tweed River - the first time she had been on board in her 28 years as a volunteer.



Grounded! The crew of *Lake Macquarie 20* retrieves yet another yacht that had fallen victim to the shallow sand bars in the Swansea Channel, on September 5. Photo: Jim Wright.



A decade of service ... Member for Coffs Harbour Gurmesh Singh congratulates MR Coffs Harbour member Doug Simmonds on the presentation of his 10 year MRNSW Long Service Medal.



Steering a straight course ... Larisa Trapeznikova, on board *Port Macquarie 30*, during a mission to rescue a boater stranded on a 45 foot catamaran 10nm offshore on August 17.

## Thoughtless vandals damage Pt Danger base

Volunteers delighted to re-open fundraising gift shop - at a social distance.

Members of MR Point Danger have focused on preserving the unit's infrastructure and finances in recent months.

Graffiti by vandals caused extensive damage to the unit's rescue base on Duranbah Beach in early August.

Four walls, two roller doors and two doors needed to be repainted, diverting volunteer energy and funding from core operations.

Our maintenance volunteer Gary Ashby and Unit Commander Glenda Ashby carried out the work.

It is a pity that a volunteer rescue organisation dealing with the safety of the boating community has to take on this extra workload due to others' thoughtless stupidity.

From late June to mid-August, the unit's crews have launched 12 rescue missions, including five in response to life-endangering emergencies.

Maintenance of our rescue

vessels and associated infrastructure is essential to ensure they remain ready for their operational workload. The heaviness of growth and barnacles attached to the AirBerth for *Point Danger 20* led to it being taken to the Tweed Slip for a thorough cleaning before being returned to the unit's pontoon.

The AirBerth has proved to be a good investment, preventing significant deterioration of the vessel's hull, with the unit executive committee deciding to invest in an AirBerth for *PD 30* as well.

Ongoing maintenance also has been carried out at our rescue base and boat shed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wheel stops have been installed at the boat shed to prevent the fuel trailer from running into the Tweed River. This work was carried out by Gary Ashby and Todd Stoll. Gary also replaced sheeting on the rescue base's external wall.

COVID-19 restrictions forced



Gary Ashby and Todd Stoll keeping MR Point Danger shipshape.

the closure of the unit's gift shop earlier in the year, which had a huge impact on our fundraising. Following the easing of the restrictions and with social distancing and hygiene procedures put in place, the shop was able to re-open in July. The fundraising volunteers were delighted to resume their duties.

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Radio Operator Alan Drochmann. Alan joined when the unit was

part of Volunteer Marine Rescue Queensland before the formation of MRNSW in 2009. He performed a regular morning shift for all those years, getting to know all the local boaties heading offshore. Alan also mentored our trainee radio operators to guide them towards their assessment. He will be greatly missed by his long-time friend and fellow radio operator John McGovern and the unit as a whole.

*Dale Leo*

## Ballina members help clean up our oceans

Seabin pollution trap a fixture at unit's new marina ready room.

It's often said that MRNSW members have some of the best workplaces in the State, on and overlooking our stunning NSW waterways.

But rubbish spoiling waters that should be pristine is a constant source of annoyance.

So when MR Ballina was approached to host a Seabin pollution trap to help clean up their local marina, members leapt at the chance.

Seabin is an Australian company that builds small floating devices that remove litter from the water.

Each Seabin has a small pump that sucks in water, filtering debris as small as 2mm and capturing up to 500kg of litter a year.

For Seabin, the world's marinas,

ports and yacht clubs are the perfect place to start cleaning our oceans.

With no open ocean swells or storms, these relatively controlled environments provide the ideal location for Seabins to do their work.

MR Ballina was identified by Seabin as having a suitable location on the Richmond River for the local community's first Seabin.

The device was installed recently alongside the unit's new floating pontoon crew room and is already hard at work cleaning up the water.

In its first few days of operation, it removed 55 pieces of plastic as well as leaves, twigs and other debris weighing some 5kg.

Unit Commander Zsolt Mankowsky said the Ballina unit was fully behind the device.



MR Ballina members Geoff Hutchinson, Phil Causley and Tony Hensley, with Seabin Chief Operating Officer Mahi Paquette and Business Operations Manager Charles Griffith.

"Our unit members are passionate about the North Coast and its beautiful waterways, and the Seabin is our way of helping to keep them looking their best," he said.

"We've provided weekly access to

the Seabin team to empty the debris trap, and some of our volunteers are helping, too – we think it's a small price to pay for helping maintain our local waterways, fisheries and other wildlife."



## Less heavy lifting for Wooli volunteers

Licence courses for 2,000 boaters fund new vehicle to take the load.

Marine Rescue Wooli's commitment to public education has not only helped to create a fleet of safer boaters on the Northern Rivers but also reduced the load on its members.

The unit's rescue vessel, *Wooli 30*, operates from a public wharf with no power or refuelling facility, meaning crew members must always transport a range of equipment, including a 70kg 5.8kva generator, to the wharf in order to launch the rescue vessel from its AirBerth.

Until recently, this gear has been transported using a member's private vehicle, which also tows the unit's new fuel trailer to the boat for refuelling.

The unit's regular boat licence courses have been an important community service and source of revenue since 2006. The funds raised over this time have now enabled the unit to purchase a light truck with a generator, air pump and

hoses mounted on the tray to avoid any heavy lifting.

Administration Officer Stephen Reading negotiated the purchase.

Thanks to course administrator Jackie Taffs, the unit had never missed providing at least a monthly boat licence course before COVID-19 struck. Courses for small groups have now resumed, just in time for the enrolment of the milestone 2,000th student.

Members in a small unit like Wooli need to be multi-taskers. As one of the skippers was just starting a recent licence course for four candidates, a call for help came in from a boater whose engine had failed off Sandon. The course was abandoned, with apologies, to release the skipper to respond.

Only one crew member was readily available so a third, who has always said "If I'm out fishing, just call me," was taken up on his offer, leaving his partner with the boat and fish to clean.



On the water and the road ... MR Wooli Administration Officer Stephen Reading negotiated the purchase of the unit's new vehicle.

Our duty Watch Officer extended her radio watch from a 5.30am start to a 5.30pm finish.

The 5m centre console was located east of Sandon Shoals and taken in tow for Sandon. The Wooli bar had required extreme caution all day and the Sandon bar was no better, with a strong runout of brown water meeting the easterly swell for constant white water on the low tide.

With good communications from deck to helm and the stability of the Naiad rescue vessel, all went well.

The boater was taken on board *W1 30* for the bar crossing, necessitating Coronavirus safeguards, including a mask, hand sanitiser and vessel cleaning on return. After three hours' sea time and 100 litres of fuel, the boater was safely home.

The use of face masks is now becoming normal practice, with our Uniform Officer producing a special Marine Rescue version. How our lives have changed!

*Richard Taffs*

## Minister steps aboard floating crew facility

Defibrillator vital equipment for unit in high-profile riverside location.

Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott met with volunteers from MR Ballina on September 3 to inspect their new facilities and hand over a piece of lifesaving equipment.

Mr Elliott, Ballina MP Tamara Smith and Parliamentary Secretary Ben Franklin met members at the unit's new \$100,000 floating crew ready room, which provides quick access to rescue vessel *Ballina 30*, helping improve unit response times.

Mr Elliott presented a new defibrillator, worth \$2,500, to Unit Commander Zsolt Mankowsky.

"The spectacular Northern Rivers are a magnet for boaters and fishers," Mr Elliott said. "Our Marine Rescue Ballina volunteers play a

vital role in keeping the many local and visiting boaters drawn to these waterways safe.

"This defibrillator will now help the unit members to save lives on both the water and shore when a patient needs to be revived in a serious medical emergency."

The State Government has invested \$37.6 million over four years to deliver MRNSW 38 new rescue vessels, improve volunteer facilities and continue upgrading the marine radio network.

Advanced first aid equipment, including defibrillators and oxygen kits, are standard equipment on MRNSW rescue vessels.

The new defibrillator will be installed at the unit's radio base on



Emergency Services Minister David Elliott hands over a new defibrillator to MR Ballina UC Zsolt Mankowsky, with Ballina MP Tamara Smith and Parliamentary Secretary Ben Franklin.

the northern wall of the Richmond River bar, close to Lighthouse Beach.

UC Mankowsky thanked Mr Elliott for the life-saving equipment.

"All our volunteers are trained in advanced first aid and CPR,"

he said. "Our base is in a high-profile location on the bar and a busy walking track and close to the beach. Vital equipment like this will be of great value in a serious emergency."

## Boaters warned not to range into range

Safety exclusion zones vital for RAAF weapons practice at Evans Head.

The Evans Head community has had a long association with the RAAF, dating back to World War Two, when 5,500 men trained for service at the Northern Rivers facility.

The Evans Head Air Weapons Range was designated in 1949 and has since been used continuously as a training range.

Since a refurbishment in 2013, it has been used by the F/A-18 Super Hornets for air-to-ground gunnery training, using inert weapons.

The range was last year determined also to be suitable as a gunnery and bombing practice area for the new F-35A Lightning 11 aircraft.

Air Force personnel recently held a meeting with local community groups and those directly affected by the range's exclusion zones, including recreational and commercial fishermen, surfers and MR Evans Head.

The exclusion zone, when active, affects fishermen, surfers and transiting vessels.

The "active" periods are advertised on the internet and at local boat ramps, with local Marine Rescue bases also broadcasting Securite warnings to alert boaters of the need to clear the zone.

However, there is always one!

Despite best efforts, in 2018 when four F/A-18s were dispatched from Amberley in south-east Queensland, a local fisherman decided he would ignore all warnings and proceed through the middle of the Safety Trace area where projectiles are most likely to be encountered.

A week's gunnery exercise was aborted at great cost to the nation.

Our unit members always find it hard to lose our qualified volunteers.

Scott Mohr has been a part of the Evans Head unit for almost 16 years.



MR Evans Head DUC Bill Bates with Australian Air Combat Group Air Commodore Tim Alsop and Air Weapons Range Controller Flt Lt Jason Van Rysbergen at a RAAF community meeting.

A steadying influence through changes of leadership, training systems and trainers, he has been a great mentor to every member who has joined the unit in that time.

Never one for the limelight, preferring instead to sit back and offer a common sense approach based on his many years of

experience, Scott was a valued coxswain, trainer and the radio operator who would always fill that vacant shift.

He has made the move north to be with his family and three young grandchildren. Their gain is our loss.

Thanks Scotty, from all of us.

*Bill Bates*

## Advanced protection for RWC operators

Brunswick team puts less restrictive new lifejackets to the test.

What do MR Brunswick volunteers and elite America's Cup sailors have in common?

Both use lifejackets that have been designed for comfort and high impact protection.

MR Brunswick is the first in the State to receive a new style of lifejacket being introduced for our Rescue Water Craft (RWC) operators.

The lifejacket's advanced features have won the approval of the trainee RWC operators at the unit, which is the first in the Northern Rivers Region to deploy the rapid-response vessels.

Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin said the Forward WIP Impact jackets featured zipped accessory pockets for items such as personal locator beacons, sun protection, water and identification.

They also have a specific shoulder pocket for a radio, along with easy to adjust straps and removable bibs printed with the MRNSW roundel.

Mr Parkin said they were a more comfortable, less restrictive fit for all operators.

MR Brunswick Unit Commander Jonathan Wilcock said his members were delighted with the fit and usability of the new lifejackets, which were a welcome addition to the unit's Personal Protective Equipment.

The new lifejackets are being rolled out across the State on a new for old replacement basis, with members in other parts of the State progressively receiving them as their existing equipment reaches the end of its operational lifespan and needs



MR Brunswick members Gabe Wuyts and Ben Fitzgibbon, with Courtney Greenslade, from MR Point Danger, in the new RWC jackets.

to be replaced.

The jackets are marketed as the preferred choice of the world's top sailing teams.

Fitting close to the body, the jacket's neoprene grip strips, on the inside, grip the operator's wetsuit to

prevent the vest from riding up.

Wide arm openings enable good freedom of movement.

Mr Parkin said the RWC Operator helmets and inbuilt communication systems would be reviewed to assess their ongoing functionality.



# Malaysian visitor lost while rock fishing

Coffs, Woolli crews join air-sea search for man swept out to sea.

Volunteers from two MRNSW units joined a large-scale multi-agency search for a man swept out to sea while rock fishing on the Mid North Coast on the weekend of August 29 and 30.

Emergency services were called to Little Beach at Red Rock, about 45km north of Coffs Harbour, about 2.30pm on Saturday, August 29, responding to reports a man had been washed into the ocean.

Police have been told the man, aged in his 20s, was not wearing a lifejacket.

He is believed to have been visiting Australia from Malaysia.

Police said the man had fallen into the water while attempting to retrieve a fish from a rock platform.

Crews from MR Coffs Harbour and Woolli joined personnel from the Police Local Area Command, the Red Rock Surf Life Saving Club and a Royal Australian Air Force helicopter in the initial search.

*Coffs 30* operated as the On Scene Coordination vessel, working in tandem with the helicopter until the search was suspended about 8.30pm with no trace of the man.

As anxious family and friends gathered at the notoriously treacherous location, rescue vessels *Coffs 30* and *Woolli 30* returned to the scene the following morning, along with the Police launch *Fearless* from Coffs Harbour, a Police fixed wing plane, Surf Life Saving, the Westpac Life Saver Rescue helicopter and NSW SES volunteers, who searched Corindi River estuary sandbars.

The search was suspended in the afternoon, with MRNSW crews then stood down before Police continued the operation the following day.

MRNSW social media was flooded with messages over the weekend, including one from Fifiey Sofoa: "Please save my cousin."

Family and friends following the



Russell Shelton at the helm of *Coffs 30* on day two of the search for a missing rock fisherman at Red Rock. Photos: Mitch Harvey.

search's progress shared MRNSW posts almost 320 times, along with their prayers and pleas for the missing man to be found.

Resident Maddie Rasmussen, who was supporting the family - in the area picking berries - told *NBN News* locals would be petitioning for warning signs at the dangerous cliffs and beach.



Jayson Palczewski keeps watch on board *Coffs 30*.

# Port Macquarie radio base back on the air

Repairs to fire damage complete in time for peak summer season.

Radio operators at MR Port Macquarie are back on the air in their Town Beach radio base.

Serious damage caused to the three-year-old building by two separate fires over the past year has now been repaired.

The unit's radio operations have transferred back to the beachfront location, which offers a clear view of the Hastings River bar, ready for the start of the peak boating season.

The unit had 42 members eager to start training early this year but when the COVID-19 lockdown brought all our training to a standstill, three crew courses, two radio courses and watch officer, skipper and leading crew training all had to be pigeonholed.

Like other units, Port Macquarie

has now rebooted our training program, in line with COVID-safe practices.

Intense training is under way, including first aid and sea survival courses in August, with the aim of more members becoming qualified in coming weeks in case of a second NSW lockdown.

Throughout the winter season, our crews have been called to two search operations and returned four other boats to safety, with our radio operators Logging On 388 boats with 1,624 people on board.

Away from operations, the unit has teamed up with not-for-profit organisation, Fortem Australia.

Fortem supports first responders and their families by offering activities aimed at strengthening



MR Port Macquarie radio operator Dave Williams helping get the unit's Town Beach radio base ready to resume operations.

individuals' mental fitness and wellbeing.

On Saturday, August 22, volunteers and their families enjoyed

the first of four surfing lessons, with the adults and kids taking part all reported to have had a ball.

*Yolanda Bosschieter*

## Largest vessel ready for island deployment

Lord Howe Unit Commander reacquainted with his former police launch.

The premier rescue vessel in the Marine Rescue NSW fleet has undergone sea and crew trials off Port Macquarie ahead of its new operational deployment as the first dedicated rescue vessel on Lord Howe Island.

The former NSW Police Force Marine Area Command launch *Fearless*, the 16m vessel has recently undergone a \$700,000 refurbishment and refit in readiness for its new career under the MRNSW banner.

The largest vessel in the MRNSW fleet will be delivered to the new MR Lord Howe Island unit - the service's 45th unit and its first offshore - later in the year.

Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams inspected the newly-refurbished vessel with founding Lord Howe Island Unit Commander Jim McFadyen and MRNSW Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin.

"This vessel represents a significant investment in the safety of Lord Howe Island's many local and visiting sailors and boaters and the volunteers who will operate on board," Mrs Williams said.

"*Lord Howe 40* has recently undergone an extensive refit and facelift at Birdon Marine right here in Port Macquarie, thanks to an investment of more than \$700,000 by the NSW Government.

"This is part of the \$37.6 million the Government has invested over four years to deliver MRNSW 38 new rescue vessels, improve volunteer facilities and continue upgrading the marine radio network.

"This expenditure is aimed at ensuring our Marine Rescue volunteers have safe, reliable and modern vessels such as *Fearless* to support the volunteers in their mission to save lives on the water.

"I'm delighted in the support of the NSW Government in enhancing the safety of the boating community and in supporting local jobs and industry," Mrs Williams said.

Mr Parkin said the boat had undergone a full mechanical overhaul, with a new wheelhouse and flybridge console, new Raymarine electronics, the re-alignment of the vessels' shafts and propellers and a new paint job in the distinctive MRNSW livery.



Alison Cameron-Brown, Kelvin Parkin and Jim McFadyen at the helm of the refurbished *Lord Howe 40* during its sea trials.

"This ocean-going vessel has a range of 200 nautical miles. It's undergone a total refurbishment from top to bottom and has emerged as good as new for its operations offshore," he said.

UC McFadyen, who spent five years operating on *Fearless* as a member of the Police Marine Area Command, said he was looking forward to reacquainting himself with the vessel following its upgrade.

"Today's sea trials and familiarisation exercises are an

important step in preparing the vessel for its voyage to Lord Howe Island and operational service later this year," he said.

"I'm excited to be here today in Port Macquarie to be a part of preparing *LH 40* for its new role at Lord Howe Island in helping to keep our boating community safer."

MR Port Macquarie Unit Commander Greg Davies and members Alison Cameron-Brown and Yolanda Bosschietter assisted with the sea trials.

## Units take advantage of professional training

Marine Rescue Crowdy Harrington hosted members of two other units for a training exercise with a distinct chill factor recently.

The unit is continuing to provide training for our members in line with COVID-19 requirements.

Members of MR Norah Head and Forster-Tuncurry joined our own members for a successful sea survival and firefighting training session in the water outside our base at Harrington.

While the water had a winter chill about it, the course was well attended, with the three units keen to take advantage of the

professional training experience.

We certainly appreciated the assistance of the crew of *Crowdy 20*, John Single and Wayne Seach, with Unit Commander Cheryl Rowe on board as an observer.

The unit also conducted a first aid refresher course that was well attended and received. Pleasingly, no humans were injured during the course of the session. We are, as always, indebted to the assistance of all the trainers who give their time and expertise so willingly. This enables us to be ready for any contingency that arises, enabling us to save lives on the water.

*Aub Polden*



Members of MR Crowdy Harrington, Norah Head and Forster-Tuncurry retrieve a life raft during a sea survival course.



# Rescue boat best sight in world: fishermen

Luck, safety gear and rapid response ensure pair located far offshore.

Two fishermen who were rescued after spending more than an hour clinging to each other 8nm off Nambucca have told of their relief at seeing a rescue boat approaching.

"It was the best thing in the world to see that boat coming. We were happy," Matt Barber told *Prime 7 News*.

The skipper of rescue vessel *Trial Bay 30*, whose crew saved the men after their small fishing boat split and sank within 15 to 20 seconds early on August 5, described the pair as "dead lucky".

"They were a long way out and the wind had just started to get up so there were a few white caps around. Another hour or so and it might have been pretty rough out there," Peter Holyfield said.

"They were dead lucky. They had lifejackets on and two EPIRBs tied to their wrists and we got out there pretty quickly."

Joe Mitchell credited Mr Barber for saving his life by ensuring he got his lifejacket on and activating their EPIRBs to direct rescue crews to their location.

"It was unreal, he saved me," he said.

As well as Mr Holyfield and crew members Ron Young, Rob Hose and

David Meani on *TB 30*, vessels from MR Nambucca and Coffs Harbour, the NSW Police launch *Fearless* and the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter also responded to the life-threatening emergency.

Mr Holyfield said the men also had rung a mate who was a pro fisherman to give him their coordinates and he phoned them through to the base.

"We got to the original coordinates within about half an hour but they'd changed," he said.

"We searched around the area and one of the guys on board spotted something yellow. I thought it might be a wave buoy but then we realised it was the two guys hanging on to each other in their lifejackets."

Mr Holyfield said one of the men had gone into shock, with the crew administering oxygen on the return journey to South West Rocks, where a NSW Ambulance was waiting to transport the pair to Kempsey Hospital for observation (*see P48*).

The rescue capped a busy week for the unit's crews, who had been tasked to two operations under a full moon on August 2.

After towing a stranded boat from Stuarts Point to the Macleay River boat ramp, Peter Holyfield, Ron



Safe! Joe Mitchell and Matt Barber return to shore on the Macleay River after being located 8nm out to sea by the crew of *Trial Bay 30*.

Young, Ian Turner and Jon Cragg had just moored *TB 30* when police requested them to head upstream to Kinchela, where a car had gone into the river.

Using the vessel's depth finder,

the crew identified an object in the water and dropped an anchor with a fender to mark its location. Fears of a body in the vehicle proved unfounded when the owner reported to police next day.



Life-saving team ... *Trial Bay 30* skipper Peter Holyfield and crew David Meani, Rob Hose and Ron Young.

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



### Don't lose your mooring

We are participating in the RMS moorings review.

### Keep Little Manly Cove Open

We successfully lobbied to give boaters continued access.

### Keep the channels to our waterways open

We are working with the RMS & Lands Department to ensure that dredging is kept up to date.

### Batemans Bay new bridge

We are working with RMS to ensure boat owners will have safe access to town and mooring facilities.

### Nowra Bridge

A new bridge is proposed, we are working with the relevant Government departments to ensure boating NSW is well looked after.

### We do cover all of NSW

Complacency and apathy are our own worst enemies. Maintain your boating rights.

## Contact us today

Telephone: 9960 1859 | E-Mail: [admin@boatowners.org.au](mailto:admin@boatowners.org.au)

Website: [www.boatowners.org.au/](http://www.boatowners.org.au/)

# Off-duty volunteers rescue fisherman on bar

Day's outing turns into impromptu rescue mission on Camden Haven Inlet.

A day's fishing ended in an impromptu rescue mission for two off-duty volunteers who pulled a fisherman to safety after his boat capsized on the Camden Haven Inlet bar on August 27.

MR Camden Haven Unit Commander Neville Adams and fellow volunteer Ken Clancy were returning from a fishing trip in Mr Clancy's boat about 12.15pm when they passed a man fishing on board a tinnie on the bar.

The pair, travelling in company with another boat, looked back and saw the man was in trouble in the waves on the bar and immediately turned back to assist.

By the time the two boats had swung around, the 3.8m aluminium tinnie had overturned, throwing the 69-year-old fisherman into

the water. Coming alongside the overturned boat, the volunteers' rescue training kicked in and they quickly pulled the man, who was clinging to his upturned hull, on board their boat and rushed him back to the unit's base.

After his ordeal in the river's chilly waters, a NSW Ambulance was called to check on the boater's condition.

MRNSW Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne said the fisherman was lucky two highly trained rescue personnel had happened to be passing and able to reach him so quickly after his dinghy had overturned.

"Today's rescue is a reminder that our coastal bars can be hazardous and anyone heading



The owner of this tinnie - retrieved by a passing trawler - was rescued by two off-duty MR Camden Haven volunteers.

out on the water should Log On on VHF Channel 16 or the free *MarineRescue* App," Mr Gawne said.

"Logging On and Logging Off helps our volunteers keep a watch over you while you are on the water

and if the worst does happen, to reach you quickly."

The upturned tinnie was retrieved by a passing trawler and dropped at the MR Camden Haven base further upstream.

# New leader brings management experience

\$10,000 in grants helps keep unit on the road and spinal patients safe.

There has been a change at the helm of MR Camden Haven after six years.

Neville Adams was elected Unit Commander at the unit's Annual General Meeting on July 28 and Peter Cameron as Deputy.

Neville has been a unit member for six years and is a qualified Radio Operator and Leading Crew member.

During his career he has gained extensive experience in management with various major companies. A people person, he will make a good leader and has the support of all our members.

Unable to stand after completing the three terms allowed under the MRNSW Constitution, outgoing UC Ken Rutledge has been appointed the unit's Property and Public Relations Officer. Ken joined MRNSW in November 2007 and has since gained his Watch Officer and

Coxswain ratings. He was elected DUC in 2012 before stepping up as Unit Commander two years later, holding the position until this year's AGM.

Ken presented a Unit Commander's Citation to the unit's hard working Fundraising and Uniform Officer Marie Roberts at the AGM to recognise all the great work she does for our unit.

Like all others, the Camden Haven unit has been doing it hard under COVID-19 restrictions.

Training has been carried out in small groups to maintain our social distancing and we have managed to get our crew members well up to speed with their marine drills.

The unit has recently succeeded in attracting two grants.

The local Kendall Op Shop presented us with a grant of \$9,000, which provided most of the funding for a second hand Nissan



Gordon Gray watches over the tow line as *Camden Haven 30* tows a ketch that broke down 5nm offshore to safety.

X-Trail 4x4 to tow our small rescue vessel, *Camden Haven 10*. This was followed by a \$1,000 grant from Stockland Care, which was used to purchase two spinal boards for our rescue vessels.

Our boaters have remained safe on the water, although we would

like to see more Logging On and Logging Off via VHF Channel 16 or the free *MarineRescue* App.

On July 21, a large ketch with four people on board was towed back into the river after breaking down 5nm off the bar.

**Ken Rutledge**



## 'Touch and go' as boat limps to safe Harbour

More boaters heading to sea to escape lockdown on Coffs Coast.

Late winter recreational boating activity has been significantly greater than usual along the Coffs Coast.

Escaping to sea from lockdown has seemed to be a popular pastime, with many boats with only one or two people on board heading out. Unfortunately, only about half of the boats going to sea Log On but with so many boats being brought out of hibernation, the unit has responded to a number of incidents.

On August 5, a Coffs Harbour crew joined our colleagues from MR Trial Bay and Nambucca responding to rescue two men whose boat capsized 8nm off Nambucca. *Trial Bay 30* located the two men, with *Coffs 30* recovering equipment from the lost vessel.

The delivery skipper of a 13m timber cruiser travelling north up the coast called our base late in the afternoon of August 18, reporting that he was taking on water faster than he was able to get rid of it.

*Coffs 30* was quickly activated with real concern that the vessel



This cruiser limped into Coffs Harbour with support from the crew of *Coffs 30*. Photo: Mitch Harvey.

would founder. It was finally located in the dark, sitting heavily in the water and taking waves over the bow. *Coffs 30* shadowed the cruiser in the darkness as it limped towards Coffs, with the crew preparing contingency plans to rescue the skipper should his vessel sink.

Mid North Coast Regional Operations Manager Randall Gawne said the boat only just made it into

the harbour: "It was touch and go.

"I'm sure this boater is very grateful to our professionally trained and equipped volunteers, who made it their mission to ensure he returned safely to shore," he said.

Cowper MP Pat Conaghan and Coffs Harbour MP Gurmesh Singh presented National Medals to two of the unit's long-serving skippers, Andrew Cox and Mark Halling, at a

ceremony held in a large venue to maintain social distancing. Mayor Denise Knight and Mr Gawne also attended the event, which was the first gathering of our members for many months and a chance to refresh our team spirit. A video, directed by member Graham Taylor, was also launched to attract new members and sponsors for the unit.

*Graeme King*

## Nambucca proves size doesn't matter

While 2020 is certainly keeping us all guessing about what's coming next, one thing is certain: MR Nambucca will not be caught short.

Although we are one of the smaller MRNSW units, that is not limiting what we aim to achieve.

We have recently gained some talented new volunteers and our training is in full swing, both on the water and on the books.

We are working on a series of projects to upgrade our base and create a more comfortable working and training environment. Installing insulation in the training room roof has not only made the room warmer but also helped reduce road and wind noise. Our old data projector

has been replaced by a smart TV to enhance our training activities and we are establishing a reference centre with books and other learning aids for members' use.

New boat winches also have replaced the existing 30 to 40-year-old units. Our second Rescue Water Craft, *NH 12*, has returned from some fine-tuning by SeaDoo in top condition, with our operators lining up to use it.

Membership Officer Theodor Ceapa has enhanced the safety of our vessel *Nambucca 20*, with a full-length secured safety rope attached along the sponsons and a new location for our buffers. Small changes but a big safety gain.

In an initiative by Deputy Unit



MR Nambucca Rescue Water Craft on a training exercise ahead of the peak summer season, when the RWCs patrol daily.

Commander Colin Cracknell, the unit is putting together small COVID-19 kits containing a small bottle of sanitiser, latex gloves and a supply of masks in a ziplock plastic bag.

Members can obtain refills at the base, with the aim of ensuring we are doing as much as possible to ensure the safety of our members.

*Gary Nichols*

# Glider alarm sparks long, fruitless search

Forster-Tuncurry members grateful to be healthy and continuing to serve.

A false alarm proved to be a useful training exercise for members of MR Forster-Tuncurry during a relatively quiet winter on the water.

The weather during the July school holidays was not the best for boating but the unit had a steady stream of 613 vessels Logging On and responded to 14 incidents, including 11 offshore.

Although most incidents resulted in our vessels towing boats with the usual complaints of broken down motors and a lack of fuel, one emergency created an exercise in interagency teamwork.

At 3.30pm on June 13, *Forster 30* responded to a report of a hang glider ditching in the water 2-4 kms east-north-east of a local headland.

Our vessel, along with two Surf Life Saving jet skis, conducted a parallel search from shore out to 4nm.

After 75 minutes, *FO 30* was stood down, returning to shore to refuel before being subsequently requested by the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command to return to the search area, along with the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter.

The search proved fruitless and four hours after originally being activated, *FO 30* was finally stood down. This was another example of the valuable contribution of our organisation, well trained members and state-of-the-art vessels.

Our members have continued training through the pandemic, often online via Zoom. A successful two



Back on the water ... MR Forster-Tuncurry coxswains lead members in training for their crew qualification through marine drills.

day first aid course was recently conducted with members from nearby bases. Gone were the "live dummies", replaced with socially distanced but suitably moulaged half dummies.

Like everyone, we long for the non-pandemic days yet are grateful our members are healthy and we can continue to serve the boating public.

*Fran Breen*

# COVID commissioning for new Lakes vessel

First offshore exercise a good workout for stable, capable Naiad.

Emergency Services Minister David Elliott officially welcomed MR Tuggerah Lakes' new vessel to the MRNSW fleet in early August.

The Minister and Terrigal MP Adam Crouch joined a small group of unit volunteers for the commissioning of *Tuggerah Lakes 20* in accordance with COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

On the jetty for the hand-over, Unit Commander Tony Younglove accepted the boat on behalf of the unit before Chaplain Don Hobbs led a prayer for the safety of all who operate on board.

The official party then took to the water to inspect the boat in action, with Steve Corbett at the helm and Bob Blue as crew.

*TL 20* has been named *The Lawrys*, recognising the enormous commitment of our leading fundraisers, Lorraine and Ken Lawry.

The boat was given a good workout before its commissioning

when it joined a search and rescue exercise out of Terrigal Haven with members of MR Central Coast and Norah Head.

In its first offshore exercise, the *Naiad* performed beautifully in a 1.5m swell and a little rain.

We all agree that operating with an enclosed cabin is much more comfortable than on the boat's open predecessor.

Thanks to Hunter/Central Coast Regional Operations Manager Steve Raymond for towing the vessel on the 30-minute trip to Terrigal and mooring it on the Haven ready for the start of the SAREX.

The boat has proven stable and capable, performing well in several operations, towing vessels to safety around the clock and assisting police with the recovery of a body.

The new-generation fit-out on board gives all crew members an added level of confidence in responding to emergencies,



The official commissioning party takes an inspection run on board *Tuggerah Lakes 20*.

regardless of the conditions.

Completing all inductions and training on the new boat has been high on the unit's agenda, again within the relevant COVID-19 guidelines.

*TL 20* is berthed at the unit's south base at The Entrance on a newly-installed float lift that has been an outstanding addition and a

delight for our crews to use, while keeping the vessel high and dry when not in action.

Personally, after a few night exercises and call outs, I feel much more confident in our safety in the darkness.

The vessel makes us proud to be represent MRNSW.

*Bob Sutton*



## Three Mayday missions in a dramatic month

Local COVID shutdown takes a third of Port Stephens operations team offline.

Three Mayday missions and a COVID-19 shutdown were the hallmarks of just one month of winter for members of MR Port Stephens.

Crews were quickly under way to two Mayday operations at Broughton Island on July 4 and 8.

A week later, a local man unknowingly infected with Coronavirus visited a local shopping centre. A large number of residents were caught up in the subsequent testing and self-isolation regime and our volunteers weren't immune, so to speak.

A third of the unit's operational workforce was suddenly unavailable and for one of the few times in its 38 year history, the unit was unable to sustain 24/7 operations. MR Terrey Hills rallied to our cause, taking over our midweek night radio operations for the rest of the month.

Just after 7pm on July 25, crews

were called to respond to a third Mayday in three weeks. A working boat with four divers on board had capsized near the old fish farm on the way to Broughton Island. *Port Stephens 31* departed the dock just before 7.30pm, with skipper Barney Pinney and crew Anthony Batchler, Lisa Lodding, Murray O'Dea and Richard Pizzuto on board.

Initial information was scant as *PS 31* made best speed in the conditions. The navigator managed to make contact with one of the men via mobile phone and set the rescue vessel's main spotlight directly ahead. The man was then able to call *PS 31* around until the light pointed directly at him.

Within seconds, an observer with a hand-held spotlight on the port side of *PS 31* called that he could make out a silhouette of what appeared to be four people sitting on the hull of an upturned 10m boat



*Port Stephens 31* crew Murray O'Dea, Richard Pizzuto, Barney Pinney, Lisa Lodding and Anthony Batchler return after a Mayday mission to rescue four men from the hull of their capsized boat.

about 100m away. The boat was moored to an unlit cardinal marker that the divers had been installing at the time of their capsizing. The four men were quickly recovered one by one, using a rescue coil. As they were hauled aboard *PS 31* by Murray and Richard, they were passed to Lisa, one of the unit's first aid trainers, for triaging. One was hypothermic and another had a deep

laceration to his left hand, while the other two appeared unscathed. It was a quick trip back to the berth, for a waiting ambulance to transfer the two injured men to hospital.

Two weeks later, Lisa and her offside Nick Dentrinos were running a training course to share the first aid skills she so aptly demonstrated that night.

*Richard Pizzuto*

## Base demolition ends era at Lake Macquarie

Sunday, September 13 marked the end of an era for members of MR Lake Macquarie.

The Sunday B Shift was the last worked in the unit's original radio station at Swansea Heads.

The team's bittersweet sign off at 6pm drew a line under decades of radio operations and memories in the small building.

Volunteers spent the next week moving equipment, furniture and other items out of the building ahead of its demolition.

The unit plans to move into its new \$1.8 million headquarters and radio base in October. Its modern amenities, radio room and facilities will dramatically improve members' operating conditions.

On a busy Saturday afternoon in August, radio operators Neil and Gail McBurnie noticed two people in an

inflatable dinghy towing a surfboard rider out to the end of the breakwall at the entrance to Swansea Channel.

The surfer was able to ride the waves at the entrance for some distance before being towed out again.

While the conditions made for a fun time surfing the channel, they were not ideal for boating and before long, a member of the public had reported the dinghy had overturned.

A visual confirmed that the dinghy had been righted and both the occupants and surfer had managed to climb aboard. It was clear, however, that the motor would not start, with the occupants attempting to row ashore but making little progress. Neil and Gail alerted our duty crew, skipper Darryl Scotman, Stuart Lumsden and Paul Webb,



MR Lake Macquarie's original small radio base will be demolished ahead of the unit's relocation to its new \$1.8 million headquarters.

who immediately launched *Lake Macquarie 30*. By the time the occupants of the dinghy had realised the peril they were in and called the base, our operators were able to reassure them help was on its way.

Once *LM 30* was on scene, it became apparent the trio was in a great degree of difficulty on the

strengthening outgoing tide.

The quick thinking of our radio operators and rapid response from the crew of *LM 30* averted a serious emergency with the dinghy being dragged towards the open sea.

The dinghy was towed to the Valentine boat ramp inside the lake.

*Kelly McNeil*

# Many Miles travelled to earn National Medal

Norah Head crew puts in sound effort to retrieve mysterious debris.

Long-serving member of Marine Rescue Norah Head, radio operator Miles Jones, has been presented with the latest in a series of awards recognising his stellar career and service.

Federal Member for Dobell Emma McBride earlier this year presented Miles with his National Medal for service to the community.

Miles began as a radio operator at MR Norah Head eight years ago and has mentored quite a few trainees over the intervening years.

Before joining our unit, Miles was Unit Commander of Queensland Flotilla 1 of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association for two years of an eight-year stint.

He already has to his credit the British Empire Medal for Gallantry, the International Police Medal

for Meritorious Service, the New Zealand Defence Service Medal, the New Zealand Antarctic Medal and two commendations for his service to New Zealand in Antarctica.

Miles' service record also included five years with the New Zealand Police, two years as part of Operation Deep Freeze in the Royal New Zealand Navy and three years with the Lake Munmorah Rural Fire Service.

Miles and his wife Jeannie also spent four and a half years based in Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia, before moving to Australia in 1995. Apart from his volunteer duties with the Norah Head unit, Miles enjoys his spare time either playing golf, toying with his model trains or flying his remote control model aircraft.

A crew from the unit put in a



Dobell MP Emma McBride presents MR Norah Head radio operator Miles Jones with his National Medal. Photo: Lee Deacon.

sound performance to retrieve a mysterious piece of debris on July 25.

A safety vessel for a paddlers' race from Norah Head to Terrigal contacted the unit's radio base to report a strange object - a cylinder about a metre in length attached to two blue buoys - floating offshore.

The unit alerted Australian Border Force, along with the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, which tasked the unit to investigate. *Norah Head 20* rendezvoused with the safety boat and took the object on board.

Once it was cleaned of the dense marine growth covering its surface, the cylinder was identified as an acoustic monitoring receiver.

Unit Commander Bill Hignett said he had received several phone calls from members of the marine

science community about the receiver after the story was aired on social media.

"It turns out the Sydney Institute for Marine Science deployed the device in 2017 in 53m of water off Bondi," he said.

"It travelled north to Norah Head in 11 days against the prevailing east coast current. It was deployed with a five-year life and cost \$30,000 but its true value is in the information that the monitor has recorded. Since last February, it recorded 267 pelagic fish contacts with Grey Nurse, Great White and Bull sharks, which were tagged as part of the scientific fisheries monitoring program."

The Institute of Marine Science has since visited the unit to collect the device.

Lee Deacon



## A Lifestyle Like No Other

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

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



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koolewongmarina.com.au

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Ph: (02) 4341 4000



Mystery solved ... the crew of *Norah Head 20* with the acoustic monitoring receiver they retrieved offshore.



# Permanent home for Newcastle volunteers

Riverside location found for unit after five years on the move.

Marine Rescue Newcastle members have welcomed the announcement that a site has been found for a permanent home for the unit after five years without a permanent base.

A piece of land on the waterfront at Stockton is set to become the location for our brand new radio base and unit headquarters.

The Crown Lands site, just a few metres from the South Stockton boat ramp, is managed by the City of Newcastle and will be leased to the unit at a peppercorn rental.

A 700sqm base will be built for the unit, bringing together our radio and vessel operations under one roof for the first time.

The unit has been without its own home since our Shepherds Hill base was seriously damaged in the April 2015 East Coast Low storms.

We are grateful to the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, Newcastle City Council and Cruising Yacht Club for providing us with temporary facilities throughout the intervening years.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes announced the new location on July 24.

"We are delighted to have found a suitable long-term home for Marine Rescue after working closely with them to find temporary bases since their former site at Shepherds Hill was severely damaged by a super storm in 2015," she said.

"This new site on the edge of the Hunter River at the end of King Street gives the volunteers immediate access to the Hunter River to continue keeping Newcastle's boating community safe inside and outside the harbour."

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked both Council and the State Government for their support.

"The base will feature the latest marine communications technology and equipment," he said.

"Having the unit's new rescue vessel right in front of the base will also improve crews' response times so they can be on the scene of an emergency even faster."

The easing of COVID-19 restrictions has resulted in a great deal of training for both boat and radio teams in recent weeks.

Congratulations to new Watch Officer Geraldine Allen.

On August 29, our new Naiad,



Space Design Architecture concept plan for the new MR Newcastle base on the Stockton riverfront.

*Newcastle 30*, responded rapidly when an EPIRB was activated off Nobbys Beach.

Emergency services were alerted to reports of people in the water offshore from the southern breakwall and Ian Morrow and Terry Reynolds were quickly under way on *NC 30*, along with a NSW Police vessel.

Two men and a young boy were thrown in the water when their boat capsized. Police retrieved one person from the water and the others made it to the beach.

A nearby fisherman told the crew of *NC 30* he had witnessed the boat capsize and activated his EPIRB to alert the emergency services.

In another operation, UC Ron Calman and Mick Quill had just rescued a ski boat stuck on a sandbank when they were called to help a yacht in difficulty 2nm offshore with a crew member reported to be suffering chronic seasickness. *NC 30* rendezvoused with the yacht, returning it to the CYC.

*Terry Reynolds*

## Crew transfers ill patient for medical care

A routine Saturday morning patrol quickly became a medical emergency for a crew from MR Central Coast in late June.

Skipper Phil Page and crew members Andrew McKellar and Trevor Phipps were heading down Paddys Channel on Brisbane Water on board rescue vessel *Central Coast 21* about 10am on June 27 when they were flagged down by the occupants of a small runabout.

When *CC 21* pulled alongside the runabout, the passengers told the crew that the master of the runabout had collapsed over the helm and

lost consciousness for about 30 seconds.

The crew did not waste any time in transferring the patient from the runabout to the rescue vessel.

The passengers had also made a Triple Zero call, asking for a NSW Ambulance to meet their boat at Koolewong ramp.

*CC 21* arrived at Koolewong soon after to the waiting Ambulance.

The patient was handed over for assessment and transferred to hospital for further treatment.

The crew of *CC 21* then continued their patrol.



The crew of *Central Coast 21* patrols the region's waterways from the unit's base at Point Clare on Brisbane Water.

## Crews navigate long winter nights on water

Cottage Point seizes training opportunities in sea mist, cloud and darkness.

The hardy volunteers from MR Cottage Point have rugged up to spend winter focused on night navigation exercises.

Crew members have devoted hours to navigating the shallows of Brisbane Water, where the many obstacles and array of navigation and on-shore lights create challenging conditions for crews to select and navigate a safe course under darkness.

Operating on waterways surrounded by National Park also means we have regular restricted visibility training opportunities, with sea mist and low cloud filling the valleys until mid-morning.

The unit has continued supporting Toll and NSW Ambulance crews by providing a waterborne training platform for their winch training.

In the COVID-19 climate, active first aid training and Coronavirus safety measures also have been high priorities. The unit has recruited and started crew training for 11 new members ahead of summer.

Despite the colder weather, there have been some busy days on our waterways. MR Cottage Point is a dedicated vessel base, using the services of MR Terrey Hills to manage our radio communications so we can concentrate on our water borne activities.

This support has enabled us to simplify our emergency response procedures and improve our reaction times. After hours, our response time is less than 35 minutes from receiving the call to turning the props. This has been achieved by focusing on after hours team



Cottage Point 30 in a precision winch training exercise with a Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter.

planning and a commitment from our members to be available when needed. The recent East Coast Lows have seen seas over 10m running into Broken Bay, providing a clear reminder of the destructive nature of Mother Nature and a timely reminder of the need to understand

our crew and vessel limitations. Thank you to all our crews for helping our new members and in particular Training Officer Mike Evans for managing these activities to ensure a safe and confident level of skill is deployed.

*Tony Gordon*



## Value for you. Support for us.



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

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

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

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

**Shop at the MRNSW e-shop**  
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# Community helps deliver new \$500,000 boat

Intensive month of inductions for Broken Bay members on 10m Naiad.

Marine Rescue Broken Bay volunteers have welcomed the first new rescue vessel to be delivered on Sydney's waterways for two years – and applauded their local community for helping them secure the \$500,000 asset for their work to save lives on the water.

The unit's new 10m Naiad, *Broken Bay 30*, arrived by truck on July 29 after a trip down the Pacific Highway from Yamba, before being lowered into the water at Quays Marina at Church Point.

Unit Commander Jimmy Arteaga said the new boat meant the unit's volunteers could be on the scene of an emergency even more rapidly.

Powered by twin 300hp Suzuki outboards, *BB 30* will operate on Pittwater, Broken Bay and up to 30nm off the coastline.

UC Arteaga thanked the local community for its support in helping to fund the new boat.

"The State Government last year gave residents the opportunity to vote for the projects they wanted to see funded in their local area through the My Community Projects grants program," he said.

"The fantastic community in the Pittwater electorate really got behind our volunteers and voted for our new rescue vessel.

"As a result, we received a \$200,000 grant towards the cost



Welcome home ... the new *Broken Bay 30* about to be lowered into the water at Quays Marina in July.

of this new boat, which will help us help our local boaters."

Members spent the month after delivery completing their vessel inductions and getting acquainted with the new boat's handling and capabilities before it officially entered service on August 29.

UC Arteaga extended special thanks to the unit's standards team, Graham Weir, Vic Lawrence and Andrew Majewski, for taking on the challenge of introducing new procedures, conducting member inductions and coxswain orientations and developing the vessel SMS in such a short time.

"These three members volunteered more than 288 hours of their time over four weeks to ensure Broken Bay was ready to support our community with the Naiad."

The new vessel replaced the original *BB 30*, the first boat to wear the new MRNSW livery when the service was established in 2009.

Crew members Vic Lawrence and Ron Carr, who initially delivered the Steber to Pittwater some 10 years ago, also formed part of the delivery crew to the new owner.

"We certainly will be sad to see our Steber go," UC Arteaga said.

"She will have a new lease in life

in South Australia."

Congratulations to Julie Derry and Jay Khan on attaining their crew ratings and to Colin Picard, Michael Clinen, Ted Talbot, Warwick McKenzie, Jason Cain, Tertius Bezuidenhout, Michael Charlton, Terry Walsh and Bob Reid, who have received Long Service Medals for a combined 80 years' commitment.

Andrew Majewski has been elected Deputy Unit Commander and has been instrumental on a number of fronts, including as the Operations Officer and part of the standards team.

*Jimmy Arteaga*



The old ... the unit's original *Broken Bay 30*, stripped of its MRNSW livery, is headed for a new life in South Australia.



And the new ... *Broken Bay 30* sets off on its maiden voyage on Pittwater, travelling to its home base at Rowland Reserve.

Proud to support Marine Rescue NSW

## BERTH YOUR BOAT on the HAWKESBURY

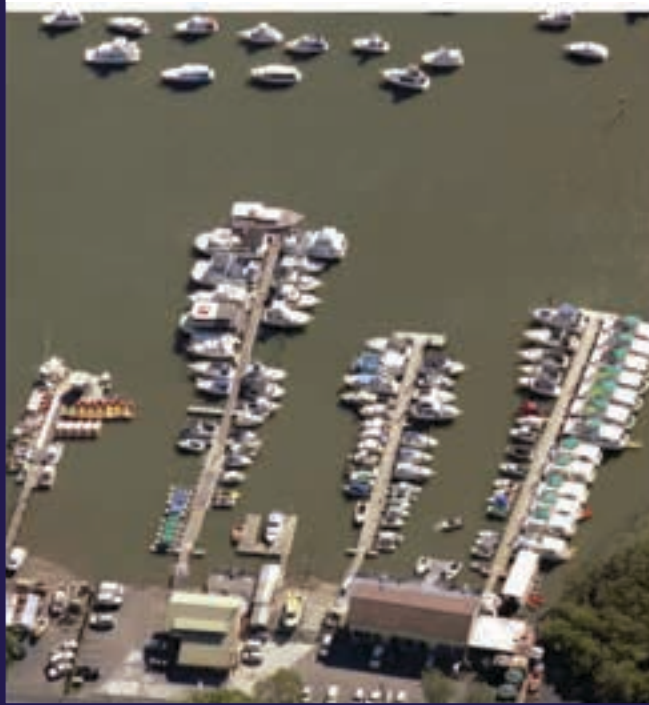


- 88 berths with power and water
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**MAKING WAVES**  
Greater Sydney News

## Fire, fatigue prompt Hawkesbury warnings

Boat's maiden voyage up in flames.



*Hawkesbury 21 returns a boat, displaying its orange V-sheet, to safety after it caught fire on the river.*

A group of fatigued kayakers and a skipper whose boat caught fire on its maiden voyage have demonstrated the need for boaters to be aware of water conditions and limited mobile coverage on the Hawkesbury River.

With water activities permitted under COVID-19 restrictions, an abundance of recreational boaters and paddlers has taken to the length of the river from Berowra to Brooklyn to enjoy our waterways.

The strong currents in some areas of the river, however, can catch visitors unaware, including a group of six kayakers who set off from Berowra at 8.30am on July 11.

The fatigued paddlers called for help late in the afternoon, with rescue vessel *Hawkesbury 21* locating them on an isolated stretch of the river at Spencer.

They were conveyed to the Gentlemen's Halt camping ground in the Marramorra National Park, where they had friends who had already set up camp.

On August 8, the unit was alerted to a vessel with a fire on board at Berowra Waters.

The Water Police also responded to the emergency.

In a remote area with limited mobile reception, the owner of the

boat had deployed his V-sheet in the hope of gaining attention.

Upon arrival on scene, the *HW 21* crew found that he had only taken possession of the boat earlier that day before taking it out for the first time.

He explained that about 15 minutes out, the manifold had started smoking before bursting into flames.

He had managed to extinguish the fire but needed help to return to his wharf.

The operation ended in the dark, providing a valuable training exercise in night navigation from Berowra Waters to Mooney Mooney.

Our members have been kept busy on the water, responding to numerous breakdowns, towing, NSW Ambulance transfers and an EPIRB activation, as well as continuing their training via Zoom.

Congratulations to two of our crew members, Sarah Adair and Sara Wakeling, on achieving their Senior Crew ratings.

The unit had been looking forward to again providing a safety watch for the annual Hawkesbury Canoe Classic but on September 5 the organisers announced that this year's event had been cancelled.

*Kym Mahoney*



# Upside down success at Middle Harbour

New Echo Watch finds its debut anything but 'set and drift'.

Marine Rescue Middle Harbour has adopted a radical new flexi-watch system called "Set and Drift".

There are now five "Set Watches" - with the new addition in August of Echo Watch - all of which are rostered one weekend every five weeks.

Then there are a number of flexible watches (Victor, Yankee 1, 2 and Zulu etc), whose members supplement the Set Watches as "Drifts".

They may be rostered one or two days at a time, in regular or irregular patterns or even on an ad hoc basis.

Lastly, there are the Training Watches (Tango 1-4) that supplement the regular watches of Set and Drift.

The new system is designed to add flexibility to the roster and accommodate the diverse needs of rated members, whose time constraints can be challenging and who may be unable to fit in to set watches because of weekend work or other commitments.

Middle Harbour is experiencing dramatic growth both in crew numbers and the ratings of those members and there is currently a lengthy waiting list of more than 100 people keen to join the unit.

So the new system is designed to be capable of quick adjustment to cope with expansion and unexpected individual constraints on availability.

Which brings us to Echo Watch, which debuted as a combination of Echo + Victor + Tango, making for a combined complement of about 12 rated members and trainees.

On their first weekend, the crew responded to an urgent call to rescue two fishermen from their capsized Kevlacat at Sydney Harbour's notorious Sow and Pigs Reef.

This is a popular but tricky location in the middle of the harbour



No point in asking them to steer in our wake ... the crew of *Middle Harbour 20* takes an overturned catamaran under tow near the tricky Sow and Pigs Reef on Sydney Harbour.

that has claimed many vessels over the years.

Joanna Mycroft, the unit's Training Officer, Echo Watch Duty Officer and *Middle Harbour 20* skipper, takes up the story:

On arrival, there were two men looking very cold, standing in the middle of their upturned catamaran.

Another RHIB and a sail training vessel were standing by to rescue them if their craft sank.

They looked very relieved when we turned up.

Our initial thoughts were to get the men on board another vessel and out of the water.

By this time, the wind was up, the rain was pouring and everyone in the open was looking cold.

The police decided it was best for them to take the men on board their RHIB and back to the Marine Area Command at East Balmain and asked if we could tow the vessel to a police mooring near Bottle and



The unit's primary rescue vessel, *MH 30*, adds some grunt but still only manages one knot, with the catamaran's cabin acting as a giant sea anchor.

Glass Point. The men had had the presence of mind to attach a rope from the vessel to their trailer hitch, providing something for us to grab onto.

*MH 20* took the vessel under tow as the police took the men on board.

With the deep cabin of the capsized boat acting like a giant sea anchor, the rescue vessel was making slow progress at an

estimated half a knot towards the police mooring. The unit's Steber 38, *MH 30*, was called in to lend some more grunt, taking over the tow but still only managing to increase the speed to about one knot.

It was a slow but ultimately successful effort, closing a dramatic debut for Middle Harbour's Echo Watch.

*Howard Gipps*

## Diverse young recruits an asset to Pt Jackson

Unit happy to be bringing in new and interesting people: Commander.

Five recruits who joined MR Port Jackson last year have succeeded in bolstering the unit's complement of crew members on board its two rescue vessels.

The five - Pauline Ramsey, Emma Strowbridge, David Mills, Ryan Green and Manny Karpouzis - have attained their Crew ratings after joining the unit in an intake of 22 newcomers in 2019.

The two young women joined in August, passing their operational assessments in March, just before COVID-19 restrictions temporarily halted training for MRNSW volunteers.

Unit Commander Greg Urand said the young, female and diverse recruits were a great asset.

"Pauline and Emma, and so many other trainees, are greatly increasing the diversity, skills and age range of the Port Jackson unit. We are so

happy to be bringing in and training all these new and interesting people," he said.

Pauline said she had been interested in volunteering, specifically in a capacity that would allow her to advance her first aid skills.

"The information evening told me everything I needed to know and I signed up straight away," she said.

Emma completed first aid training with St John Ambulance for work and discussed volunteering with the organisation with the trainer, who was also an MRNSW volunteer.

"He helped me to sign up with St John but also recommended Marine Rescue as another volunteer activity that I would be interested in, so I reached out to Marine Rescue at the same time," she said.

The two women met at a unit information evening and have since



Two of MR Port Jackson's new crew members, Pauline Ramsey and Emma Strowbridge, passed their operational assessments in March.

worked together and with the other new crew members throughout their training and assessment processes.

They said the unit's volunteers had been welcoming to the new recruits and the training process enjoyable and interesting.

The women agreed the application process had been straightforward and simple and the training all encompassing, with everyone working together to help each other and learn as much as possible.

## Terrey Hills maintains COVID safety 24/7

Committee developing new membership strategy for pandemic times.

Marine Rescue Terrey Hills has settled into an excellent routine for managing its 24/7 operations in the COVID-19 climate.

All Watches conduct rigorous cleansing of the work stations and maintain safe distancing at all times and the base is professionally cleaned daily.

Thanks to all members for the commitment and the unit executive for ensuring everything is being done to ensure that we maintain both our health and service to the boating community.

The unit has new leadership following our elections. Matt King is the new Unit Commander and Sandy Howard the Deputy. Members have thanked former UC John Harris for his achievements and commitment over six years.

The Marketing, Funding



Operating safely ... radio operators Andrew Laurich and Helen Manifold on duty at MR Terrey Hills.

and Membership Committee is continuing to deliver a program focused on attracting new members and developing a new strategy to improve this activity, taking into account social restrictions.

The unit's Facebook manager David Crawford is promoting the unit on social media and Helen Manifold, assisted by committee members, has obtained a number of grants from government and other funding

bodies. Our radio club currently has 243 members as the committee examines all options for integrating with the boating public and people looking to join MRNSW.

*Denis Comber*



# Bachelors of Barrenjoey living the high life

Boaters, jet ski riders urged to steer clear of headland's resident seal colony.

*See how he dives  
From the rocks with a zoom!  
See how he darts  
Through his watery room...  
Seals by Robert Frost*

Whether they be "merrow" in Irish mythology, "kopakonán" in the Faroe Islands, "selshamurinn", the Icelandic version or "selkie" in Scottish lore, seals have been the subject of imagination and story-telling in many cultures, particularly in northern Europe and Scandinavia.

In the Scottish Isles, where the selkie legend originated, it is said that folk would only hunt seals for food and fur during hard times, as killing a seal was believed to bring bad luck. Elsewhere, seals have been less tolerated, even regarded as a menace, threatening the livelihood of fishing communities.

Regular boaters in Pittwater, north of Sydney, have become familiar with the presence of a local seal colony. Usually seen basking on the rocks north of Barrenjoey Headland, these are mostly New Zealand fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) and a smaller number of their Australian cousins (*Arctocephalus pusillus*). Their diet includes fish, birds, octopus, squid and other cephalopods. Females mature between four and six years and males later, between eight and 10 years.

According to NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services Ranger Stephanie Martin, seals have been present at Barrenjoey Headland for about seven years. Thought to be a semi-permanent colony, it appears to have become more established in the past three to five years. Numbering about 20, the colony includes a mix of young males, females and a large bull, easily spotted from a distance on the highest point of their regular rock.

The seals were originally found a bit further west of the headland



A bachelor pad, not a nursery ... the Barrenjoey Headland seal colony is mostly male. Photos: Stephanie Martin, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

but have moved in recent years. It seems reasonable to assume this may have been a tactical move away from easy human access, particularly the weekend crowds headed for Barrenjoey Lighthouse.

The seals are predominantly male: a group of bachelors rather than a breeding colony. However, smaller seals are sometimes present in the winter months. Classified as pups, at half the length of an adult seal, these youngsters have been weaned and do not need their mums. At 18 months, they have come of age, as it were. Stephanie explained they were "just hanging out with the older and successful seals – kind of like a mentoring program".

MR Cottage Point crews have quite often noted vessels, particularly smaller boats and jet skis, coming uncomfortably close for a better look at the bachelor pad. Stephanie reports the big bull has suffered a propeller cut on his belly, which fortunately looks to be healing.

Irresponsible boaters have also been seen trying to clamber on to the rock where the seals normally rest. NPWS is investigating

installing signs on the rocks to remind boaters and jet ski riders to keep their distance. Overt signs of seal response to disturbance include increased alertness and the tendency to move towards the water and flushing into the water. If you see a seal hurrying to the edge and diving into the water, it is not putting on a show but is more likely disturbed by your presence. A seal yawning is actually baring its teeth in a warning that it may bite.

NPWS warns that seals are wild animals and unpredictable, so should be given plenty of space. The public is advised to keep at

least 40m from seals and never get between them and the water. People should not try to touch or feed them.

*Joyce Yeap*



Cute but unpredictable ... a seal in the 'mentoring' colony.



People are warned to keep at least 40m from the seals and not to try to touch or feed them.

# You're true heroes: dad thanks rescue crews

Air-sea search launched after father and daughter kayakers blown far offshore.

A father has thanked members of MR Botany Port Hacking for their efforts to save him and his young daughter when they were blown offshore on their kayak in mid-August.

Two crews from the unit joined a major air and sea search for the pair in rough seas with a 2-3m southerly swell and 20 knot winds.

The dad and daughter set out from Boat Harbour at the northern end of Cronulla Beach on August 16.

The winds, swell and tide pushed them 5nm offshore before they were spotted by the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter and subsequently taken on board a NSW Police vessel.

"Thanks to you guys! We seriously appreciate everyone's efforts," he said in a text message to a crew member who had made contact during the search.

"You guys are true heroes. Thank you so much."

Unlike this mission, crews responded to an emergency with a fatal outcome on July 5.

Three men were retrieved from the water after their boat capsized off La Perouse but died at the scene.

The search by Water Police, a crew on board *Botany 30* and Surf Life Saving continued until it could



The first 12m Naiad in the MRNSW fleet ... the new *Botany Hacking 30* is readied to enter the water for the first time, on the Clarence River at Yamba.

be confirmed there had been no one else on board.

Demonstrating the versatility of our members, the crew of *Port Hacking 30* also joined the National Parks and Wildlife Service searching south towards Wattamolla in the Royal National Park for a whale reported to be entangled.

The arrival of the unit's new rescue vessel, the first 12m Naiad in the MRNSW fleet, is imminent.

Built at Yamba Welding & Engineering, the vessel will be based on Port Hacking and give the unit additional grunt, particularly on offshore operations.

The unit has increased its



*Botany 30* battles a 2-3m southerly swell in search of a dad and daughter blown offshore on their kayak. Photo: Brad Whittaker.

training activities in the lead-up to the peak of the boating season, with an intense schedule of regular sessions. Crews are on the water each Wednesday and Friday night,

along with the weekend day shifts, to ensure the unit has ample numbers of qualified Coxswains and Leading Crew and Crew members for the long, hot weeks of summer.

## Shoalhaven award for Ulladulla volunteer

The Shoalhaven Emergency Services Community Awards presentation ceremony was held on September 5 at the Emergency Operations Centre at Nowra.

All guests were socially distanced and wearing masks.

The four MRNSW finalists were Mike Boadle (MR Shoalhaven), John Eltherington (MR Shoalhaven), Allan Brook (MR Ulladulla) and Alex Ross (MR Jervis Bay).

Unfortunately, Alex was unable to be present and was represented by

his wife, Rebecca.

The MRNSW Officer of the Year Award for the Shoalhaven was presented to Allan Brook.

Allan is one of our four MRNSW finalists in this year's State Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards, to be announced on October 30. Plans are under way to expand the awards to additional Local Government Areas.

Congratulations to Allan and all finalists.

*Pete Taylor*



MRNSW Shoalhaven finalist Mike Boadle, Regional Operations Manager Bruce Mitchell, MRNSW Officer of the Year Allan Brook, awards ambassador Pete Taylor and finalist John Eltherington.



# Cat uses one of nine lives on floodwaters

Shellharbour crew chases down rogue yacht blown up coastline.

The owner of a 9m catamaran ripped from its mooring by floodwaters on the Shoalhaven River and dragged out to sea on August 11 has praised crews from MR Shellharbour and Port Kembla who captured and retrieved his vessel.

An East Coast Low dumped almost 400mm of rain across the Shoalhaven over four days, resulting in some of the worst flooding in 30 years in the district.

Floodwaters pouring down the Shoalhaven River, which had risen to 4.13m, had cut an opening at the normally-closed river entrance at Shoalhaven Heads, allowing the Seawind 1190 Sport, *Pirate King*, to escape to open waters on August 10.

Ower Doug Jackson told Brent Vaughan on *Seabatticals* that a friend had managed to board the boat when it nudged into the riverbank on August 10 and deploy the reserve anchor. It had not held and the boat had washed out past the heads in the "washing machine" caused by the confluence of 10

knots of outgoing river water and a 3m south-east swell.

With the anchor deployed, the boat then sat 500m offshore for hours but by 5pm it was a kilometre offshore.

"I went to bed thinking it was all over, red rover," he said.

When he woke on August 11, there was no sign of the boat and his estimation was that it had ended up in Davey Jones' locker.

At 8.30am he received a call from the Water Police that it was under tow.

Overnight, the boat had travelled 40-50km north to Bass Point through "extraordinarily difficult conditions", staying off the rocks on the coastline and with little damage other than a cracked hatch.

The crew of rescue vessel *Shellharbour 30*, Gerry Kelly, Geoff Troth and Joe Vasconcelos, headed out in choppy seas early on August 11 and took the *Pirate King* under tow, making slow progress at four knots in the conditions on the return voyage to Port Kembla. A MR Port



Ahoy *Pirate King*! The crew of *Shellharbour 30* arrives on scene to retrieve a catamaran washed out to sea by floodwaters.

Kembla crew then shadowed the two boats into harbour.

"One point I'd like to make is that the contribution from the volunteer Marine Rescue at Shellharbour and Port Kembla, who were able to get a

tow rope onto the boat in the most extraordinary conditions and then manage to get it to Port Kembla for me - that was a fantastic job and I'm very grateful to them," Mr Jackson said.

# Gales, storms lash Kioloa's training plans

Members of MR Kioloa were looking forward to returning to training once MRNSW gave the all-clear after our extended COVID-imposed period of on-call duties only.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other plans for us.

Since mid-July, the South Coast has been pounded by a succession of storms and high seas, including two East Coast Lows in as many weeks.

The first large low hit on July 26, dumping 220mm of rain on Kioloa in three days and whipping up damaging seas.

The cyclonic winds brought down many trees and damaged local

homes but as just as the clean-up was almost complete, a second big low hit.

The storms caused the worst beach erosion many locals could recall.

Although the Kioloa boat ramp is useable when the seas are down, the loss of sand from the beach has exposed underlying rocks normally buried under a metre of sand. This has made it extremely tricky to launch or recover a boat, with a high risk of damage to vessels.

The storms and persistent gale force winds have meant there has been little boating activity at Kioloa for the past two months.

Hopefully with spring



Storms have caused the worst erosion Kioloa locals remember, making it extremely tricky to use the area's boat ramp.

approaching, Mother Nature will be kinder and allow us to get some proper on-water training and

crew assessments completed in readiness for the summer season.

Peter White

## Offshore fishermen urged to check boat, fuel

Long haul for Shoalhaven crews to rescue anglers chasing tuna off the Shelf.

Crews from MR Shoalhaven have responded to a spate of offshore emergencies recently, rescuing a number of stranded fisherman chasing tuna off the Continental Shelf.

Two of the long-distance missions, including one 11nm east of the Crookhaven Lighthouse, were under darkness and the furthest saw the crew of *Shoalhaven 30* travel some 21nm out to rescue five people stranded on a 7m cuddy cabin runabout.

All operations were completed successfully, with the boaters and rescue crew returning safely to shore.

It is timely to remind boaters not only to check their vessel's maintenance is up-to-date but also that they have sufficient fuel on board to reach their planned desination and return, with some in reserve.

Major flooding in mid-August reduced boating traffic on the



Debris on the flooded Shoalhaven River poses navigation hazards for boaters in mid-August.  
*Photo: Danielle Carter.*

Shoalhaven and Crookhaven rivers.

The crew of *SA 30* was tasked to investigate a 40 foot portable building being used as a temporary home by a man who lost his house in the Christmas bushfires.

The building had been washed

downstream from west of Nowra and ended up stranded on a sandbank at Shoalhaven Heads.

Unfortunately, this was one time we were unable to assist, with the building firmly stuck a long way from the river.

Congratulations to four crew members who have received their Senior Crew ratings.

Rhys White, Paul Windfield, Mark Asper and Danielle Carter all were happy to move up the rating ladder.

*Bill Carter*

## Port Kembla upgrades Hill 60 facilities

Crews from MR Port Kembla have responded to broken down vessels and a rogue catamaran offshore during winter.

On July 11, the crew of *Port Kembla 30* deployed in the dark to rescue two people on board a boat broken down off Bellambi.

The crew returned the 5.2m fibreglass runabout to Bellambi Harbour.

At the same time, *PK 20* headed to the entrance to Lake Illawarra to respond to a separate incident.

A month later, *PK 30* was activated to support a crew from neighbouring MR Shellharbour towing a 9m catamaran that had been washed out to sea from the flooded Shoalhaven River and drifted north to Bass Point (see P 39).

*PK 30* shadowed the two vessels into harbour to assist in manoeuvring the large yacht on to a mooring if needed.

Off the water, the unit has continued to upgrade its Hill 60 base and facilities.

After installing new radio communications and electronics equipment and carrying out major structural repairs, including replacing the unsafe deck, the unit has now boosted its security lighting and replaced the roof.

The next stage is to refurbish the lower floor, changing the layout to provide members with better facilities, including a new kitchenette, a modern bathroom, improved lighting, storage and a dedicated area for training, meetings



Dark deployment ... *Port Kembla 30* returns a 5.2m runabout to shore at Bellambi.

or search and rescue coordination in the event of a major emergency.

The unit also will receive a new defibrillator to install in the base, which is in a high-profile location

with a lot of passing pedestrian traffic and visitors enjoying the views of the coastline from the rebuilt deck funded by a Port Kembla Community Infrastructure Grant.



## New generation vessel due in November

Chance to climb over boat at factory visit 'makes it real'.

Members of MR Jervis Bay headed to the Northern Rivers in early September to inspect progress on the unit's new \$850,000 rescue vessel.

The new *Jervis Bay 40* is the first to be built for MRNSW by Harwood Marine and will replace the original *JB 40*, a 13.5m Steber reaching the end of its operational life.

Unit Commander Tony Dagger said the boat would be delivered in November.

"All the Jervis Bay members are looking forward to our new vessel and it making a major contribution to our capabilities for the safety of the boating community in our patch," he said.

"Actually getting to touch and climb aboard it makes it real.

"We were able to stand at the helm and get a feel of what we will be able to see over the bow



We're not gonna need a bigger boat ... MR Jervis Bay member Darren Huxter and UC Tony Dagger with Fleet Manager Kelvin Parkin and Illawarra ROM Bruce Mitchell, dwarfed by the new *Jervis Bay 40*.

and crawl through the engine compartments and into the massive storage areas we have. Standing over six metres above the water line

and on the flybridge and the view we will have is especially impressive and will be a huge benefit in search and rescue activities."

Staff from marine electronics supplier BME also attended to work with the crew on the layout of the electronics and controls.

## Jervis Bay flying high with RAAF partners

Marine Rescue NSW will continue working with the Royal Australian Air Force to support the development of the national search and rescue response capability under a new Memorandum of Understanding between the two services.

The MOU will see MR Jervis Bay continue supporting the RAAF 37 Squadron's search and rescue training activities for another two years.

The unit has worked with the RAAF for six years, with its crews normally taking part in one or two search and rescue exercises a month with 37 Squadron, based at RAAF Base Richmond.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos welcomed the ongoing partnership.

"Our volunteers play a vital role in helping ensure that when sailors and others are in trouble far out to

sea, Australia is ready to respond," he said.

The exercises allow air crew to practice deploying Air Sea Rescue Kits from C-130J Hercules transport aircraft. The rescue kits, deployed in extreme-range operations within Australia's enormous search and rescue region, include two life rafts and two containers with emergency supplies.

During each exercise, the crew of *Jervis Bay 40* heads 5nm offshore before deploying an inflatable life raft as a target for the air crew.

A Hercules then makes a series of passes, as low as 130 feet, dropping marine markers, first aid kits and large wooden logs roped together to simulate rescue kits close to the target.

*JB 40* then retrieves the deployed logs and other equipment. The recovery of the logs, each weighing



Air cargo ... equipment dropped by a RAAF C-130J Hercules during a search and rescue exercise is recovered by *Jervis Bay 40*.

more than 60kg, is physically demanding work for the crew.

By the time the exercise is complete, up to half a tonne of equipment and logs will have been secured on board for return to HMAS Creswell at day's end.

MR Jervis Bay Unit Commander Tony Dagger said the MOU was a

source of pride for the unit.

"This partnership enables MR Jervis Bay to continue to play a key role in supporting the RAAF in its vital search and rescue training and provides our volunteers with the opportunity for purposeful and stimulating training," he said.

*Phil Campbell*

## Pair swim to shore after rolling on bombora

Debris leads Ulladulla crews to sunken boat off harbour entrance.

A series of emergencies kept MR Ulladulla crews on the water throughout the cold days of winter.

Two people on board a boat that overturned in the pre-dawn darkness off the entrance to Ulladulla Harbour managed to make their way to shore to raise the alarm.

The man and woman reached a nearby caravan park to call the unit's radio base to report what had happened and alert the unit to the presence of the upturned vessel.

The unit's two vessels, *Ulladulla 30* and *Ulladulla 20*, were tasked to search for the boat, which posed a potential navigation hazard to other boaters entering and leaving the harbour.

The crews found fishing tackle and other gear floating off Sullivans Reef, a bombora just off the harbour, indicating the boat's likely location.

The two boaters were later treated at Milton Hospital.

On July 9, a crew responded to



*Ulladulla 30* sinks in a trough as it searches around the Sullivans Reef bombora for a boat that overturned in the pre-dawn darkness. Photo: David Hall.

rescue two people on board a 5-6m open runabout that broke down 10nm east of Ulladulla.

The boat's skipper radioed the unit's radio base for help, reporting the boat was experiencing mechanical problems.

Both vessels were again activated on August 14 to rescue two vessels: one stranded near the Warden Light

and another in danger of running on to rocks at Burrill Rocks, at the entrance to Burrill Lakes.

*UL 30* pulled the boat to safety from the rocks, returning the three people on board to the harbour.

*UL 20* made good speed to rescue a boat that ran up on to Lighthouse Beach on the southern side of Warden Head. After satisfying

themselves that the two people who had been on board were safe, the crew returned to base.

Both boats were reported to have had fuel problems, prompting Unit Commander David Hall to remind boaters to ensure they had sufficient fuel supplies and were confident their boat was suitable for the conditions before heading out.

## Floods damage river markers, radio base

Sussex Inlet recruitment drive attracts 13 new members to unit.

Marine Rescue Sussex Inlet has been productive during winter, taking advantage of some ideal weather between bouts of strong southerly storms that dumped a lot of water on the area, causing two floods of the river and township.

The storms and floods restricted access to our rescue vessel due to danger from the gale force winds and water over the jetty. We also spent time mopping up flooding in our base, which caused minor water damage in the radio room.

The bad weather damaged some local navigation markers but also had a surprising effect on the river and sand bar. The shallow sections of the river and the channel across the bar have been dredged by the heightened outflow of storm water

from St Georges Basin. This has widened the river entrance but exposed a concrete block that was the base for a cardinal marker that was swept away over six years ago, which has reportedly been struck by several boats cutting the corner.

The unit launched eight operations, including towing a jet ski with two people on board that sucked its anchor rope into the jet intake across the bar into the Sussex Inlet River. Two boaters on a small dinghy on its maiden voyage made it to a jetty after the boat was swamped by the wake of a passing vessel and sank. The dinghy was later located overturned and drifting rapidly towards the sea in a field of flotsam and taken in tow.

The unit elections resulted in a



Floodwaters over the jetty restrict crew members' access to *Sussex Inlet 20*, still sitting high and dry.

change of command, with Karen Lowry elected Unit Commander and Greg Tuffy Deputy.

Members thanked former Commander Ellen Dodd and DUC Tom Dunlop for their hard work and contribution.

UC Lowry's immediate aim was to increase membership and following a successful information night at the base in July, we now have 13 new members who have begun their radio operator and crew training.

*Les Pataky*



## Tuross volunteers rocked by vandalism

Senseless damage to rescue vessel puts boaters' lives at risk.

Volunteers from MR Tuross were shocked by the discovery that their rescue vessel, *Tuross 20*, has been senselessly vandalised overnight on August 19.

The vessel was taken off the water for urgent repairs after a large rock was thrown through the vessel's windscreen, shattering the glass.

Monaro Regional Operations Manager Glenn Sullivan said arrangements had been quickly put in place when the damage was discovered to ensure that the safety of the local boating community was maintained while the repairs were carried out.

Neighbouring units at Batemans Bay to the north and Narooma to the south covered the waterways for their Tuross colleagues.

Mr Sullivan said the irresponsible and thoughtless vandals had potentially placed lives at risk.

"The vandalism of an emergency

response vessel is extremely disappointing," he said.

"This boat provides a vital service to the local boating community on the Tuross and Moruya rivers and every minute counts when you are responding to an emergency on the water.

"Our volunteers give their time to serve their local community and spend countless hours a year honing their skills so they can respond as rapidly as possible to save lives on the water. They deserve far better than this.

"It is incomprehensible why anyone would want to make their job harder and place the safety of others at risk."

A new windscreen needed to be produced in Queensland, with the boat expected back on the water in mid to late September.

Anyone with information on the damage is asked to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.



Vandals hurled a rock through the windscreen of *Tuross 20* while it was moored at Preddys Wharf on the Moruya River.

## Lake Jindabyne reveals its secret past

Boaters urged to keep a lookout for semi-submerged hazards.

Boaters have been urged to Exercise caution on the Alpine Lakes as water levels continue to recede in the severe drought conditions gripping the high country.

As at August 25, storage levels on Lake Jindabyne were at 54.15 per cent, with Lake Eucumbene at 28.93 per cent.

MR Alpine Lakes has alerted boaters to the need to keep a careful lookout and travel at a safe speed on the lakes in the current conditions.

Unit Commander Les Threlfo said marker buoys were sitting high and dry on the dirt where water used to cover the Jindabyne boat ramp.

Numerous hazards are being uncovered or hiding just below the water line on the lake, including the

ruins of the 1929 St Columbkille Catholic Church, on Church Island.

The church was named after Saint Columba, an Irish abbot and missionary evangelist credited with spreading Christianity in what is today Scotland. He founded the abbey on Iona, which became a dominant religious and political institution in the region for centuries.

The Jindabyne township was relocated in 1969 and the original settlement flooded for the construction of the lake as part of the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

Work continues to improve the recreational facilities around the lake, with a new amenities block being built at the Jindabyne boat ramp. The project, to take the next few months, is being funded under



No chance of managing four knots ... boaters are urged to exercise caution as water levels recede further on Lake Jindabyne.

the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Traffic control measures are in place along the access road to the boat ramp, however, construction is not expected to affect boating enthusiasts or shared trail users.

More than \$1.3 million in upgrades to the access road at the boat ramp were unveiled last year, with the project funded by the NSW Government, Snowy Hydro and Snowy Monaro Regional Council.

## Bermagui team trains on land, sea and Zoom

Members adapt to new routines while maintaining vital operations.

We find ourselves living in strange times, in which everything has changed. Distancing, masks, sanitiser, leaving your contact details, Zoom meetings, cancellations and staying at home are now part of our COVID-19 routines.

The impact of the Coronavirus on MR Bermagui's daily operations has been significant but our volunteers are maintaining their commitment to our vital radio services and emergency response.

Over a 10-day period at the start of the last school holidays, the crew of *Bermagui 30* was called to launch four rescue operations. Two of these were at night, including a call for help from a boat stranded 15nm offshore with motor problems.

The easing of MRNSW Covid restrictions means we can again hold small meetings at our base. The limitations of 1.5m social distancing, however, only allow us

to accommodate a maximum of 10 people, including our two radio operators, so some meetings have been moved to the nearby Bermagui Country Club.

Larger meetings have been held on Zoom, with more than 20 members attending the Annual General Meeting, which saw Caron Parfitt returned as Unit Commander and Stephen Knight elected as Deputy. Heartfelt thanks to Alec Percival for his decade of service to our members as both Commander and Deputy.

Our crew training has changed significantly, with a maximum of only six people able to be on board *BG 30* at a time, including three qualified personnel.

In order to help our members maintain their training progress, we have introduced a split shift and now operate two training sessions to minimise the number of people on the vessel at any one time.



MR Bermagui members find novel, socially distanced, ways to learn their COLREGS on land.

We have also introduced more land-based training activities to teach and reinforce the rules and regulations of the sea, as well learning about ropes, knots and lines. This has resulted in some novel ways to get the information across and entertain local passers-by at the same time.

Like other units, Bermagui has taken advantage of the online MRNSW state-wide theory training, with three of our trainees completing

their radio operator training completely online and another three midway through their crew training.

While our fundraising and community events remain off the agenda for the moment, we are continuing with our new routine in our day to day base operations, involving sanitising, cleaning surfaces, signing in and providing Personal Protective Equipment both in the base and on board *BG 30*.

*Debbie Worgan*

## Vigilance required on sandy Merimbula bar

Crews put priority on getting to know 'nimble, manoeuvrable' vessel.

Members of MR Merimbula have resumed training with gusto following the interruption earlier in the year from COVID-19.

The hours devoted to training are in addition to the time our volunteers freely give to their operational duties and we are fortunate to continue attracting new recruits to help provide our vital services to the boating community.

While our radio operators have continued monitoring marine radios and responding to requests for help, our crews are back on board both *Merimbula 30* and our new *MB 20*.

Familiarisation with *MB 20* is a current priority. The lower cockpit canopy and the ability to convert to a topless cockpit allows the boat to fit under the Merimbula road bridge,

giving the unit access to the top lake and recreational boat ramp for the first time. Our crews are finding the boat nimble and manoeuvrable, with a handy turn of speed.

Extra vigilance is required by all crews and boaters crossing the Merimbula bar at present, with the movement of sand continuing to limit water flow and resulting in a sandbar between the port and starboard markers of the main channel.

Local government agencies are aware of this and we are expecting the markers to be adjusted accordingly if Mother Nature does not correct the channel naturally.

In the meantime, access to the sea requires some counterintuitive manoeuvres.



The 'nimble and manoeuvrable' *Merimbula 20* has a handy turn of speed.

The unit's next project is to replace the ageing timber walkway to our new pontoon wharf. A wider and more substantial walkway will make access to both rescue vessels easier and safer. The new walkway will cost the unit \$38,000 for

materials. The work will be carried out by our skilled and trades-qualified members, with the rest of us lending muscle power and helping to raise funds to cover the cost.

*Roger Barson*



# Fire outages highlight need for sustainability

Grant funds power installations to give Narooma communications confidence.

A vital part of any MRNSW radio base is maintaining communications, especially during emergencies and disasters.

During the summer bushfires, the MR Narooma base lost most of its communications, including the mobile phone network, Wi-Fi and, at times, our landline.

We were also without electricity for significant periods, causing us real concern that our back-ups would be stretched beyond their limits. Not only were we assisting several bushfire evacuees staying in our grounds but handheld radios were the only option we had left for coordinating crews and other unit messaging.

As a short-term solution, we had an uninterruptable power supply back-up for radios and we purchased a portable generator to provide further reinforcement.

The only thing preventing us from moving to full sustainability, with solar panels and a battery bank, was the prohibitive cost.

We applied for several grants before contacting local organisation South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance, which advocated for our needs. The unit has now received a welcome \$12,500 under the Commonwealth Government Community Energy Efficiency and Solar Grants to install

this essential equipment.

While we certainly hope to never again have a season of disasters like 2020, we now have confidence that we are in as strong a position as possible to handle whatever may come our way. Thank you to our dedicated Grants Officer Scott Bowden for his professional submissions.

For a small unit, we are blessed with dedicated volunteers who turn up regularly for training, rain, hail or shine. Some enjoy the challenge of studying to advance to higher roles as coxswains and masters.

Two of these, Don Shortridge and Mick Wahren, have been rewarded for their hours of training and studying, successful passing their coxswain operational assessments.

Congratulations to both on this significant achievement in a relatively short period of time. They now swell the ranks of skippers available for duty on *Narooma 30*. Thanks also to their mentor, Ross Constable, whose constant tutelage has been invaluable.

It's fair to say that 2020 has been the most extreme year on record and from our point of view, also one of the quietest. From January 1, we endured extreme bushfires, which absolutely battered the tourist trade.

We were no sooner getting over this than the COVID-19 crisis took



Newly qualified MR Narooma Coxswain Mick Wahren.



Also earning his Coxswain epaulettes, Don Shortridge.



Evacuees sheltering in the MR Narooma base, which was struck by communications outages during the Black Summer bushfires.

hold. Visitor numbers to Narooma have been only a fraction of normal and at this stage there is no end in sight. Whatever happened to those halcyon days of old when restaurants were full, beaches were

crowded and there were often 50 to 100 boats out fishing at Montague Island and beyond, with MR Narooma on standby to do what we do best? Vale 2020, roll on 2021.

*Paul Houseman*



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## HELP INJURED WILDLIFE

Every year thousands of marine birds and animals are injured by plastic bags, fishing line, hooks and sinkers.

If you see an injured bird or native animal please call WIRES on 1300 094 737 or Australian Seabird Rescue on 0428 862 852.

**DONATE to WIRES at [WIRES.ORG.AU](http://WIRES.ORG.AU) or to Australian Seabird Rescue at [SEABIRDRESCUE.ORG](http://SEABIRDRESCUE.ORG)**

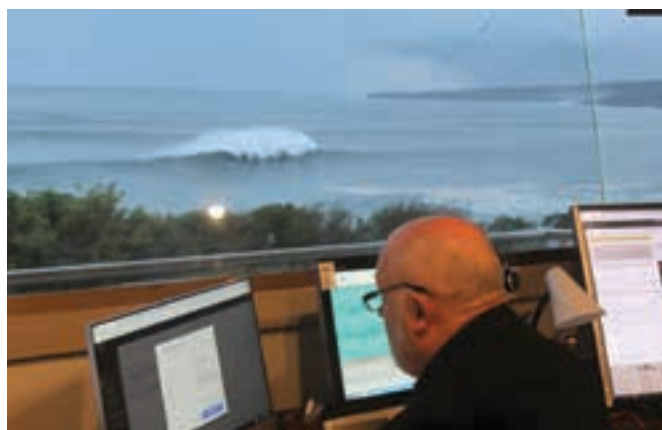
## What we've been up to



Fancy meeting you here ... night navigation training is essential to ensure MRNSW crews are ready to respond with confidence to emergencies around-the-clock. Crews from MR Port Jackson and Middle Harbour headed out on a cold, moonlit night in July, rendezvousing at Rose Bay for an operational briefing on board Port Jackson 30 and Middle Harbour 20. Photo: Daniel Moran.



Good aim ... a day's outing finished at the end of a tow rope rather than a ski rope for eight people stranded on a 6.4m boat at the Nowra ski park, who were rescued by the crew of Shoalhaven 30.



Surf's up ... conditions have often been hazardous for boating along the NSW coastline recently. Trainee Dave Simmonds has a bird's eye view of the churn below the MR Eden radio base on July 15.



A good result ... Hawkesbury 21 crew members Sara Wakeling and Paul Camilleri help free a boat grounded off Little Wobby Beach. The boaters commended the crew's friendliness and effort.



Seal of approval ... the local wildlife gives rescue vessel Bermagui 30 the once over while taking a breather in front of the MR Bermagui base on the town wharf.



## Jamie packed many duties into 7,000 days

Public relations officer, skipper, radio operator and mentor sadly missed.

Jamie Roberts gave almost 7,000 days - nearly 20 years - of service to the boating community as a member of MR Ulladulla and earlier, the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol.

I had the pleasure of working with Jamie over those years and the number of unit members who turned out to farewell their colleague at his funeral in July was a measure of the esteem in which he was held.

Jamie joined the RVCP in February 2001. He was awarded the National Medal in 2016 for his continual operational service, participating in numerous rescues and sharing his marine experience with many a new starter.

He was made an Honorary Member of the unit the same year and received a Unit Commander's Citation in June 2018. These two awards reflect Jamie's significant contribution to our unit and boating community.

The retired journalist, who had no previous marine experience, became a Marine Radio Operator and Skipper Level 3, enabling him to operate as the master of our rescue vessel up to 15nm offshore.

Jamie continued as a skipper and crew member for a number of years and was involved in many rescues before he decided it was time to come ashore, where he continued on regular radio shifts.

His friendly nature made him an ideal public relations officer for the unit and he was responsible for introducing the unit's first website.

He put his skills as a journalist to good use, writing regular news articles and preparing materials for commemoration and dedication ceremonies for no less than four vessels and our current base after our original home was destroyed by fire.

Jamie also took on the task of boat license trainer and assessor, a



MR Ulladulla Unit Commander David Hall (right) presents a Unit Commander's Citation to Jamie Roberts in 2018.

task that earned us much-needed funding from NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

Jamie is sorely missed by all who knew and worked with him. From

my own point of view, it certainly was a pleasure. We extend our condolences to Fay and Jamie's family at this difficult time.

*Keven Marshall*

## Ulladulla unit mourns volunteer trio

Marine Rescue Ulladulla has sadly lost another three members.

Max Owens gave 24 years' service to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and MRNSW, which was recognised with Honorary Membership of the unit in 2016.

After joining the RVCP in 1996, he quickly qualified as a Marine Radio Operator and Coxswain.

Max served as an officer in the Australian Army, seeing overseas service in a number of countries, including Vietnam.

On his discharge, he worked with the Australian Quarantine Service until his retirement, when he and his wife Helga moved to Fishermans Paradise. Max joined the RVCP and Mid South Coast Legacy Group, of which he was Chair for a number

of years. His knowledge and organisational skills were a valued asset to both groups.

Max was involved with the unit until recently, when ill health forced him to give away his active duties.

He is survived by Helga and their two children. Under COVID-19 restrictions, his funeral was a private family service, with a remembrance service possible at a later date.

Peter Barnes passed away recently at the grand age of 95 after a long love affair with the sea.

At an early age, he sailed a 22 foot yacht from England to Australia, which was no mean feat in an age without GPS, AIS or plotters.

An early member of the Ulladulla RVCP, he was instrumental with other members in establishing the unit's 24 hour radio service and his



Max Owens.

skills as a navigator were of great value in training budding crew and skippers.

We also have recently lost Trevor McCarthy, who was a member of MR Ulladulla for eight years.

Trevor carried out radio operator duties on a regular basis until such time as health and technology



Trevor McCarthy.

caught up with him and he decided to retire from our ranks. Trevor was always a happy and obliging presence in the base and a willing worker.

The members of MR Ulladulla offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends of all three men.

*Keven Marshall*

## Community farewells valued volunteer

Forster-Tuncurry loses great salesman.

Members of MR Forster-Tuncurry joined members of other local community services to form a guard of honour at the funeral of their colleague Brian Evan Booth, who passed away in July.

Brian was born in Burwood in Sydney in December, 1933. During WWII, when it became apparent the war was creeping on to Australia's doorstep, Brian and his sister Helen were among many Sydney children evacuated to the Blue Mountains.

After qualifying as an electrical fitter at Sydney Technical College, he travelled the countryside installing then new-fangled fluorescent lights.

He later settled back in Sydney, joined the YMCA and met Mavis, whom he married in 1957.

The couple had two children and created a successful travel agency.

Their big break came when radio broadcaster Jack Davey invited them on to his show to talk about their agency and they won a flight with TAA to destinations anywhere in Australia, choosing the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns and Thursday Island.

Brian gained his pilot's licence in 1970, enabling him to join the State Emergency Service. He became a Controller and was heavily involved in the evacuation of Darwin after



Brian Booth.

Cyclone Tracy hit in 1974.

Some years later, Brian joined Encyclopaedia Britannica, where his sales pitch was so successful he won an all-expenses-paid trip for two to the USA.

When the couple retired to Forster, Brian joined organisations including Probus, the Men's Shed and MR Forster-Tuncurry, in 2013.

Members of all three formed a guard of honour at Brian's funeral service. DUC Fran Breen said members had always been impressed with Brian's prowess as a salesman and after hearing his life story, now understood why!

Brian will be missed by us all.

Wendy Donnellan

## Fishermen incredibly grateful to rescuers



The crew of TB 30 returns Matt Barber and Joe Mitchell to safety.

Two fishermen whose boat sank 8nm offshore from Nambucca on August 5 have expressed their gratitude to the emergency services who came to their rescue, especially the crew of *Trial Bay 30*, who found them in the open water.

The boat's owner, Matt Barber, from Macksville, told Nambucca's *Guardian News* that when COVID restrictions eased, he and Joe Mitchell, from Bowraville, planned to visit the crew at their South West Rocks base to say a proper thank you for saving their lives.

*The Guardian News* spoke to Matt and told the men's story of survival:

Matt had had his 5.4 metre boat for about six years - it was an ex-pro fishing rig, built for Sydney Harbour during the 1988 Bicentenary. He'd done a bit of maintenance on it - welding a seam on the outside and fitting a plate over it.

"But it seemed fine. There was a tiny leak - it was an old boat - but we'd take on no more than 2L of water during a five-hour trip," he said. He still doesn't know exactly how the boat failed, "but my best guess is that the transom split".

With the few minutes they had before the boat was completely consumed by the sea, Matt phoned in a distress call to Trial Bay Marine Rescue (before calling Nambucca and Coffs, too).

"I rang South West Rocks and gave them my GPS coordinates and told them I'd be somewhere close

to that - because I ain't gonna last long," he said.

He fitted a second lifejacket to Joe - an old yellow foam one - after realising the first was too small with the four layers of jumpers and coats Joe had on. He also triggered two EPIRBs, tying the second one to Joe.

"I made sure it wasn't going to come off him - if nothing else, at least they'd find him," Matt said.

The senior deputy captain of the Newee Creek RFS Brigade still has flashes of memory: hearing the sound of a chopper overhead and a boat arriving, which overshot them - "we couldn't see anything from the water level, but we heard it go past us - they found our debris field" and the feeling of elation when the *Trial Bay 30* crew finally spotted them.

"It was the best sight I've seen for a long time when that boat pulled up alongside us - I'll never forget it."

Matt is incredibly grateful for the efforts put in by the various emergency services - particularly the first responder Trial Bay Marine Rescue crew.

He said he had taken one thing from the experience: while he was appropriately prepared, the incident had reiterated the importance of knowing your safety gear and how to use it.

"I can't stress that to people enough," he said.

"And lifejackets should be fitted specifically to the clothes you plan to wear out on the water."

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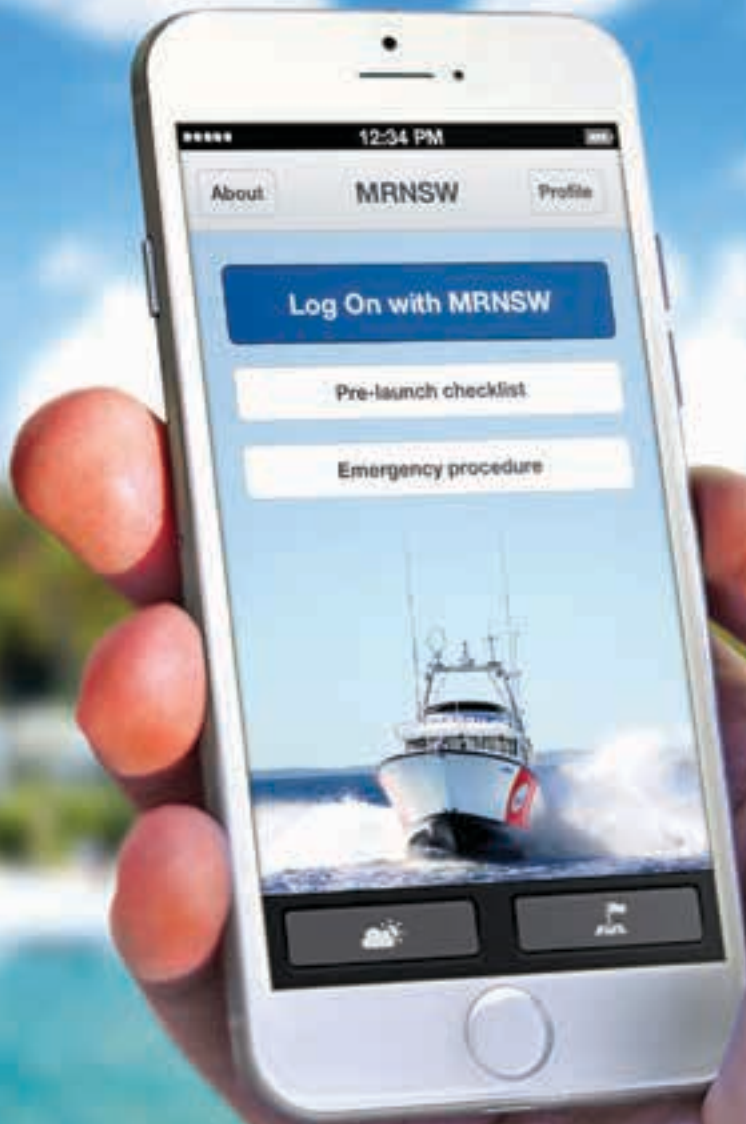


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