

# PORT CHATTER

SUMMER 2022  
DECEMBER

## MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

*'Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water'*





## MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT

Postal Address: PO Box 20, Nelson Bay, NSW 2315

Location: Nelson Head, Nelson Bay, NSW

Email: base.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au

Phone: (02) 4981 3585

## VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

### UNIT APPOINTMENTS - DECEMBER 2022

<b>Patrons: Kate Washington MP, State Member Port Stephens</b> <b>Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson</b> <b>Stephen Bromhead LLM MP, State Member Myall Lakes</b> <b>The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne</b>		<b>Finance</b> <b>Treasurer:</b> <b>Adrian Hill</b> Deputy Treasurer: Bernhard Kahl Grants Officer: John Reid Gift Shop Manager: Sandra Scheuber Gift Shop Bookkeeper: Denise Olsen	
<b>Unit Commander:</b> <b>Ben van der Wijngaart</b> <b>Welfare / Liaison:</b> <b>Ross Debenham</b> Assistant Welfare / Liaison: Helen Peterson <b>Protocol Officer:</b> <b>Harold Gibson</b> <b>Deputy Unit Commander::</b> <b>Colin Couper</b> Emergency Services Liaison Officer: Colin Couper Data Management/Network/Comms: Lee Ryman, Brian Richardson, Howard Faulks		<b>Community Relations</b> <b>Community Relations Officer:</b> <b>Lisa Lodding</b> Public Relations/Social Media: Stephen Barrett Port Chatter / Wavelength Editor: Krystyna Winslow, Peter Merlino Assistant Editor: Geoff Williams Fund Raising Officer: Peter Young Social Media (Facebook): Murray O'Dea Social Committee: Lisa Lodding Webmaster: Rob Guyder Assistant Webmaster: Mick O'Rourke Donation Boxes: Angela Tilling	
<b>Operations</b> <b>Operations Officer:</b> <b>Laurie Nolan</b> Assistant Operations Officer: Anthony Batchler Communications Centre Manager: Nigel Eves Assistant Comms Manager: Dee Gilliland Rosters Manager: John Lee Assistant Roster Manager: Chris Beadle On Call Watch Officer: Neil Fraser, Frank Van Druten, Graham Abberton, Stephen Harris, Colin Couper, Laurie Nolan, Ron Lighton, Ben van der Wijngaart Duty Callout Officers: Neil Fraser, Peter Dentrinos, Frank Van Druten, Graeme Abberton, Julian Lyddy- Meaney. Radio Club Manager: Elizabeth Francis Boats Manager: Mark Kelly Assistant Manager: Tony Baker Ashes Scattering Coordinator: Harold Gibson Chief Engineer: Bill Haskell Coxswains: Ray McLeod (MR Master) Sue Freeman, Robert Johnson, Laurie Nolan, Brian Bibbing, Mick Duggan, Iain Blackadder, Anthony Batchler.		<b>Corporate Services</b> <b>Administration Officer:</b> <b>Sue Freeman</b> Assistant Admin. Officer: Deb Venables Clerical Assistance: Erica Smith WH&S Officer: Riko Eguchi Honours/Awards: Krystyna Winslow Providore: Glenyce Lumsden, Bloss Cleary Unit Meeting Supply: Bloss Cleary Data / Stats: Maureen Wheatley Supply: Margaret & Andrew Morrison Membership: Deb Venables. Erica Smith	
<b>Unit Training</b> <b>Unit Training Officer:</b> <b>Ray McLeod</b> Assistant Training Officer: Peter Dentrinos Training Systems Officer: Angela O'Dea, Jennifer Dunn Rescue Vessels Training Officer: Howard Faulks Assistant RV Training Officer: Paul Radford Course Presenters: Ray McLeod, Trevor Moxham, Ben van der Wijngaart, Riko Eguchi, Brad Polak. First Aid Presenters: Peter Dentrinos, Lisa Lodding		<b>Facilities</b> <b>Facilities Officer:</b> <b>Grant Leddie</b> Property Officer: Vacant Maintenance: Steve Chauncy, Harold Gibson, John Woodbridge, Alan Woodward Security: John Smith Cottage Manager: Vacant Curator: Bronwen McLeod Cottage Rosters: Alan Woodward Wedding Co-ordinator: Bloss Cleary Team: Lynn Gibson, Harold Gibson, John Smith Tours: Harold Gibson Tea Rooms Liaison: Grant Leddie	

## OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

*Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water*

### 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.

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

- Emergency support to vessels in trouble
- 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.

**Gift Shop :** Marine Rescue Port Stephens operates a unique gift shop on the ground floor of the Marine Rescue Communications Centre at Nelson Head Reserve, Nelson Bay. The shop offers gifts with a nautical flavour and a range to suit every budget. Without income from the Gift Shop, the Unit would find it very difficult, if not near impossible, to operate. Open to the public, 7 days a week from 9am to 3pm.

**Nelson Head Reserve:** Marine Rescue Port Stephens Unit of which Marine Rescue NSW is the responsible entity to the State Government for upkeep of this Crown Land heritage precinct "Reserve".

A small museum is operated by volunteers and is open to the public, 7 days a week from 9am to 3pm.

A portion of the Historic Lighthouse Keepers Cottage is leased to a private operator "Inner Light Tea Rooms" for breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon teas/coffee, from 8.30am to 3.00pm.

**Wedding Ceremonies:** Bookings can be made to hold weddings on the reserve (see Lighthouse Weddings page).



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Assistant Agent  
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## UNIT COMMANDER

### UNIT COMMANDER

#### 40 YEAR WATCH – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



November 2022 marks 40 years since the first radio operations by the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol based at Nelson Head.

The first transmission was broadcast from a caravan sited on Nelson Head car park at what is now the Marine Rescue Port Stephens base.

A member of the Port Stephens Game Fishing Club Mr Kevin Clark and the unit's first division commander arranged for a donated Caravan to be fitted out with basic radio equipment under the guidance of John Thompson, a regional captain from the Patrol division at Broken Bay who had recently moved into the area.



John Thompson recognised the need for a permanent patrol presence because there was no Patrol base operating between Lake Macquarie and Coffs Harbour on some 270 kilometres of coastline.

On the 21 November 1982 the caravan radio base was officially opened, and we have been maintaining a radio watch and rescue service ever since.

Soon the Coastal Patrol's caravan radio room moved into a proper radio base building on the WWII bunker, and in 1993 into the present 'water tank', Communications Centre behind the Lighthouse Keepers Cottage and expanded into today's operations now known as Marine Rescue Port Stephens.



After 30 years we again find ourselves in need of new accommodation for our Radio Base.

We are now one of only three remaining 24/7 Marine

Rescue radio bases out of 45 operating on the NSW coast – the others being the State Communications Centre (SCC) in Sydney and Marine Rescue Port Macquarie. With Port Macquarie, we are soon likely to be taking over some of the State-wide overnight radio watch for day-only units – something currently handled by an overloaded SCC.

The equipment required for this expanded role, the limited, sub-standard space and safety issues associated with our current Communications Centre, demand we build a new Communications Centre that meets contemporary standards and expectations. Among these will be disabled access and reopening of the room to visits from the public, which have been restricted owing to the COVID epidemic. Plans are progressing for this facility to be constructed on the same site as our previous 'home' over the WWII bunker.

All this presents new challenges for our members and our finances. Additional responsibilities mean more training. While we have a sound capital base for the cost of the new building, we will need some serious strategic thinking about our fundraising efforts to cover the balance as well as our regular operating costs.



Both require more members to maintain our 24/7 shifts and to be involved in the Gift Shop (our primary fundraising source), helping with weddings, sausage sizzles and other fund raisers.

So, if you're interested in, or even just curious about, joining a great community service organisation, check out our new website - 'Join Us'/'Submit an expression of interest'.

Another year has almost slipped over the horizon again, so on behalf of the Marine Rescue Port Stephens Executive, I would like to wish all of our readers, and particularly our ever loyal and hard-working Unit members a peace-filled and relaxing Christmas and a Happy New Year.

PS. Don't get **too** happy if you're on the water this New Year's Eve as I drew the short straw again and have the night duty at the Radio Base that night. Last New Year's Eve saw four incidents, two of them MAY DAYS!

**Ben van der Wijngaart**  
**Unit Commander**



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that it be cleaned every 6 months.

## DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

### DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

During a recent holiday trip to the beautiful Far South Coast, I called in to a number of Marine Rescue bases and was warmly welcomed by those radio operators on shift at Jervis Bay (in Huskisson), Bermagui, Merimbula and Eden (photos below). They were more than happy to chat about the local conditions and challenges faced by their Units, which did sound to be quite familiar to those for Port Stephens. Apart from their unique operational requirements for their area, there is always the fund raising for the Unit and the recruiting of new members from the community.

All Units are being issued with new life jackets, thanks to a contribution from the State Government for 2,040 Baltic Legend 190 PFDs. Port Stephens is soon to receive theirs and each crew member will have their own personal one plus each vessel will carry spares for visitors and rescued people on board.

Marine Rescue NSW members have been assisting the SES during the devastating floods throughout the State. So far, 75 crew members from Units have spent time in far off places such as Menindee, Walgett, Col-larenebri and Bourke. They have also been assisting the Marine Rescue Unit at Moama and at other flooded places on the Murray. They have been using some of our service's vessels as well as those of the SES. Apart from assisting stranded people, they have also recovered sheep from flooded paddocks (Merino Rescue NSW?), taken hay to where the animals are as well as transporting provisions for the more common two legged variety.

They have been spending 6 days in the field, sleeping in tents on stretcher beds, no doubt missing the gentle rocking of sea waves to send them to sleep.

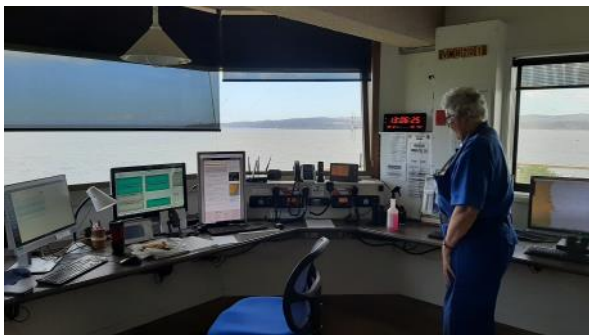
Recently, I made a presentation to the members of Fingal Bay Probus Club, part of the Unit's current program to alert local organisations of our work and raise our profile in the community. I very much appreciated the warm reception for MRPS and especially the delicious carrot cake.

Getting ready for the upcoming busy holiday season.



MR Ulladulla recovering sheep from flooded paddocks

**Colin Couper**  
**Deputy Unit Commander**



Marine Rescue Eden



Marine Rescue Jervis Bay



Marine Rescue Merimbula



Marine Rescue Bermagui



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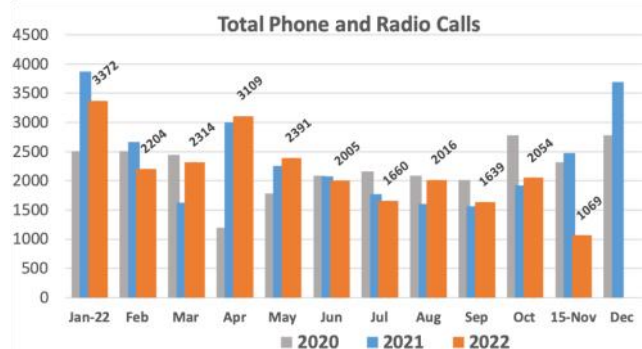


## OPERATIONS

### OPERATIONS

Summer is rapidly approaching, and with that, there will be a big increase in the boating activity in and around Port Stephens. Over the long, wet and windy Winter/Autumn, the members of Marine Rescue Port Stephens (MRPS) have been undergoing extensive on-going training, honing their skills in both the Communications Centre and on the Rescue Vessels, to serve your needs better.

As well as the on-going training, we have manned the Radios and been available for vessel callouts on a 24/7, 365 days a year basis. There is never a dull moment when you are a MR member! If ever you need to log on for a voyage or require assistance on the water, there is always one of our dedicated and professional members to assist you. You can see from the following graph that we receive many calls by phone and radio (not ALL of which are calls for assistance - thankfully).



However, when someone on the water DOES need assistance, the well-trained and professional volunteers at MRPS quickly start a process which has been proved to be the most effective for providing assistance where needed in the quickest possible manner. In the last Port Chatter, I outlined to you the “Anatomy of an Incident” from the perspective of the Watch Officer or Radio Operators in the Marine Rescue Base. This issue, I will outline (in narrative form) how the Rescue Vessel (RV) Crew are called out, and what they do once “on the job” to locate and rescue a Distressed Vessel (DV).

### **ANATOMY OF AN INCIDENT**

#### **Part 2 – Rescue Vessel Operations**

When the Watch Officer or Radio Operator receives a “call for assistance” via the Radio or Phone, they are responsible for advising all of the necessary agencies and personnel to ensure that action is commenced immediately. The initial call can come from a number of sources... It could be a call directly from the vessel requiring assistance or it might be from an observer who has seen someone else in difficulty. It may even come to us directly from the Water Police or through our own Marine Rescue Operational team.

After consultation with the necessary agencies (Marine Area Command, Water Police, MR Operational staff etc), a decision is made to either task our vessels or not. If we are tasked, the Watch Officer contacts our DCO (Duty Callout Officer) to start the process to “Get the Boats Moving”. First call is to our Duty Skipper (a Coxswain who has been rostered on for the current week), where the task is discussed and decisions are made by the Duty Skipper as to which vessel is to be used (we have two vessels – a 12.5m Steber and a 8.5m Gemini RHIB). Crewing requirements are also decided by the Duty Skipper and advised to the DCO, whose job is then to start ringing available Boat Crew members until sufficient crew can respond.

The first Crew Members to arrive at the dock (along the rock wall at d’Albora Marina in Nelson Bay) start to ready the nominated Rescue Vessel (RV) by gathering necessary equipment from the storage shed – these include the Vessel iPhone, the iPad and the communication headset batteries. While in the shed, crew members sign on to our “Duty Hours” recording system.

Once on the RV, the Crew commences readying the RV for sea. This involves removing and storing all protective covers from the outdoor equipment and ensuring that all fenders and ancillary towing gear are in place. Engine hatches are unlocked and visual checks of both engines are conducted to ensure there are no abnormalities with coolant levels or stray water or other objects in the bilges. Inside the cabin, the crew undertake a series of checks in accordance with the documented “check lists” to ensure that everything is in order *before* we leave the dock. Batteries are turned on, hatches are unlocked, windows are opened to ventilate the cabin, navigation, RADAR and engine control panels switched on.

When the systems are all up and running, the designated Radio/Navigation crew member contacts the Radio Base for details of the local and forecast weather and the type, identity, location and communication method for the Distressed Vessel (DV). The RV vessel log book entries are commenced and the location of the DV (if known) is plotted on the Navigation System screens.

Meantime, the Master of the RV (normally the Duty Skipper but it may be another Coxswain or Leading Crew nominated by the Duty Skipper) goes through a start-up process for the engine and automated fire-control systems, then starts both engines. A number of further checks are conducted to ensure engine and steerage controls are functional, fuel is sufficient for the task and all electronics are functioning correctly.

Typically all these preparations happen within 20 minutes of receiving the call for assistance.

*(Continued on page 11)*



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## OPERATIONS REPORT CONT'D

(Continued from page 9)

Prior to departing the dock, the Master conducts an ORA (Operational Risk Assessment) to ensure that all required information has been received and documented. A "crew briefing" is then conducted with all Crew, confirming relevant weather details, the description and location of the DV, the various roles to be undertaken by each of the Crew (nav/radio, front deck, rear deck, safety, welfare, first-aid, etc) and that all Crew are wearing the necessary PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) such as Lifejacket, Personal Locator Beacon, Sunscreen etc. As the Crew are all volunteers, it is vital to ensure that all are willing to proceed and are comfortable with the unfolding scenario. Once this is confirmed by each member of the Crew, orders are issued by the Master to take up positions to launch the RV from the dock – letting go the mooring lines and keeping watch for other vessels or objects that may be in the way.

By this time, the Radio/Navigator crew member has logged on the RV and its crew with Marine Rescue Port Stephens, changed the status of the RV from "Stand-by" to "Operational" on the MRNSW Status Board and plotted the position of the DV on the Navigation system. A proposed Route is calculated and brought up on the screens, ensuring that the RV is always in "safe water" and not likely to run into any hard objects (rocks, beaches, headlands etc) or traverse through water that may be too shallow.

The Master then controls the RV using engine power and steering to follow the selected route, always keeping a good look-out to ensure the vessel remains safe at all times. For night taskings in particular, there are two electronic means of maintaining the "safety watch" on board – the RV is fitted with a very sophisticated Doppler RADAR which can be adjusted to suit conditions and there is a FLIR (Forward-Looking Infra-Red) camera which can "see in the dark".

For taskings that involve lengthy travel distances and time, the Master rotates Crew through various roles to "share the load" and ensure boredom or complacency does not creep in. This is also a very important part of the Crew's on-going training program, as it is important that all members achieve familiarity and competency in ALL areas of the vessel. Eventually, we want all Crew members to progress through the ranks up to Coxswain or even Master level.

Sometimes the location of the DV is not known or is uncertain. All RV Crew, particularly Coxswains and Masters, are trained and proficient in establishing Search Patterns designed to have the best chance of locating a "missing" vessel. These are put into effect when the DV is not immediately found at the "Last Known Position" (LKP)

or when their location is uncertain.

Upon locating the DV, the Master ensures that it is safe to approach by making a visual check for any lines or gear that might be in the water and possibly foul the RV's propellers or steering. If the DV has battery issues, a "Jump Starter" can be transferred across to them to attempt to start their engines. Otherwise, the Skipper has to set up to tow the DV back to safety.

For a tow to be effected, depending on the conditions, it may be necessary to attach a light "heaving line" to the towline, then throw the heaving line (with a weighted sand bag) to the DV. The persons on the DV then need to pull in the heaving line until the stronger towline is received, whereupon they attach it to a strong point on the bow of the DV. The strong point could be the trailer hitch on small runabouts or forward deck cleats on larger vessels.

Once the towline is securely fastened to the DV, the tow can commence. It is required that the DV is steered in the wake of the RV and because conditions can be less than favourable, all persons on the DV must wear a lifejacket and remain seated for the duration of the tow.

During the tow, the RV crew must keep a close watch on the DV to ensure that it is not deviating from our wake and that all persons on board appear to be safe. Sometimes the length of the towline needs to be adjusted to suit the conditions especially in rough seas with a large swell.

Upon approach to the desired destination for the DV, the crew on the RV shorten the tow for better control and will often "raft up" alongside the DV (attaching the DV alongside the RV). Once rafted up, the RV and DV can be manoeuvred "as one", especially important if the DV needs to be taken inside a Marina or even placed into a berth or at the fuel wharf.

As a volunteer organisation *we are not allowed to charge a fee* for the service provided, so we most often discuss with the Skipper/owner of the DV as to how they may contribute to our costs by way of a donation. It is not generally appreciated how much it costs the individual Marine Rescue units to maintain the excellent level of service provided – in our case at MRPS, this is approximately \$150k per year. This is made up of fuel and maintenance costs and to allow for replacement of the RVs – each base needs to contribute at least 20% of the cost of replacement vessels about every ten years. On top of that, there are ongoing costs with the Communications Centre (IT, Radio and communications equipment, utilities etc).

(Continued on page 13)



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## Soldiers Point Marina

PORT STEPHENS NSW

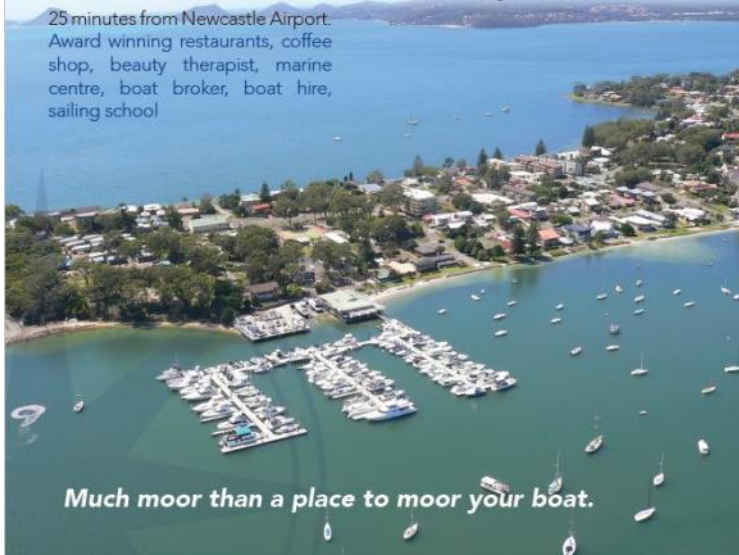
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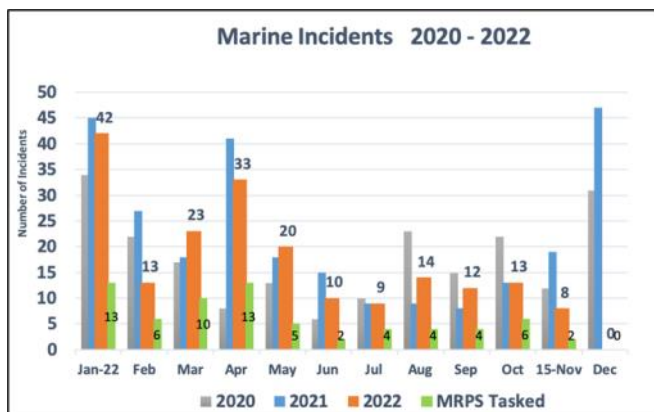
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## OPERATIONS REPORT CONT'D

(Continued from page 11)

Finally, the following chart shows how many incidents are handled by Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Not all incidents require an on-water response by our Rescue Vessels (RVs) but when they do.... That's when the highly trained Boat Crews get cracking! The times we have been required to launch our Rescue Vessels and

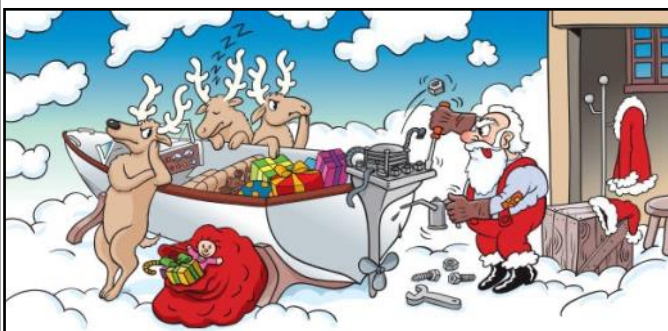


actually save someone on the water are shown in green. We have responded 69 times so far this year.

**Please....**

**STAY SAFE... IF IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT.  
AND ALWAYS... LOG ON WITH MARINE  
RESCUE PORT STEPHENS.**

**Laurie Nolan**  
**Operations Officer**



## EMERGENCY LIAISON OFFICER

### Emergency Services Liaison Report

The Port Stephens Emergency Management Plan 2022 was approved by the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) in February has now been published and a copy is available in the Unit's Communication Centre.

On 21 November, a meeting of combined LEMCs was held at Lower Hunter RFS Fire Control facility at East Maitland. Present were members of the other emergency response volunteer organisations (MRNSW, SES, RFS, SLS) as well as the State services such as Police, Ambulance and Fire & Rescue. Additionally there were representatives from other NSW State Departments, Ausgrid, RAAF and of course Council officers from Port Stephens, Maitland and Dungog.

The NSW Police are the Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON) under the NSW State Emergency Plan and Inspector Wayne Humphrey has now organised that the three regions be under his umbrella, with appropriate Deputies for each LGA.

One of the few lighthearted discussions centred around how the recent Mambo Wetlands fire managed to burn so much of the area beside Salamander Way on top of a metre of water!



Emergency Services attending fire at Mambo Wetlands Salamander Bay. Photo Source: 2HD Webb site

While this was a combined meeting of the three LGAs, it is planned that the quarterly meetings be broken up so that each Council area still continue with their local LEMC in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters of the year with the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter being for the Hunter Central Coast region and the final quarter the combined three Councils.

After the meeting was closed, the results of an After Action Review (AAR) held on the 23 August for the July floods in the Hunter river and tributaries was reviewed. While Marine Rescue was not directly involved in the floods, it was very instructive as to what results emerged from the AAR. All points raised indicated ways to face such an event better in the future and re-enforced the message that there is constant improvement in handling emergencies by all agencies involved.



Flood Water at Raymond Terrace 2022

**Colin Couper**  
**Emergency Services Liaison Officer**



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Fourth Friday of the month\*



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[www.fingalbaysportsclub.com.au](http://www.fingalbaysportsclub.com.au)  
(02) 4984 1244



## RESCUES

### PIGGY'S BEACH

Saturday 26th November

At 2:50pm the base received a call from a 7-meter Cuddy Cabin which was having engine issues near Piggy's Beach. The base received all the details and passed onto DCO Graeme who informed Mick the Duty Skipper.

The crew soon assembled down at the dock and Mick had PS30 on her way to the Distressed Vessel (DV) at Piggy's Beach. Crew Nigel and Michael had the DV quickly under tow and PS30 was headed to Soldiers Point Boat Ramp.

PS30 delivered the DV safe and sound and made their way back to her berth at Nelson Bay Marina at 4pm.

### BIRUBI BEACH

The same Saturday at 7pm the base received another call for assistance for a 9-meter motor cruiser that was having fuel issues near Birubi Beach. Once again Duty Skipper Mick was back out on the water on PS30 with boat crew Howard and Tony.

The weather was not kind with 20kts winds and large swells. Once on scene the crew had the DV under tow, but it was terribly slow heading back to the safety of Port Stephen's Bay due to the weather conditions.

This operational tow was 5 hours in duration with PS30 delivering the DV with 2 people on board safely to Nelson Bay Marina.

Duty Skipper Mick and crew arrived back at their berth around 1am Sunday morning.

### FINGAL LIGHT

Sunday 27th November

With only a few hours sleep the radio base at 7:41am received a message from the public that an overturned vessel had people in the water and on the rocks at Fingal Light. The radio base immediately issued a Mayday for two people in the water.

Duty Skipper Mick and crew responded to the **Mayday** and had PS30 steaming to Fingal Light House. By the time PS30 arrived the two people had been heroically retrieved from the water by three men in another vessel fishing close by. One of the rescued men had a broken leg and the other cuts to their arms and legs. They were delivered to Shoal Bay where an ambulance was waiting to take



them to hospital.

PS30 had the task of towing the submerged vessel back to Fingal Beach as requested. Once the vessel was delivered to Fingal Beach, Duty Skipper Mick and crew headed for home. They logged off at 11:30am just before lunch.

Well done to the radio base, Duty Callout Officer and boat crew for their efforts over this weekend. Time for Duty Skipper Mick to have a well-earned rest and good sleep tonight.



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## DONATION—THANK YOU

### ROTARY CLUB SALAMANDER BAY

On the eve of celebrating 40 years of voluntary community work Marine Rescue Port Stephens received a timely financial boost from Rotary Salamander Bay to assist in its life saving work on local waters.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens recently suffered a serious financial challenge when it lost a major source of funding, the after - hours communication support for the Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley RFS transferred to a centralised call -out service.

Consequently the \$500 donation from Rotary is seen as an “all hands on deck” incentive to challenge other organisations to follow suit in keeping this vital operation afloat.

Salamander Bay Rotary Club President Harry Parker recognised the need to support non- profit operations such as Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

“Port Stephens is a major boating and marine mecca and we know Marine Rescue has lost this recent permanent funding”, Mr Parker said.

“Both our organisations are about helping and saving lives, whether it is on the land or water, we recognise the need to support such operations.

“Our Rotary Club is also aware extra volunteers are needed up at the Marine HQ base as the recent COVID 19 pandemics resulted in some reduction in member numbers”.

The Unit Commander of MRPS Ben van der Wijngaart pointed out any donations are gratefully received.

“We are a registered charity and donations go directly and completely to supporting our operations”.



Laurie Nolan Operations Officer accepting donation from President Rotary Salamander Bay Harry Parker

**Steve Barratt**

**Public Relations Officer**

## MARINE RESCUE PORT STEPHENS NEW WEBSITE



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## FAMILY FUNERALS

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108 The Boulevard (cnr Cary St), Toronto

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## FUNDRAISING

### FUNDRAISING

Marine Rescue Port Stephens is dependent on income from many sources to be able to save lives on the water. Our unit relies on you the general public, as one of our major income sources and we are very grateful of the response we get from the Port Stephens community. Well done!

We have been out and about since the last Port Chatter at many events like the Sustainable Expo, the Soldiers Point School, St Phillips Fair, Nelson Bay Bowling Club Friday night Seafood Raffle and now we will be at Fingal Sports Club once a month with their Friday night Meat Raffle.

Of course our main stay remains the Bunnings Sausage Sizzle. All these fundraising events are well supported by our local community. Thank You.



With the Christmas holiday coming up Port Stephens welcomes the huge number of visitors to the area. Our fundraising and promotional crews will be out and about promoting boating safety, so if you see us call over and say Hi. We love to have a chat and tell you what Marine Rescue NSW and Port Stephens Unit do in "Saving Lives on the Water".

Enjoy the Festive season, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Peter Young**  
Fundraising Officer



## GIFT SHOP



### GIFT SHOP

We are now gearing up for the holiday and tourist season and we have lots of new stock to please our customers. We are also very happy to welcome two new members to our team—great news!

Our Unit recently celebrated 40 years of operations and we are honoured that our long time member Shirley was interviewed by NBN News with a glance around our shop and base.

We wish everyone a safe and pleasant Christmas and New Year and hope to see you with your shopping baskets in the shop!

**Sandra Scheuber**  
Gift Shop Manager

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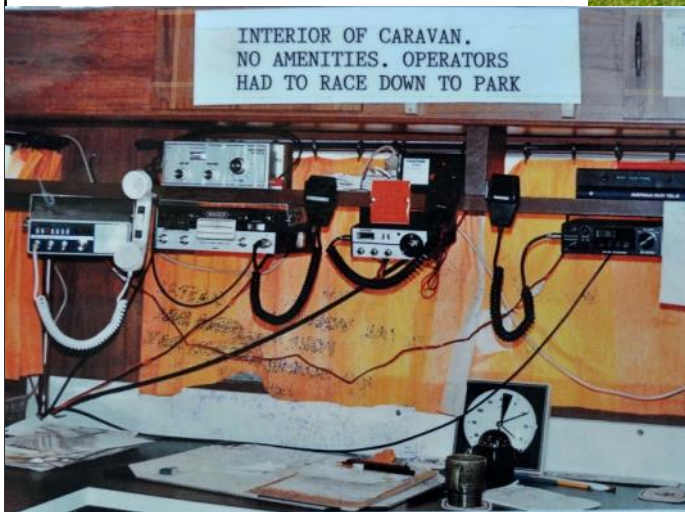
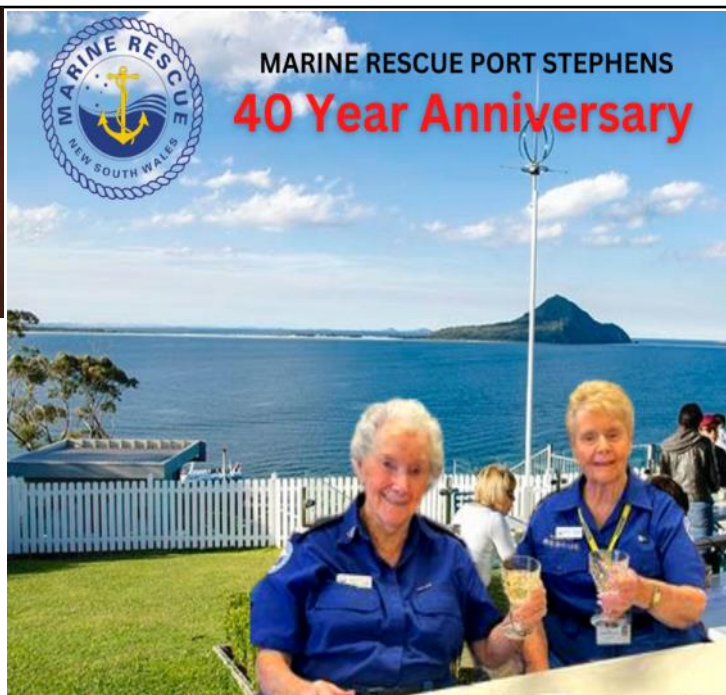


## 40TH ANNIVERSARY



21st November 2022 marks 40 years since the first radio operations by the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol based at Nelson Head.

The widows of the late John Thompson and Kevin Clarke came to the base along with 38 year MRPS veteran member Harold Gibson to remember and celebrate the beginning of what has become MRPS a 24/7 vital rescue operations for the boating community.



The first transmission was broadcast from a caravan sited on Nelson Head car park at what is now the Marine Rescue Port Stephens base.

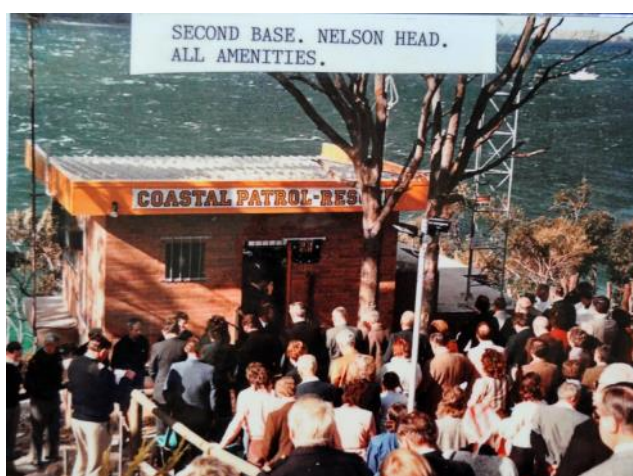
A member of the Port Stephen Game Fishing Club Mr Kevin Clark and the unit's first division commander arranged for a donated Caravan to be fitted out with basic radio equipment under the guidance of John Thompson, a regional captain from the Patrol division at Broken Bay who had recently moved into the area.

John Thompson recognised the need for a permanent patrol presence because there was no Patrol base operating between Lake Macquarie and Coffs Harbour some 270 kilometres of coastline.

On the 21 November 1982 the caravan radio base was officially opened by the then NSW State Member for Port Stephens, Arthur Wade, to operate initially on weekends.

One week after the first gathering of potential members, the division's first radio course got underway at the Australian Joint Warfare Establishment at RAAF Williamtown, starting a long association with the RAAF Base.

Within 3 months of operations of the interim base, 35 members qualified as radio operators and 12 of those members used their own boats, placed on the patrol registrar to be on call for rescues.



**Steven Barratt**  
**Public Relations Officer**



## KARINGAL PRESCHOOL VISIT



You're never too young to visit a Museum!

Recently a group of 27 children (4-5 years old) from Karingal Preschool at Nelson Bay had a morning of exploration and learning visiting the Inner Light Museum. They had fun finding 'treasures from the past' in the museum using pictures of museum objects and then locating them.

A lot of fun was had with the signal flags in the light room, pulling them out and trying to find them on the board to discover what they meant. The front veranda of the cottage then made a perfect picnic spot for a morning tea break.

Our young explorers were also given the special privilege of visiting Marine Rescue Communications Centre in small groups where our Radio Operators did a great job interacting with the children, asking them age-appropriate questions about water safety and explaining what happens when they are on a shift. Our on duty Watch Officer and Marine Radio Officers Frank, Chris and Ian did an excellent job in giving our little visitors a memorable morning.

It would be lovely to see students of all ages from other schools come to enjoy and learn about our unique museum.

Please contact Marine Rescue radio base on 4981 3585 or email [facilities.portstephens@mrnswh.com.au](mailto:facilities.portstephens@mrnswh.com.au) to arrange a guided tour from our dedicated volunteers.



**Harold Gibson**  
Tours Officer

**Bronwen McLeod**  
Museum Curator

## ONGOING TRAINING



Our boat crew use Water Rescue Dummies to simulate persons in the water with a crew member then role playing as the patient once on board. The training exercises are based on previous incidents completed by boat crews and aim to closely replicate actual events which crews may encounter.



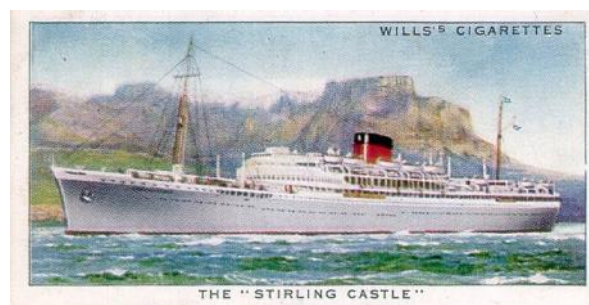
## WHAT'S IN THE MUSEUM

These little, worn books have sailed the world with their owner, H.G. Taylor, who donated his collection to our museum. In another era young boys dreamed of sailing the oceans just as Harry did.

The Engineman's Master Key was 'the standard text book of Australia' for all in charge or operating steam engines, pumps, boilers and mining machinery. Someone, possibly Harry, purchased our copy in Alberts Bookshop, Murray Street, Perth. Inside is written H.G. Taylor S.S. Appledore.

Not a lot of information is available about the Appledore. She was built in 1953 at West Hartlepool and appears to be one of a number of ships with names ending in 'dore' – Mapledore, Castledore, Stratidore etc. I believe her name was changed two or three times and have no further details on her.

'Verbal Questions and Answers as given to Engineers of Trawlers for their Certificate' is another of Harry's little books. The book was originally written to be used in preparation by the Engineers for Board of Trade Examinations and this particular copy is endorsed 'H.G. Taylor R.F.A. "Barb"'. R.F.A. stands for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary which delivers worldwide logistic and operational support to the Royal Navy military operations. They are the uniformed civilian branch of the Naval Service staffed by UK merchant sailors. Harry served in HMS Conway, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and then moved on to merchant service with Union Castle Steamship Company.



Which brings us to the third little book, Wannan's Marine Engineer's Pocket Book. Harry's copy was the third edition and appears to have been printed in 1902. This illustrated book contained 'the latest Board of Trade rules and data for marine engineers'. It is signed 'H.G. Taylor, Chief Engineer, Stirling Castle'.

The RMMV Stirling Castle was a British ocean liner built in 1935 by Harland and Wolff (which also built the Titanic) in Belfast for the Southampton to South Africa mail service. She was, at one time, the largest ship sailing regularly to South African ports from the U.K. During WW2, the Stirling Castle was used as a troopship. She was refitted in Fremantle for a return to passenger service in 1946/47. Eventually the Stirling Castle was replaced by newer, faster cargo ships and was withdrawn from service in 1965. In 1966 she was broken up for scrap in Japan.

As often happens with those who have had a maritime career, Harry became a volunteer with Lake Macquarie Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (RVCP). He held several senior positions within the RVCP and established the RVCP training program with Naval Cadets at TS Tobruk. Known as Captain H, he was popular with all. What an interesting life he led!

**Bronwen McLeod**  
Curator

# Inner Light Weddings Nelson Head



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# Inner Light Reserve Weddings

*Marine Rescue Port Stephens Volunteers hosted three beautiful weddings*

## **Millie and James**



Celebrated their important day on 22nd October 2022 at Inner Light Reserve; the Father of the Bride being one of our own Marine Rescue members.

With the help of her Mother, Millie chose a native theme of wattle sprigs and eucalyptus leaves for backs of chairs and arbour design in keeping with the scenery and making it an absolutely beautiful and happy day for everyone.

## **Sam and Christian**



Were married on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 4pm. The couple celebrated their special day with family and friends then continued celebrations at Atmos Restaurant Shoal Bay. Sam and Christian chose a white wedding theme.

## **Stephanie and Thomas**



Celebrated their wedding on 12 November 2022 at 4pm. Stephanie chose a very traditional wedding of black and white suits for the four Groomsmen, burgundy for the four Bridesmaids.

The reception was held at Broughton's at the Bay for 70 guests and family

## 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.



## Our service to Port Stephens 2005-2022 YTD

People saved/ assisted	7,180
Rescues and assists	3,335
Rescue Crew volunteer hours	76,720+
Radio Base volunteer hours	346,340+
Radio calls made/received	335,490
Telephone calls made/received	334,110

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



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

**Join our team!**

**Volunteer with Marine Rescue NSW**

For details on how you can make a difference & to apply, visit  
[mrnsw.com.au/become-a-volunteer](http://mrnsw.com.au/become-a-volunteer) today



## APPRECIATION



### **Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:**

Ben van der Wijngaart, Colin Couper, Laurie Nolan, Murray O'Dea (MRPS Facebook), Bronwen McLeod, Sandra Scheuber, Bloss Cleary, Peter Young and Steve Barratt.

**Distributors of the *Port Chatter*:** This Quarterly newsletter does not arrive in your letter-box via the tooth fairy. The following people volunteer their time in making deliveries. Distribution Co-Ordinator: Ross Debenham, Elizabeth Francis, Maureen Wheatley, Peter Merlino and Marian Chappell.

**Advertisers in *Port Chatter*:** The following advertisements help support the unit and the production of the Port Chatter quarterly newsletter.

***Please show your appreciation by giving them your custom.***

<b>Community Clubs</b>		Fingal Bay Sports Club
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		Shoal Bay Pharmacy
		Terry White Chemart Pharmacy, Nelson Bay
	Eye Care	Specsavers
<b>Funeral Services</b>		France Family Funerals
<b>Maritime</b>	Marina	Soldiers Point Marina
	Boating Sales and Repairs	Nelson Bay Outboard Services
	Fishing Supplies	Duff's Salamander Bait & Tackle (at Coles Express)
<b>Motor Vehicles</b>	Service Stations/Tyres	Fingal Bay Service Station and Tyres
<b>Windscreen Repairs</b>		Novus Autoglass Shop
<b>Real Estate</b>		Century 21 Paradise Waters, Nelson Bay
<b>Restaurants and Cafes</b>		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head
		Jetty Gelato Shoal Bay
<b>Radio Station</b>		Port Stephens FM 100.9





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

# Make every journey safer. Log On & Off with Marine Rescue.

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**MarineRescue App**

It's quick, simple & free. Just tell us:

- Your boat registration
- Your mobile phone number
- Number of people on board
- Where you're heading
- When you plan to return

We'll stand watch. If you don't Log Off as planned, our volunteers will start searching for you.

Log On whenever you're heading out on the water and Log Off when you return. We'll stand watch. If you don't Log Off as planned, our volunteers will start searching for you.

To Log On, call Marine Rescue Port Stephens on VHF Channel 16 or use the free Marine Rescue App. You can download the App at the App Store for Apple devices or Google Play for Androids.



You can always Log On, whether you're out for a morning's fishing, a day trip around your local area or cruising along the coastline. And it doesn't matter if you're on a tinnie, a cruiser, a yacht, a kayak, a canoe or a jet ski.

When you Log On via, our radio operator will ask you for some basic information about your vessel, your destination and contacts.

You'll enter the same details on your smartphone or other device if you're using the Marine Rescue app.

If you don't Log Off, this information will help us find you, whether you've simply forgotten to Log Off when you returned to shore or you're caught in an emergency and need help fast.

Tell us:

- Your boat registration number
- Where you're leaving from
- Where you're heading
- What time you plan to return
- The number of people on board
- Your mobile phone number

If the fish are biting and you decide to stay out longer, simply call Marine Rescue Port Stephens on VHF Ch 16 or use the Marine Rescue App to update your arrival time.

Remember to Log Off when you're back on shore. If you haven't let us know you're back safely, we'll start to look for you. We'll try calling you first up, just in case you've forgotten to Log Off and headed home with your catch. That's the best outcome. If we get no answer, we'll step up the response.

When you Log On via the App, choose the live safety tracking option so your position is updated in our vessel tracking system every 30 minutes. This means that in an emergency, our rescue crews will have a starting point for a search operation, based on your last known position, saving valuable time when minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

## Skeds

If you're travelling along the coastline, we encourage you to establish a voyage plan with Marine Rescue Port Stephens and an offshore tracking schedule for you to check in (to 'sked') with our bases along your route. This lets us know that you're travelling safely, on schedule and not in need of emergency help. We'll keep track of your progress until you safely arrive at your destination in NSW or we hand you over to the marine rescue service in the next State if you're travelling further north or south.

# Volunteers saving lives on the water