

PORT CHATTER



AUTUMN 2022
MARCH

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

'Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water'



Recognition for their Bravery





MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT

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VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

UNIT APPOINTMENTS - FEBRUARY 2022

Patrons: Kate Washington MP, State Member Port Stephens Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson Stephen Bromhead LLM MP, State Member Myall Lakes The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne		Community Relations Community Relations Officer Will Scott Public Relations/Social Media Vacant Editor - Port Chatter/Wavelength Penelope Highland Assistant Editor Geoff Williams Fund Raising Officer Peter Young Social Media (Facebook) Murray O'Dea Social Committee: Lisa Lodding Webmaster Vacant Donation Boxes Angela Tilling	
Unit Commander Ben van der Wijngaart Welfare / Liaison Harold Gibson Assistant Jenny Fitzsimons Protocol Officer Harold Gibson Deputy Unit Commander Colin Couper Emergency Services Liaison Officer Colin Couper Data Management/Network/Comms Lee Ryman, Brian Richardson, Howard Faulks		Corporate Services Administration Officer Sue Freeman Assistant Krystyna Winslow Clerical Assistance Erica Smith WH&S Officer Riko Eguchi Honours/Awards Krystyna Winslow Providedore Glenyce Lumsden & Bloss Cleary Unit Meeting Supply Vacant Data / Stats Maureen Wheatley Supply Margaret & Andrew Morrison Membership Deb Venables, Erica Smith	
Operations Operations Officer Laurie Nolan Assistant Operations Officer Anthony Batchler Communications Centre Manager Nigel Eves Assistant Manager Dee Gilliland Rosters Manager John Lee Assistant Will Scott On Call Watch Officer: Neil Fraser, Frank Van Druuten, Graeme Abberton, Stephen Harris Duty Callout Officers: Neil Fraser, Peter Dentrinos, Frank Van Druuten, Julian Lyddy-Meaney, Graeme Abberton Radio Club Manager Elizabeth Francis Boats Manager Mark Kelly Assistant Manager Vacant Ashes Scattering Coordinator Harold Gibson Chief Engineer Bill Haskell R.F.S. Liaison: Lower Hunter Ross Debenham Hunter Valley Colin Couper Coxswains Sue Freeman, Robert Johnson, Laurie Nolan, Brian Bibbing, Iain Blackadder, Mick Duggan, Ray McLeod (MR Master)		Facilities Facilities Officer John Reid Property Officer Vacant Asst PO/Projects Vacant Maintenance Steve Chauncy, Harold Gibson, Trevor Jarmain, Paul Sullivan, John Woodbridge, Alan Woodward Security John Smith Electrical Services Doug Craike Cleaning Contractor Mel White Cottage Manager Vacant Curator Bronwen McLeod Historian Paul Farnhill Cottage Rosters Alan Woodward Wedding Co-ordinator Bloss Cleary Team Lynn Gibson, Harold Gibson, John Smith, Tours Harold Gibson Tea Rooms Liaison John Reid	
Unit Training Unit Training Officer Ray McLeod Assistant Training Officer Peter Dentrinos Training Systems Officer Angela O'Dea, Jennifer Dunn Rescue Vessels Training Officer Brian Bibbing Course Presenters: Paul Buckley, Colin Couper, Neil Fraser, Ray McLeod, Trevor Moxham, Ben van der Wijngaart First Aid Presenters: Peter Dentrinos, Lisa Lodding		Contributions are most welcome from all members. They should be accompanied by the author's name, address and phone number, and can be emailed to the editor at editor.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au Contributions are subject to review by the Executive Committee prior to publishing.	
Finance Treasurer Adrian Hill Assistant Vacant Grants Officer John Reid Gift Shop Manager Sandra Scheuber Gift Shop Bookkeeper Denise Olsen			

OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Saving lives at sea on open and closed waters in and around Port Stephens

MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT SERVICES PROVIDED



Category One Marine Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre (SARCC). Located at the former Inner Light and now Heritage Site at Nelson Head, 32°42.632 S; 152°09.667 E (overlooking Shoal Bay and looking out through the entrance to Port Stephens). Accredited by the State Rescue Board.

Communications Centre, Nelson Head - VMR217. Operated by trained and qualified volunteers, 24 hours a day; 7 days a week; 365 days a year. Monitoring 27MHz, and VHF marine frequencies, emergency and calling channels. Open during each day to the visiting public.

Apart from radio coverage generally to the local boating community, the Communications Centre offers:

- Emergency support to vessels in trouble
- Emergency and routine after hours communications for Rural Fire Service operating in the Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley districts
- A Marine Radio Safety (MRS) service – Boat Register
- A checkpoint and radio coverage for recreational vessels transiting up and down the coastline adjacent to Port Stephens.
- Weather readings and local conditions observations and
- Current Bureau of Meteorology weather forecasts and tidal information. (These can be obtained by contacting the Comms Centre by phone or radio and are also offered in regular radio skeds).

Accredited Rescue Vessels Available on a 24 hr call-out basis, subject to Police tasking. (See 'Rescue Vessels' page).

Weather recording facility Accredited by the Bureau of Meteorology. Regular reports on local conditions are electronically communicated to the Bureau, as well as to Radio, TV and Print media outlets in the local area.

Nelson Head Reserve and Heritage Inner Light Cottage. The Nelson Bay Unit of Marine Rescue NSW is responsible to the State Government for upkeep of this heritage precinct, through its 'Nelson Head Lighthouse and Rescue Station Reserve Trust Management Sub-committee' (which includes a representative of the Port Stephens Historical Society).

A small museum is operated by volunteers and is open to the public, 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

A portion of the building is leased to a private operator for morning/afternoon teas/coffee and lunches.

Wedding Ceremonies. Bookings can be made to hold these in the grounds (see Lighthouse Weddings page).

Below the Comms Centre, on the ground floor, is a tourist Gift Shop operated by Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Without profits from the Gift Shop, together with support from the local community, clubs and businesses, the Unit would find it very difficult, if not near impossible, to operate.

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UNIT COMMANDER

UNIT COMMANDER



Business (almost) as usual.

So good to see our Gift Shop and the Cottage Museum open again after many weeks of closure during the latest Omicron outbreak. So we are almost back to 'business as usual'. Regrettably, we still need to keep the Communications Centre (Radio operations tower)

closed to the public owing to the limited space and the



need to take all precautions to ensure the lowest risk of infection in this area. Hopefully this will change at some time in the future and we will be able to show visitors our great views and tell them about what we do. That's something our volunteers have always enjoyed.

After Nearly 30 Years

In 1993 the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, later to become Marine Rescue, Port Stephens moved from the hut on the WWII bunker on Nelson Head to its current location in the Command Centre building behind the Lighthouse Museum.

After almost 30 years that facility has become unsuited for its purpose. The COVID crisis and other factors have exposed a number of WHS issues that can't be rectified by refurbishment. It also has a high vulnerability to bush and structure fires. Space has further become an acute problem as our unit has developed.



Consequently, we are planning to build a new Command Centre at Nelson Head over the existing WWII bunker – back where we came from originally. Current concept plans have been drawn up for a Communications Room over the bunker and behind it, separated by a public foyer, meeting and training rooms that will also provide a local Emergency Operations Centre. This would also allow the Gift Shop some much needed greater shop space and storage.

The new centre most importantly will be wheelchair



accessible, eco-friendly in its construction and operation and possess a high-rated fire resistance as well as



providing improved access by fire-fighting vehicles.

Concept plans just in show this will be an innovative construction that minimises the visual impact on Nelson Head. Like anything built in Nelson Bay, it won't be cheap and the site is not an easy one. We'll be looking to grants and fundraising to take the brunt of this cost. So if you have a rich thalassophile uncle let him know!

I'm sure some people don't realise that Marine Rescue Port Stephens, like other Marine Rescue units, are run entirely by volunteers and have to raise the bulk of their funds to build and maintain their

(Continued on page 7)

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UNIT COMMANDER AND DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

(Continued from page 5)

facilities and purchase, operate and maintain our vessels. Our annual budget is in the vicinity of \$160,000 with only a \$30,000 contribution by the State Government. That leaves for a lot of sausage sizzles and sales from our wonderful Gift Shop!

Recognitions for Bravery

On 17 February a number of Marine Rescue Port Stephens members attended New South Wales Government House for the awarding of bravery awards by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC Governor of New South Wales.

Coxswain Laurie Nolan received the Star of Courage in recognition of his conspicuous courage in the face of great peril as the crew of rescue vessel Port Stephens 40 battled 50 knot winds and 5-6m seas to save disabled racing yacht M3 in 2016.



Pictured from left: Bravery Medal recipients Ron Lighton, Richard Pizzuto, Commissioner Tannos, Star of Courage recipient Laurie Nolan, Bravery Medal recipients Ian Drummond and Paul Sullivan, at the awards ceremony at Government House.

Fourteen other members of the unit received national Bravery Medals for their service to the community in the M3 mission and a series of other operations in wild conditions on January 6 and 7, 2016, including responding to five Maydays and searching for a lost yachtsman.

Awarded the Bravery Medal were Noel Corcoran, Ian Drummond, Michael Duggan, Suzanne Freeman, David Jack, Ken Johnson, Ron Lighton, Peter Merlino, Tom Miller, Richard Pizzuto, Michael Smith, Paul Sullivan, Eryl Thomas (dec'd) and Nigel Waters.

In all, total 22 Watch and Crew members from Marine Rescue Port Stephens received various Marine Rescue awards for their efforts, with seven awards of a Commissioner's Citation for those members in the Radio Room during the operation; 14 awards of a Commissioner's Commendation for Courage for Boat Crew involved in the numerous sorties over the two days

and the award of the Medal for Valour to Laurie Nolan.

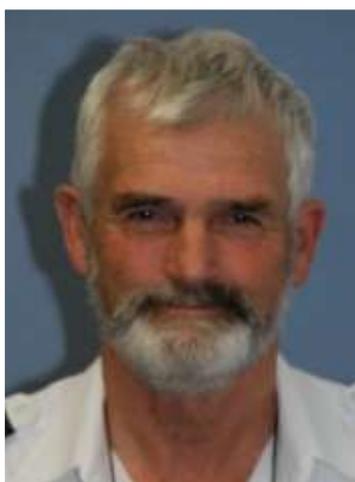
The following link provides more detail:

([Marine Rescue - Port Stephens | Providing a valuable service to Port Stephens Waterways. | Awards](#)).

Again my congratulations to all the well deserving recipients for this recognition of your dedication to our mission of 'saving lives at sea'. Volunteers who put their lives on the line to save others.

Vale Eryl Thomas

Sadly, on 27 February we lost one of the real legends of our Unit. Eryl Thomas, much loved and known to



members and the wider Community as "Captain Seaweed" passed away peacefully with his family present. He was 83 years old.

From when he joined the then Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 1999, Eryl was a full-on member of the unit. In his earlier career he had been an electronics technician with a work history in servicing helicopters. This enabled

him to assist our radio officer with large amounts of work to do around the base and on our rescue vessels. Aside from his boat duties, he put in extraordinary hours of duty, day and night, as a radio operator and was also involved in boat maintenance and fund-raising.

He was also a dedicated mentor to new and old members on radio procedures, navigation and seamanship. Eryl was a true leader, mentor and friend to all who served with him and was not so long ago awarded Unit Life Membership and also a Bravery Medal for his involvement in January 2016 rescue operations.

Eryl wanted a quiet family funeral which was held on Friday 4 March.

Ben van der Wijngaart



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DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER.... AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

Oh dear, just when we greeted a reduction in restrictions by returning to MRNSW Level 1 COVID in December, along comes Omicron and back we go to Level 2. This meant masks for a 6.5 hour shift in the Communication Centre and on the boats but more sadly, the closing of the Gift Shop and Cottage for over two months. With it being the busy season for visitors to Port Stephens, it wasn't just the foregone revenue we missed but the camaraderie of those members who add to the buzz at Nelson Head. However, there was still plenty of activity on the water as will be shown in the Operations report.

We also continued to link with our sister organisation with a visit in December by the Unit Commander, OPSO, Ross Debenham (Lower Hunter Liaison Officer) and myself to the RFS Fire Control Centres at Bulga and East Maitland. Apart from an opportunity to receive feedback on how MRPS is performing as Firecom (very well), it also gave us a chance to meet with new key personnel in both Districts. We were also given a draft timetable for each District's migration to the centralised RFS Computer Assisted Despatch (CAD) which allows us to plan for the sad farewell of our service to our fellow volunteers.

A number of experienced members have been assisting the development of new MRNSW software by attending Zoom workshops and replying to draft specifications for the next version of Seahawk. This is the statewide system that allows vessels to logon and logoff and records the many items of communication that flow in and out of the Base. We have also been alpha testing the next version of the mobile phone logon app which will provide enhancements to make logging on and off easier for skippers, as well as including safety and other relevant information for the boating public. This has allowed input from the coalface to the HQ IT team to ensure the new releases are practical as well as easy to use.

By the time this edition has gone to press, we will have had a visit from HQ IT personnel to review our computer setup and install a new phone system. We are so very fortunate to have among our membership knowledgeable and enthusiastic IT experts which make our Unit's computer and radio setup next to none. Their contribution was recently recognised with a Unit Commander Citation to Lee Ryman for his continued innovation and technical support. Brian Richardson, the author of the software MaRIO, that keeps Unit member information, records and circulates weather data, generates rosters and runs the Comms Centre shift plus much much more, received Unit Life Membership. I also recognise the great assistance provided by Howard Faulks as our representative on the MRNSW IT Steering Committee and HCC Regional IT Committee as well as supporting Lee and Brian. We are blessed.

After taking over the role of Emergency Services Liaison Officer from Laurie Nolan, I attended the Port Stephens Local Emergency Management Committee meeting at the Council Chambers in early February. It is impressive to see the link between the many organisations such as Police, Fire & Rescue, SES, Surf Lifesaving, NSW Government departments, the RAAF and other agencies to ensure that we are prepared as a community for any disaster situation. A new Port Stephens EMPLAN was endorsed as well as a Flood Emergency Plan from the SES. This all goes on in the background sometimes unbeknown by the general public.

Looking forward to a less 'complicated' year ahead, but after the last two, who knows ...

Col Couper





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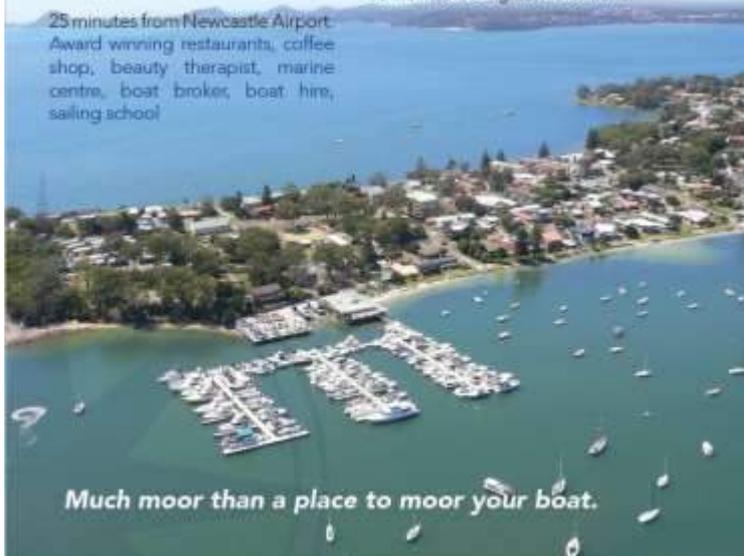
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OPERATIONS

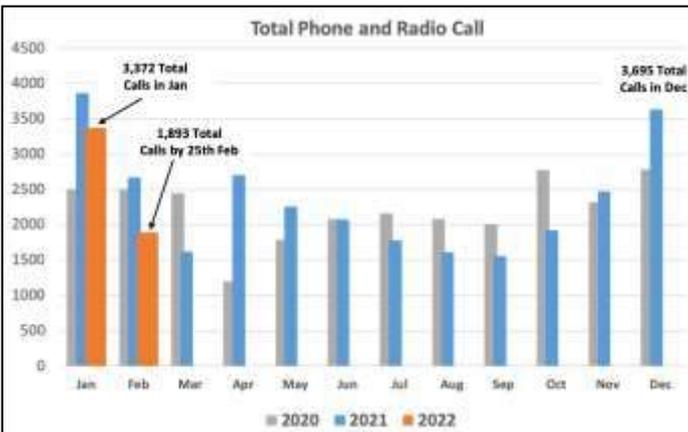
OPERATIONS OFFICER

The freeing up of travel restrictions between NSW regions resulted in a “bumper” holiday season in Port Stephens. It was great to see so many people, both locals and visitors, out and about enjoying all the natural beauty of this area. I am told that many travel-related businesses were flat-out and the cash registers were “ringing their heads off”.

Naturally this also resulted in increased boating activities on the waters of Port Stephens, with all of the normal attendant dramas and problems. Most boat-owners are very diligent when it comes to preparing for their on-water activities, with all the necessary equipment fully maintained and ready at hand. However, there are always those few who do not adequately prepare their vessels **or** their crew for the dangers that can be lurking “just around the corner”.

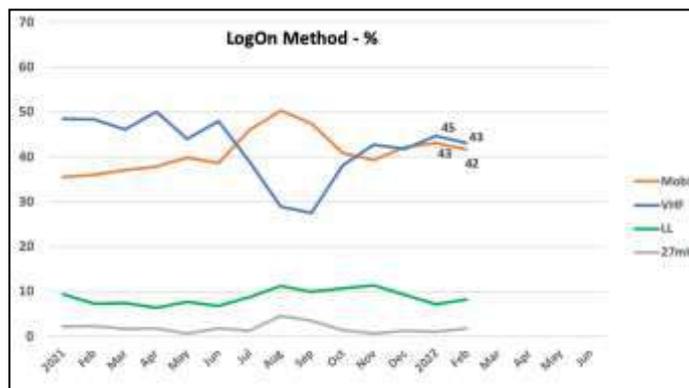
As well as having all the right equipment, a good safety measure is to always Logon with your local Marine Rescue unit every time you go out on the water. You just never know when you might need help in a hurry, and if you’re already logged on the process is so much easier and quicker.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens also had a very busy holiday season, both in the Communications Centre and on the water. We had our **busiest day ever** just before New Year when 108 boats logged on before 10am, testing the skills and patience of the three Watchkeepers who took all the calls and managed to get them all onto our system. You can see from the chart of Total Phone and Radio Calls that December was particularly busy,



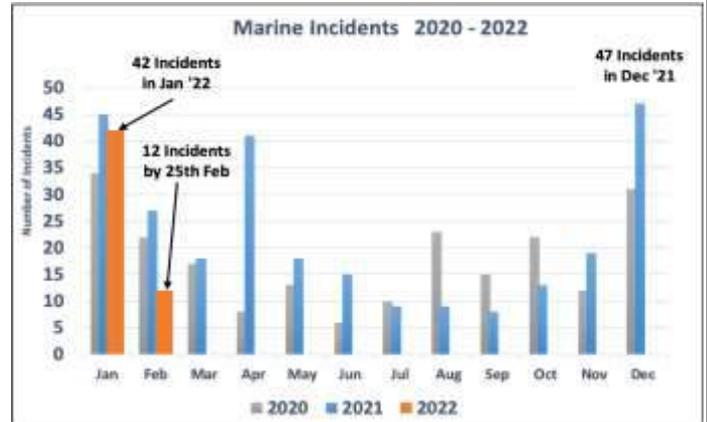
whereas January was affected by some unfavourable weather which kept many boaters away from the water. Nevertheless, the Communications Centre at MRPS is always busy and can sometimes be quite challenging.

Fortunately, these days many boaters use the Marine Rescue Logon App which is the quickest and surest way of ensuring that



you get onto our system quickly and with no fuss. In fact, there are now almost as many boaters logging using the APP as there are using VHF radio (42% vs 43% respectively in February).

OPERATIONS



In the last couple of months, Marine Rescue Port Stephens has been involved in over 100 Marine Incidents, ranging from overdue vessels and simple requests for assistance due to engine or battery issues, all the way up to full-blown Search and Rescues (SARs). Even a simple mechanical break-down at sea can result in serious threat to life if the vessel is close to shore or in foul weather conditions. The sea can be a very unfriendly place, and situations or conditions can deteriorate rapidly without warning. We take **ALL** incidents in open waters very seriously, and do all we can to get the distressed vessel back to safety in the earliest time.

A good example is the case of a couple of very lucky fishermen who were in their 6-7metre Cabin Runabout, fishing just north of Broughton Island when their battery ran flat and they could not start the engine. They were only 50 metres offshore and were being blown by strong winds towards the rocks where the waves were breaking very heavily. Their anchor was only just holding them, but slipping along the bottom and they were very close to being dashed on the rocks. MRPS Rescue Vessel PS31 was tasked to assist, and fortunately made good time in reaching the distressed vessel before disaster struck. Understandably, the two fishermen were extremely grateful!

In January there were a number of SARs, including a marooned kite surfer who was being washed out to sea past Yacaaba Headland, a capsized small catamaran near Tomaree Headland, and an automated “mobile SOS” alarm from a Jetski with two people fishing near Fingal Bay. All three vessels and the four people involved were returned to safety by the fabulous MRPS crews involved.

Just this last weekend, there
(Continued on page 13)



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OPERATIONS

(Continued from page 11)



Port Stephens is a great place to enjoy water activities, with such a variety of things to do and see. But it can also be a dangerous place if you are unprepared or foolhardy.

Please.... **STAY SAFE. IF IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT.**

Laurie Nolan

were three POB in a small tinnie checking on their lobster pots around Yacaaba Headland in challenging conditions – a 2-metre swell with choppy seas on top. When their motor failed, they were in grave danger of being blown onto the rocks where the waves would have dashed their old boat to pieces and put their lives at serious risk. They made a frantic



MAYDAY call to our Communications Centre which was immediately relayed to our Duty Skipper. Fortunately, both PS30 and PS31 were training in the Shoal Bay area, and were able to respond immediately. In no time at all PS31 was speeding to the scene and quickly identified the exact location of the distressed vessel, as the occupants were holding up a very bright orange "V-Sheet" which was easily spotted. Once again.... there were some very lucky and grateful POB who were returned to their families, and the excellent safety record of the Port Stephens area was maintained.



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FACILITIES

FACILITIES OFFICER

What a great feeling to have all of the COVID-19 restrictions lifted and a return to some semblance of normality!

We have been able to reopen the Cottage, Museum and Light Room and we look forward to welcoming back visitors to these displays.

The Light Room refurbishment is almost complete; we are still waiting for the new lamps to be built and are very hopeful that they will be finished by the end of March. This will give visitors a very good appreciation of what the original Light Room looked like and how it operated.

Our new Museum Curator, Bronwen McLeod, has done a fantastic job in reinvigorating the displays in the museum and only has some additional displays to the Marine Rescue Room to complete the overhaul. The Port Stephens Historical Society has put up new posters in the museum hallway which give an in-depth display of a number of shipwrecks along the Port Stephens coastline.

The Tea Rooms are operating at full capacity and welcomes all visitors for morning tea, lunch or just a cup of coffee. So drop in any time up until 3:00pm and enjoy the friendly service and the great views.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place for the last few months our maintenance team has not been able to do much work on the buildings at the Base but have been able to keep the lawns and gardens looking immaculate for visitors to enjoy. Weddings have restarted and forward bookings are looking very healthy. We really look



forward to seeing brides and grooms return to the site to enjoy the fantastic views as they "tie the knot".

We look forward also to seeing the return of many visitors to enjoy the services we have on offer.

John Reid



As mentioned previously we are hosting a major event, the 150th anniversary of the lighting of the first lamp on Nelson Head, on 1 April. A number of distinguished visitors have been invited, including descendants of the first and last light keepers at the Nelson Head Lighthouse. A replica lamp will be lit to commemorate this historic occasion so we are hoping for fine weather on the day.



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WILFUL DAMAGE AT MARINE RESCUE DOCK

DAMAGE TO DOCK FACILITY

Marine Rescue Port Stephens volunteers were shocked recently to discover significant damage to their vessel berthing facility inside the Nelson Bay harbour/marina. Damage had been purposely inflicted on one of the solar panels on the roof of the Muster Shed, where vital life-saving and electronic equipment is stored for use in the Unit's mission of Saving Lives at Sea.

It is obvious that someone has thrown a rock from the public walkway along the marina's harbour wall, scoring a direct hit on one of the four solar panels. The panel was damaged beyond repair, necessitating the replacement of the panel at significant cost to the volunteer-based MR Unit that we rely on to provide a vital service to the community.

The Unit's berth does not have access to the normal 240-volt power grid, due to its location along the rock wall of the marina. In order to maintain 24/7 readiness for their life-saving activities, the Marine Rescue volunteers have to rely for all their power requirements on a sophisticated and fully stand-alone power generation and storage system. A 4-panel solar array feeds through a charger into a battery bank, and then via an inverter it is connected to the vessels to ensure that they, and all related equipment, is kept fully charged.

A couple of weeks ago, the MRPS vessel maintenance team discovered the damage when they turned up to undertake their regular weekly service program, and immediately alerted the Unit's management. Operations Officer, Laurie Nolan, inspected the damage at the earliest opportunity and discovered to his dismay that the panel was significantly damaged and was obviously not functioning to the required power output. The offending rock was still on the roof of the shed next to the damaged panel, but unfortunately no evidence could be obtained as to the perpetrator of the malicious damage.

A replacement panel has now been installed to restore full functionality. Justin Curtis of TechMobile (ex of Jaycar at Salamander Bay) performed the work, and advised that the damaged panel was only operating at about 5% capacity, reducing the whole system's effectiveness by about 25%.

The system is totally automated, ecologically sound and self-sufficient. In times of lower solar activity (ie, cloudy days, nights), there is an auxiliary diesel generator which cuts in automatically as soon as the battery level gets down to a pre-determined low level. The system was installed about 2½ years ago, as part of a major project to modernise the facilities. At that time much of the concrete pontoon dock was replaced, and the crew muster shed and power system was built to very specific requirements. Marine Rescue Port Stephens is very grateful to have received the generous financial support of many local identities and businesses in the completion of this project, which has resulted in significant improvement to the service that the volunteers can provide.



Justin Curtis from *TechMobile* removing the damaged panel from the roof of the shed.



The damage caused by the rock can be clearly seen.



OPSO holding the offending rock

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INNER LIGHT WEDDINGS

Winara and Christopher (right) celebrated their wedding on the afternoon of 5 February 2022 with 45 close family and friends.

The couple met in their 20's and migrated to Australia. In 2017 whilst holidaying in Port Stephens on their *Baby Moon*, (holiday before their baby's born) they visited Nelson Head which was set up for a wedding that very day. Winara told Chris, this is where she wanted her wedding, the place they celebrated their coming child and also a place she felt truly blessed.

They had originally planned to marry in October 2020 but Covid restrictions and border closure meant close family members could not attend, so the couple decided to reschedule to 2022.

It was a very colourful wedding fitting in with the Maori tradition. The bridesmaid (right) was the couple's young daughter and the two eldest sisters of friends did the ceremonial Maori haka celebrating and welcoming special guests.

(Photos by Florent Vidal Photography)



Kathy and Mark (below right) celebrated their wedding on 26 February together with 24 close family and friends.

Kathy and Mark met in high school and became engaged a few years later, they have three lovely sons. Two of Kathy's sons proudly walked her down the aisle (tissues all round). This was a very special moment for Kathy.

It was very much touch and go with the weather but mother nature held out and the happy couple managed to take beautiful pictures that captured their special day. The arrangement for the ceremony was a little different for this wedding with the set up on the verandah of the Museum. We can cater for most weather situations!

The service was officiated by *Helen Hising Celebrant*.

If anyone has an interest in joining the wedding team please drop me a line.

Bloss Cleary - 0490 226 399

On behalf of the Wedding Team



IN MEMORIAM JOHN NILS ALMGREN 20/6/1930 - 24/12/2021

IN MEMORIAM

The following article in memoriam of John Nils Almgren is reprinted from the most recent Marine Rescue Port Stephens internal newsletter "Wavelength".

MRPS sought and received permission from his family for the article to be reproduced for the interest of the boaters of Port Stephens.

John Nils Almgren - 20/06/1930-24/12/2021

It is with sincere sadness that I write about the recent



passing of our member, benefactor and dear friend, John Almgren. John passed away at a Sydney nursing home where he had been a resident for the past two years. A celebration of John's life was

held in the Magnolia Chapel at Macquarie Park Crematorium North Ryde on Tuesday 11 January with over 80 family and friends including John's wife Yvonne. The service was streamed allowing overseas relatives and friends to be part of the celebration.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens was represented by uniformed members; Rod Reeson (former Unit Commander), Peter Merlino (past DUC), Shirley Clark, Monica Thompson and myself, long time friends of John and Yvonne. Rod Reeson passed on our Unit Commander and fellow members of Port Stephens' condolences. Rod also delivered a very interesting talk on how John and Yvonne first became interested in the work carried out by Port Stephens RVCP/Marine Rescue. John and



Yvonne had been following the progress of the then, Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, after they observed the Division's rescue vessel the *Girralong* perform a very difficult task of towing a very large yacht off the oyster

racks at Salamander Bay. They were very impressed by the professional ability of the crew that they decided to support Port Stephens RVCP/Marine Rescue.

In 1999 the *Spirit of Tayside* was generously purchased by the Almgren's from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, UK. Two of our senior officers John Thompson and Rod Reeson were flown to London to inspect this life boat, and stayed for two weeks to be trained in the operation of this beautiful lady of the sea.

Spare parts were also procured for the vessel. On arrival in Australia a new stand-by engine, new electronics, and air-conditioning, were purchased and the vessel was ready for service in Port Stephens. The only condition put on us from John, other than maintain and look after the vessel professionally, was that the vessel be re-named *Danial Thain* after John and Yvonne's grandson.

As time went on it was soon evident that Port Stephens required a 'fast response shallow draft vessel' to operate in the shallows of the bay and the Myall Lakes. No surprise here when John and Yvonne heard of what we were intending, they supported us once again with having this vessel locally built. The same condition from John, as given for the *Danial Thain*, that this vessel be named *Codi-K*, after John and Yvonne's granddaughter.

Rod also went on to speak about the hundreds of boaties who owe their lives or safety to our unit having such remarkable vessels. Rod also commented that due to the excellent stability and self-righting capabilities of the *Danial Thain*, crew members were also thankful for such a safe sea going vessel.

John and Yvonne had a condition to being benefactors that they remain anonymous, only a small circle of senior officers were to know their names.



For many years, the Almgren's did not want to be recognised for the large contributions they have put into our unit over the past 20+ years. Both John and Yvonne were made *Life Members* just before John passed away. This was to recognise their support and contributions given to Port Stephens over many years. Their generosity has just been unbelievable for what they have done for the boating community on and around the waters of Port Stephens.



I am sure that I can speak on behalf of our unit commander Ben van der Wijngaart, fellow officers and members at Marine Rescue Port Stephens and say thank you to Yvonne and her family for all

of your support that you have given to Marine Rescue

(Continued on page 21)

IN MEMORIAM

(Continued from page 20)

Port Stephens. John's name will always be with us and the contribution of the Danial Thain and Codi-K will always be part of Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

I would like to share with you all now a little background about John Almgren AM.

John Almgren's working life has been all based around electronics engineering mainly in the telecommunications industry. John by all accounts was a man with a brilliant mind, top of his class at university.

John was co-founder of J.N. Almgren Technology Pty Ltd. This business was involved in the manufacture of telecommunications systems and other electronic communication components.

John was highly regarded in his communications field and over the years received these awards:

1994 the CHARLES TODD MEDAL for his excellence in communications.

1995 Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his services to the communications industry.

He was made a Fellow of Dunmore Lang College (Macquarie University) for his continued educational support in the communication area.

John and Yvonne have given much time and support to many charitable organisations including **The Sir David Martin Foundation**, helping young people in crisis. **The Red Kite Foundation**, supporting children with cancer and their families. **Sydney Adventist Hospital** assisting with the newly built wing. **Care Flight**, providing rapid response critical care. **Royal Flying Doctor Service**, an aeromedical organisation serving remote and isolated Australians.

Thank you dear friend for all of you kindness and support and the many lives that you have saved with your very kind donations over the years.

Harold Gibson

The true value of JN Almgren's philanthropy is not measured in dollars but rather in the statistics of vessels and the souls saved; some from certain death, some rescued from distress and danger, and others simply assisted on the water in a time of need. The statistics at the foot value his remarkable contribution in terms boaters can relate to.

So how did this man's gift of the vessels Danial Thain and Kodi-K really save lives and help so many more?

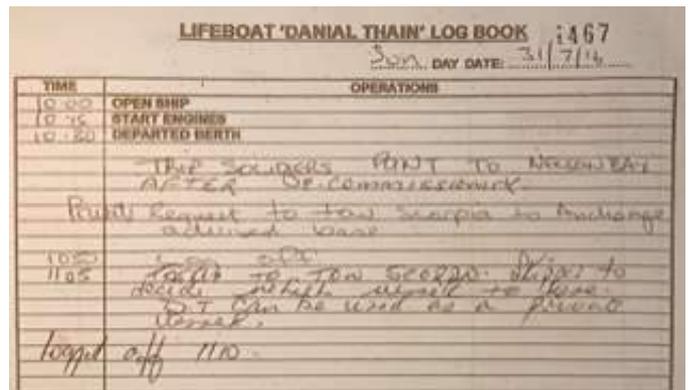
From the ships logs and from MRPS Radio Room records the following figures are a reasonable indication of the profound impact and benefit to boating public.

DANIAL THAIN and KODI-K	Indicative numbers 1999 to 2016 <small>Note 1</small>
Vessels rescued or assisted	More than 2,000 vessels
Souls on board	More than 5,000 people
DT hours at sea	More than 6,000 hrs
DT crew counts	More than 12,000 crew events
DT Fuel needed	More than 450,000 litres

Note 1: by way of comparison in the recent 15 years 2005 to 2020 there have been 2,718 rescues and assists to the relief of 6,300 people on those boats.

JN Almgren's Danial Thain was a very seaworthy vessel. As a purpose built rescue vessel she was not only a saviour for distressed seafarers but she also took care of her crew who were fully confident in the capabilities of Almgren's acquisition. This was made very apparent at her decommissioning which noted that of the only six rescues recognised on the statewide MRNSW Honour Roll at that time, three were performed by the Danial Thain and crew.

Even after decommissioning Danial Thain was called upon. Here is the final entry in the ships log showing an assist to another vessel on return after decommissioning.



Thank you John Nils Almgren.

Geoff Williams and Harold Gibson



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BIRDS AROUND PORT STEPHENS

PIED CURRAWONG (STREPERA GRACULINA)



The Pied Currawong is a robust, crow like bird that is found throughout eastern Australia and on Lord Howe Island. It is absent from Tasmania. The name currawong is onomatopoeic and derived from the bird's call. It is believed to be indigenous in origin. Currawongs are closely related to the butcherbirds and the Australian Magpie but are only distantly related to crows and ravens.

The Pied Currawong is 44–50 cm in length and the wingspan varies from 56 to 77 cm. Adult males weight around 320 g and females 280 g. The bird is mostly black with white patches in the wing, undertail coverts, the base of the tail, and the tip of the tail. It has bright yellow eyes. The bill is long and heavy, about one and a half times as long as the head and is hooked at the end. Legs are dark grey-black. Both sexes are similar, although the female may sometimes be greyer on the underparts. Young Pied Currawongs are duller and browner than the adults.

The call is loud, distinctive and melodious and has been translated as 'kadow-kadang' or 'curra-wong'. They also have a loud, high-pitched whistle, transcribed as 'wheoo' which is used only in winter.

Their preferred habitat is forests and woodlands, but they have also become well adapted to urban areas in recent times where they are found in parks and gardens. There has been a significant increases in population in Sydney and Canberra since the 1940s and 1960s respectively. The Pied Currawong prefers mature forests for breeding. It is generally sedentary, although populations at higher altitudes relocate to lower areas during the cooler months. The birds can live for over 20 years in the wild.

The Pied Currawong is omnivorous. Its diet includes a wide variety of berries and seeds, invertebrates, bird eggs and juvenile birds. They consume more vertebrate material during the spring breeding season than they do during autumn and winter, when berries are more widely available. Larger prey up to the size of a young possum

is also taken. It may be hung on a hook or in a tree fork or crevice and can be eaten straight away or, in the case of larger prey, over a period of time. As foraging takes place in trees some metres above the ground, they are able to share territory with the ground-foraging Australian Magpie. On the ground, a Pied Currawong hops or struts.

During the spring breeding season, Pied Currawong pair up and establish territories that are defended vigorously by the male. The nest is a bowl of sticks, lined with grasses and other soft material. The material is gathered by both sexes, but the female builds the nest, which is placed in a high tree fork, up to 20 m above the ground. A clutch of three eggs is laid and incubated by the female for about 30 days. The chicks are born altricial and remain in the nest for an extended period. The male supplies food to the female while she incubates the eggs

and for the first week after the chicks hatch. After that, both parents feed the young. The Channel-billed Cuckoo (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) parasitizes Pied Currawong nests, laying eggs which are then raised by the unsuspecting foster parents.

The population of Pied Currawong is estimated to have doubled over the past 30-40 years due to the creation of favourable habitat by humans. There are a number of negative factors associated with this increase.

Historically, Pied Currawongs bred in the Great Dividing Range and only visited east coast cities and towns in flocks during the autumn and winter. However, they now remain there all year round, and increasing numbers are breeding there. Cities provide an abundance of food resources, reducing the mortality of young Pied Currawongs during the winter to levels much lower than they would be in their 'natural' habitat.

Pied Currawongs are voracious nest predators of smaller birds in some areas. The nesting season of many small birds overlap that of Pied Currawong which are estimated to kill about 40 broods (up to two kilograms) of small birds to raise one brood of its own. The numbers of some small bird species are believed to have declined in areas where currawongs breed. Control of Pied Currawong numbers was undertaken on Cabbage Tree Island as part of the recovery programme of the endangered Gould's Petrel.

Pied Currawong thrive on the berries of some ornamental plants and then regurgitate a pellet containing the seeds after digesting the fruit. This has been responsible for the spread of exotic, invasive flora such as privet and asparagus fern.

**Neil Fraser
Twitcher**



RFS LIAISON HUNTER VALLEY

Marine Rescue Port Stephens takes over the communications role for Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley RFS nightly. From around 4.00pm until 9.00am the following morning all 000 fire calls for the region are directed to the MRPS Watchkeeper who pages and maintains radio and phone communications with RFS units, duty personnel and Fire and Rescue.

HUNTER VALLEY RFS

One of the wettest summers in recent memory has dampened the bushfire season, much to the relief of the volunteers at Hunter Valley RFS. It also means growth of vegetation which may lead to problems later this year. But as the figures for the last three months reveal, there have been no shortage of callouts for Motor Vehicle Accidents and Car Fires. The introduction of the newly trained Road Crash crew has already swung into action on the notoriously dangerous Putty Road.

A new system has been setup for 000 Fireline calls to MRPS for Hunter Valley. A recorded message asks our Watchkeeper to press 1 on the phone keypad. This then allows a conference call whereby the HV Duty Officer and other staff may listen in to the details. At the end of the call, the Duty Officer may give further instructions to include after the page to brigades has been sent.

In late January, a hayshed fire on the western side of Muswellbrook on Wybong Road saw many units called out to extinguish multiple bales of hay. The nearby coal mine assisted with heavy equipment to pull apart bales so that firefighters could get to the seat of the fire.

(The author was involved with the Comms for this particular 000 call and was kept busy with brigades from Edinglassie, Wybong and Kyuga plus HV staff attending overnight and into the day). The smoke hung around the area for the next 24 hours.

One major structure fire in February was at an industrial estate. The intense fire required Fire & Rescue 444 from Singleton plus

crews from the RFS Brigades to wear CABA (Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus) to extinguish this hazardous fire. NSW Ambulance also attended for firefighter welfare.

But it's not always MVAs and fires. At 10:00 pm one night in early January, four

Supervised



people in a ute were swept off a causeway at McCullys Gap. They were able to climb onto its roof while awaiting assistance from a multi-agency response. Edinglassie was one of the brigades to assist and bring the 49 year old male, 16 year old boy and two 14 year old girls to safety. Just goes to prove the saying:

"If its flooded, forget it!"

Colin Couper



Prepare Act Survive



RFS LIAISON LOWER HUNTER AND GIFT SHOP

LOWER HUNTER RFS LIAISON

Seaham Rural Fire Service

Seaham is a township located on the banks of the Williams River 14.6 kilometres from Raymond Terrace where the Williams River runs into the Hunter River. In 2011 the population was 1025 and expanding. The suburb of Seaham is 42.8sq km. The township of Seaham was pronounced in 1838.

Unfortunately, since white settlement the township has been threatened by various bush fires. Fires threatened the township in February 1926 and



SEAHAM RFS SHED

1939 when the town was partially destroyed. Destructive fires were experienced in 1944 and 1951.

The Rural Fire Service shed is located at 10 Torrance St Seaham, and the brigade has a Cat 1 and a Cat 7 appliance.

Fire Recovery Grants

On 24 February 2022 Wollombi, Laguna and Bucketty Brigades, along with other community groups attended Laguna Hall to receive funds from the Fire Recovery Grant Scheme. Bucketty received grants for a chain saw and first aid courses whereas Laguna is going to increase the dimensions of their door to allow access for a larger appliance.

Ross Debenham

The table below reflects the incidents received by MRPS from Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley Districts

Month		Bush/Grass	Structure	CFR	MVA	Car	AFA	Other	Total
Nov-21	LHRFS	13	1	6	7	7	5	15	54
Dec-21	LHRFS	8	4	9	10	9	5	15	60
Jan-22	LHRFS	15	5	15	14	16	6	13	84
TOTAL	LHRFS	36	10	30	31	32	16	43	198
Nov-21	HVRFS	6	1	2	4	4	2	16	35
Dec-21	HVRFS	2	0	3	2	2	0	9	18
Jan-22	HVRFS	1	1	4	5	5	0	7	23
TOTAL	HVRFS	9	2	9	11	11	2	32	76



Once again we have opened our cheery door, hoping this will be a welcome, lasting return to trade. The Shop has been closed since the sudden lockdown in January.

We are proud to be part of Port Stephens Unit contributing to Saving Lives on the Water and keeping our rescue vessels fuelled and in good repair.

After 10 weeks of closure we will resume our normal trading hours 9.00am - 3pm, 24/7. Our volunteers are all eager to be up and at it, throwing off our masks and dispensing with the QR codes. It has been a rough two years but we have a great range of items on offer, so come on in and have a browse you will find something you will like, there is no limit to customers in the shop now.

Sandra Scheuber - Manager



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THE EXCALIBUR PART 2

THE EXCALIBUR TRAGEDY - PART 2

The Search and Rescue Operation

At 2130 hrs, the signal from John Roger's EPIRB was picked up by satellite and relayed to the Australian Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre (AusSAR) in Canberra. Within 16 minutes of receiving the signal, a fixed-wing aircraft was despatched to locate the source. By 2230 hrs the aircraft had located John Roger's strobe light but was unable to determine if there were persons in the water. A Westpac Rescue Helicopter was then despatched from Newcastle to investigate. Search and rescue authorities were unaware at that time that the signal had been sent following capsizing of *Excalibur*.

The two survivors had been in the water for over two hours when they heard the plane searching for them. It circled above them before flying off. Later they heard a helicopter approaching. The strobe light was sighted by the helicopter crew about 21 nautical miles east of Seal Rocks. At around 0020 hrs, using their spotlight, the aircrew were able to confirm two persons were alive in the water, but could not remain on scene for long or recover the men. The helicopter was running low on fuel and was not equipped for night hovering over water. It also did not have winching equipment that could be used to recover the survivors. Before departing, the helicopter crew passed details of the survivor's location to the *MV Curia*, a 50,000 tonne Swiss registered bulk carrier on its way to Port Kembla, which diverted to the site.

As the helicopter departed and the men's hopes of being rescued faded, the two survivors again found themselves

alone in the raging seas with no idea of how or when they might be saved. After entering the water, John Rogers had been able to get the hood of his



wet weather jacket over his head and pull it down over his face to protect him from the breaking waves. However, they were unable to get McDermott's hood out and he had begun to ingest sea water. After two hours he began to vomit, experience cramps and started to become dehydrated. As McDermott began to weaken, both men began to experience waves of hypothermia. Rogers was better equipped for the conditions as he was wearing thermal underwear and a fleecy jacket but McDermott was wearing only shorts. They wrapped their legs around each other in an attempt to keep warm.

The survivors had been in water for around five hours when they saw a large white light coming towards them. Initially thinking it was a trawler, the two were shocked to realise it was a bulk carrier, and it was almost directly upon them. They tried to swim out of the way, but as they were tied so closely together and in a weak condition, the

attempt was in vain. The ship went over the top of the men who became caught in the bow wave, sucked beneath the ship, pummelled in the wash beneath the hull, before eventually resurfacing alongside. Deck lookouts immediately spotted them and alerted the captain who cut the engines to prevent them from being sucked into the propellers. However, it was not possible for the large vessel to stop quickly, and the two survivors could only watch as the ship glided silently off into the darkness.

It took two hours of delicate manoeuvring in the rough seas to get the ship into a position where the men could be recovered. Eleven attempts were made before the men were positioned close enough to the ship's lee side to be recovered. After struggling to get to the life rings that were thrown to them, the men were eventually hauled to the side of the ship but were too weak to climb the ladder that had been lowered.

McDermott was recovered first. By this time, he was lapsing in and out of consciousness. With Roger's



assistance, the crew were able to haul him up to the deck using a looped rope, and took him immediately to the ship's sick bay. Rogers was a bigger, heavier man and the light-framed Filipino crew struggled to get him up the ship's side. When he was finally pulled up to the railing he was grabbed by the wrists of his jacket, only to slide out of the jacket, his PFD and his safety harness, falling 10 metres back into the ocean. Miraculously, he landed feet first in a life ring. Eventually, he was hauled to safety. It was 0343 hrs by the time both men were safely aboard, nearly seven hours after they first went into the water. Both were suffering from dehydration and hypothermia. It was only when they were aboard *MV Curia* that authorities were informed that *Excalibur* had capsized and four crew were missing. All missing crew were wearing life jackets.

By 0500 hrs a massive air and sea search covering 1000 sq km had been launched. Assets involved included four helicopters, four fixed wing aircraft, four rescue boats and

(Continued on page 28)

THE EXCALIBUR PART 2

(Continued from page 27)

at times, seven merchant vessels. The rescue vessels were Water Police launches *Fearless*, *Intrepid* and *Nemesis*, and Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (RVCP) Port Stephens *PS40*, *Danial Thain*. *Nemesis* was



despatched from Port Stephens, *Intrepid* from Newcastle and *Fearless* from Sydney. The current Unit Commander of Marine Rescue Newcastle Ron Calman was then a member of NSW Water Police, and was aboard *Intrepid*, together with former Port Stephens Water Police Coordinator, Sergeant Tony Hogg. At

various times helicopters from several news organisations were also flying over the search area.

The aerial search was coordinated by AusSAR through the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre in Canberra. The Water Police Emergency Operations Controller coordinated the on-water search and the senior on-site Water Police officer controlled the on-site assets. Initially On-Scene Command was from *Intrepid* and this was subsequently taken over by *Fearless*. Water Police allocated search areas to the rescue vessels. At 0750 hrs the Hunter Westpac rescue helicopter located the upturned *Excalibur* around 43 nautical miles east of Port Stephens. The body of Christopher Heyes was found floating nearby, tangled in ropes from the capsized yacht. An empty Life Ring/Horseshoe with an attached drogue from *Excalibur* was located by *Danial Thain* crew at 0943 hrs and an empty life jacket was later found. Visibility in the prevailing gale conditions remained poor throughout the day and was rarely more than a few hundred metres.



Police divers were requested to support the rescue operation. Two divers were flown from Sydney to Williamstown by NSW Air Ambulance and then flown to the site by Westpac Rescue Helicopter. They were dropped into the water adjacent to the capsized yacht. An underwater inspection failed to locate any crew beneath the yacht. An assessment was made as to whether any of the rigging could be removed to assist towing. It was deemed too dangerous to undertake that work. A tow line was secured to *Excalibur* and the divers were recovered by *Intrepid*. One of the divers was Alex Barrell, now Deputy Commissioner of Marine Rescue NSW.

The search continued during the day, and as the weather and sea conditions deteriorated, the smaller rescue craft were forced to leave the search area. At 1700 hrs, no further survivors had been found and *MV Curia* left the search area for Port Kembla with the two survivors. An attempt to tow the capsized yacht back to Port Stephens

failed when the cables broke. Police then attached a tracking device to the hull of *Excalibur* and she was abandoned. Fixed wing aircraft continued the search into the night, hoping to locate strobe lights from the other missing sailors.

On the morning of 18 September, eight helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft operating out of Taree continued to search an area of 550

square km. However, a sea survival expert determined there was no chance of survival after 36 hours in the water under the prevailing conditions, and the aerial search was suspended around midday.

The account of the *Excalibur* tragedy will be continued in the next edition of Port Chatter when the role of Port Stephens RVCP will be described.

Neil Fraser

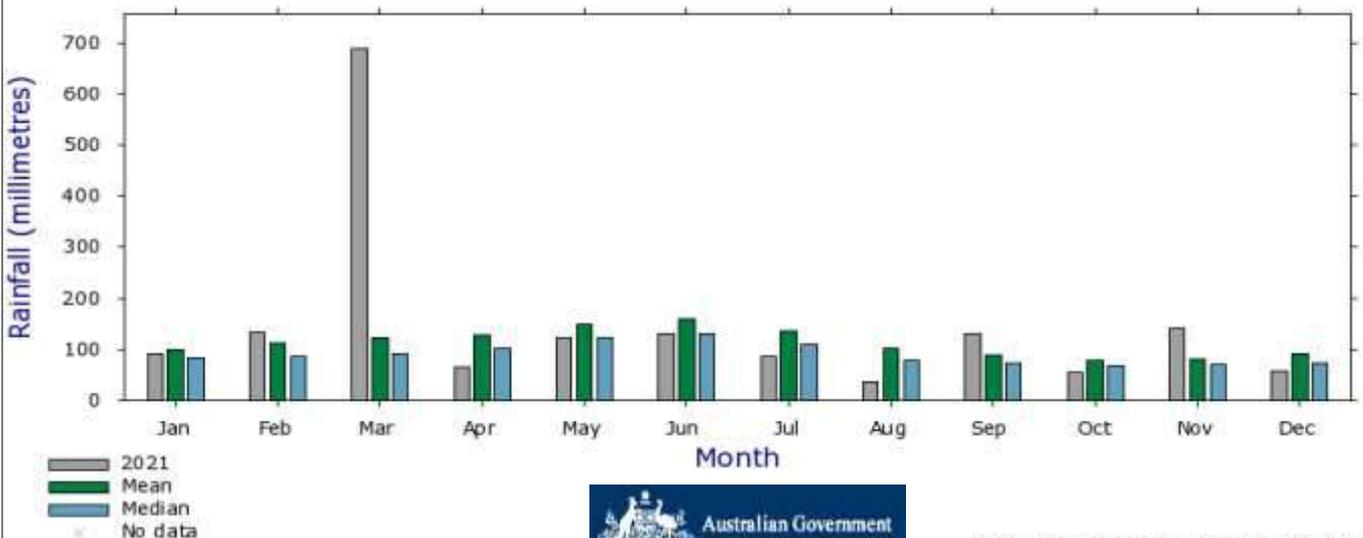


Excalibur McDermott and Rogers with *MV Curia* crew

PORT STEPHENS WEATHER

Nelson Bay, NSW - January 2022					Nelson Bay, NSW - February 2022				
Date	Day	Temps °C		Rain	Date	Day	Temps °C		Rain
		Min	Max				Min	Max	
1	Sa	22.5	26.7	0.6	1	Tu	21.7	28.5	0
2	Su	19	27.8	0	2	We	22		1.8
3	Mo	21	26.7	0	3	Th		22.2	
4	Tu	21	26.2	1.2	4	Fr	17.1	23.2	41.3
5	We	20.6	27.9	6	5	Sa	17.2	24.5	3.7
6	Th	20.7	26.3	7.7	6	Su	17.8	24.8	4.2
7	Fr		25	0.1	7	Mo	21	24.6	1.9
8	Sa	19	27	3.8	8	Tu	17.8	24	3.4
9	Su		28.1	8.2	9	We	17.5	29.1	0.1
10	Mo	19.1	27.5	0	10	Th	20	30	0
11	Tu	19	27.9	0	11	Fr	21	27.3	0
12	We	19.3	27.2	0	12	Sa	18.6	24.9	17
13	Th	19.8	27.6	0	13	Su	18.8	26.8	3.2
14	Fr	19.8	27.2	0	14	Mo	19	26.7	0.1
15	Sa	17.9	28.1	0	15	Tu	17.4	26.9	0
16	Su	19.2	26.5	1.3	16	We	18	28.2	0
17	Mo	19.5	28.9	0	17	Th	20.1	28.1	0
18	Tu	21	26	0.1	18	Fr	19.3	28.5	4.6
19	We	20	23.5	13.3	19	Sa	20.4	26.6	2.6
20	Th	18.8	24.4	1.3	20	Su	20.2	27.4	0
21	Fr	19.2	26.6	0	21	Mo	17.2	30.5	0
22	Sa	19.7	24.5	1	22	Tu		27.3	0
23	Su	18.1	25.8	1.2	23	We	20.5	27.8	11.1
24	Mo	19.5	26.5	0	24	Th	21.7	24.3	0.7
25	Tu	19.4	28	0	25	Fr	20.6	26.3	8.2
26	We	19.7	27.5	0	26	Sa	20.1	23	6
27	Th	20.1	27.2	0	27	Su	20	24.5	9.6
28	Fr	21	28	0	28	Mo	20	28.4	3
29	Sa	20.2	27	0					
30	Su	20.8	28.3	0					
31	Mo	22	30.1	0.2					
Statistics for January 2022					Statistics for February 2022				
Mean		19.9	27		Mean		20.9	28.5	
Lowest		17.9	23.5	0	Lowest		17.1	22.2	0
Highest		22.5	30.1	13.3	Highest		22	30.5	41.3
Total				46	Total				122.5

Nelson Bay (Nelson Head) (061054) 2021 Rainfall (millimetres)



Note: Data may not have completed quality control



Climate Data Online, Bureau of Meteorology
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MARINE RESCUE PORT STEPHENS

“Volunteers doing our jobs professionally”



Our service to Port Stephens 2005-2020

People saved/ assisted	6,300
Rescues and assists	2,718
Rescue Crew volunteer hours	62,658+
Radio Base volunteer hours	311,787+
Radio calls made/received	316,695
Telephone calls made/received	300,431

Every day, Marine Rescue Port Stephens Members give more than 60 volunteer hours to serve our community

Volunteers saving lives on the water

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSELS CURRENTLY IN SERVICE

The unit currently has two purpose built, specialised rescue vessels, crewed by motivated and trained volunteers who can be called upon at anytime, day or night, to head to the assistance of those who call.

A response time of 20 mins or less is estimated from alert to heading to sea. Our vessels boast a comprehensive inventory of the latest navigation, communication, safety and rescue technologies on board.

PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 31* *JOHN THOMPSON*



Specifications

Make / Model:	Steber International 38' - Category 3 SAR Vessel
Length:	11.46m (38ft)
Beam:	3.84m (12.6ft)
Displacement:	11.6 tonne
Draft:	1m
Fuel:	1350L
Engines:	Twin 420hp Yanmar diesel
Top Speed:	30kn
Crew:	Operational - normally 4
VHF:	Sailor 6222
Radar:	Raymarine Q24C Doppler
MFD's (Multifunction Display):	Raymarine Axiom 9 and 5 x Raymarine Axiom Pro 12 Hybrid Touch
AIS:	Raymarine AIS950
RDF:	Taiyo
27Mhz:	GME GX400B
DCN:	Tait TM9300

Rescue Vessel *Port Stephens 31 John Thompson* was built by Steber International, Taree, NSW and completed in May 2016. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic.

Port Stephens 31 is fitted with state-of-the-art radar, direction finding and navigation equipment as well as forward looking infra red search equipment.

John Thompson has been prepared to Marine Rescue NSW specifications with minor customisation at the request of Port Stephens Unit and is capable of covering Port Stephens and anywhere along the coast for example Broughton Island, Seal Rocks and 30nm out to sea or further if tasked by MACSAR.

**PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 30*
*CODI-K II***



Specifications:

Make / Model:	Gemini WR-850
Type:	Rigid-Hull Inflatable (RHIB)
Length:	8.5m
Beam:	2.8m
Engines: -	2 x Suzuki four-stroke Outboards 200hp each (150kW)
Fuel Capacity:	2 x 200 litre tanks
Fuel Consumption:	Cruising speed - 50 litres / hour
Displacement:	3.2 tonnes
Survey:	2C
Crew:	4 operational
Speed:	Top speed around 40 knots. Cruising speed 25 to 30 knots.

Rescue Vessel *Port Stephens 30 Codi-K II* was manufactured in South Africa, prepared by Britton Marine of Taren Point NSW, and completed in February 2012. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic with alloy longitudinal keel reinforcement and her cabin is glass-reinforced plastic.

She boasts among her electronic equipment a Raymarine Radar/Plotter, Furuno AIS Class-A and FLIR Thermal Night Vision System.

Codi-K II has been prepared to Port Stephens Unit specifications in consultation with Marine Rescue NSW, and is capable of covering all of the areas of Port Stephens; ie, the Myall River system, Karuah River, and the other shallow areas of our waterways, as well as outside waters as required.

IN APPRECIATION....



Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:

Colin Couper, Ross Debenham, Neil Fraser, Laurie Nolan, John Reid, Will Scott, Ben van der Wijngaart. You too can become a contributor and you will be most welcome. See inside front cover.

Distributors of the *Port Chatter*: This Monthly newsletter does not arrive in your letter-box via the tooth fairy.

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		Shoal Bay Pharmacy
		Terry White Chemart Pharmacy, Nelson Bay
	Eye Care	Specsavers
Funeral Services		France Family Funerals
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		Soldiers Point Marina
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Restaurants and Cafes		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head
Radio Station		Port Stephens FM 100.9



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D’Albora Tenant Directory

Company	Phone	Water Tenants	Phone
Corner Secrets	02 4981 1160	Imagine Cruises	02 4984 9000
Marina Ice Creamery	02 4984 1788	Bay Booking Office	02 4984 3843
Pacific Watercolours	02 4984 1922	Pacific Blue Charters	0407 817 157
The Wood Oven	02 4984 4800	Moonshadow TQC Cruises	02 4984 9388
Mavericks on the Bay	02 4984 1203		
R Marine Port Stephens	02 4984 2355		
Let's Go Adventures	02 4981 4331		
Hogs Breath Cafe	02 4984 2842		
Lime Mexican	02 4984 4403		
Blueys Restaurant and Bar	02 4006 5931		
Broughtons at the Bay	02 4981 0865		
Cafe on the Bay	02 4905 5092		
Mobile Marine Electrics	0422 782 863		
Mid North Marine Engineering	0448 492 221		
Zone Out	0419 735 995		
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