

PORT CHATTER

SUMMER 2023

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

‘Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water’



Seasons Greetings





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 2023

Patrons:

Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson
The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne

Unit Commander: **Ben van der Wijngaart**
Welfare / Liaison: **Ross Debenham**
Assistant Welfare / Liaison: Helen Peterson
Protocol Officer: **Harold Gibson**

Deputy Unit Commander: **Colin Couper**
 Emergency Services Liaison Officer: Colin Couper
 IT Officer/Network/Comms: Lee Ryman
 Deputy ITO: *Vacant*
 Data Management: Brian Richardson

Operations

Operations Officer: **Mick Duggan**
 Assistant Operations Officer: *Vacant*
 Communications Centre Manager: Nigel Eves
 Deputy Comms Manager: Dee Gilliland
 Rosters Officer: John Lee
 Deputy Roster Officer: Chris Beadle
 On Call Watch Officers: Stephen Harris,
 Frank Van Druten, Peter Young,
 Ron Lighton, Graham Abberton,
 Neil Fraser, Colin Couper,
 Ben van der Wijngaart
 Duty Callout Officers: Neil Fraser, Peter Dentrinos,
 Frank van Druten,
 Julian Lyddy Meaney,
 Tony Baker, Graeme Abberton

Radio Club Manager: Glenda Dean
 Boats Manager: Mark Kelly
 Assistant Manager: Tony Baker
 Ashes Scattering Coordinator: Harold Gibson
 Chief Engineer: Bill Haskell
 Coxswains: Sue Freeman, Robert Johnson,
 Laurie Nolan, Brian Bibbing,
 Mick Duggan, Iain Blackadder,
 Murray O'Dea, Peter Wood,
 Nigel Eves, Howard Faulks

Unit Training

Unit Training Officer: **Howard Faulks**
 Assistant Training Officer: Brad Polak
 Training Systems Officer: Jennifer Dunn
 Rescue Vessels Training Officer: Iain Blackadder
 Assistant RV Training Officer: Paul Radford
 Course Presenters: Peter Dentrinos, Ray McLeod
 Ben van der Wijngaart,
 Riko Eguchi, Brad Polak,
 Paul Radford

Corporate Services

Administration Officer: **Sue Freeman**
 Assistant Admin. Officer: Deb Venables
 Clerical Assistance: Erica Smith
 WH&S Officer: *Vacant*
 Honours/Awards: Krystyna Winslow
 Providedore: *Vacant*
 Data / Stats: Maureen Wheatley
 Supply: Margaret & Andrew Morrison
 Membership Officer: Sharon Barry
 Membership Support: Erica Smith

Fundraising Officer

Deputy FRO **Peter Young**
 Food Service Coordinator: Ray McLeod
 Wedding Co-ordinator: *Vacant*
 Donation Boats: Bloss Cleary
 Gift Shop Manager: Angela Tilling
 Gift Shop Bookkeeper: Sandra Scheuber
 Grants Officer: Denise Olson
 Mark Page

Community Relations

Community Relations Officer: **Frank Van Druten**
 Public Relations/Social Media: Stephen Barrett
 Port Chatter / Wavelength Editor: Peter Merlino
 Assistant Editor: Geoff Williams
 Social Media (Facebook): Jeff Dallinger
 Assistant: Murray O'Dea
 Social Committee: Mac Maccullum, Jim Brennan
 Webmaster: Rob Guyder
 Assistant Webmaster: Mick O'Rourke

Finance

Treasurer: **Adrian Hill**
 Deputy Treasurer: *Vacant*

Facilities

Facilities Officer: **Grant Leddie**
 Deputy FACO: Jim Ottaway
 Property Officer: Jim Ottaway
 Maintenance: Steve Chauncy, Harold Gibson,
 John Woodbridge, Alan Woodward
 Security: John Smith
 Cottage Manager: Erica Smith
 Curator: Bronwen McLeod
 Cottage Rosters: Alan Woodward
 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).

UNIT COMMANDER'S REPORT

UNIT COMMANDER



Honouring Long and Dedicated Service

Occasionally I have the real pleasure of honouring the extraordinary service of our volunteers. The 2023 Community Achievement Awards were such an opportunity.

One of our long-serving personalities, Harold Gibson, often affectionately referred to as our 'Padre' has provided long, loyal and unique service to the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and subsequently Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

We nominated Harold for recognition of his work with the Nelson Head Inner Light Reserve in the category of Individual Achievement for the Management of Crown Lands. As there was also an organisational category, we 'hedged our bets' and also nominated our Unit for recognition for its care of the same site.

The Unit made the semi-finals (no mean feat when seeing the competition), but to his great credit, Harold reached the short-list of five finalists.

The citation on his nomination read, in part,

'Harold Gibson is a devoted member of the Nelson Head Lighthouse Reserve Management Committee for 34 years. Harold has been a driving force behind the reserve's remarkable evolution. Starting as a modest Port Stephens tourist attraction in 1990, Harold helped transform it into a bustling destination with over 140,000 annual visitors. His knowledge and captivating tours have made the reserve a beloved community asset, enticing visitors from near and far. Harold's contributions to the Reserve include actively recruiting volunteers and engaging schools. His legacy, marked by dedication, preserves the site's historical significance for future generations and exemplifies the true spirit of volunteering.'



(Continued on page 5)

UNIT COMMANDER CONT'D

(Continued from page 4)

Regrettably, for health reasons Harold was unable to attend the Awards gala event in Sydney on 25 November, but I was able to proxy for him.



It was an enjoyable event that highlighted an impressive range of our fellow citizens who, through often courageous initiative, voluntarily do so much for our community with no expectation of reward.

Harold is one of them. Well done 'Padre'

NSW Life Membership

Coincidentally, Harold was also nominated by our Unit for the rarely awarded Life Membership of Marine Rescue NSW.



This award is the highest accolade Marine Rescue NSW can bestow upon its members. It is awarded to recognise members who have made a significant and sustained contribution to operations and/or administration and have had a major positive influence on the performance and direction of Marine Rescue NSW.

A synopsis of the award citation follows. However, it falls short of describing the diverse leadership roles Harold has held over his 38 years of voluntary service:

Quite apart from dedicated and diligent work as a radio operator and Watch Officer, Harold's work 'on the boats' and later as engineer gave our unit a solid base on which to educate and build new members' depth and breadth of knowledge and gain confidence. His teaching and mentoring have been invaluable and continue to this day, if in a less formal way. The wealth of knowledge and his willingness to undertake additional responsibilities within the Unit has been exemplary and appreciated by his peers, visiting public and the community. He has been an essential part of the Unit's development providing guidance and moral support during time of need to all members.

The award was announced at the Marine Rescue AGM, also held on 25 November.

We look forward to the Marine Rescue Commissioner visiting our Unit early in the new year to make the presentation.

Approaching Christmas on the Water

Finally, we are soon to again encounter the Christmas Season which will hopefully be marked with celebration and family fun in our beautiful Bay and our outside waters, for our locals and the many visitors who enjoy our environment.

This will mean many people and their boats encountering the water after a substantial absence. It's therefore timely to provide the following cautionary reminder to all watercraft operators from SUP boarders and jet-skiers to motor cruisers and yachties:



- Weather - Check and respect the weather forecasts.
- Vessel - Check your vessel thoroughly – don't assume it has remained the same as when you used it last.
- Safety Equipment - Check your radios, and safety equipment and wear your lifejackets.
- Log-on – with Marine Rescue – your best free insurance policy!

We'll be rostering additional operators again from mid-December to cope with the expected workload and our Radio Officers and Watch Officers are always happy to help you with weather reports and log-ons.

Have a great, safe and fun summer holiday season in Port Stephens.

Ben van der Wijngaart
Unit Commander



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DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

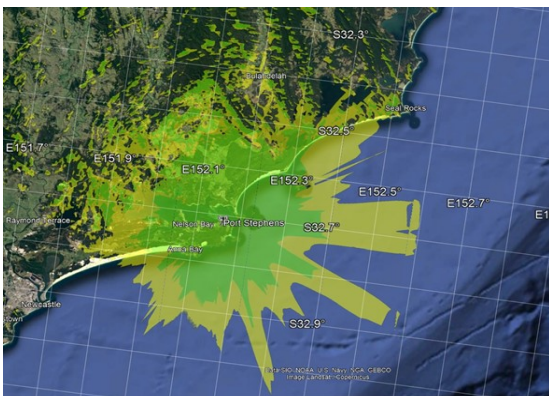
New VHF Radio Coverage for Port Stephens

Above Nelson Bay, on Lily Hill, is the Gan Gan lookout. Multiple towers host telecommunications and radio equipment and now there is one more radio and antenna linked through to the Communications Centre on Nelson Head.

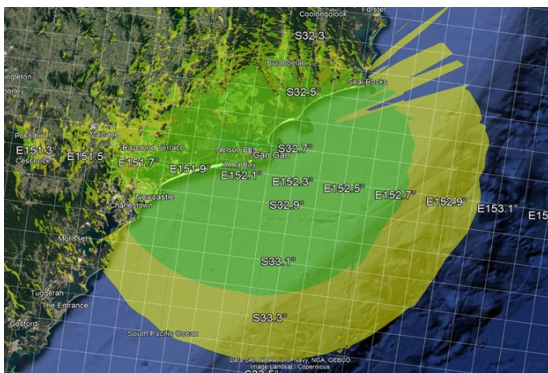


Because VHF radio is 'line of sight', this extra height now gives our radio operators greater coverage into areas that were once black holes, such as Fame Cove and North Arm Cove, plus to the repeater channel 21 to the north of Seal Rocks.

The coverage from the existing radios on Nelson Head, exclude the repeater channel 80 on Mount Sugarloaf behind Newcastle.



Coverage from Nelson Head



Coverage from Gan Gan

We now have a range from beyond Seal Rocks in the north, down to Morisset in the south and out to sea beyond the Shelf. We have advised other Marine Rescue Units at Lemon Tree Passage, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and further south that if they are having trouble raising a vessel on channel 16, ask Port Stephens to attempt to make contact using the Gan Gan radio.

Presentation to Lower Hunter RFS

It is over a year now since Marine Rescue ceased being the overnight radio Firecom for Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley RFS districts. All RFS districts have now moved to a Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) system used by many other State emergency services such as Police, Fire & Rescue, etc. As a result radio operators in the Communications Brigades have become CAD operators.



To mark the 13 years that MRPS had assisted our fellow emergency service volunteers, a plaque was presented to LH Manager, Superintendent Marty Siemsen and Bert Pipan at their East Maitland District Centre. A similar will be presented to Hunter Valley District at Bulga when next it can be arranged.



As we did in the disastrous fires in 2019-20, we again offered to assist the RFS should such calamity return but it will be in a more supporting logistics role rather than radio operators.

Colin Couper
Deputy Unit Commander

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Lachlan Holden
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Scarlett McInnes
Receptionist /
Trainee

OPERATIONS OFFICER

The last few months has seen Marine Rescue Port Stephens involved in several very serious search operations as well as an interesting incident with several twists and turns.



The first serious operation saw the rescue vessel Port Stephens 30 tasked to assist the Nelson Bay Water Police to search for the pilot of a missing helicopter that crashed just north of Yacaaba headland off Bennetts Beach. This search eventually found the wreckage of the helicopter but unfortunately did not find the missing pilot.



The second serious operation involved both our rescue vessels, Port Stephens 30 and Port Stephens 31. The operation required our vessels to assist Newcastle Water Police in concert with vessels from Marine Rescue Newcastle and Marine Rescue Lemon Tree Passage to search for a missing swimmer off Stockton Beach. This search was conducted over three days with no success.

The most interesting incident we were involved in started as a very routine call. The wife of a fisherman called the base to request assistance for her husband. He was by himself in a small tinny fishing off Soldiers Point boat ramp and was unable to get his engine started. She advised his phone had run out of power while calling her so had no means to communicate with the base.

Our radio base advised the duty callout officer of the task who proceeded to activate a crew to respond in our smaller vessel Port Stephens 30 (PS30). As the crew were proceeding to the dock the radio base put out an all ships call requesting any vessel in the area who may be

able to assist. At the time a vessel called Song Lines advised they were in the area and was able to assist if required. Song Lines was advised to stand by as PS 30 was only 15 mins or so away.

PS 30 arrived at the Soldiers Point boat ramp and commenced a search of the area. As they were unable to find the tinny they made contact with Song Lines to determine if they had seen the vessel. Because Song Lines was asked to standby they did not look for the vessel and therefore had not seen it in the area.

PS 30 proceeded to expand the search and observed a tinny on the opposite side of Dowardee Island putting it to the west of the island outside the Soldiers Point boat ramp area. PS30 proceeded around the island towards the vessel's location. As PS30 was proceeding around the island they noted a surf ski drifting in the water near the island without a passenger. When they approached the tinny the crew observed two people in the tinny, one with a double ended paddle like those used on a surf ski and another occupant using a single paddle attempting to row the tinny. The crew was able to confirm this was indeed the vessel they were looking for but was confused as to how there were two occupants when the initial call was only for one. As the crew were taking up the tow the second passenger identified he was the owner of the surf ski and requested the crew assist by recovering his ski.

Once the tinny was under tow the crew proceeded to recover the surf ski and commenced the tow towards Soldier Point boat ramp.



Crew member Brad on aft deck keeps constant watch whilst a distressed vessel is under tow

(Continued on page 11)

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OPERATIONS CONT'D

(Continued from page 9)

At this time the owner of the tinny advised the crew that he was looking to be towed to Greenplay Point near the entrance to Cromarty's Bay as he launched his tinny from the banks of the point near his home. The crew confirmed they were able to assist and proceeded in the direction of Greenplay Point. As they were proceeding towards the point one of the crew called to stop the boat as they were about to run over a line that was floating across their path. They were able to stop the boat in time to prevent the line from wrapping around their propellers. Upon investigation they found the line was secured to a moored yacht approximately 150 meters away and was drifting across the water with a float secured to the other end. The crew commenced to remove the line from the water to prevent any other vessels being caught out by the line.

During the line removal the surf ski rider advised he could continue from this location and proceeded to take his surf ski and paddle towards shore. During this same period another tinny with two passengers passed PS30 and advised the crew they were on the way to their boat as they had been advised someone was on their vessel. (Unbeknownst to the crew the two occupants of the tinny were very new members of Marine Rescue Port Stephens!)

Once the floating line was secured, the crew proceeded to drop the rescued tinny safely off at Greenplay Point. As the crew were tidying PS30 for their return to berth they noted the second tinny returning now with three occupants on the vessel. As they approached they advised PS30 that they had found the third person stranded on their vessel. He had attempted to swim from his vessel to shore and after approximately 25mins was only able to climb onto a nearby yacht.

He advised he was very thirsty and requested some water. PS30 provided the water and then after confirming he was feeling ok proceeded back to the dock.

A number of days later the new Marine Rescue Port Stephens members on the second tinny spoke to the crew members of PS30 to advise that the person they had found on their vessel was found attempting to hide from them. He had moved the security cameras so that he could not be observed. Upon being found he proceeded to provide them with the story that he had been trying to swim ashore and had struggled with the current, so he climbed onto their vessel. After PS30 left the area he requested to be dropped back on his vessel where his girlfriend was located.

A day after the incident the new members were made aware that the person they found on their vessel was wanted by the police.

Several days after this incident the radio room received a call from a woman who was stranded on a moored vessel as her partner had been arrested that morning and she could not get ashore. The radio room reported this to Marine Area Command (NSW Police) who advised them that the police would assist with the matter.

What started as a routine matter just seemed to grow and grow. You would struggle to write this story!

Lessons learned: things aren't always as they seem and keep a lookout for suspicious behaviour on the water and don't hesitate to call the Police.

Mick Duggan
Operations Officer



MARINE RESCUE NSW
Volunteers saving lives on the water

A job for everyone

Our volunteers bring different interests and experience to Marine Rescue NSW. And there's always a job to be done.

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PORT STEPHENS 30 (SHIRLEY CLARK) COMMISSIONING

New Port Stephens vessel named in honour of long-serving volunteer during commissioning ceremony

Member for Port Stephens Kate Washington has welcomed a new \$667,000 Marine Rescue NSW vessel, which provides a significant boost for the Port Stephens community.



Ms Washington was joined by Marine Rescue NSW Deputy Commissioner Darren Schott to officially commission *Port Stephens 30* to the Marine Rescue NSW fleet.

The new vessel, funded by the NSW Government and community donations, was today also named the *Shirley Clark* in honour of the 92-year-old Port Stephens unit member.

Ms Washington said it was an honour to commission the *Shirley Clark* and recognise the decades of dedication by one of Marine Rescue NSW's longest serving volunteers.

"Shirley has a long history of helping keep boaters safe in the region alongside her late husband Kevin. "She has given so much to the community and it is wonderful that this new vessel will bear her name while it carries out its vital life-saving work on the region's waterways."



"On behalf of the people of Port Stephens, and all of our boating visitors, I thank Shirley and all of the dedicated, hardworking Port Stephens Marine Rescue volunteers," Ms Washington said.



"This rescue boat has the speed and technology to quickly and safely get rescue crews where they are needed when vital seconds count. This rescue vessel is a valuable investment in the safety of Port Stephens and the Hunter Coast's active local boating community and its many visiting boaters," she said.

Ms Washington also encouraged all boaters to Log On and Log Off with Marine Rescue NSW either using the free Marine Rescue app or via VHF channel 16.

"Using the Marine Rescue app or establishing contact through VHF Channel 16 ensures that a search will be initiated for boaters who don't return from a voyage as planned"

Marine Rescue NSW Deputy Commissioner Darren Schott said the new rescue boat was designed and built to meet demanding local operating conditions and would prove a reassuring presence for locals and visitors alike. "Boaters at Port Stephens can take comfort knowing this state-of-the-art vessel is at the ready should they run into trouble," he said.

"With twin 300 horsepower Suzuki outboard engines and a specialist Raymarine suite of maritime navigation equipment, the 10 metre Naiad rescue boat is equipped to perform a variety of operational tasks."

"The upgraded search and rescue technology on board including radar, sonar and FLIR night vision has improved our search capability, which is vital to our mission of saving lives on the water."

(Continued on page 15)



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PORT STEPHENS 30 (SHIRLEY CLARK) COMMISSIONING CONT'D

(Continued from page 13)

"As well as operating on the Karuah River and Port Stephens Bay, this boat can quickly deploy up to 30 nautical miles out to sea to rescue boaters who find themselves in trouble offshore."

"In the first nine months of this year the Port Stephens unit has been incredibly busy assisting boaters, completing 228 rescue missions, 101 of which were emergencies," Deputy Commissioner Schott said.



Marine Rescue Port Stephens Unit Commander Ben van der Wijngaart thanked the local community for its generous support of the unit's fundraising efforts to contribute 20 per cent of the cost of the new vessel. He said the new vessel was a significant improvement over the unit's former 8.5 metre rescue boat.

"With improved handling and manoeuvrability and greater volunteer comfort, our crews are able to operate more safely for longer periods and in a wider range of weather and sea conditions."



"The vessel's name, the *Shirley Clark*, is a fitting tribute to much respected life-member Shirley Clark. Shirley has been a volunteer with the Port Stephens unit for more than 40 years and remains a popular and highly respected member of the Port Stephens community," he said.

Source: MRNSW Facebook News Page

RESCUES

A quick assist was undertaken for a small runabout Tuesday 21st November 2023 afternoon.



The vessel had an engine issue and was unable to make way back to the boat ramp. Fortunately, the skipper had managed to tie-up to a mooring in Shoal Bay while waiting for help.

As PS30 and crew were on the water for training, they were quickly on the scene to render assistance.

A tow was established, and the vessel and occupants were safely delivered back to Soldiers Point boat ramp.



Source: MRPS Facebook

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RESCUES CONT'D

Saturday 28th October 2023 training turned into a medical evacuation of an injured person from their sail catamaran who suffered a severe injury to their leg.

As it was suspected he may also have broken a bone, the skipper of the vessel was unable to get help himself.

The injury was reported to Marine Rescue Port Stephens radio base and as the rescue vessels were already on the water, PS31 and crew were quickly on the scene to assist the injured skipper and his two dogs.

The skipper was helped onboard the rescue vessel where his injuries were treated by the crew.

An ambulance was organised to pick up the patient at the public wharf at d'Albora Marina.

The injured skipper was placed into the hands of the ambulance medics and the dogs were returned to a relative for safekeeping - all well from their adventure.

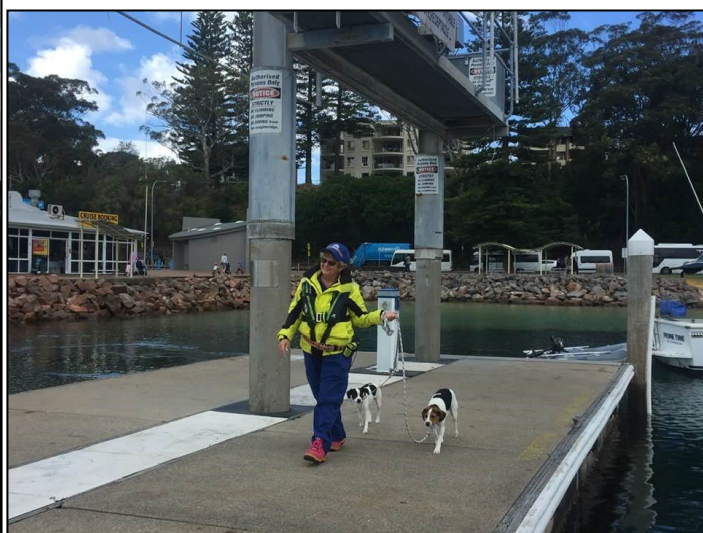


Injured Skipper with his two dogs on the aft seat of our Rescue Vessel PS31



Coxswain Sue Freeman looking after the precious animals on board Rescue Vessel PS31 and in extremely good hands

Did you know? When you logon always advise us number of adults, children and pets onboard!



Sue returning the two dogs to a relative

Source: MRPS Facebook

COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

Imagine going for a swim with your friends at beautiful Stockton Beach. It's a calm sunny spring day the waves are small so you jump right in there and before you know it you're in a deep drop-off and you're being washed out to open water!



That's what happened to a missing person on a Sunday in November and for the following three days crews from Marine Rescue Port Stephens on both our rescue vessels John Thompson PS31 and Shirley Clark PS30 have been out conducting searches with other emergency services.

Imagine you were helping conduct these search and rescue incidents.

Whilst you'd be feeling lots of emotions as a volunteer member on the rescue vessel, you've been called and down at the berth at Nelson's Bay within 20 minutes along with your other crew preparing the rescue vessel to go out for the run down to Stockton in about an hour to coordinated with Water Police Marine Area Command and other services. Then a methodical search patterns all day in rough and windy conditions until doing the long run home late in the afternoon to pack up, only to perhaps be asked to do it all again tomorrow.

All of this unpaid.



We needed at least four people including the skipper and three crew on each boat, and there's only about a dozen available crew at any one time, so it meant many of the Marine Rescue volunteers putting in multiple days work in these extremely trying circumstances and yet the sense of contribution to the community makes it not just worthwhile but also richly rewarding.

We hope not to be called on for a serious incident anytime soon but another rescue is always just around the corner.

Our crew come from all walks of life, some with little or no background in boating.

Anyone with the interest and willingness to learn can step up as we train all our new recruits with Marine Rescue NSW Registered Approved Training Courses.

We just need people who will turn up to do a job and chip in. We'd love to grow our boat crew and indeed all our volunteer teams and we have great roles for people in the communications centre, gift shop, Nelson Head Reserve grounds, rescue vessel maintenance, cottage museum, weddings and our fundraising team.

If you'd like to help in any way details on our next intake and Information Night are included on the last page of this newsletter and will be held on



Monday 5th February 2024.



Frank Van Druten
Community Relations Officer

FUNDRAISING

Hi from our Fundraising Team and what an effort everyone has put in over the last couple of months!

Our Jet Ski Raffle volunteers have put in a huge effort at Salamander Bay shopping center, promotion days at St Phillips Fair, Port Stephens 30 commissioning, boat ramps alongside Maritime expired flare collection and many more events.

Only two months remaining until the draw at Fly Point on Australia Day 26th January 2024, so look out for our tickets stands whenever you see our Promotional Trailer and/or Food Trailer. Tickets are also on sale at our Communication Centre and Gift Shop located on the Nelson Head Lighthouse Reserve.



Our food trailer has been very busy all around the Bay including the one off event RAAF Williamtown Air Show where we were located at Stockton on the 18th November.

The food trailer is becoming very popular with organizations looking for good food at their events and we have had exceptional bookings and much needed income so far for our Port Stephens unit.

Dates are filling fast for 2024 so if you have an event coming up give our Communications Centre a call on 4981 3565 or email fundraising.portstephens@mrnsnw.com.au and you will be helping Marine Rescue Port Stephens **"Saving Lives On The Water"**.

All our Fundraising workers are volunteers as are all our unit members. If this wonderful team did not give up their time, our fundraising would not exist .

As the Fundraising Officer my huge thanks and gratitude to all our volunteers and when you see them out working thank them for their contribution in keeping our Rescue Vessels and Communication Centre operational.

Peter Young
Fundraising Officer



GIFT SHOP

We have enjoyed meeting quite a few overseas visitors at the moment, all being very complimentary to our Gift Shop and Marine Rescue Unit.

We are receiving lots of new items to carry us over into New Year and Christmas sale are blooming. Shop members will celebrate Christmas and end of year with a picnic at Little Beach, with families welcome. We look forward for some new members in the coming year after our February 2024 Induction.

So if you feel like a leisurely browse and friendly chat please call in.

Our members wish you a very happy, safe and healthy holiday season.

**Di Baillie for
Sandra Scheuber
Gift Shop Manager**



Miranda Parkes (L) and Bernice Ruiz welcoming our Gift Shop customers and showing some of the exquisite handmade dolls from our member Bloss Cleary on sale and in stock for Christmas

SCHOOL VISIT



On Friday 3rd November 2023 103 students from Anna Bay Public School visited the Nelson Head Lighthouse Reserve and discovered how the 180 volunteers from Marine Rescue Port Stephens go about "Saving Lives on the Water."

Volunteers to assist guide the students on the day were Coxswain Sue Freeman, Cottage Manager Erica Smith and Facilities Officer Grant Leddie who explained how volunteers monitored and maintained radio communications 24/7 and crewed our two offshore search and rescue vessels. The students also discovered the history of the Inner Lighthouse & Cottage.

Students had the opportunity to visit the Communications Centre and met Watch Officer Peter Young, Marine Radio Operator Chris Beadle and trainee Alana Green.

The students asked lots of great questions, including wanting to know if the night Watch Officer ever fell asleep at night!



They were inquisitive and extremely well behaved and we welcome them back.

The Nelson Head Lighthouse Reserve and Marine Rescue Port Stephens volunteers welcome schools to visit where our volunteers can give guided tours about the history of Port Stephens, visit the museum and our operational communications centre.

Source MRPS Facebook

NELSON HEAD MUSEUM

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Port Stephens Historical Society (PSHS) has had a long involvement with the Inner Light Museum managing the displays in one of our rooms. Recently the PSHS was subsumed by the Tomaree Museum Association (TMA) who are very keen to continue the connection with our Inner Light Museum.

Some enthusiastic members have already commenced an overhaul of the Local History room, packing away items for removal to their storage facility and planning for completely new, refreshed displays in that room.

If you have family or friends visiting over the upcoming school holidays, consider bringing them up to visit the Museum and check out what's new and different.

Our Light Room (the original lighthouse) is quite rare in its design, you may never see another one like it! It's easy to miss so look out for the room at the end of the front veranda.



Currently it is a work in progress and the room is closed to the public whilst this continues.

Plans include replacing some of the display cabinets with more modern ones that will include LED lighting to better highlight and display the items. The TMA will draw on their own historical artifacts currently in storage to include in the revamped displays.



A visit to our amazing Gift Shop as well could help with your Christmas present shopping. All proceeds go directly to support our local Marine Rescue Port Stephens unit.

Bronwen McLeod
Inner Light Museum Curator



Inner Light Weddings Nelson Head



What an amazing backdrop for incredible memories!

Tomaree and Yacaaba Headlands together with Port Stephens waters form a unique and amazing backdrop for your wedding ceremony.



Let us prepare the perfect venue for you and your guests.

You are able to style your wedding as little or as much as you wish utilising the items listed in our brochure, including set up by our volunteers, at no extra cost.



Plan your dream wedding ceremony in this idyllic and unique setting.

Prepare in the Charming Lightkeeper's cottage. Then make your grand entrance from this Heritage building.

For all wedding ceremony enquiries and to receive a copy of our information brochure, please contact:

Wedding Coordinator

Mobile 0490 226 399

Email:

weddings.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au

Inner Light Weddings

The Wedding Team at Nelson Head has been very busy over the last couple of months and here are some of the highlights during November

Jenny and Nathan

Married 4th November 2023 in the presence of close family and friends on a glorious Port Stephens sunny day.

Jenny was escorted down the aisle by a very proud father to an anxious Groom Nathan



Lauren and Will

Celebrated their wedding together on Thursday 9th November 2023.

The happy couple signed the wedding certificate with 45 close family and friends in attendance with beautiful views of the sparkling waters of Port Stephens behind them.

The Wedding reception was held at White Sands Convention Centre Shoal Bay Country Club.



Mark and Rebecca

Commenced life as married couple on Saturday 18th November 2023.

The happiness was infectious for everyone on the day as Mark and Rebecca pledged their love for each other amongst 30 family and guests who made the most of the spectacular views



*On behalf of all the Wedding Team members
we wish the happy couples every happiness in the future*

Bloss Cleary
Wedding Coordinator

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 including Broughton Island, Seal Rocks and 30nm out to sea or further if tasked.

PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 30*
SHIRLEY CLARK



Specifications

Make/Model:	Yamba Welding and Engineering, NAIAD 10M Rescue Vessel
Length:	10 Metres (33 feet)
Beam:	3.22 Metres (10.5 feet)
Displacement:	4.545 Tonnes
Draft:	0.77 Metres
Fuel:	900 Litres
Engines:	2 x 300 HP Suzuki V6 Outboards
Top Speed:	42 Knots
Crew:	Operational – normally 3-4
VHF:	Icom IC-M605EUROB VHF Radio
Radar:	Raymarine Quantum Radar T70416
MFD's (Multifunction Display)	3 x Raymarine Axiom 12" Pro and 1 x Raymarine 9"
AIS:	AIS 4000 Class A AIS
RDF:	Rotheda RDF RT-300
27MHz:	GME GX400B 27Mhz Radio
DCN:	Tait TM 9355 Radio

Rescue Vessel Port Stephens 30 Shirley Clark was built by Yamba Welding and Engineering, Yamba, NSW and completed in June 2023. Her single hull is made of aluminium.

Port Stephens 30 is fitted with state-of-the-art radar, direction finding and navigation equipment as well as forward looking infra red search equipment.

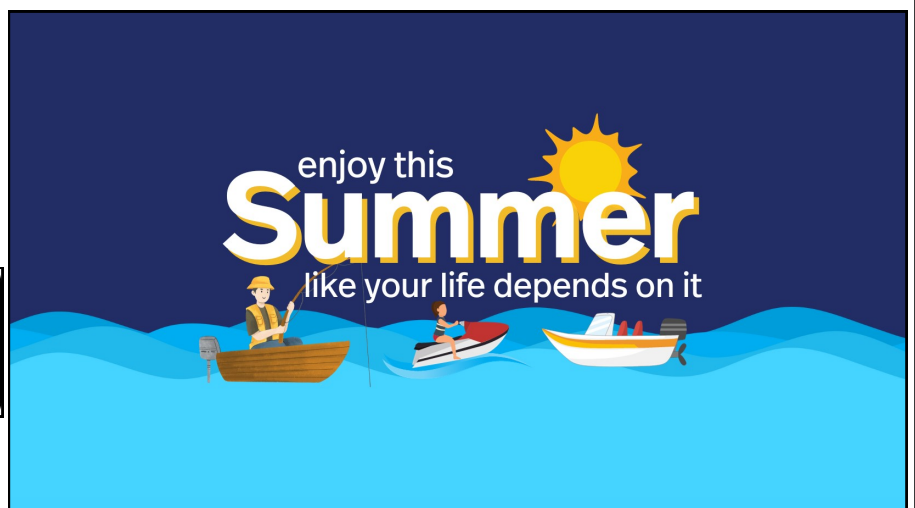
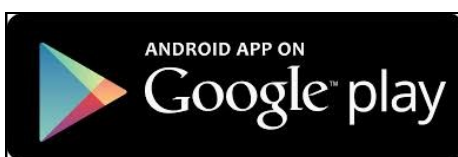
Shirley Clark has been prepared to Marine Rescue NSW specifications with minor customisation at the request of Port Stephens Unit and is capable of covering the area between Port Stephens and anywhere along the coast including Broughton Island, Seal Rocks and 30nm out to sea or further if tasked.



Picture this - you're heading out on that long awaited fishing trip you've planned with your friends only to have the weather turn against you last minute!

At Marine Rescue Port Stephens we want you to have a great day out and that is why when you Log On with Marine Rescue NSW App you can have peace of mind that we are looking out for your safe return.

The free Marine Rescue NSW app gives up to date weather warnings which means your day on the water can go to plan or you can reschedule for a brighter day.



APPRECIATION



Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:

Ben van der Wijngaart, Colin Couper, Mick Duggan, Frank Van Druten, Peter Young, Bronwen McLeod, Di Ballie, Bloss Cleary, Peter Merlino, MRPS Facebook Jeff Dallinger.

Distributors of the *Port Chatter*: The following people volunteer their time in making deliveries of this newsletter. Distribution Co-Ordinator: Ross Debenham, Peter Merlino, Elizabeth Francis and Marian Chappell.

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

Please show your appreciation by giving them your custom.

Baker	Bakers Delight	Salamander Bay Shopping Centre
Hairdresser	Men's Barber Shop	Vince's Salamander Bay Barber Shop
Home/Office	Locksmith	Nelson Bay Locksmith Services
	Pools	Adept Pools
Health	Chemists	Salamander Centre Pharmacy
		Terry White Chemart Pharmacy, Nelson Bay
	Eye Care	Specsavers
Funeral Services		France Family Funerals
Maritime	Marina	Soldiers Point Marina
	Fishing Supplies	Duff's Salamander Bait & Tackle (at Coles Express)
Windscreen Repairs		Novus Autoglass Shop
Real Estate		Century 21 Paradise Waters, Nelson Bay
Restaurants and Cafes		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head
		Jetty Gelato Shoal Bay
Radio Station		Port Stephens FM 100.9

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR FUNDRAISING RAFFLE

DRAWN AUSTRALIA DAY
26TH JANUARY 2024

MARINE RESCUE NSW
Port Stephens Unit

NAME

PHONE

ADDRESS

Drawn 26th January 2024 at Fly Point NSW

CFN21153

MARINE RESCUE NSW – Port Stephens

(02) 4981 3585 - Lighthouse Road, NELSON BAY NSW 2315

www.marinerescueportstephens.com.au

TICKETS \$10 EACH or 3 FOR \$20

PRIZE: JET SKI

Yamaha EK Deluxe
Waverunner +
registered ski and trailer
including 3 lifejackets.
Valued: \$ 16,899



Drawn 26th January 2024 at Fly Point NSW

Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water

CFN21153

SUBMIT YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Port Stephens Unit

Marine Rescue Port Stephens currently has about 180 members whose age and skill range are many and varied. Some members are still in full-time employment while many others are retired from full-time work and find the great satisfaction which comes from volunteering in a community assistance environment.

Regardless of your work/life situation you could bring your life and work skills with you when you volunteer at

Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

Our next **Information Presentation** will be held on

Monday 5th February 2024

commencing at 1800hrs (6.00pm) at

5A Lighthouse Road Nelson Bay



If you are interested in becoming a Member please scan the QR Code to fill in our Expression of Interest online or Call our Communications Centre on 02 4981 3585.

Volunteers saving lives on the water