

PORT CHATTER

WINTER 2026

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

'Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water'



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).

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.

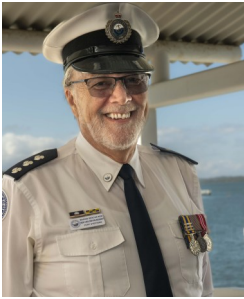
Nelson Head Reserve: Marine Rescue Port Stephens Unit of which Marine Rescue NSW is the responsible entity to the State Government for upkeep of this Crown Land heritage precinct "Reserve".

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



Farewell from Me

As this edition of Port Chatter goes to print, it marks both the close of another chapter for Marine Rescue Port Stephens and the end of my tenure as Unit Commander after six very rewarding years of unexpected service.

The COVID Challenge

When I took on the role in June 2020, we were immediately confronted with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was an uncertain time, requiring rapid adjustments to how we operated, trained, and supported one another. Despite this, MRPS never wavered.

Our crews, radio operators, and support teams demonstrated remarkable resilience, ensuring that we remained fully operational and ready to assist the boating public when it mattered most.

Unexpected New Engines for PS31

We have had other challenges – one that stands out was the engine corrosion issues on PS31 the John Thompson.

That required the urgent location and replacement of both engines when confronting our busiest season in 2021.

An expensive exercise but one that was skilfully and quickly carried out by the Soldiers Point Marina.

Lightning Strike

Then there was the April 2023 lightning strike on our Base that knocked out most of our front-line communications and computer equipment and the weather station.

Again, the extraordinary efforts and dedication of our members kept us on-line so we didn't miss a beat.

Food Van and Fundraising Challenges

One of the notable outcomes of that plan was the acquisition of the Food Van in 2023. This was a strategic move in fundraising after losing the income from our 13 year long night communication service for the Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley RFS.

It, and our rejuvenation of our Wedding Service, have now joined the Gift Shop as our primary fundraising sources – not without a great deal of hard work by our fundraising volunteers.

The launch last year of our Sponsorship Programme and the very successful Float Our Boats event have also cemented further ties with our community as well as providing big boosts to support the cost of our lifesaving operations.



Premier operation of the new food van at Pelican Point on 29 July 2023

New Operational Assets

Among the innumerable challenges was the introduction of new software systems and communications equipment. An important investment in our capability was the arrival of a new vessel, the 'Shirley Clark', named in honour of our still-serving most senior member, now 95!



The Shirley Clarks

(Continued on page 5)

CENTURY 21 PARADISE WATERS—
NELSON BAY



CENTURY 21
NELSON BAY
REAL ESTATE
Family run
& owned for
18 years



City:
Nelson Bay -
Corlette NSW

"Fantastic and great service"

"Michael has been thoroughly professional throughout the sale of our house in Nelson Bay. His detailed approach and making sure everything is addressed on time without any dramas has impressed us a lot. We would recommend him for sure."

"Sam and the rest of the staff are very helpful and any work that needs doing is done quickly and professionally, thank you Century 21 Nelson Bay."

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS FOR A FREE MARKET APPRAISAL

(02) 4984 4700



Michael Kirby
Principal/
Licensee
0423 792 829



Samantha Kirby
Property Manager
Licensed Agent
4984 4700



Tyneale Kendrick
Administration
4984 4700



Tyrone Hall
Assistant Agent
4984 4700



Faith Brimble
Assistant Agent
4984 4700

UNIT COMMANDER'S REPORT CONT'D

(Continued from page 3)

New Base Facilities



Artist's rendering of the NW view of the proposed new facility

One of the signature projects has been the development of plans for the replacement of the 34 year old base facilities on Nelson Head.

These are no longer adequate for our current and future needs and have been found to present several work health and safety issues.

After two earlier attempts we have now developed a thoroughly examined concept model that will be put to Marine Rescue HQ for approval in June this year.



Artist's impression of the inside of the new Communications Room

Nelson Head Retaining Wall

Another major project that will also hopefully be completed shortly is the repair of the deteriorating WW2 constructed retaining wall around the Nelson Head site.

Planning Our Future

In 2022 we drafted and implemented the first strategic plan for the Unit to meet existing challenges and adapt to future challenges.

While an on-going project, we have implemented many changes to address these challenges.

Celebrations and Commemorations

Over the 6 years we have had a number of commemorations and celebrations.

The commemoration in May 2021 of 1943 Catalina crash at Jimmy's Beach was a small but touching occasion.

This was followed in April 2022 by celebrating the 150th anniversary of the lighting of that first Inner Light lamp on 1 April 1872 and we are very honoured to have Mr Geoff Glover, a descendant of the Lightkeeper William Glover, to light the replica lamp to commemorate this historic occasion.

Then on 6 January this year we commemorated the 10 year anniversary of the remarkable East Coast Low rescues undertaken by this Unit.

...and Most Importantly Our People

Our membership of volunteers has grown from 158 to around 200 in 6 years and it's been pleasing to see we have recently had an increasing number of senior leadership positions being taken up by women.

Over the years of my tenure, our crews have responded to a wide range of incidents across Port Stephens and beyond – from MAY DAYs to straight-forward tow assists and the more complex search and rescue operations.

The professionalism displayed on the water and in our Communications Centre has been exceptional and in keeping with our 44 year tradition of saving lives on the water.

There have been many standout incidents over the years - operations that tested our skills, teamwork, and endurance, but in every case, our people rose to the challenge and delivered outcomes of which we can all be proud.

Behind all of this is the heart of MRPS - our volunteers.

Whether you serve as vessel crew, a radio operator, in training, in administration, fundraising, or behind the scenes in support roles, every contribution matters.

The willingness of members to give their time—often at short notice and in challenging weather conditions—is what makes this unit so special.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Unit Executive and leadership team, both past and present.

Your guidance, support, and willingness to share the load have been invaluable.

Leadership is never a solo effort, and I have been fortunate to work alongside such dedicated and capable people.

To Our Partners and Supporters

Of great importance has been the strengthening of our relationships with partner agencies.

(Continued on page 5)

UNIT COMMANDER'S REPORT CONT'D



(Continued from page 5)

Our close collaboration with the Port Stephens Water Police has always been there and remains the cornerstone of our operations.

From my observation, this has grown with increasing mutual respect over the six years,

The growth of the collaboration with the RAAF at Williamstown has also grown through regular training with their rescue helicopter and survival training with Wedgetail and F35A squadrons.

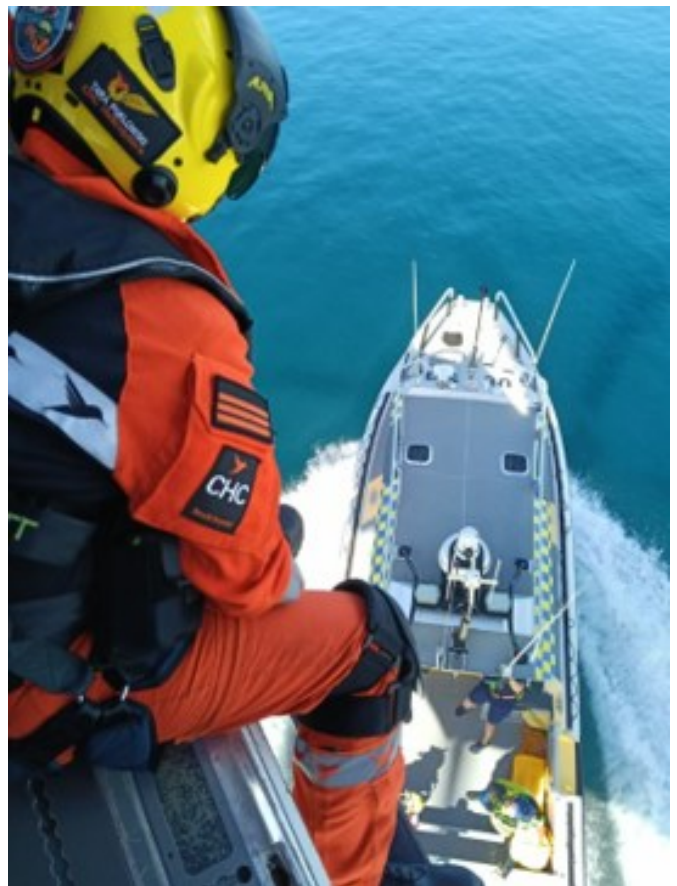
Support of whale disentanglement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service has also been a new development in recent years that has further broadened our community support base.

I also wish to acknowledge the vital support provided by families and local businesses and the public of Port Stephens. Without your understanding, encouragement, and strong financial support, much of what we do simply wouldn't be possible.

Finally...

As I prepare to step down in July, I do so with immense pride in what we have achieved together and confidence in the future of Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

The unit is strong, capable, and well-positioned for the years ahead. I wish my successor 'fair winds and following sea'.



Serving as Unit Commander has been a great privilege and has given me the opportunity to work alongside extraordinary people (both within Marine Rescue and the Port Stephens public), share in challenging moments, and celebrate meaningful successes.

While I am relinquishing this role, my commitment to Marine Rescue remains, and I look forward to continuing to contribute in other ways.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and your friendship over the past six years.

Time for another change...

Ben van der Wijngaart
Unit Commander
Marine Rescue Port Stephens

DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

Sponsorship

Following a review of our Sponsorship Program, we've refreshed our sponsorship tiers to better reflect the commercial landscape here in Port Stephens.

Judging by the response so far, we seem to have struck the right balance!

Thanks to the great work of our Sponsorship Officer, Mark, we're pleased to welcome two new sponsors on board — ISG Electrical and JRC Electrical.

If you'd like to learn more about the updated program or discuss sponsorship opportunities, we'd love to hear from you.

With EOFY fast approaching, now is the perfect time to get involved — there's only one more trial balance to go for FY26!

sponsorship.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au

Donations

"Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." – Forrest Gump

Alongside our sponsorship efforts, we've also been incredibly grateful to receive several unexpected donations recently.

These generous contributions are a wonderful reflection of both the dedication of our volunteers and the strong support we receive from our community.

I have listed three of note below.

Raymond Terrace Men's Shed

On 22 May I had the pleasure of accepting a Certificate of Donation for \$2,000 from the Raymond Terrace Men's Shed.

The Men's Shed provides a welcoming and supportive environment where local men can come together, connect, and enjoy woodworking while taking time away from life's challenges.

This year the Raymond Terrace Men's Shed raised an impressive \$20,000 through sales of their beautiful handcrafted work, which they generously distributed

among ten local organisations.

MRPS was fortunate to be one of the recipients.

It was an honour to accept the donation on behalf of our Unit.

Their generosity and commitment to supporting the wider community was truly humbling.

Thank you to President, John Young, and all the Raymond Terrace Woodies for your kindness and support.



(Continued on page 8)

ISG
ELECTRICAL
3D DESIGNED SWITCHBOARDS & SHEETMETAL
isgelectrical.com.au

DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER CONT'D

(Continued from page 7)



Nelson Bay Line Dancers

We were also delighted to receive a \$700 donation from the Nelson Bay Line Dancers.

When deciding where the funds should go, the partner of our Radio Operator Ian Matthew, Deb, suggested MRPS — and we're incredibly grateful they did!



Radio Operator, Ian Matthew

Women Who Sail Australia

Finally, Women Who Sail Australia generously donated \$700 from the proceeds of their annual "Gathering" event.

This year's event was especially significant, marking the 10-year anniversary of their very first Gathering.

Two of our female crew presented at the WWSA conference, while our other boat crew gave a tour of our rescue vessels.

As always, a big thank you to everyone involved and to our generous community for your on-going support.



Female crew presenting at WWSA: Victoria Gardner (top) and Sue Freeman (bottom)

On a Personal Note

June will be the end of my two-year tenure as DUC.

By the time the next Port Chatter is published, a new DUC will have been appointed.

It has been a great two years serving the Unit and community of Port Stephens.

I wish the new leadership all the best and am sure that they will find the role as rewarding as I did.

Riko Eguchi
Deputy Unit Commander

COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

GOLF, GOLF, GOLF

Aim For The Horizon was our inaugural golf day fundraiser held on Monday 25 May. It will be the first of many and it was a huge success, with the rain holding off (for the most part) and the kangaroos coming out to support all the players.



This community day-out was run by our amazing Marine Rescue Port Stephens volunteers at Horizons Golf Resort, Salamander Bay. Thank you to all the participants

who came along to play a round and share lunch together. There were prizes galore and the golfers had a lot of fun competing!

Thanks to all the local businesses who lent their support with donations and prizes!

The main prize for our yearly raffle also showed up as a guest star, and what a surprise it was a golf buggy!



Get your tickets now and until 26 January 2027 at the Base 7-days a week and on select days at Salamander Shops and events. Keep an eye on our [Facebook](#) for announcements.

MAY INFO DAY

Our second Volunteer Info Night for 2026 was held on Tuesday 18 May and we were really pleased to see how well-attended it was, with members of the community showing a strong interest in all aspects of our organisation.

Despite a very rainy night, the men and women of the local area, of all ages and walks of life, turned out to offer their assistance in any small way for the mission of saving lives on the water. Thank you to everyone who attended.

If you want more information about how to volunteer in future contact our Membership Officer on 0472566450 or email enquiries to membership.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au

Our next Info Night is **31 August 2026 at 6pm**

Where to go: In the Training Room at the Base, Nelson Head (head up the hill from the Little Beach boat ramp)

Marine Rescue Port Stephens is a 24/7 Base run entirely by volunteers. We need help from people like you in

(Continued on page 11)

Nelson Bay Locksmith

Keys cut while you wait,
Engraving, Trophies and
Name Badges also supplied

Daniel Mackenzie (Locksmith)

Shop 2, 59 Donald Street
NELSON BAY 2315
Phone 24hrs: 4981 3428

Member of the Master Locksmiths Assoc. of Australia



Sponsored by



Salamander Bay Shopping Centre

4982 7788



Keeping your music alive

P (02) 4984 6666

F (02) 4984 6718

COMMUNITY RELATIONS CONT'D

(Continued from page 9)

operations, fundraising, and support.

Submit an [expression of interest](#) via our website and we'll be in touch with next steps.

SUNDAY SOUNDS

Sunday Sounds at Robinson Reserve, Anna Bay, featured local musician Anyerin Drury. It was a great afternoon out for parkgoers wishing to relax on the grass to some classic tunes. The Marine Rescue Port Stephens food van was there feeding the community. Our fundraising volunteers fired up the BBQ and sold drinks.

The funds from every sausage sandwich we sell goes towards saving lives on the water.



This was the third edition of Sunday Sounds. It happened on Sunday 26 April and was organised by Port Stephens Council.

The Sunday Sounds program was scheduled to run on the last Sunday of the month from February to May.

Due to inclement weather the May session has been postponed until 28 June. Future musical stylings will be Oran Vir. You can expect to see the Marine Rescue Port Stephen food van back in the park again!

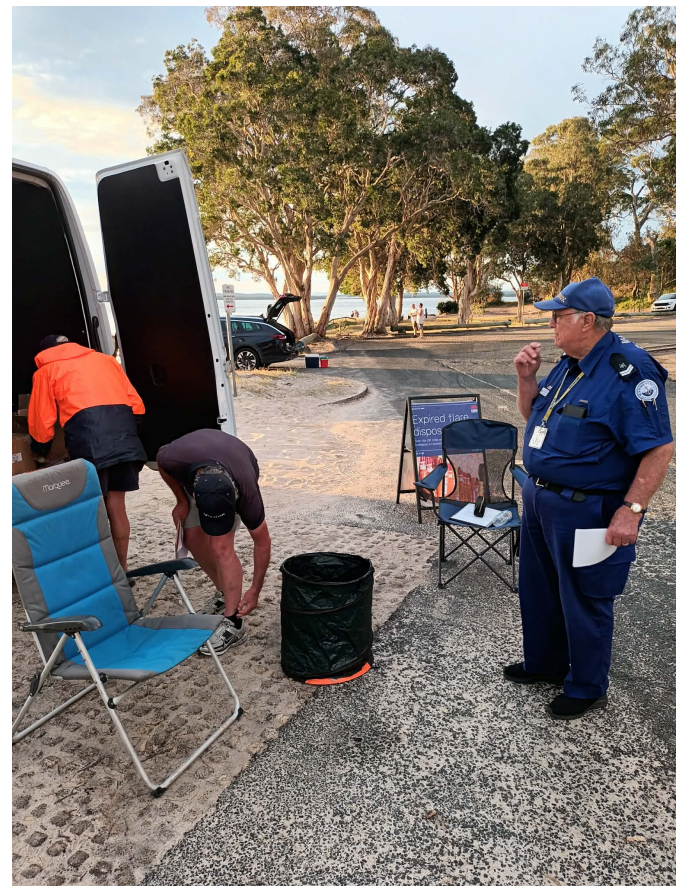
FLARE DISPOSAL DAY

On Monday 6 April 2026 between 3:30pm and 5:30pm NSW Maritime ran their expired flare collection program at Little Beach Boat Ramp, Nelson Bay.



We joined them to offer members of the public education about logging on with our mobile app, how to volunteer, life jacket regulations, and local marine parks, as well as literally pointing them to our friends at the collection van!

These collection days allow boaters to dispose of expired flares safely at regular intervals during the year. It is an offence to ignite flares outside of an emergency. Expired flares must not be discarded in household or public bins.



(Continued on page 12)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS CONT'D

(Continued from page 11)

To stay informed and receive updates directly to your inbox about future collection days, please subscribe via this [NSW Maritime form](#).

SAIL PORT STEPHENS

On 13 April this was the view of the Sail Port Stephens Commodores Cup race from the radio room of Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

The regatta HQ was at d'Albora Marina Nelson Bay with a variety of courses taking place at inshore and offshore islands and bays in Port Stephens from 13-18 April.

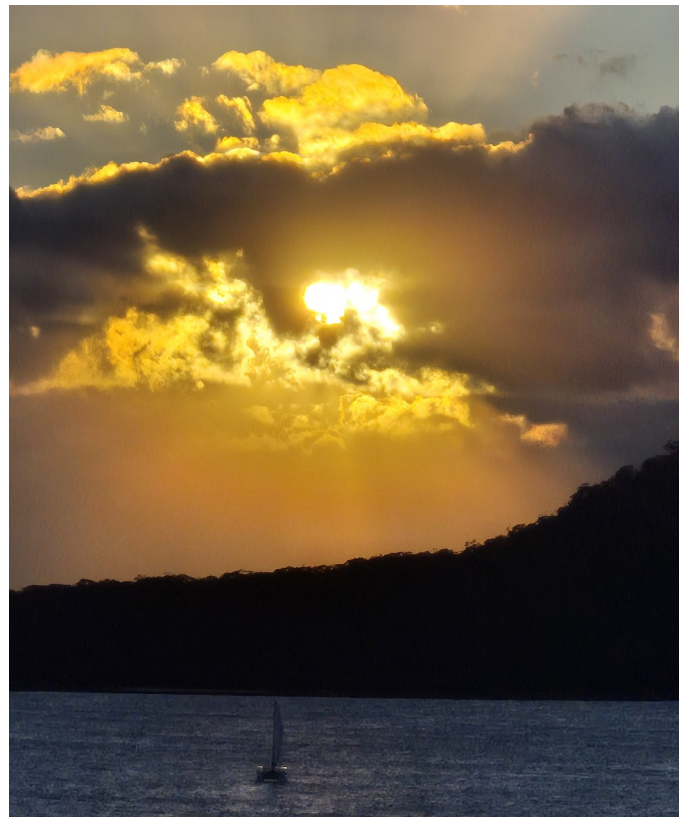
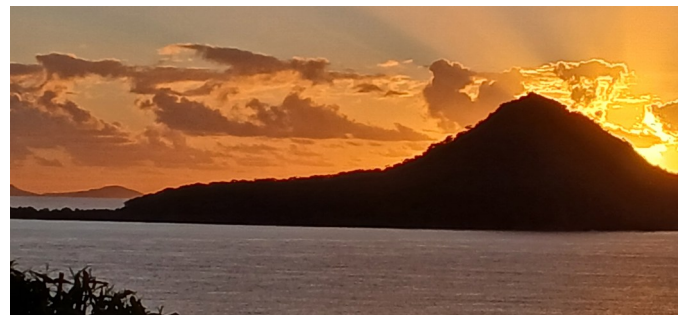
The day of this photo the course involved racing around a buoy at Shoal Bay. The radio operators were also able to track the paths of the yachts' journeys on our computer systems via AIS.



RADIO OPERATORS CAPTURING THE SUN

Our radio operators have also been delighting the public with the morning and afternoon light shows they capture from the unique vantage point of Nelson Head.

Here is a selection of shots featured recently. See also the photo on the front cover of this edition and the one



appearing in the Unit Commander's report (page 6).

Our member photos are regular postings on our Unit's [Facebook](#), so come follow us for more spectacular scenery.

Morgan Bell
Community Relations Officer

AIM FOR THE HORIZON GOLF DAY FUNDRAISER

Thank you to the 84 members of the public who came along to our Golf Day on 25 May. These kind of events cannot happen without the participants, and the community spirit of the golfers is what led to the success of this fundraiser. Special thanks to those Marine Rescue members who brought along friends to make up teams.

Congrats to the winners Michael, Jodie, and Campbell Reid, and David O'Leary, aka The Four Leaf Clovers.

Horizons provided a fantastic venue and lunch and the weather was favourable on the day. We also had an enthusiastic response to the raffles that were run.

We are grateful to the following sponsors: Port Stephens Council, Good Food Distributors, Bunnings, Diggers, Fingal Bay Sporties, Imagine Cruises, Horizons, Game Fish Club, and the Australian Boating Manual.

Join us on 24 May 2027 for our next Golf Day!



AIM FOR THE HORIZON GOLF DAY CONT'D



NEW RAFFLE

ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW RAFFLE ! Main prize: Golf buggy and trailer!

Marine Rescue Port Stephens has launched their major yearly raffle to be drawn on 26 January 2027. This year first prize is a BD04 Golf Cart (value \$13,000) with a Gal flat-bed transport trailer (value \$2,700). Second prize is a Tahwalhi Stand Up Paddle Board (value \$541).

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Tickets are available every day from the Nelson Head Base in the radio room and gift shop. They are \$10 each or 3 for \$20 and help support saving lives on the water.

We also have upcoming days at the Salamander Bay shops where the buggy will be on display in the Centre between 9am and 3pm on a Thursday and Friday.

Shopping Centre dates:

- 25-26 June
- 9-10 July
- 6-7 August
- 24-25 September



BOAT CREW TRAINING

Our Boat Crew trains regularly to assist with maintaining skills and to practice various scenarios which may occur during an incident.

Towing, rafting up, and placing an assisted vessel onto a mooring, dock, or beach are our staple operations.

However, recently our Boat Crew has also been involved in operations involving medical situations and coastline searches.

Instead of on-boat training, for this session our Boat Crew gathered in the Training Room to discuss recent events and a few procedural changes to our operations.

An important point of discussion was considering our own safety when assisting others.

While several key procedures were reinforced, Boat Crew had the opportunity to raise any issue or concerns they had and these were talked through during the meeting.

Iain Blackadder
Coxswain



YACHT SUSPENDED FROM A HELICOPTER

Things you see from the radio room ...

One of our radio operators captured this extraordinary shot from the Marine Rescue Port Stephens comms centre tower. You don't witness a yacht suspended from a helicopter every day!

The chopper had been out at Shark Island off Fingal Bay and flew over the air space near the Base. Photo taken the afternoon of 28 April.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens assisted with the Mayday involving this wreck at Fingal Island 7.30pm 22 April.

The two POB made it back to safety with the help of Port Stephens Water Police and further assistance sought from the Westpac Rescue Helicopter and CHC's Chopper 21 helicopter.

Well done to our radio operator who took the initial distress call.

The 10-meter sailing vessel was stranded on submerged rocks. Due to the challenging conditions – including darkness, strong southerly winds, and moderate seas – helicopter assistance was ultimately necessary.

Two men aboard the vessel – aged 54 and 69 – were airlifted to Williamtown Airport and treated by NSW Ambulance paramedics for minor injuries and hypothermia.



Australian Family Owned & Operated

France

FAMILY FUNERALS

“...caring as only a family can...”

NEWCASTLE

209 Maitland Road (cnr Barton St), Mayfield

LAKE MACQUARIE

108 The Boulevard (cnr Cary St), Toronto

PORT STEPHENS

45 Stockton Street (cnr Church St), Nelson Bay

STOCKTON

63 Mitchell Street (cnr King St), Stockton

Specialising in Fixed Price Pre-Paid Funeral Plans
Free, No Obligation Funeral Information & Advisory Service
Payment & Finance Plans Available (Conditions Apply)
Available 24 Hours - 7 Days

ALL AREAS 1800 44 66 53

www.fff.com.au

THE NUMBERS

FEBRUARY

Volunteer crews from Marine Rescue NSW completed 404 search and rescue missions across the state in February, including 140 emergency responses, safely returning 847 people to shore.

The February total brought the number of missions performed over summer (December to February) to almost 1,700, highlighting the sustained demand placed on volunteers during the peak summer period.

“Sixty per cent of responses were for engine, battery and fuel issues,” said Commissioner Andrews.

Crews responded to a dozen capsized vessels during the month and were involved in numerous multi-agency missing person searches including along the Northern NSW coastline.

In February, our radio operators managed 18,864 calls, including nine MAYDAYs and five PAN PANs, and kept watch over 24,241 people on board 7,322 vessels that had Logged On.

Hunter/Central Coast (across all 8 units): 121 search and rescue missions including 36 emergency responses with 211 people safely returned to shore.

Search and rescue missions in locations of highest demand: Lake Macquarie 61, Brisbane Water 17, Lemon Tree Passage 13, **Port Stephens 11**

Hunter/Central Coast (across all 8 units): 103 search and rescue missions including 31 emergency responses with 195 people safely returned to shore.

Search and rescue missions in locations of highest demand: Lake Macquarie 36, Brisbane Water 31, **Port Stephens 15**



MARCH

During March, Marine Rescue NSW volunteer radio operators maintained watch over almost 20,000 people on board Logged On vessels and managed more than 16,000 calls, including six MAYDAY distress calls and one Pan Pan.

THE BOATING SEASON

Between 1 October 2025 and ANZAC Day 2026, volunteers completed 3,147 search and rescue missions, assisting 7,059 people

Across NSW, volunteers responded to 86 medical emergencies, 220 groundings and 120 capsized vessels.

Commissioner Andrews said many incidents remained preventable.

“Engine, fuel and battery failures accounted for 62 per cent of responses, which is far too high.”

Marine Rescue NSW radio operators handled 132,031 calls during the season.

Among those were 75 MAYDAY distress calls involving immediate danger to life, alongside 42 PAN PAN calls from boaters facing urgent but non-life-threatening situations.

Logging On with Marine Rescue NSW remained a critical safety tool, with volunteers monitoring 170,608 people on board 46,824 Logged On vessels.

Hunter/Central Coast (across all 8 units): 950 search and rescue missions including 220 emergency responses with 1,880 people safely returned to shore.

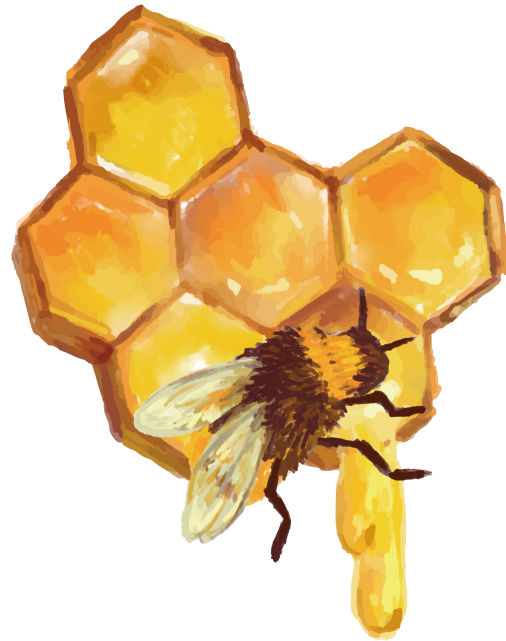
Search and rescue missions in locations of highest demand: Lake Macquarie 420, Brisbane Water 169, **Port Stephens 151**

GIFT SHOP

At this time of year, as we are all gearing up for winter, our Gift Shop has a lovely new range of products for all ages and all budgets. We have seasonal scarves and beanies to keep you warm as it cools down as well as a great range of mugs and cups for those essential chilly morning hot cuppas.

For this newsletter I'd like to showcase our Australian and locally made gifts.

Checkout our new Etchelon Magnets designed and made in Canberra from Australian Timber. These exquisite magnets showcase Nelson Bay Australiana and our very own Marine Rescue Boats.



We have a gorgeous new range of Ruby and Grace bags, purses, glasses cases and tea bag holders.

Very popular is our delicious Tanilba Bay honey.

And we have a huge new range of Lemon Myrtle Fragrance products – lip balm, soaps, body lotions, moisturisers, hand and body wash, shampoo, conditioner and natural insect, sandfly, and mozzie repellents.

There is even a dog shampoo in this range. They smell divine and so will you using them.



(Continued on page 19)

GIFT SHOP CONT'D

(Continued from page 18)



For something a little funky we have Smyle Designs Earrings made in Brisbane from recycled plastic.

Super cute designs and colours.

The Gift Shop is also selling tickets for the Marine Rescue Port Stephens annual raffle.

This is our major fundraising event to help keep our boats on the water to save lives. As always, we have some fabulous prizes.

Pop into the shop to say hello to our gorgeous ladies, check out our reasonably priced gifts, buy Australian, and get yourself a raffle ticket as well.

We are looking forward to your visit real soon.

Tracy Glode-Sivier
Gift Shop Secretary





**TerryWhite
Chemmart**

- Pharmaceutical advice
- Home medication reviews
- Webster packing of medication
- Health services check (Inc. blood pressure and cholesterol check)
- Free home delivery
- Flu vaccinations
- DNA testing
- Impromy weight loss management program
- Hire of medical equipment
- Sleep Apnoea testing
- Open 7 days

**18 Stockton Street, Nelson Bay
Phone (02) 4984 2445**

**NOVUS
AUTO GLASS™**

- ✔ **Windscreen Replacements**
- ✔ **Stone Chip & Crack Repairs**
- ✔ **Glass & Perspex Cut to Size**
- ✔ **Side & Rear Glass**
- ✔ **Mobile Service**

4982 7474

3 George Road Salamander Bay

Address: 5a Lighthouse Road Nelson Bay NSW 2315

Call 02 4984 2505

NELSON HEAD
Inner Light
TEA ROOMS

Come for the view, Stay for the Food

At Inner Light Tea Rooms, you will “Come for the View, Stay for the Food!”

Our Cafe has spectacular panoramic views of Port Stephens.

Breakfast and lunch

You can savour breakfast, lunch, morning or afternoon tea while enjoying the magnificent view.

Opening hours

We are open **7 days a week** (weather permitting) from **8.30am to 3.00pm**.



VOLUNTEER WEEK

For National Volunteer Week we took the opportunity to recognise the many volunteers who help Marine Rescue Port Stephens thrive.

Our volunteers contribute in countless ways across our community and are always willing to give a hand to those in need.

Thank you to both our operational and fundraising members who are highly visible to the public, and all those working behind the scenes maintaining our amazing heritage site and keeping training, admin, finance, and technology ticking over like clockwork.

This week, and every week, we celebrate the people whose time, effort and generosity help save lives on the water in Port Stephens.



ANZAC DAY

This ANZAC Day, members of Marine Rescue Port Stephens gathered for the Nelson Bay service at Apex Park. A wreath was laid on behalf of the entire Unit as our tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Our contingent then assembled to take part in the march.



Members of our Unit stood alongside the local people of Port Stephens to pause, reflect, and remember the values of mateship and duty that continue to guide us today.

ANZAC Day remains one of the most significant commemorative occasions in Australia. The observance is a chance to honour those who served and a reminder that we all share a strong community spirit.

We will remember them.

Lest we forget.



Photos by Phillip Craig Images
@philcraigphotography

BALLINA TRAGEDY

The night of Monday 4 May was the darkest night ever experienced by Marine Rescue NSW.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers answer the call for help 24/7 and that night six members from Marine Rescue Ballina did just that. They launched with a single mission, to save lives on the water and assist a yacht, reported to be in difficulty off the South Ballina break wall.

Tragically, two of our volunteers lost their lives during the response.

Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Todd Andrews said the devastating loss is a solemn reminder of the risks faced by volunteers who serve their communities.

“These two men were serving their local community and have made the ultimate sacrifice to help others.

“Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the families and loved ones of the deceased, their fellow crew members, the brave radio operators who handled the difficult communications during the incident, the entire Marine Rescue NSW family and the wider Ballina community during this incredibly difficult time.

“We are supporting our volunteers and their families through professional counselling and chaplaincy support.

“We ask that the privacy of those involved and their families be respected during this difficult time,” Commissioner Andrews said.

On 6 May Marine Rescue NSW confirmed that the names of the two Marine Rescue Ballina volunteers who tragically lost their lives during the Monday night rescue mission were William (Bill) Ewen and Frank Petsch.



Bill was approaching 10 years of dedicated service with Marine Rescue Ballina, having joined in

February 2017. He was a highly respected and valued crew member.

Frank joined the unit in January 2024 and quickly progressed to the role of Coxswain (Restricted), demonstrating his commitment to serving others on the water.

People were invited to share messages of condolence via [this link](#). These messages will be compiled into a book and shared with Bill and Frank’s families, as well as the Marine Rescue Ballina team.



REST IN PEACE

Statement from Marine Rescue Ballina, 18 May:

As we continue to mourn the loss of BA 30 crew members, Bill Ewen and Frank Petsch, Marine Rescue Ballina would like to provide an update on plans for a Marine Rescue NSW Memorial.

The Memorial will be in Ballina in the weeks following the final funeral service. At this stage, we anticipate the memorial will take place in late June.

As both men are laid to rest in the coming weeks, the families have asked that their wishes regarding the funeral services be respected.

Frank Petsch’s funeral will be a private, family-focused service attended by invited guests only while the details for Bill Ewen’s service are still being finalised.

With the families’ wishes paramount, the community will have the opportunity to come together and pay their respects at a Memorial. Further details will be shared as soon as arrangements are finalised.

Thank you for your support, and your continued respect for the wishes of both families during this incredibly difficult time.

TAKING THE LOVE PLUNGE AT PORT STEPHENS

When marriage vows are exchanged at one of the most popular wedding venues in Port Stephens, the people behind the scenes making it all run like clockwork are the volunteers of Marine Rescue.

The entire site at Nelson Head Reserve is managed by Marine Rescue Port Stephens (MRPS) whose volunteer members undertake all site maintenance and wedding preparation activities. All funds raised from weddings on the site are used to support MRPS operations.

The MRPS Weddings Team currently consists of seven hard-working members plus their much-loved and dynamic team leader, Bloss. They have been hosting weddings on the site for over a decade, with Bloss at the helm for the last six years. It is during these post-Covid years that the team has seen a boom in bookings. This can be attributed to the continued decorative innovations of Bloss, but also to the passion and good vibes the whole team brings to newlyweds on their special day.

There is also something to be said for stunning tableau of the location itself. The views from the greens of the Inner Light historical reserve bring them in, and the attentive service of the MRPS volunteers keeps them coming back!

The Inner Light wedding venue at Nelson Bay enjoys unparalleled views of the Tomaree and Yacaaba Headlands and the Islands beyond. The landforms of the Heads emerging from crystal blue Port Stephens waters forms a unique panoramic backdrop for magical nuptial memories. The site is the perfect ceremony location for couples dreaming of magnificent ocean photoshoots.

Guests are treated to a unique elevated vantage point of Shoal Bay, one of the most spectacular locations in the area, and indeed Australia. In 2025, Wotif voted Port Stephens winner of Aussie Town of the Year (based on accommodation searches and reviews). Visit NSW described the outlook of Shoal Bay Beach as a “perfect arc of white sand” that runs between Tomaree Head and the Nelson Head in its shortlist of best beaches in Port Stephens.

The Weddings Team regularly receives hand-written notes of thanks and gratitude for exemplary service before, during, and after marriage ceremonies. MRPS hosts an average of 14 weddings per year. In 2024 they did an extraordinary 28 weddings.

The site can accommodate parties of 100 guests, and also offers discounted “Micro-Wedding” rates for services with under 15 guests. Site access is available for two hours from the scheduled ceremony start time. A big feature of the wedding packages is the ever-expanding decorative arrangements available.

A couple booking today will select from a range of styles of arbours or plinths with a choice of floral arrangements. They may opt for an ‘Americana’ style chair, white fold-up chairs with white cushion seats, or stick with the ‘Traditional’ set, stretch white seat covers with a choice of organza sashes.

Members of the bridal party are given space to prepare in the charming Lightkeeper's Cottage and make their grand entrance from this Heritage Building. Everything you see that frames their journey down the aisle is laid out by MRPS volunteers. At one event white Bali flags may adorn either side of the stage or the pathway from the carpark. Some parties choose a red carpet or Shepherd's crooks for the bridal walk. A set of white umbrellas are often chosen to offer shade to wedding guests in the warmer months. Flower petals or bubbles can really make those photos pop.



The Inner Light is a special and historical place. It has played an important role in guiding vessels into Port Stephens since 1872 and the heritage listed Lightkeepers Cottage is now a museum and the oldest building in Nelson Bay. The site has continued to play a key role in providing safety for mariners as the home base for the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and now the team at MRPS.

As Bloss recently said: ‘I acknowledge there is no “I” in team, which I accept and respect. Marine Rescue Port Stephens weddings are successful purely because of the efforts of the Wedding Team, which is well recognised by wedding parties and guests. I would like to express my pride in the team and thank them for the continual efforts given to make it the success it is.’

The Unit would like to thank the continual efforts and dedication of the Wedding Team, especially in the challenging summer weather conditions. And on behalf of MRPS, the Wedding Team wishes every happy couple all the very best for the future. The best part of the job is always sharing the love on the day.

WEDDINGS TEAM VOLUNTEERS

Some of our Weddings Team volunteers bringing positive vibes to a recent ceremony. The close-knit crew demonstrate perfectly how at Marine Rescue we are one big family. Well done guys for spreading joy to the community. A smile is contagious!

These delightful moments were captured at the Marine Rescue Port Stephens Base at Nelson Head. The immaculate lawns at the heritage site are also maintained by our volunteers.

Every dollar raised from weddings held at Marine Rescue Port Stephens goes towards our 24/7 operations saving lives at sea.





ADEPT POOLS

PTY LTD

Creative Pool Construction & Tiling

4915 8666

National Award Winning Pool Builders In Port Stephens



SALAMANDER BAY BARBER SHOP



When quality counts....

Traditional barbering and quality, expert service
you'd expect when you have your hair cut.

TRADING HOURS

8am—5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9am-5pm Wednesday

7.30am—2pm Saturday

Closed Sunday



Phone: (02) 4919 1640

Shop 2, 267 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay



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

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.

APPRECIATION



Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:

Ben van der Wijngaart, Riko Eguchi, Morgan Bell, Tracy Glode-Sivier, Iain Blackadder, Shane Morgan (photos), Lianne Manley (photos), Phillip Craig (photos), MRPS Facebook.

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

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.

Electrical	MRPS official sponsors	ISG Electrical
	MRPS official sponsors	JRC Electrical
Hairdresser	Men's Barber Shop	Vince's Salamander Bay Barber Shop
Home/Office	Locksmith	Nelson Bay Locksmith Services
	Pools	Adept Pools
Health	Chemists	Terry White Chemart Pharmacy, Nelson Bay
	Eye Care	Specsavers
Funeral Services		France Family Funerals
Windscreen Repairs		Novus Autoglass Shop
Real Estate		Century 21 Paradise Waters, Nelson Bay
Restaurants and Cafes		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head
Radio Station		Port Stephens FM 100.9
Apparel	Industrial Uniform	Totally Workwear

