

PORT CHATTER

SPRING 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 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 hour call-out basis. (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



Welcome to the spring edition of Port Chatter.

Introduction

At the AGM of the Unit it was an honour and a privilege to be appointed as the latest Unit Commander.

Whilst I have only been in the Bay for around eight years I have been visiting Port Stephens for around 40 years.



As a keen sailor the bulk these occasions have been bringing my boat up to compete in regattas and stay on a bit to enjoy the bay.

So I have lots of great memories, which is why my wife and I decided to relocate after our retirement.

Coming from a sailing background I wanted to be on the water but wanted something different and Marine Rescue provided that great opportunity.

Close to seven years ago I joined and I am now a Coxswain and Watch Officer.



I have also been through the roles of Boat Training Officer and Unit Training Officer.

Making it a family affair my wife Deb joined the unit five years ago.



Safety during the Boating Season

For many of us as the days start to get warmer the attraction to get back out on to the water will increase.

Before heading out, check your vessel as it may have been sitting on a trailer for some time and you may not have really looked at closely since last season.

Make sure batteries, fuel, and safety equipment are all in good condition and your engine has been serviced.

(Continued on page 5)



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UNIT COMMANDER'S REPORT CONT'D

(Continued from page 3)

If possible, try to understand some often key components of your vessel.

For example, if you have a jet ski, if you don't already know, find out if your jet ski has a tow/shut-off valve and understand how to use it.

If you ever have to be towed this is an important piece of knowledge that can assist with the towing.

One of the most important pieces of safety gear you have is your lifejacket.

Ensure that everyone onboard your vessel has one, that it is good working order, and they know how to use it.

Remember even this piece of safety equipment is useless unless you are wearing it.

The other issue that I see on the water is where you end up being driven by a schedule rather than changing your plans due to weather or conditions.

Be prepared to change your plans if the conditions deteriorate.



Log on with Marine Rescue

Carry reliable communication devices and let someone know your plans for time out on the water.

I do encourage everyone to log on with Marine Rescue via the MRNSW Mobile App, via our phone number (02) 4052 2300, or via Channel 16 on VHF.

This includes just going out into the enclosed waters of Port Stephens which is approximately 2.5 times the size of Sydney harbour.

Even if you log on with the Mobile App it is not a bad idea to test your VHF radio from time to time by calling Marine Rescue on Channel 16 and asking for a radio check.

I hope to see around town or on the water. Hopefully when I say on the water it is just to wave and say hello and you are having a great time on the water!

Howard Faulks
Unit Commander
Marine Rescue Port Stephens

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DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER - OPERATIONS

As for most of Port Stephens, winter is generally a quieter time for Marine Rescue due to the lower level of vessel activity on our waters.

That said, we never know when we are going to be needed, so our crews, both in the Radio Room and for the boats, are required to remain vigilant and ready at all times.

This winter our volunteers in the Radio Room received 40 calls for assistance and of these a total of 24 required an on-water response.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens rescue vessels responded to 15 of these incidents. One was handled by our colleagues at Lemon Tree Passage and eight involved either the Water Police or NSW Maritime.

One of the incidents in particular, where a single fisherman found themselves in the water for several hours after their boat capsized, highlighted how important it is to let someone know where you are going and what time you'll be returning, before going out on the water.

Ideally you should log on with our Base so we can monitor your voyage and safe return. But if you don't do that, at least tell someone in your family, or a friend, so that if you fail to return the alarm can be raised and emergency responders know where to start looking for you.

It is also really important that you have the correct safety equipment on board and that it is in-date and serviceable.

Life jackets should be serviced regularly, something you can do yourself. Instructions on how to do this can easily be found on-line, or you can take them to a professional to have done.



The last thing you want is to find yourself in an emergency situation and your safety equipment fails you.

In addition to the aforementioned incidents, our boat crews have also been busy helping other agencies with a number of activities over the winter period.

We have a very close relationship with the CHC helicopter rescue team based at Williamstown and have been conducting regular training sessions with them. This often involves them winching someone onto the deck of our boat.

You may well have seen this happening in the Bay from time to time.

Additionally, we assisted with a search for a whale that was believed to be somewhere between Fingal and Broughton Islands and was snared with lines of some sort.

Despite an extensive search the whale could not be located, so hopefully it managed to free itself and continue on its onward journey north.

Now we move toward the better weather of spring and summer, with the prospect of more activity on the water and consequently more work for our team.

Mark Page
Acting Deputy Unit Commander - Operations



COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

WINTER FEST

The food van was down at Apex Park 11-12 July for the weekend of the Winter Festival starting with the Family Night.

There were dance performances, rock and roll fun, the Pretty Amazing Jono – roving magic stunt clown, face painting, bubbles, and a balloon artist.

So many people from the community came along to say hello and grab a sausage sandwich or an egg and bacon roll!

Our food service volunteers at Marine Rescue Port Stephens had a great time cooking up a storm and meeting you all.



THANK A FIRST RESPONDER

On 10 June former Deputy, Riko, along with our Facilities Officer, Grant, represented the Unit at Thank A First Responder Day at Salamander Early Education.

They proudly attended the event alongside first responders from across Port Stephens including SES, Ambulance, Police, RFS, Fire and Rescue, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, and Surf Life Saving.

The event brought together children, educators, families and emergency service personnel in a welcoming environment.



It helped children better understand those who serve their community while giving first responders a chance to connect with local families.

They joined the children in activities such as making flower bouquets, nail painting, races and games, creating opportunities for conversation, laughter and learning.

Back in May we received their colourful invitation to attend their 4th annual celebration, which remains on

(Continued on page 9)

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS CONT'D

(Continued from page 7)

display in the radio room.

It thanked first responders for helping keep the community safe and emphasised the importance of building children's familiarity and trust with local emergency service personnel.



STINKER RESCUE REUNION

Four representatives from Marine Rescue Port Stephens, who were involved in the rescue of Stinker Clarke (both boat crew and radio operators), met up with the other emergency services who worked together to save a life on the day.

As it was a multi-agency marine search and rescue operation the reunion included members that comprised of Marine Rescue NSW, NSWPF Marine Area Command, Port Stephens-Hunter Police, and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

Everyone wished Stinker a speedy recovery and the best of health!

Reliving the experience was a serious reminder of the importance of logging on and logging off for every trip.

Logging on with Marine Rescue is a free service that lets someone know where you are going, where you are coming back to, and what time you expect to be back.



As soon as we don't hear from you we can initiate a process for tracking you down.

This is especially important for solo sailors and fishermen and can save your life in man overboard incidents like this.

Log on via VHF Channel 16 or by calling (02) 4052 2300, or use the free MRNSW mobile app.

SUE FREEMAN ESM: EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

Huge congratulations to our very own Suzanne Freeman for being awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal (ESM) for distinguished service and commitment to maritime search and rescue in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours List.

Suzanne is a Coxswain and Deputy Unit Commander at Marine Rescue Port Stephens. The Emergency Services Medal acknowledges distinguished service by members of Australia's emergency services, including those involved in emergency management, training and education.

For almost 24 years, Suzanne Freeman has provided distinguished service to the boating community through her operational leadership, mentorship and unwavering commitment to volunteer welfare.



A highly experienced Coxswain and Watch Officer, Suzanne has accumulated more than 4,900 operational hours on rescue vessels and more than 1,350 hours in the radio room. She has participated in numerous rescue

(Continued on page 10)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS CONT'D

(Continued from page 9)

operations, many conducted in challenging offshore conditions.

Suzanne's courage and professionalism during the devastating East Coast Low emergency in January 2016 saw her awarded the Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner's Commendation for Courage and subsequently the Australian Bravery Medal.

Well done Suzanne! Our Unit is very proud of your achievement! Wonderful recognition for consistent hard work and dedication. Our community is lucky to have you!

GINDALAN AND GIMBAY VISIT

The Salamander Early Education Centre sent over some Indigenous dolls asking if they could hang out at the lighthouse or get to go on a boat.

The dolls go out on country for adventures. They have a little book that shares their adventures with the children when the dolls and the book return. The book is filled with photos and text of the places they have visited.

While at Marine Rescue Port Stephens young Gindalan and Gimbay took a trip out to our boat to learn about steering and ropes with our skipper Laurie and they did a night shift in the radio room with me where they looked at all the charts and found the secret bed.



THE HUMAN WHALE

On Sunday 19 July at Fingal Bay Beach the community paid homage to the annual whale migration season by forming The Human Whale.

People came together on the beach to form the outline of a 100m Humpback Whale as a celebration of the 40,000 whales that pass the coast of Port Stephens between May and November.

The Marine Rescue Port Stephens food van provided the sausage sizzle on the day!

Morgan Bell
Community Relations Officer



WHALE DISENTANGLEMENT TRAINING DIARY

Day 1: Monday 20 April

Two of our coxswains, Murray and Iain, along with Jason from Marine Rescue Norah Head, are currently transiting to Lake Macquarie to participate in a large whale disentanglement training event.

To assist, the three coxswains are taking the Marine Rescue Newcastle boat, NC30, down the coast.

While NC30 is away from Newcastle, NSW Water Police will assist any boater needing help.



The large whale disentanglement training event is bringing together people from various NPWS locations, including four Marine Rescue units.

Training will happen over the next two days.

Day 2 : Tuesday 21 April

Whale training update: Our coxswains continued training with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) throughout the afternoon after a bumpy ride down from Newcastle.



(Continued on page 12)

WHALE DISENTANGLEMENT TRAINING DIARY CONT'D

(Continued from page 11)

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) large whale disentanglement teams conducted off-water run-throughs of various techniques. Many questions and discussions occurred as they watched and listened to experienced trainers.



Tomorrow the NPWS will be assisted by Marine Rescue NSW to recreate the lessons of today on the water.

Day 3: Wednesday 22 April

Whale training update no. 3: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) took to the boats today to commence their on-water training at Lake Macquarie.



(Continued on page 13)

WHALE DISENTANGLEMENT TRAINING DIARY CONT'D

(Continued from page 12)

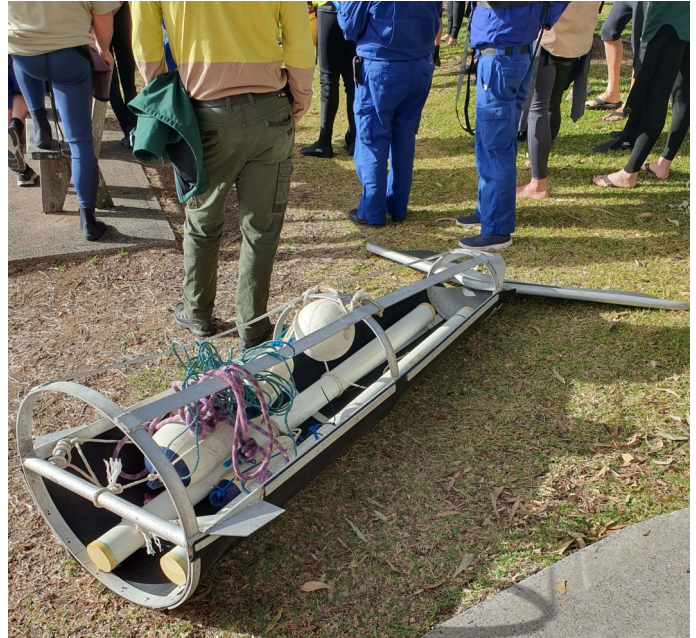
Marine Rescue NSW boats towed a simulated whale tail as the NPWS crew practiced various techniques to assist disentangle their target.

Crew safety is a major component of the training.

Today allowed trainees to gain a valuable insight into the dangers inherent in their activities.

The after-training debrief revealed a number of issues which will now be reviewed and incorporated into procedures.

Our Marine Rescue Port Stephens coxswains, Iain and Murray, learned about their responsibilities when future whale disentangles are performed.



BUY RAFFLE TICKETS ONLINE

This year tickets to our Australia Day raffle (drawn on 26 January 2027) can be bought online:

<https://rafflelink.com.au/mrps26-27>

The 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).

Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$20 and help support saving lives on the water.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens will have the main prize of our major yearly raffle on display at the Salamander Bay shops between 9am and 3pm on:

- 24-25 September
- 22-23 October
- 16-17 November

Come down to the Centre to check out the buggy and say hello to our volunteers!



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ENTANGLED HUMPBACK

On Thursday 18 June at 9am Marine Rescue Port Stephens picked up the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) whale disentanglement team at Little Beach.

They were waiting for a confirmed sighting of an entangled whale to determine whether they should be heading out.

The entangled humpback whale was first sighted off Cape Solander in South Sydney. It was trailing three buoys behind its tail fluke.



The whale travelled north along the waters of the Central Coast and Newcastle on Wednesday 17 June and based on swim speed calculations was expected to traverse Port Stephens to Forster–Tuncurry that day.

On the Wednesday, despite two confirmed sightings at Norah Head and Wybung Head, disentanglement teams unfortunately missed the whale by only a matter of minutes.

The whale could not be relocated despite extensive search efforts.

On the Thursday, despite a long day of waiting, our crew returned to the dock without entering open waters as the whale was not sighted that day.

WEDDINGS REVIEW

"Our wedding dreams truly came to life because of your wonderful volunteers and the passion you all bring to what you do.

Nothing was ever too much trouble, and thanks to you, we were able to enjoy a perfect, stress-free ceremony.

We will always be so incredibly grateful for everything you did and for how special you made our day.

We would highly recommend anyone looking for a beautiful venue in Port Stephens to choose Marine Rescue — you won't be disappointed."

- Ann and Brendan, 9 April 2026

<https://marinerescueportstephens.au/weddings/>



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NPWS MARINE WILDLIFE PREP DAY

Annual Marine Wildlife Prep Day

Five members from Marine Rescue Newcastle, Lemon Tree Passage, and Port Stephens attended the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) HCCBs Annual Marine Wildlife Prep Day North on 19 May 2026.



The annual refresher day prepares agencies and volunteers for the upcoming marine wildlife season by revisiting procedures and improving coordination during marine wildlife incidents.



Marine Rescue NSW attended as a partner agency alongside NPWS and other organisations involved in wildlife response activities.

The program covered several important topics, including



compliance requirements relating to whales, dolphins and seals.

Participants also reviewed recent research and response events, including the Port Stephens turtle mortality event in 2025 and the beaked whale mortality event in Sydney during March 2026.

A significant focus of the day was H5 Bird Flu awareness training.

Although H5 had not yet affected mainland Australia, NPWS advised that 597 bird species and 20 marine animal species were considered at risk.



Attendees received training on recognising symptoms and using online reporting systems established for early detection and monitoring.

Participants were also reminded that H5 is zoonotic, meaning it can affect humans, although cases remain rare.

The day included four breakout sessions covering practical marine wildlife response scenarios.

One session explored cultural inclusion and the involvement of Traditional Owners in marine wildlife management.

Topics included whale carcasses, euthanasia procedures, necropsies and responses during East Coast Low events.



NPWS MARINE WILDLIFE PREP DAY CONT'D

(Continued from page 17)



Another session focused on marine mammal identification and assessment.

Participants learned the importance of accurately identifying species, assessing body condition, recognising wounds or entanglements, and determining whether intervention is required.

The session also covered approvals and response models used during marine wildlife incidents.

A third workshop examined dolphin stranding scenarios.

There are 39 species of whales and dolphins found in NSW waters, each requiring different response considerations.

The final session involved the management of turtles and their nesting. While most turtle nesting occurs in Queensland, nesting activity is increasingly being recorded further south.

Nesting has been observed on the Central Coast, while northern NSW — particularly around Diamond Beach — is now recognised as a significant nesting area.

The training day provided valuable knowledge and reinforced the importance of cooperation between agencies and volunteer organisations in protecting marine wildlife along the NSW coast.

Grant Leddie
Facilities Officer



JOIN RADIO CLUB

Join our Radio Club for an easy log on.

You pay a small fee that supports the Unit and helps save lives on the water in your local area.

1 year for \$30 or 3 years for \$80.

You are assigned a short ID number.

All of your registered details will be already saved into our system so there are less questions for you to answer every time you head out onto the water.

Visit the Base or use our website: <https://marinerescueportstephens.au/radio-club/>

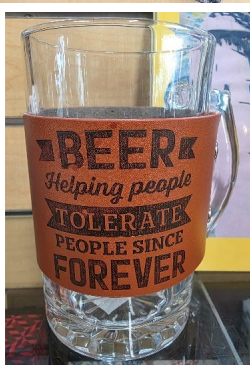
GIFT SHOP

Our Gift Shop has a diverse range of gifts for all occasions and this edition we are going to showcase what we have for the wonderful men in our lives.

What many don't expect when they come to visit us is the great range of men's gifts we have in stock all year round.

Perfect for Fathers Day, Christmas, birthdays, and even just to say 'I am thinking of you' and 'I love you'.

We have leather wallets, handy, easy to carry tool kits, beer mugs, stubby holders, and some funky cheese board, knife, and wine-bottle opener sets.



Come and check out our range of majestic model sailing ships, a nod back to our nautical past, and a great gift for sea-faring enthusiasts.

The Gift Shop is also selling tickets for the Marine Rescue Port Stephens annual raffle drawn Australia Day 2027.

This is our major fundraising event for the year to help keep our boats on the water to save lives.

As always, we have some fabulous prizes with the major prize this raffle being a golf cart with transport trailer.



Pop into the Gift Shop to say hello to our gorgeous ladies, check out our reasonably priced gifts, and get something special for the men in your life.

Don't forget to get yourself a raffle ticket as well.

We are looking forward to your visit real soon.

Tracy Glode-Sivier
Gift Shop Secretary

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SETBACKS FROM WHALES

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) asks we all help keep whales safe by respecting setback zones.

Amongst the 30,000 to 40,000 whales that pass Port Stephens each year are the tiny population of only 250-350 southern right whales on Australia's east coast. We are incredibly lucky to have southern right whales visiting our coastline.

Unfortunately there were reports of people getting way too close to a southern right whale mother and her calf.

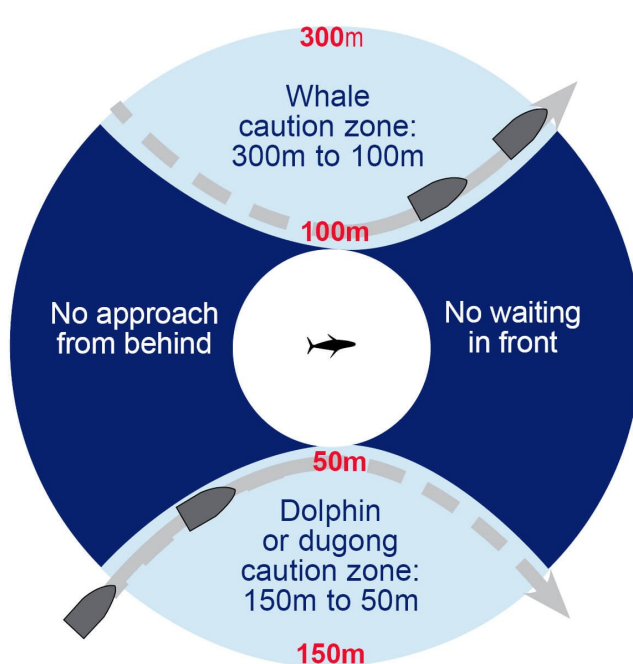
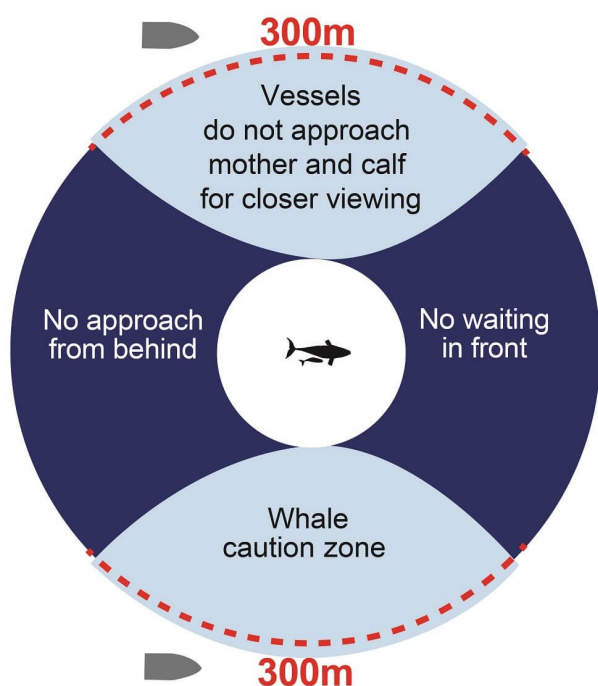
Whales, especially new mums, can become distressed when disturbed by water vessels and drones.

If a calf is present, you are not permitted within 300m. Please keep your distance.

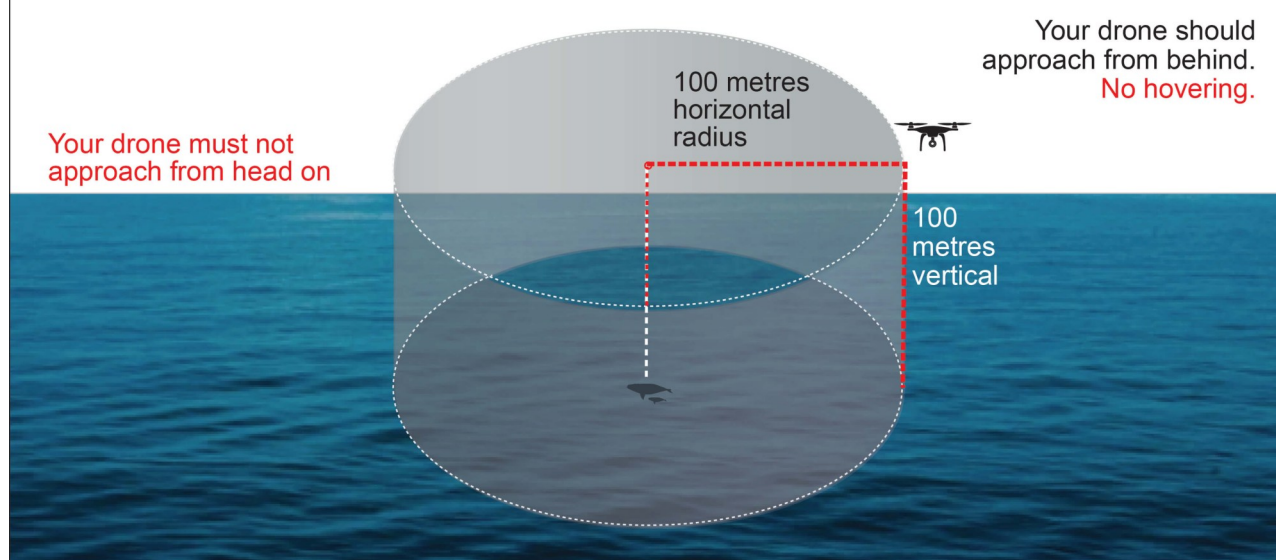
If you are approaching a marine mammal using a jet ski or other prohibited vessel you must have negligible wake and stay at least 300m from a whale, dolphin, or dugong.

Prohibited vessels include personal motorised watercraft (jet skis), parasail boats, hovercraft, hydrofoils, wing-in-ground effect craft, remotely operated craft or motorised diving aids like underwater scooters.

More information on whale approach distances here: <https://bit.ly/whale-approach>



The no-fly zone for a drone based on the marine mammal approach distance



THE NUMBERS

JUNE

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers completed 235 search and rescue missions across the state's waterways during June, safely returning 548 people to shore as demand for the service remained strong despite cooler weather.

Almost 40 per cent of the missions undertaken during in June were emergency responses, with Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Todd Andrews reminding boaters that preparation is critical before heading onto the water.

Marine Rescue NSW volunteer radio operators managed 20,267 calls during June, including three MAYDAY and two Pan Pan calls.

Radio operators also monitored the safe return of 21,654 people on board 6,341 vessels that Logged On with Marine Rescue NSW before heading out.

Engine problems continued to be the leading cause of rescue missions during June, accounting for 42 per cent of all responses.

Commissioner Andrews reminded boaters to take extra care as the annual whale migration continues along the New South Wales coastline.

"These are magnificent wild animals and their behaviour can be unpredictable. Give them the space they deserve and always keep a careful lookout for whales, other vessels and changing conditions."

Hunter/Central Coast (across all 8 units): 65 search and rescue missions including 22 emergency responses with 145 people safely returned to shore.

Search and rescue missions in locations of highest demand: Lake Macquarie 29, **Port Stephens 14**, Brisbane Water 11.



JULY

Marine Rescue NSW volunteers completed their second busiest July on record, responding to 253 search and rescue missions across the state's waterways as favourable winter boating conditions encouraged more people onto the water.

The 253 missions were 12 shy of the record set in July 2023. Volunteers safely returned 512 people to shore, with 90 of the month's responses classified as emergencies.

Marine Rescue NSW radio operators were extremely busy in July, managing 18,921 calls, including four MAYDAYs and four PAN PANs, while maintaining a safety watch over 23,645 people onboard 5,831 Logged On vessels.

Mechanical issues continued to account for the majority of rescues, with engine, battery and fuel-related problems responsible for 57 per cent of all responses during July.

With daylight saving still almost two months away, Commissioner Andrews also reminded boaters to plan around reduced daylight hours.

"Shorter winter days increase the risk of being caught on the water after dark," he said.

"Plan your trip carefully, allow plenty of time to return before nightfall and avoid navigating in darkness unless it is absolutely necessary."

Hunter/Central Coast (across all 8 units): 71 search and rescue missions including 20 emergency responses with 139 people safely returned to shore.

Search and rescue missions in locations of highest demand: Lake Macquarie 31, **Port Stephens 11**, Brisbane Water 10.

STINKER RESCUE

News story on 24 June

Marine Rescue Port Stephens was part of a multi-agency marine search and rescue operation that located a man in a lifejacket in the water 400m southwest of Fingal Lighthouse. The search was initiated at 6pm on 24 June when a fisherman failed to return home.



The operation comprised of Marine Rescue NSW, NSWPF Marine Area Command, Port Stephens-Hunter Police and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter operators located an overturned vessel smashed against rocks at 8:30pm and directed Port Stephens Water Police to the area. Responders faced challenging conditions including 15 knot southerly winds and a 2.5m southerly swell.

The 77-year-old man was removed from the water, and first aid was rendered by officers. Police conveyed the man to Nelson Bay Public Wharf, with a Marine Rescue NSW vessel leading the way to provide a break from the large swells.

At the wharf, the man was treated by a Westpac Rescue Helicopter doctor and NSW Ambulance paramedics. He was then taken by road to Tomaree Hospital before being transferred to the John Hunter Hospital for the treatment of hypothermia and abrasions.

The more you can help, the more rescue-ready we are.

Donate once		Donate monthly	
\$50	\$80	\$125	\$250
\$380	\$2,000	\$10,000	Other

Please enter a full dollar amount

☒ I'd like to give to a specific unit

Port Stephens

☐ I'd like to write a message

Public Statement from Stinker on 25 June

Yesterday afternoon, I was fishing in Stinkpot in front of the lighthouse, something I have enjoyed doing for almost 50 years.

As conditions deteriorated and I was pulling up my anchor to head home, I was hit by a larger-than-average wave that swamped my boat. Within moments, Stinkpot had overturned, leaving me clinging to the upturned vessel.

As the boat drifted closer to the rocks, I made the decision to let go and drift out into deeper water. While in the water, I came across two of my oars and an empty plastic bucket. Together with my life jacket, they became my lifeline and helped keep me afloat.

As the sun set and the water grew colder, it became clear that my only chance of survival was to be located by one of the rescue agencies. All I could do was hold on and hope.

After spending four to five hours in the water, I finally saw the light I had been hoping for—the searchlight from the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. That light guided the Water Police rescue team directly to me, allowing them to pull me from the water and ultimately save my life.

I would like to sincerely thank my wife for raising the alarm when I failed to return home, as well as my family, who travelled from Sydney and flew in from Brisbane, and our longtime friends who gathered at Fingal Beach to keep watch as news of the situation quickly spread. Their local knowledge of where I go fishing and my secret spots was vital to my rescue.

I am deeply grateful to all of the emergency services involved in the search and rescue operation. From Marine Rescue, Water police, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter and Paramedics. Their professionalism, dedication, and bravery are the reason I am here today.

Over the coming days, I look forward to personally thanking those involved and spending some time recovering. I suppose there are moments when I forget that I am not getting any younger.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in bringing me safely home. I will be fishing in quieter waters in the future.

Assistance with fundraising

Since the rescue Stinker has kindly offered to assist Marine Rescue Port Stephens with fundraising as an expression of gratitude.

The easiest way to donate is to select the Port Stephens unit on the Marine Rescue NSW donation page:

<https://www.marinerescuensw.com.au/support-us/donate>



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BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE BASE

Our volunteer Shane took these amazing long-lens photos of the Nelson Head Base from Tomaree Head.



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
PSN:	Tait TM9800
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
PSN:	Tait TM9800
DCN:	Tait TM9355 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*:

Howard Faulks, Mark Page, Iain Blackadder, Grant Leddie, Morgan Bell, Tracy Glode-Sivier, Stinker Clarke, Shane Morgan (photos), MRPS Facebook, NPWS.

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