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Autumn 2016



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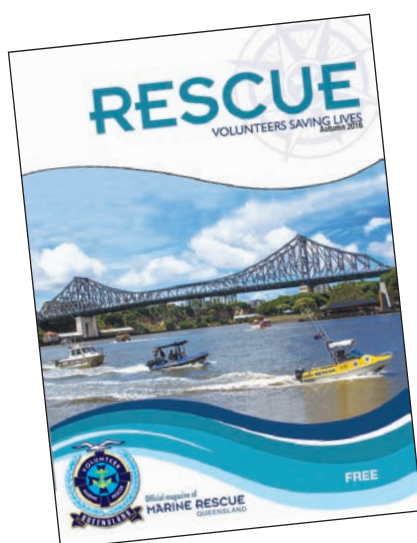
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### Squadron Call Sign

		VHF Repeaters	HF (2Meg)	27MHZ	VHF
VMR ST PAULS					
VMR THURSDAY ISLAND	VMR 422	22, 82	YES	YES	YES
VMR WEIPA	VMR 430		YES	YES	YES
VMR AURUKUN	VMR 498				YES
VMR KARUMBA	VMR 490	80		YES	YES
VMR BURKETOWN					YES
VMR MORNINGTON ISLAND	VMR 457			YES	YES
VMR BURDEKIN	VMR 481	80	YES	YES	YES
VMR BOWEN	VMR 487	21	YES	YES	YES
VMR WHITSUNDAY	VMR 442	81, 82	YES	YES	YES
VMR MIDGE POINT	VMR 458	81, 21			YES
VMR MACKAY	VMR 448	80, 21	YES		YES
VMR GLADSTONE	VMR 446	82	YES		YES
VMR ROUND HILL	VMR 477	81, 82	YES	YES	YES
VMR BUNDABERG	VMR 488	22, 80, 81	YES		YES
VMR HERVEY BAY	VMR 466	22		YES	YES
VMR BRIBIE ISLAND	VMR 445	81, 21		YES	YES
VMR BRISBANE	VMR 401	81, 21		YES	YES
VMR RABY BAY	VMR 455	81, 21, 82		YES	YES
VMR NORTH STRADBROKE	VMR 449	81	YES	YES	YES
VMR VICTORIA POINT	VMR 441	81, 82		YES	YES
VMR JACOBS WELL	VMR 450	82	YES	YES	YES
VMR SOUTHPORT	VMR 400	82, 22	YES	YES	YES
VMR CURRUMBIN	VMR 420	82	YES	YES	YES

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VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE AURUKUN	C/- Shire Council	Aurukun 4871	(07) 4060 6120
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VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE ROUND HILL	PO Box 282	Agnes Water 4677	(07) 4974 9383
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VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE HERVEY BAY	PO Box 120	Urangan 4655	(07) 4128 9666
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BRIBIE ISLAND	PO Box 85	Bribie Island 4507	(07) 3408 7596
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BRISBANE	PO Box 201	Sandgate 4017	(07) 3269 8888
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE RABY BAY	PO Box 87	Cleveland 4163	(07) 3821 2244
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE NTH STRADBROKE	PO Box 28	Dunwich 4183	(07) 3409 9338
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE VICTORIA POINT	PO Box 3276	Victoria Point West 4165	(07) 3207 8717
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



I'm pretty sure three months is coming around more quickly these days than it used to, it seems just a few weeks ago I say down to write my last article. I'm pleased to report throughout the state that we survived the Christmas and summer 'silly season' in great shape. It was an

incredibly busy time and after more than 18 years in this business for me I was a little shocked at some of the briefings I received from squadrons. At times our crews were called on to deal with unusual situations and sadly some very tragic ones. However from our point of view we sustained no serious injuries, and no equipment damage throughout the entire state of Queensland. I'm incredibly proud of our crews, the relentless work they do and the positive difference we make to the Queensland boating community.

So as we settle back into the 'routine' of 2016 it's time for us to look ahead and examine ourselves and perhaps our vision for the future. Actually this is not as easy as you might think because we are already at the top of our game in many respects. For example we lead the entire nation in the areas of training standards and vessel standards. Should our vision simply be to keep doing what we are doing, or should it be more than that? At the recent meeting of

the Queensland State Council we started to examine exactly this area with one of the councillors kindly having started a body of work on a strategic plan for the next few years. Areas to be examined are governance, staffing, communications and our place within disaster management. If you, as an operational member, have any ideas or thoughts to put forward, contact your local management committee and have them bring ideas forward to their next zone meeting which will also be looking at these issues.

Well folks, 'the times, they are a changing'. Our badly overworked CIO Dave Paylor mostly on his own time but also as sponsored by his company, Empired, has been working on updating our IT systems. The upgrades include new email for everyone that wants it and a single point of sign on for either the extranet and portal or in other words integrating these two products together to make them easier to access. He is also working hard to make the products easier to use, so that areas such as training and vessel activations should see a reduced time to input changes. Hopefully the start of this will be ready to roll out in the next few months. I've seen some the new work and I must say it's intuitive to use and looks very impressive.

Most of you who are either skippers or involved in training would be aware that there have been many changes to the core maritime legislation over the last



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VMR

VMR



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

few years. Starting in 2012 with the nationalization of legislation with the implantation of the Domestic Commercial Vessel Act and its attendant Regulation, things have been happening quickly ever since. For those in Queensland without commercial licenses, we have been operating under exemption 24 for emergency services vessels. Exemption 24 as it was, expired on December 31 last year. The AMSA website now shows a draft version of the new exemption

**THIS NEW EXEMPTION IS MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE IN ITS SCOPE THAN THE VERSION IT REPLACES AND IS QUITE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT A VMR VESSEL CAN AND CAN'T DO**

24 designed to take us through to 2018. This new exemption is much more comprehensive in its scope than the version it replaces and is quite specific about what a VMR vessel can and can't do. You may choose to review for yourself the new draft on the AMSA website however please be aware that we are currently in consultation with AMSA over a range of issues which affect rescue vessel operations. I commend the approach of AMSA in dealing with us, as initially they have listened to our concerns

and largely accepted that the changes we request are necessary. In 2018 the current thinking is that exemption 24 will cease to exist and the remaining arrangements for all emergency services vessels will be covered with a new Marine Order. At time of writing the idea of a separate scheme 'R' for rescue vessels is unlikely to come to pass. Watch this space!

2016 is going to be another huge year around the state. I know that planning is already well underway for the Bundaberg Fishing Classic once again and at time of writing, VMR Bribie will once again begin planning its hugely successful Emergency Services Expo likely to again be held in October. On top of this a number of new vessels should come online shortly with the winner likely to be the new 11.6m vessel for VMR Bundaberg, after which a second new vessel for VMR Bribie is well into its construction phase and the new vessel for VMR Whitsunday will come online later in the year.

If VMR was a paid enterprise or a government department I would still be massively proud of what our people achieve, but when you pause and consider that this is all achieved by volunteers who simply want to make the world a better place, I stand in amazement.

**Keith Williams**

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# The VP's WATCH

**T**he transition from state based control of commercial vessels (including our VMR fleet) is well underway with increasing evidence of the AMSA footprint. Most recently this has been in the form of increased emphasis on Safety Management Systems (SMS) and release of draft legislation to update Exemption 24 for Emergency Service Vessels and Crew.

Firstly to SMS. Commercial vessels are required to have a current SMS to comply with the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV Part E – Operations). Previously our SMSs largely relied on documentation of emergency procedures, demonstration of currency with associated drills, the maintenance schedule with relevant records etc. The requirements under Schedule 1 of NSCV Part E are much more prescriptive and are a focus of recent audits by MSQ on behalf of AMSA. AMSA have realised the significance of the changed requirements and are conducting workshops with commercial operators and marine rescue groups to facilitate the preparation of the required SMS documents.

There are 12 components to an approved SMS:

1. Vessel and contact details
2. Risk assessments

3. Owner's responsibility and authority statement
4. Designated persons
5. Master's responsibility and authority statement
6. Resources and personnel
7. Procedures for on board operations
8. Emergency preparedness
9. Follow-up on hazardous occurrences and non-conformities
10. Maintenance of vessel and equipment
11. Documentation
12. Verification, review and evaluation.

The procedures for on board operations are our familiar SOP's. The risk assessments are now required to justify the development / application of the SOP's. It might seem like a bureaucratic response to SOP's which have been successfully applied over many years, but unfortunately this is now the way of the world and we have to conform. VMR Victoria Point have placed their very comprehensive SMS on our portal as a guide to one which has passed audit.

Now to Exemption 24. The current Exemption 24 that applied to Emergency Service Vessels and Crew



**In Queensland there are some 5000 committees, and the not for profit sector contributes a total of over 600 million hours of labour to the Australian economy annually.**

**This equates to 359,700 full time equivalent employees, using the base rate of pay, this equates to 3.5% of gross domestic product or in dollar terms \$16.5 billion dollars' worth of volunteer contributions. So the value of your contribution is not to be underestimated.**



## VP REPORT

has an expiry date of March 31, 2016. The National Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee (NVMRC) had been working with AMSA over the last couple of years on an instrument to replace the current Exemption 24, so it was quite surprising that draft legislation for the update appeared on the AMSA website for 'public comment' in late January without another pass by the NVMRC, the body representing our 'industry'. A hastily convened meeting between VMRAQ and AVCG representatives identified 24 significant issues with the draft, including the absence of training as an approved use of marine rescue vessels, ambiguity in relation to approved plying limits and frequency of survey requirements. These issues were conveyed to AMSA and at the time of going to print we are still awaiting the revision with March 31 only one week away!

The February 2016 meeting of your State Council resolved to work towards adoption of a new constitution, based on the Model Rules for Incorporated Bodies. The new constitution and by-laws will hopefully overcome some of the anomalies associated with the current document and be supported by an updated strategic plan.

Those of you who trawl social media may be aware of recent developments with Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR) groups in Victoria. The Victorian Government commissioned a review of marine search and rescue in 2014. The review was tasked with examination of:

- Governance issues
- Standards, accreditation and audit
- Training
- Funding, and Communications.

The report was also to look at the structure of MSAR groups with the view to improving service provisions, identifying overlapping responsibilities. The report noted

- the absence of a MSAR governing body that could provide a state-wide coordination of SAR capacity
- an absence of process to accredit units were fit to provide agreed services; geographic and
- time based monitoring of VHF 16 and 67 and issues with funding shortfalls.

The February 2016 Government response to the report recommended:

- Victoria Police remain as the MSAR control agency to fit in with National MSAR arrangements
- An office would be established for state-wide coordination of MSAR strategy, with the current MSARC being replaced by a working group comprising representatives of the 13 agencies involved in emergency response as well as reps from three government departments!
- A common set of operational standards should conform to the proposed AMSA Scheme R (now to be updated Exemption 24)
- Development of a common MSAR training and exercising system
- Consider requirements for improved funding, but with continued reliance on volunteers and community support for fund raising
- Centralised vessel specifications and purchase
- Improvements to the emergency VHF coverage and monitoring.

Given the above, how are we looking in Queensland? Instead of seven MSAR organisations we have only two, with overlap in areas of responsibility only in the south east corner. We have a nationally accredited training program which was relied on to a large degree for the development of the new MAR package and which is being adopted in Tasmania and Western Australia. VMR and AVCG have a state wide series of VHF repeaters, with overlap capacity for adjoining

units; we have some 24 hour VHF monitoring from bases as well as the MSQ coastal network for VHF 16 and 67 which is monitored by relevant marine rescue bases during the day and by MSQ's Vessel Tracking Service at night. VMR and AVCG units participate in joint SAREX's with QWPS. Our funding situation is still parlous and your Executive is working on strategies to highlight our value to the state's emergency response capacity with the view to developing a more sustainable volunteer support base.

I'm now off watch.



Northern Zone crews work on a risk assessment at the recent AMSA workshop.



When I looked back at the Autumn 2015 journal article for VMR488 I noted mention of a quiet time for activations and mention of the possible impact of seasonal conditions for boating and the end of the cruising season. Same again this year with only three activations for the December – February period.

On December 8 *Bundy Rescue* was activated to assist a 15m fly bridge cruiser with engine problems 3nm off the beach, just north of Baffle Creek and some 36nm north of Burnett Heads. The vessel was towed back to the Port Marina. It appears there was a fuel supply issue, possibly due to blocked filters.

We had just completed the usual Saturday morning training on February 13, the vessel was refuelled and wash-down was next. However the radio operator appeared over the balcony saying “Hold it we have a job on”.

VMR was tasked by the police to assist with the search / rescue of a sailboarder, reported by a member of the public, to be in the water 2km north of Nielsen’s Park Beach. *Bundy Rescue* was immediately back in action. However once underway we were then advised the target vessel was just off the mouth of the river, with a jet ski in attendance!

This was in fact the situation when *Bundy Rescue* arrived. However instead of a sail boarder with a white /orange sail we found a yellow kayak / trimaran with two people on board and Surf Life Saving jet-ski in attendance, but the sail was white with yellow and blue stripes. Was this the reported vessel? Police confirmed the target and we were stood down.

Folks on the tri indicated they were okay and had not called for assistance.

What are the learnings from this incident?

- A strong wind warning was current
  - Winds of 15-25kts were forecast;
  - BOM warnings include the advice that wind gusts can be 40% stronger than the published averages.
- Our experience is that problems with equipment failure often occur with the ‘freak’ gust of wind or the ‘unexpected’ wave
- While these folks may have been experienced, the thrill of the prevailing conditions did place them at considerable risk
- The incident also consumed valuable Police, SLSA and VMR resources that may well have been required for other responses.



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## BUNDABERG



Safe in the river during the strong wind warning.



At 07:19 on February 29 our radio operator took a call for assistance from a motor cruiser in the Town Reach of the Burnett River with three tangled anchors. Tangled anchors might not seem a big issue, but it is when the outboard has dropped of your tender and there is no way to manoeuvre to deal with the problem. *Bundy Rum* our 5.5m inshore vessel was activated because of the impending low tide and shallow conditions before the Town Reach. The anchor situation was quickly resolved and the skipper with tender returned to the North Bundaberg boat ramp.

### OUR NEW BOAT

There was another relevant reference in the Autumn 2015 journal article, this time to progress with our new boat and payment of the deposit in February 2014. After many delays, initially involving resolution of cross border survey issues with 2B construction but 2C survey and then waiting completion of a sister ship for Marine Rescue NSW, we can say it is almost finished. At the time of writing our new 11.6m Sail Fish Commercial Series catamaran is within days of completing fit out before sea trials at Ballina. The

finish on the vessel is amazing and we are looking forward to the initial training runs with the manufacturer before she is trucked to Burnett Heads as *Bundy Rescue 2*.



*Bundy Rescue 2* in fit out.



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## TRAINING

Four of our members have commenced the progression from competent crew towards coxswain. So far this has involved development of additional boat handling skills, visits to commercial vessels and vessels on the hard stand and commercial refuelling facilities. Navigation and SAR training are on the autumn agenda.



**Trainees visit the commercial re-fuelling and hard stand facility at Port Bundaberg Marina.**

We received a visit from the Emergency Service Cadets from Biggenden at the base on Saturday, February 20. The cadets also visited other emergency services such as Surf Life Saving and the Care Flight helicopter.

The visits were to expose the cadets to a range of emergency service operations not available in their area so that some aspects of their training would have additional relevance and to show them opportunities for volunteering with emergency services later in life.

We gave them an overview of VMR operations and explained how we fit into the emergency services network. This was followed by visit to *Bundy Rescue* and an explanation of her function and equipment. We were lucky to have a donated out of service life raft which was inflated to show the cadets the action

and also for some of our members who had not seen this before. UTC John O'Callaghan then unpacked the safety equipment and survival rations in the raft.

During a tour of the radio room the cadets heard radio traffic between the base and *Bundy Rescue* out on a training session in the river.

We were pleased with the interest shown by the cadets and the number of questions asked.

Marine Rescue Queensland has endorsed the visits of Emergency Services Cadets to several squadrons throughout the state. It would be good if some of them returned as VMR members once they are 16 years of age.



**Cadets on *Bundy Rescue*.**



**Now this is where we find the rations.**





The Explorer 390's with 30hp Suzuki outboards.

### THE FISHING CLASSIC

Yes it is on again. Our 11th Family Fishing Classic and major fundraiser will be held June 24-26, 2016 which is the first weekend of the school holidays. There has been a major upgrade in the prize pool for lucky draws with three Quintrex boats with outboards and trailers. Two of the boats are Explorer 390s with the Mangrove Jack wraps and 30hp Suzuki outboards and the big prize is a Renegade 420 centre console with a 40hp Suzuki.

The Classic runs from Burnett Heads over the three days, with an Open offshore category as well as Senior and Junior Estuary categories. The Estuary fishing allows for catch and release and dead weighins. Registration is already open on the web site <http://www.vmrbundabergfishingclassic.com.au/> along with details of the 2015 Classic. A strong list of category prizes will again be on offer.

There will be plenty of great food stalls and a licenced bar.

Mark the date – get the bait.

**Graham Kingston**  
Public Relations Officer  
Marine Rescue Bundaberg

### FRONT COVER IMAGE – VMR BRISBANE:

# WORTH THE EFFORT RYAN!

It was a tricky shot, handled well by our Foxtrot crew member, Ryan Massingham,

As for the line-ups, well that was a 'real training exercise for Foxtrot Crew'!

This particular day a small regatta was being held on the river front of the Jazz Club; with the sailors tacking, ferries and City Cats and recreational boaties criss-crossing the river, communications were a BIG part of the exercise.

Again, we have to acknowledge Ryan Massingham as he was on land with a bird's eye view, constantly advising of the water traffic around us via hand held radio.

All in all, your request for vessel photographs for this journal edition was a fantastic training exercise for our crew (better tell you I am on Foxtrot Crew);

The water was rough, with winds over 15kts and gusting on the bay, cloudy skies, but reasonably calmer in the city reaches to get these shots.

We had fun, learnt a lot and felt very proud to be displaying our skills in our own coverage area, not to mention receiving acknowledgement from people on and off the water.





# **VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE**

## **ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.**

# **CODE OF CONDUCT.**

*V.M.R.A.Q. Personnel will maintain the highest standards of conduct in serving the Queensland community. In particular, V.M.R.A.Q Personnel will always strive to maintain these five principles required of all members of Volunteer Emergency Services*

*V.M.R.A.Q Members Will:*

- 1. RESPECT THE LAW AND THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.**
- 2. RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE.**
- 3. BE DILIGENT.**
- 4. ALWAYS ACT WITH INTEGRITY.**
- 5. MAKE DECISIONS AND UTILISE RESOURCES WITH DUE REGARD FOR ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY.**

For more information on the 5 principles, please refer to the Code of Conduct & Anti Discrimination Manuals held by your Management Committee.

Date of Issue 01.09.96

# WE NEED TO TALK!



The crowd testing out the latest in rods.

VMR Gladstone's latest information session was held on February 18, 2016. We figure that most boaters go fishing so the line-up included something for them to draw the crowd in.

**Q**ueensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol presented information about catching fish in the local area including bag limits and how to identify different species. A number of questions were asked by the audience to make sure they were doing the right thing.

The local guys at Compleat Angler brought some toys along and these were very popular with the crowd. There was a range of lures and some of the latest rods and reels. They were passed around the audience with Adam pointing out features and answering questions from the group. Everyone had to turn their pockets out at the end of the presentation!

Maritime Safety Queensland gave some pointers for preparing for an extended voyage. This was not

just for boaties that head out for a few days, but those that go boating for a long day trip. Reminding people to make sure that they have supplies should something happen, that everyone on board needs to know where the safety gear is stowed and how to use it and to make certain they have enough fuel to get back home.

Darren Brown from Curtis Coast Marine talked about boat wiring and marine electrical tips. Darren brought along a board rigged up with some of the latest lights available and the newest switches. The audience was shown how using some simple conduit can make their wiring safer and last longer. There were simple and practical tips given to making sure you get the most out of your marine battery. Another message was that wiring and batteries that are fine for a car

are not suitable for the marine environment. You can even 'pimp your boat' with a range of underwater lights and also a bung light. Apparently it attracts some fish and squid.



Getting some tips on rods.



There were also officers from Gladstone Water Police and Gladstone Port Authority on hand to answer any questions from the group.

It is great to see the authorities and enforcement agencies coming along to these sessions as it gives the locals an opportunity to get to know the people in uniform and ask all those questions that may save them money in fines.

Thanks to **Curtis Coast Marine** for providing a GPS watch (valued at over \$500) for a door prize. Barry, who won the prize was looking forward to putting into use. A copy of the latest *Grant's Guide to Fishes* was won by Eddie who was very excited as "he never wins anything"!

The squadron has run three information sessions a year for the last three years and this is the best attended so far with over 50 people coming along.

"It was great to see a large group attend the information session," said Mick McAullay, Vice President. "With a lot of people around Gladstone going boating, these nights are always a great way to pass on information to VMRG members and locals alike. Everyone learns something and no one goes home hungry or empty handed," said Mick.

VMRG promotes recreational boating safety in partnership with QGC. Since 2011, QGC has provided



**Barry Breslin (left) winner of the GPS watch donated by Darren Brown (right) from Curtis Coast Marine**

more than \$1.1 million to build VMRG's capacity. The acquisition of a new rescue vessel and tow vehicle has diversified VMRG's rescue fleet and expanded its response capabilities, while the delivery of accredited training programs has helped strengthen the skill set of volunteers. Communication and engagement activities have been undertaken to raise the community's marine safety awareness.

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**ABOVE:** New paint job, new projector and screen in the training room.

**RIGHT:** New tool box full of tools.



**Cupboards added under the bench in the radio room.**

**V**MR Mackay Inc. has recently received a formal request from the bureau to take responsibility for weather broadcasts. While it has been common local knowledge for over 12 months, we have finally received a formal request. The local station will close mid-March 16 and be replaced by an automatic station. Townsville Station will follow. While the Management Committee has not yet considered the request, a number of concerns have been expressed. Firstly, this appears to be yet another example of Government devolving responsibilities to volunteers without any monetary recognition for taking on additional

# WATCH THIS SPACE!

**Next edition we will be having a photo of each squadron's vessel/s.**

**Please send your photo submissions to  
[projects@marinerescueqld.org.au](mailto:projects@marinerescueqld.org.au)**

**Please ensure your photos are named as your squadron.**





operators are retirees. They do a great job and have a good working relationship with the boating community. Our mid-week roster is usually a one-person, five hour shifts 0800-1300 and 1300-1800hrs. During the cruising season, on days when the weather is good, these operators are kept busy. They do not need an additional responsibility of delivering official forecasts on behalf of a Federal Government Agency.

A number of improvements have been made around the base over the past few months, mostly with money received through grants. The whole base had a face lift with a coat of paint, a new projector and screen have been installed in the training room, cupboards have been added under the bench in the radio room, a new tool box (full of tools) has been purchased for the workshop, and the motors have been replaced on *Mastermyne Mackay Rescue 6* through a great deal from Yamaha.

Plans for more improvements are underway.

A worrying recent trend in activations has seen far too many boaters running out of fuel a long way out to sea. Some 20 miles out and further. A lot of different factors affect fuel consumption. One boater who was baffled by the amount of fuel he had used had probably not considered the amount of growth on the hull of his boat causing drag.

responsibility, notwithstanding a reliable source has said that it will save Government \$millions in the long term. Secondly, during the winter months, the Mackay-Whitsunday region services a large number of cruising vessels from southern states and overseas. Many are not familiar with local weather conditions and regularly contact the local BOM officers seeking additional information such as seeking a more exact time when the next south east change will pass through. Finally, and probably the most importantly, many of our mid-week radio

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## BRIBIE ISLAND

# BUSY YEAR

## for VMR BRIBIE



**Energex Bribie One and Energex Bribie Three assisting the 40ft yacht, in calmer waters to Spinnaker Sound Marina after losing its mast a few days previous.**  
Photo courtesy of Joy Leishman

**V**olunteer Marine Rescue Bribie Island received over 14000 calls last year, of those 192 were for assistance. This represented a 25% increase on the number of calls for the previous year and a 40% increase in requests for assistance.

The local community has responded wonderfully to VMR's recent fund raising activities to provide new vessels to assist in providing this critical service. The magnificent new vessel, *Energex Bribie One*, which was commissioned in August last year has proven to be an excellent rescue and emergency all weather and conditions vessel, another new purpose built boat is expected around the end of March 2016 to assist with open and smooth water operations.

The above vessel was only recently purchased and was travelling 'home' to North Queensland when disaster struck about 3nm south of Caloundra, with the mainsail splitting and dragging in the water and a snapped mast in 3m seas. The two crew were also suffering chronic seasickness. *Energex Bribie One* was diverted from another assist to retrieve the stricken vessel and to supply crew for the yacht to be towed back to Bribie Island. Due to the heavy conditions the tow could only manage 4kts and Queensland Ambulance Service met the vessel at the Bongaree Jetty to treat the crew. The yacht was temporarily berthed at Bongaree Jetty to be towed at a later date to Spinnaker Sound Marina when the above photo was taken.

## VMR RESCUES CHILD FROM WILD SEAS



**Energex Bribie One in smooth waters.**

**S**aturday night a distress call saw Queensland Water Police activate *VMR Bribie Island* to rescue an infant child with a high temperature and a rash from a vessel just off Moreton Island. The 27ft vessel with 10 people on board of which four were children was heading to the wrecks at Tangalooma to shelter from the weather (3-4m seas).

On arrival at Moreton Island, all that were aboard the vessel were now on the beach and the QAS officers assessed that the baby was well enough to make the voyage to Redcliffe. *Energex Bribie One* was then tasked with transporting the two Queensland Ambulance Service officers and the sick child with the mother to Redcliffe to an awaiting ambulance then on to the Redcliffe Hospital.

With very heavy seas VMR's new boat could only manage about 7kts, taking almost two hours, it is capable of 45+kts in smooth seas. On arrival at Redcliffe Hospital just after 11pm both QAS officers decided to go back to Bribie Island by road, such were the difficult conditions.

Congratulations to the skipper Ian Grimes and his crew: Nathan Gundry, Andrew McAlister and Denise Inggs for a fantastic job in very trying conditions. Ian commented that "the vessel handled very well in the heavy seas".



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**V**MR Southport has had an exceptionally busy summer on the water. Post Christmas, the crews have been run off their feet with activations of all sorts ranging from rescuing swimming dogs after a vessel capsized to some very serious ambulance medivacs.

One week saw a record 36 activations and the Australia Day public holiday alone saw 17 activations, with crews on the job well into the early hours of the morning. In general crews have been attending to flat batteries, vessels aground, and broken down vessels on a routine basis.

Of note was a particular incident where VMR Southport were tasked to assist the Qld Water Police in searching for a gentleman who had gone missing in a Broadbeach Waters canal. The man's kayak and pet dog had been located on the beach, however there was no sign of the man. Crews assisted in searching the waterways for almost two days, until tragically a body was located.

It has been noted that jetskis have made up an astounding percentage of our work. Some very serious medical situations have been attended, with serious lacerations, broken bones and spinal injuries to jetski riders.

Crews also attended to a 76ft, 70 tonne sailing vessel which required towing through the Gold

Coast Seaway due to a gearbox issue. Of particular humour to the crews was the tow of a vessel with no forward propulsion. The evening was particularly rough and windy and between being notified of the vessels problem and arriving on scene, the vessel had travelled into the wind and swell for almost 2nm – in reverse. The skipper and his crew member of the vessel were absolutely saturated, and were extremely glad to see us arrive.

The new radio aerial tower at VMR Southport has suffered some costly, unwanted damage in the four months it has been operational. Galahs, (of the feathered variety) have taken roost atop the tower and chewed apart several of the radio aerial cables, causing the need to replace these. Repairs will soon be underway to replace and sleeve these cables to prevent this happening again. Surprisingly, with this damage, radio transmission has not been interrupted.

VMR Southport's rescue vessels continue to run without any major problems, and 2016 will see the need to replace up to six outboard motors. Grant applications have been submitted for some of these and if successful will certainly lighten the cost burden.

Training is going very well, with courses back in action after the break. An Elements of Shipboard Safety Course is currently being held with several



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## SOUTHPORT

other squadrons providing members to undertake the Course.

Three skippers are currently undertaking practical assessments to move to the next rank, however, given the need for these exams to be done as accurately as possible, sea and weather conditions need to be suitable to gain the most benefit. Sometimes the time taken to carry out these exams can be lengthy.

Six new members have commenced a six month training program to become First Responders with VMR Southport. This program is undertaken with the Qld Ambulance Service and these people will all receive a Certificate to Practice, pending successful results. Good luck to these members.

Southport has seen a huge amount of membership enquiry over the past three months. Crews are very full at present and several new radio operators are in training. With both the rescue base and the Seaway Tower to staff, we continually need solid numbers. As we move towards the cooler months, we can be faced with colds and flu amongst members, along with the fact that many like to travel at this time of year.

All else is good at Southport. Looking forward to a safe, but busy Easter on the water.

### VMR SOUTHPORT NOTABLE JOBS

VMR Southport recently received a late afternoon phone call from a jetski rider whose craft had been swamped and washed onto the rocks on the north wall of the Seaway. To compound the problem, a mate of the troubled rider had come to his assistance to help retrieve his jetski, only to have the towrope sucked into the jet of his ski, rendering it inoperable. It too was washed onto the rocks. Upon VMR's arrival,

a risk assessment determined that it was too rough and dangerous to attempt to assist these people. Water Police were now on scene as well. By this stage both jetski riders had managed to retrieve their jetskis to the beach and a third jetski rider was advised by Police to go into the beach and tell these guys to secure their jetskis for retrieval when the sea conditions calmed. As dark was approaching they were then told to walk across the island, leaving their mobile phones switched on, where the Police would pick them up on the inside of the Broadwater. The VMR crew returned to base.

Approximately 45 minutes later a call was received from Police to advise that these two guys had not appeared on the inside of the island and phone coverage had been lost. A request was made for VMR to assist in a search for them. Departing the VMR base again, a crew reached the Seaway, only to be advised that the two gentlemen had been located safe and well.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Qld Ambulance Service (QAS) recently requested transport by VMR Southport to a gentleman who had fallen from his surfboard on South Stradbroke Island, possibly suffering a spinal injury. VMR obliged and after trekking across the island Paramedics and VMR crew met a patient in extreme pain, with an obvious back injury. Whilst being treated, a second ambulance crew was transported by VMR from the Grand jetty to the scene. A decision was made to extricate the patient by rescue helicopter due to the nature of his injuries.

After being given pain relief and fitted into a spinal mattress, the Rescue 500 helicopter from Brisbane arrived, landing on the beach.

The patient was loaded aboard and flown to hospital. The resultant condition of the patient is unknown.

A great job was done by all concerned.

\*\*\*\*\*

A concerned member of the public notified VMR Southport recently that an unmanned jetski was floating in the Nerang River. Having a VMR vessel in the area, a crew attended, locating the jetski. Water Police were notified and with a registration number were able to locate the owner who was safe and well. VMR were requested to tow the jetski back to the Base where the owner would collect it. A few hours later three people arrived, advising they



Qld Fire and Emergency Services doing evacuation drills at the Seaway Tower



had been using the jetski before pulling it up on the beach to go and visit friends. On return the jetski was gone and unable to be found. Thinking that it had been stolen, never to be recovered, the trio were driven back to their car by friends, where they headed off home. Reality was the tide had come in and washed the jetski away.

A great deal of appreciation was shown of VMR's and Water Police's efforts.

\*\*\*\*\*

Over the holiday period VMR crews were called on several occasions to jetskis and their riders who had been stranded in areas where the tide drops very quickly, leaving no way out. One occasion was behind Brown Island in the northern Broadwater. Three people became stranded, requiring them to wade out over 300m through soft mud in order to be rescued. In this instance the jetski had to be abandoned. Later in the evening on the high tide, a call was received at VMR Southport that the jetski had been located floating in the mangroves. VMR attended in the early hours of the morning, retrieving the jetski, returning it to its grateful owners who made a generous donation for VMR's efforts. A lesson learnt, if you want to go exploring, always be aware of what the tides are doing and a study of a chart beforehand will save a lot of heartache, as these people discovered.

\*\*\*\*\*

A lady contacted VMR recently requesting urgent attendance to a car that had rolled down the the boatramp near her residence on the Coomera River. The lady stated "the car

needs a tow real quick". After determining no-one was in the vehicle, the lady was requested to contact Police, who could sort the matter.

A little embarrassed, the lady later called back VMR and said she had panicked and soon realised that a tow truck would rectify the situation better than a boat.



**VMR Southport members recently attended a joint SAREX at Point Danger with VMR Currumbin and Jacobs Well, Marine Rescue NSW, Surf Lifesaving, Qld Water Police and NSW Water Police.**

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# BLUEBOTTLE

## MARINE STINGERS

by Glenn Norris

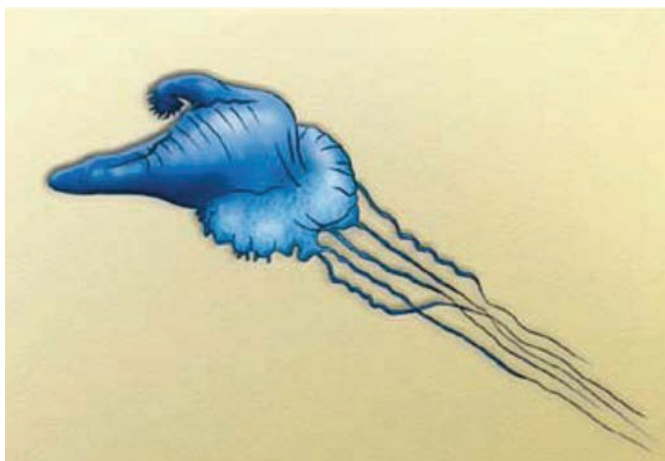
**For those of us who spend a lot of time swimming, surfing and/or fishing in our beautiful waterways and on our golden beaches, it is very likely that at some stage we've encountered the painful misfortune of a Bluebottle sting.**

**B**luebottle stings will usually cause immediate and severe pain, lasting one to two hours generally. A red line will appear on the skin where the tentacle has touched, sometimes becoming swollen and itchy. In extreme cases, someone stung by a bluebottle will develop symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In extremely rare cases, Bluebottle stings can cause allergic reactions leading to breathing difficulties.

Contrary to old wives tales, and when grandma was a kid, Coca Cola and vinegar are no longer treatment for Bluebottle stings. It was always thought that the acids in these neutralised a sting.

However, studies are showing hot water as the most effective pain treatment. 'Hot water' does not mean straight from a boiling kettle, but water warm enough to tolerate (approximately 45°C). The affected area is immersed, or otherwise poured on, for a minimum of 20 minutes. As well, it is very important to remove any remaining tentacles on the skin, remembering to use gloves whilst doing so. Gently wash the affected area in salt water as you do so. In circumstances where hot water is not available, a cold ice pack may be effective.

Life threatening Irukanji and Box Jellyfish are found in northern parts of Australia and vinegar is commonly used on their stings as it seems effective at stopping the tentacles releasing more venom. In these areas, if you cannot clearly identify a Bluebottle as being the cause of a sting, it is safer to treat the sting with vinegar.



It must be remembered when treating any problem, if you feel out of your depth or the treatment is not working immediately, call for an ambulance or see a doctor. In cases where Bluebottle stings have affected the eyes, lips, etc. urgent medical help should be sought.

Nowadays most beaches erect warning signs advising when Bluebottles are present. If this is the case when you go to the beach, take second thoughts before entering the water.

Bluebottles have a float or bottle-shaped blue sac, which sits on the water's surface. They have many string-like tentacles hanging down from the float.

Bluebottles live in the oceans around Australia. They eat fish, small crabs and plankton.

Bluebottles eat using their feeding tentacles. Their mouths get big enough to surround their food. They then break their food into small bits with digestive enzymes.

Sea slugs (nudibranchs), sea turtles and violet snails eat Bluebottles.

Each Bluebottle is actually a colony of individual animals. Each animal has a special role for feeding, reproduction, defence and food capture or as the float for the colony.

**DISCLAIMER :** This article is for informational purposes only and further research and training is required.





### BUILDING

**T**he upgrade of the building at VMR Raby Bay is almost complete. The project involves a new boat ramp and a boat shed. Also, to update the rest of the aging facility, the building was repainted internally and rendered and painted on the outside. The only remaining activities are to install internal benches, cabinets, shelving and other fixtures.

The building extension ensures that *RBII* and *RBIV* can be launched quickly and safely. On February 28, both vessels were moved to their new 'homes', which was marked by a small event at VMR Raby Bay.

As part of the project, a new 10,000 litre fuel tank was installed, to enable continued refueling of boats on the ramp.

### VESSEL UPDATE

Our three vessels, *RBII*, *RBIV* and *Energex Medivac* continue to perform well, apart from the usual smaller electronic glitches.

**ABOVE L-R:** The new boatshed (blue door) is completed.

*RBIV* (left) and *RBII* (right) in their new 'homes'.

The new 10,000 litre fuel tank in the ground.

Some consideration is being given to a possible update of *RBIV* (6.0m RIB) as she is beginning to show her age and is not ideal for rough weather conditions.

Safety Management Systems (SMS) for each vessel are being updated, to ensure they are compliant with latest legislation.



*RBIV, Energex Medivac, RB II 'posing' for photos.*

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## RABY BAY

### OUR PEOPLE

Our favourite radio operator, Maureen Dawson, turned 80 in January and is now officially our most 'senior' volunteer. Maureen is one of our most hard working volunteers, operating the radio room both Saturdays and Sundays on most crews.

Her birthday was celebrated with a large surprise birthday breakfast, attended by 40 people including representatives from the Water Police. At the event, Maureen was represented with a Life Membership, only the 12th person at VMR Raby Bay to receive this.

It is with regret, we will be seeing Peter Stock leaving VMR Raby Bay. Peter is Duty Officer of crew 2 and has also served as our Secretary for many years. Peter moved to Redcliffe some time ago, making the commute on early crew mornings rather onerous. Peter will be joining Coast Guard Redcliffe, so he can continue his contribution to marine safety. We thank Peter for his dedicated contribution to VMR Raby Bay.

David White, new skipper from crew 2, will replace Peter Stock as Duty Officer of crew 2.

### TRAINING

The training program continued with several members making good progress on their various training modules. Three training workshops were held, covering 'Skipper Training Program', 'Building Evacuation' and 'Operate Main Propulsion Systems'.

We have agreed with VMR North Stradbroke that their members can attend the monthly training workshops at VMR Raby Bay.



**Maureen turned 80 and was awarded life membership.**



**Farewell to Peter Stock, Duty Office and Secretary.**



**RBII getting for an activation at dusk.**

### ACTIVATIONS AND EVENTS

The period since last report has been very busy, with 174 activations and 194 people returned to safety. This includes 35 medivacs, 67 activations to assist vessels in needs, four searches and 67 training runs.

One example of an activation was a call to assist a 28ft Bayliner, which had run aground far into the Pelican Banks. The decision to return to base to collect the rubber duck and extra towrope, giving 350m reach, was a good decision as both items were required to retrieve our Bayliner off the bank.

VMR Raby Bay also had two challenging Medivacs undertaken in foul weather conditions. One of these was from Reeder's Point, where *RBII* needed to go



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**FAR LEFT:**  
Bayliner afloat  
after using 350m  
tow rope.

**LEFT:** Energex  
Medivac towing a  
38ft cruiser.

into shallow depths in very poor weather, to transfer a heart patient straight from the beach onto the bow. This required all the skills of the otherwise very experienced skipper, to ensure it was done safely.

Another 'interesting' medivac was from Tungalooma, also in foul conditions, where a patient had to be transferred from the jetty, which is actually not designed for such operations, again worsened by considerable wave action. Again, a challenging job for the skipper.

The Christmas period was busy as usual, with extra volunteer crew manning the base for the two week

holiday period. As usual, on January 25 *Energex Medivac* was sent into the Raby Bay Canals, with Santa on the back deck and Christmas Carols being played on the external loud speakers.

#### SPONSORSHIPS / DONATIONS

Energex decided to renew the sponsorship of *Energex Medivac* for another year, which is greatly appreciated, particularly given the cost reduction pressure Energex is currently under.



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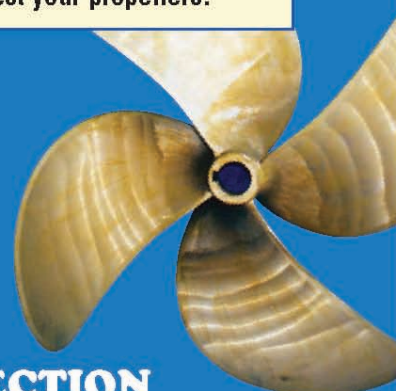
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Jockey Glenn Philip and trainer with Rebel Rover.



Rebel heading towards Woody Point.



Rebel rafted up alongside *Energex Sandgate 1*.

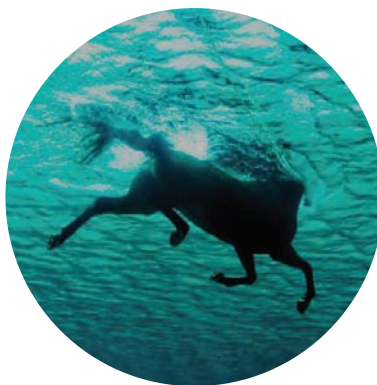
On Thursday morning February 25 our after hours emergency number received a call from a very concerned horse trainer, Bradley Smith, his horse was in Bramble Bay and heading east at last sight!

Glenn Philip immediately gathered a crew together and advised Queensland Water Police that we had 'an equine rescue to attend', he was asked to repeat the message. *Energex Sandgate 1* was in the water and off with Glenn skippering, crew members Michael Gill Bailey and Karl Nast.

After the horse, Rebel Rover, was spooked the jockey, Jackson Morris, was thrown from the horse on the Sandgate foreshore and Rebel Rover began making his way out to sea, Jackson was unable to reach him.

Two kilometres out from the Sandgate foreshore and heading toward Woody Point, our crew spotted the horse and made their way toward it; water police were also out on the water and collected the jockey from Sandgate to link up with *Energex Sandgate 1*. The jockey was then transferred to *Energex Sandgate 1* to assist in calming the horse. The majority of our volunteers don't have lassoing experience, however crew member Michael Gill-Bailey was able to lasso Rebel Rover, as Glenn slowly brought *Energex Sandgate 1* up beside Rebel Rover. With both motors in neutral, the jockey, Jackson was now close enough to talk and pat Rebel Rover to a reasonably calm state.

Trainer, Bradley Smith has explained to us in most cases a race horse would be worked in the water for a maximum of 15 minutes, it had now been almost two hours and Rebel Rover had swam 11km! To say the horse was reaching exhaustion at this point is an understatement.



Without asking any more of the horse Glenn began heading slowly but consistently toward the Sandgate beach, Rebel Rover was tiring as they approached the shore Rebel Rover was able to touch the bottom, the ropes were released and Jackson rode Rebel up on to the sand.

After one week we visited Rebel Rover in his stable. The horse was being monitored daily by the vet who assures us Rebel Rover is recovering well although still 'a bit tight' and will need at least a month to fully recover.



# THROUGH THE PORTAL

**W**hile not strictly portal related, I have had a number of queries about mass emailing. Many squadrons send email communications to their associate/waterside assist members and have had issues with their current email providers limitations. All email providers, including Microsoft with O365 apply limitations to the number of emails that can be sent out at one time and over a period. This helps protect us all from spam – unwanted emails, and also protects the server environments to ensure they do not get jammed up.

If you do need to do mass emailing then the best option is to use a service which is specifically designed for it. There are many out there but an example is MailChimp – <http://mailchimp.com>. These let you import a list of email addresses and create formatted mailings that can be sent to the whole group or selected groups. They also allow people to self-subscribe to your list and also, importantly, to unsubscribe as this is a requirement of any mass emailing. Perhaps most importantly for us, provided you stay within their restrictions (up to 2000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month) the service is free!

Hope this helps.

**Dave Paylor**



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## HERVEY BAY

**H**i all, I guess everybody has finished the Christmas/new year party circuit for another year. I was very lucky to be in Sweden for six weeks over Christmas and experienced a white and very cold time. My thanks to those that kept the boats floating during this time.

We have put through a number of new crew and have another group part way through their initial training. Welcome on board. Also welcome on board some of our local Parks and Wildlife rangers who will be doing their commercial coxswain ticket through Marine Rescue.

on our current infrastructure. A possible concept for replacement. The chair of this group is Ray Harris and he is currently supported by Les Czulowski, David Marshman, Graeme Stanton and Peter Zanker and he has access to whatever resources he requires to produce the required outcomes of this group. These guys will provide management with advice on a way forward to develop our 10 year projected plan.

We are also developing better working relationships with QPS, QAS, MSQ, SES and Maritime boating as well as other local government and business organisations. This is proving a huge task as OIC's

### Potential style of our new rescue vessel.



This year has started with a lot of changes and a lot of maintenance issues being addressed. All our vessels have new Safety Management Systems (SMS) in place to comply with AMSA requirements. Please make sure you are aware of the contents of this document. Come March 1, 2016 all squadron SOP's should be revised as a new addition and again please ensure you are aware of this.

WH&S and maintenance issues have seen RSL Rescue stay on the water over the last couple of months. These issues should be resolved before this is printed and she will be back in the boatshed.

I started a sub committee late last year to firstly look into statistics in relation to what we do, how we do it and from this information develop strategies and a comprehensive plan to take the squadron forward over the next 10 years. We will see some changes soon to the way we do business as a result of this information.

As this sub committee progresses we will see some concept images become available so that everybody will be aware of what is happening. A result of this sub committee's work to date, is that the management committee have agreed that RSL Rescue needs to be replaced within the next two years. The sub committee has started to look into this replacement vessel and the impact it may have



**We are looking at a walk around deck for the new boat.**

and area commanders change due to postings and retirements and their replacements not being briefed on the current negotiations on the table. Very, very frustrating and draining as we continually have to repeat our plan and proposals.

I must thank my committee for their continued support through these very busy few months. We still have a lot of things to work through but I am confident that we can move forward.

If anyone has concerns or requires more information about our direction toward 2026, please contact me. I am happy to pass on the facts.

**John Smith**





### NEW RESCUE BOAT TAKING SHAPE

**O**ur new Noosacat 4400 is starting to look like a rescue boat, and hopefully by the time you read this it will be on duty up here in the Whitsundays. It will have a full Furuno electronics package, together with an upmarket FLIR and a Radio Direction Finder, a specially designed QAS stretcher facility, and an air-conditioned cabin. We can't wait!

### ACTIVATIONS

As well as the usual breakdowns and tows there were a number of more memorable activations since November.

#### Activation 28/11/15

**Task: Medivac from Hayman**

**Skipper: Fin Forbes**

**Crew: Mick, Bill and Rod**

Fin was at the radio room and heard a conversation over the radio (at approx. 1130) that said a 23 year old male off a charter boat vessel (at Stonehaven) had a spear from a spear gun through his lower calf. The Charter Boat Co. advised them to head toward Hayman Island while the company would contact the Emergency Services. Dewi relieved me at the base at approx. 1145 and Fin told him what was taking place and suggested he may become involved.

At 1320 Dewi rang Fin to advise him that the Qld Ambulance Service wished us to take a paramedic to Hayman and bring the patient back. We left Abell Point Marina at 1355 with one paramedic and a top crew of Mick, Bill and Rod. The weather was typical Whitsundays – i.e. perfect. We were tied up at Hayman at 1440 and the paramedic went and did his assessment.



Noosa Cat Australia P/L

The patient and two passengers were on board and we were on our way back to APM by 1510. Travelling at 29kts back got us unloaded and refuelled and back safely in our pen (with Dewi and Hay Pt. VTS informed) at 1610.

#### Activation 04/12/15

**Task: Possible Tow – Engine room fire**

**Skipper: Fin Forbes**

**Crew: Gary, Rod & Wendy**

At 1604 Bill (24/7 phone holder rang) Fin as a Sarco to okay a simple job – a vessel anchored outside Shute Harbour with engine problems, non VMR member, willing to pay our call out fees, one person on board, could not get in contact with other local commercial operators, and needed assistance to get into Shute Harbour – simple – no problems and would Fin be skipper – Yes. VMR1 was all ready with crew when he got to it (Gary, Rod and Wendy) – they had just got back from an earlier activation.

We left APM 1630 to do this 'simple' job, arriving at the vessel at 1655 to find it was a 100ft, 90 tonne jet

## WHITSUNDAYS

powered catamaran that had had a fire and its motors were out of action. It could not raise its anchor, the wind was blowing 30kts and the seas were lumpy and confused.

Upon assessment of what we were dealing with, we could not observe any points we could tow from even if we chose to, and no points we could tie alongside if we were so inclined. The one person on board was in no immediate danger (which is our main priority) but we did offer to take him off the vessel if he wished, but he declined. His crew had gone ashore and he was trying to get in contact with someone (on a Friday afternoon) who could rectify his engine/ power problems. To make matters worse his phone was getting low on battery.

But our decision was simple – we could not do anything for him and even if we tried we would be putting him and ourselves into danger.

### **Activation 08/12/15**

**Task: Medivac – Hook Passage**

**Skipper: Ray Lewis**

**Crew: Wendy, John & Craig**

Ray received a call from Bill Harrison at 1845 regarding a person who had fallen on board a charter boat which was located in Hook Passage. We picked up a QAS paramedic and departed Abell Point Marina at 1920. Going across Whitsunday Passage, we found that it was blowing over 20kts and seas were rough.

Arriving at the vessel in Hook Passage, we decided to stand off as the vessel was rather large. The patient was brought over in a large tender and he was examined by the QAS paramedic on *VMR1*.

The patient did not want to leave the charter boat where there was a party going on but was convinced he had to return to the mainland for observation. With Wendy at the helm the return trip across the passage was smoother as we were slightly running with the waves and she did an excellent job of taking *VMR1* into the fuelling wharf and also our berth.

### **Activation 14/12/15**

**Task: Medivac – Hayman Island**

**Skipper: Ray Lewis**

**Crew: John, Will and Norbert**

Ray received a phone call from Bill regarding a medivac from Hayman Island where a person was having medical issues and needed to be brought to the mainland. *VMR1* left the berth at 1900 hrs and proceeded to the fuel wharf to pick up two QAS paramedics and a police officer. With all required personnel on board, we departed Abell Point marina at 1945hrs for Hayman Island.

The trip over and back was reasonable with south east winds and a moderate sea. *VMR1* arrived at Hayman Island and was in the process of docking at the western pontoon as per usual, when we noticed a torch being flashed from the eastern pontoon.

A speedy turnaround in the marina saw us a few minutes later tied up next to the waiting medical staff and patient.

After a quick assessment by the paramedics, the patient came aboard so within five minutes we were on our way back to Airlie. Norbert took the helm back and did an excellent job of berthing at the fuel dock where our passengers disembarked; we fuelled up and returned to our berth.

### **Activation 25/12/15**

**Task: Medivac from Nara Inlet**

**Skipper: Mal Friday**

**Crew: Michel and Norm**

'Twas the day before Christmas, and not a creature ... wait. Mal had called the phone holder Bill to let him know that he was available for call outs on Christmas day, little knowing that he would be calling me at 3:35am on Christmas Day for an urgent medivac of an elderly patient on an 86ft motor vessel in Nara inlet.

*VMR1* was ready and waiting for paramedics Anthony and Leigh near the fuel dock, departing at 4:15am for a very quick trip to Nara. Aided by the pretty good conditions we scooted across the passage at 30kts plus, and were alongside the other vessel at 4:45am. Apologies if we woke any one on boats in Nara on the way in or out, this was a true emergency!

After the paramedics had spent some time to stabilise the patient and we had lowered the chart table to set up a bed for her, we loaded her and her daughter and grand-daughter for the return journey to Abell Point – instructions from paramedic Anthony were “make best speed”, so it was 30kts plus all the way back, and we were able to discharge the patient and her family for the trip to hospital by 6:45.

### **Activation 12/01/16**

**Task: Medivac – Cid Harbour**

**Skipper: Craig Verral**

**Crew: Tom, Ray and Fin**

Emergency Phone holder Fin called Craig at 10:15am, but he missed his call and called him back 10 minutes later. (He was struggling to get a full crew assembled, so Craig was very glad he saw the missed call and called him straight back). A 70 year old female solo sailor's yacht's bilge had exploded, apparently from some cleaning product vapours igniting when she was cleaning it while at anchor in Cid Harbour; she was badly burnt and needed medical attention ASAP.

We departed APM @ 10:45, with Fin the phone holder coming along as crew with Tom and Ray, and with two QAS officers onboard we proceeded at full speed towards Cid Harbour.

Fin had requested that the sailor stay anchored in Cid Harbour until we got there, however when we raised contact with the vessel on radio, she reported that she was underway, motoring back to the mainland. A heroic effort by the sailor to up anchor and head for



the shore, but in this case it made things a little more difficult for us and probably less comfortable for her.

We found the 40ft sailing yacht motoring west in the middle of the Whitsunday passage, however due to the sea conditions and the sailors apparent confusion (possibly suffering from shock) it was very difficult to come alongside the sailing yacht as it kept turning beam on to the seas, making it roll quite violently... a LOT harder than if the boat was anchored as requested!

We decided it would be safest and most prudent to transfer one of our crew (Ray, a very experienced VMR skipper also) onto the sailing yacht and he motored the vessel to the safety of Bauer Bay, South Molle Island.

Once in the calmer waters, the patient was transferred to VMR where the QAS officers assessed her condition and started treatment. They advised that she would need to go to hospital, so after putting the sailing yacht on a mooring, making sure it was secure to be left unattended (and her cat had food and water) we then returned back to APM as quickly as possible, arriving at 12:25. The QAS officers and the patient departed for hospital, while we refuelled and stood down VMR1.

Great work by Craig's highly experienced crew. It's hard to look bad as a skipper when the crew are also

all VMR skippers with about a century of accumulated nautical experience between them!

#### Activation 19/01/16

**Task: Medivac – South Molle Island**

**Skipper: Geoff Smith**

**Crew: Tom, Norbert and Gary**

All crew were on board shortly after 11pm and VMR1 transferred to the fuel dock to pick up the Paramedic who arrived 11.30pm. The night was warm, clear, nice moon, little wind, no seas and almost low tide. Perfect. We had a fast run to South Molle, arriving at midnight. The non-floating jetty at low tide meant a bit of a step down for our passengers to the gunwales of VMR1, but we were able to transfer the patient and her friend without anyone going for a late night swim.

After the paramedic gave us the all clear, we had an equally fast trip home and onto the fuel dock at 0050 for the drop off and into the pen at 0105 after refuelling.

#### Activation 28/01/16

**Task: Plane Crash – Whitsunday Island**

**Skipper: Mal Priday**

**Crew: John F**

Mal was getting ready to go to the boat to run the Thursday training session when he received a call from phone holder John C. He said that VMR Mackay



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**Seaplane Crash, Chance Bay. Courtesy Whitsunday Times**

had just called to advise that a plane had gone down in Chance Bay, but that we had not yet been activated. Mal asked him to put a crew together as we were bound to become involved, and made his way to VMR1.

As he was pulling up in the car park John F was just in front of him coming to what he thought was a training session, and John was told it may turn out to be a bit more involved than that. As we walked to the boat John C rang to say that we had been activated by QAS, and as Mal was on the phone an ambulance pulled up with paramedics Anthony and Doug. Anthony very quickly pointed out that we needed to go, and go now!

We quickly prepared the boat for departure and we then helped the paramedics load all of their gear – a lot of gear, but at that stage they did not know how badly injured any of the passengers were, or what we were going to find. After waiting a couple of minutes to see if any more crew were to arrive, Mal made the decision to depart immediately with just himself, John F and the paramedics – time was of the essence!

VMR1 left Abell Point at 4:15pm, at that stage bound for the crash site at Chance or Crayfish Bay at the

southern end of Whitsunday Island. Conditions were a bit choppy, with an outgoing tide pushing against 10-15kts of north to northwest wind, but the hammers were down all the way.

En-route we were advised that the 11 passengers had been transferred to Hamilton Island by another boat, and after a quick phone call to Hamilton Marina we knew where to head when we arrived. At 4:55 pm we tied up near the Police RHIB that had preceded us, and the paramedics were off to assess their patients along with our offer to assist in any way, if required. VMR1 was doing 30-33kts all the way out, depending on how strong the tide was at the time – a very quick trip.

Fortunately our further assistance was not required, and our paramedics were back on board by 6:25. One patient had been airlifted to Mackay with head injuries, but the rest were able to stay on the island and their condition was to be monitored overnight. This was almost an anti-climax ending to an incident that could easily have had far worse consequences.

VMR1 departed Hamilton at 6:30, off loaded the paramedics and equipment around 7:30, then was refuelled and washed down before returning to its berth for shutdown by 8:00pm.

#### **Activation 3/2/16**

**Task: Medivac in Shute Harbor**

**Skipper: Geoff Smith**

**Crew: Keith, Tom, and Rod**

A man living aboard a boat in Shute had a bad back and couldn't move. The paramedics wanted us to take them to the boat then transfer them and the patient ashore. VMR1 left APM at 9.25 arriving at the Shute fishing pontoon at 9.52. There was a 15-20kt northerly with a short chop building.

We transferred the paramedics to the boat out in the bay and stayed alongside whilst they did their thing. VMR1 left the boat at 10.30 and dropped the paramedics and the patient off at the Shute Terminal, departing at 10.45.

The seas were up a bit now and we had a bumpy ride back to APM, taking it quite easy round Pioneer Point, arriving at the fuel dock 11.45 and the pen for 11.55.

#### **Activation Report 7/2/16**

**Task: Medivac, Daydream Island**

**Skipper: Fin Forbes**

**Crew: Rod, Michel and Norbert**

At 2210 the QAS rang wanting our services to medivac a two year old little girl from Daydream Island. The crew were ready to rock and roll by approx. 2300 but the paramedics were having a busy night and we didn't have them on board and us leaving APM until 2350.

The weather was warm but raining and with a strong sou-easter. Pitch black. We were at





Daydream and the Paramedic doing his assessment by 0020. The little girl and her mother were taken aboard with one little 'incident' – she dropped her dummy in the water while being transferred aboard. Michel was the hero of the night, retrieving it from the water – a happier little girl.

We left Daydream at 0035 and were unloaded and refuelled and back in our pen by 0120.

#### **Activation Report 17/2/16**

**Task 1: SAR after vessel hit rocks and sank, near Solway**

**Passage, Haselwood Island, one person missing**

**Task 2: Transport Police and Coroners, Hamilton Island**

**Skipper: Geoff Smith**

**Crew: Gary, John.**

Tom called just before 08.00 and when Geoff arrived, Steve the paramedic was waiting so we boarded and started pre departure checks. Gary and John arrived soon after and we were under way at 8.22.

On route we heard there were two people on a beach, possibly Teague Island, and one missing with no sign of the boat. Conditions were perfect with little wind and the start of the ebb tide although very hot and humid.

Going past Catseye Bay on Hamilton we saw the CQ Rescue Helicopter ahead and slightly to the south of VMR1's track towards Solway. Shortly afterwards CQ put out a general call that they were hovering over a person in the water, approx. two miles south of Chance bay. VMR1 altered course towards the Chopper and firewalled it, arriving at 8.55 with a Parks boat and a Cruise Whitsundays RHIB. Even a tender turned up soon after.

The chopper directed us to the site. This was difficult as the chopper was directly overhead and the noise made it very difficult to hear the radio and to understand their directions.

After we had the person aboard VMR1 the paramedic was able to confirm that unfortunately there was no chance of resuscitation. VMR1 travelled back to the Police base where the deceased was handed over to the coroner's people.

We then learned that there was another body, not connected to the earlier incident, to be recovered from Hamilton and as the large police boat was on the slip, we were 'it'.

#### **Task: collect body from Hamilton Island crew: same again plus three police, two coroners**

We had to wait for two more coroner's people to arrive from Bowen as well as three policemen, finally departing at 11.25. Because we knew we had another body and trolley to deal with we elected to leave the tender behind on the police dock to give us precious space because we now had eight POB as well as a body to pick up.

We arrived at Hamilton 12.19 and unloaded everyone. The police weren't sure of the circumstances surrounding the death and suggested they may be at least an hour investigating. They all returned at 13.48 with the body. We loaded the trolley on board and departed. We had acquired another policeman, as well as the body, for the return trip so we were now 9+1 POB.

We arrived at the police dock at 14.38, unloaded everyone then re-loaded the tender.

Many thanks to Geoff, Gary and John, great teamwork. Without their input and common-sense the very sad day could have been much, much longer.

Lessons learned are: communication with the chopper when overhead is difficult because of the noise. When they were giving us directions, they were initially giving them relative to themselves which would be okay if you can see the chopper easily. We couldn't. Later they switched to giving the instructions relative to us, your 3 o'clock etc., which worked much better. We need to establish this before getting too close with the noise getting in the way.

**Mal Priday**

**Vice President, VMR Whitsunday**



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# EYE PROTECTION FROM THE SUN

by Sharon McLean

**Our eyes they say are the window to our soul; they are for a lot of people the most important of all our senses. Yet, we expose them to danger everyday by going outside in the sunshine. Over time the sun's rays can seriously damage our eyes and surrounding skin. This can lead to vision loss, cataracts, macular degeneration and eye lid cancers. Simple protective measures will help keep our eyes and the surrounding sensitive skin healthy.**

**O**ur VMR members are in the sun a lot, whether it is on a rescue boat, washing boats, doing maintenance or collecting donations. Our volunteers also spend time in the sun due to working outside, driving or spending time with their families at the beach, fishing, camping, cycling, snow skiing/boarding or even playing sport. All this time in the sun adds up and can come back to haunt us down the track if we don't protect our eyes from a young age. We are at risk all year round from the sun.

Certain types of light from the sun can wreak havoc on our eyes.

**Ultraviolet A and Ultraviolet B Light:** Ultraviolet A (UVA) and Ultraviolet B (UVB) are powerful invisible rays with wavelengths shorter than visible light and are the most dangerous parts of the sunlight. These rays can cause cataracts, eyelid cancers and other skin cancers, they are also believed to play a part in macular degeneration and are a major cause of vision loss for people over 60. UV rays can prematurely wrinkle and age the skin around the eyes.

**High Energy Visible Light /Blue Light:** High energy visible light (HEV light) in the violet/blue spectrum is a potential contributor to cataracts and other serious eye disorders. Blue light can damage the retina over time leading to macular degeneration. The retina is the membrane where images are formed and transmitted to the brain. The macula, is the region of sharpest vision located near the centre of the retina, is the most likely area to be damaged.

**How Sunlight Damages Your Eyes:** The eyelids skin is designed to protect the eye. It is thin and contains fragile tissues which are vulnerable to UV light. Inside the eye, the lens and cornea are both transparent and filter UV rays. Years of UV absorption can damage both the lens and cornea. The lens which is the eye's focusing mechanism. Can turn yellowish and develop cataracts. The cornea which is the area in front of the

outer layer of the eye admits light and images to the retina.

## UV DAMAGE CAN CAUSE:

- > **Eyelid cancers** – account for 5-10% of all skin cancers. Early warning signs are:
  - A lump or bump that bleeds or does not disappear;
  - A persistent red eye or eyelid inflammation that does not respond to medication;
  - A new flat or elevated pigmented lesions with irregular borders and growth;
  - Unexplained loss of eyelashes.
- > **Intraocular Melanoma** – the most common eye cancer in adults. Symptoms may include blurred vision and a change in the shape of the pupil.
- > **Conjunctival Cancers** – reported cases have been rapidly increasing in numbers. May be common in patients with atypical mole syndrome. All patients with skin melanomas and/or atypical moles, should have yearly ophthalmologic evaluations.
- > **Cataracts** – this is the most common cause of treatable blindness. Cataracts are a progressive clouding and yellowing of the crystalline lens which is the eye's focusing mechanism.
- > **Macular Degeneration** – often referred to as age related. Believed to be caused by cumulative UV damage to the retina.
- > **Keratitis or Corneal Sunburn** – Excessive UV exposure from the sun can burn the cornea, which is the clear refracting surface that admits light and images to the retina.

These conditions can be found during a routine ophthalmologist's exam.



### PROTECT YOUR EYES

The best defence against the sun to protect your eyes is to wear sunglasses when you are in the sun. Even on overcast days, the UV rays can still penetrate through the clouds.

Sunglasses should offer the following:

- Meet the Australian Standard AS/NZ 1067:2003 (Sunglasses and Fashion Spectacles)
- The ability to absorb and block 99-100% of UVA and UVB light. Ideally they should also guard against HEV light
- They should be a sufficient size to shield the eyes, eyelids and surrounding areas
- Are durable and impact resistant
- Are suitable for driving
- Polarized lenses eliminate glare, especially when driving, but also on the water or snow skiing where the reflection greatly magnifies glare. Continuing glare can cause fatigue, headaches and even migraines.

It is important to also protect the eyes of children, whose eyes are particularly sensitive to UV light. Some young children may be reluctant to wear sunglasses, but you can still protect their eyes by

putting a wide brimmed hat on or keeping them in the shade.

Other safety measures are also important:

- Wear a hat with at least a 3" brim all around, this can block up to half of all UVB rays from your eyes and eyelids. Hats also help block UV from entering your eyes from above
- Sunglasses and hats cannot cover your face, so sunscreen is also important
- Seek shade between 10am and 4pm where possible.

### EYE PROTECTION FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS:

Some outdoor workers need protection from flying particles, dust, splashing materials and harmful gases. Tinted eye protectors that meet the Australian Standard AS/NZ 1337:1:2010 (Eye and Face Protectors for Occupational Applications) provide sun protection and reduce glare outside. Untinted eye protectors marked 'O' also have sufficient UV protection for outdoor use. If a worker needs protection from flying particles, dust, splashing materials or harmful gases, sunglasses which comply with both the AS/NZ 1067 and AS/NZ 1337 should be worn.



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Mike Sweeney - British Virgin Islands





By Sharon McLean

The weekend of February 5-7 was a busy one for the Northern Zone. With up to 300 ml of rain predicted to hit the area between Ayr and Mackay, there was also a full weekend of events being held for the squads of the zone at VMR Whitsunday.

- Friday night – zone meeting
- Saturday –SMS (Safety Management System) workshop
- Sunday – LLN (Language, Literacy and Numeracy) course.

The rain started in Mackay on Friday afternoon and did not let up. Keith Williams and Graham Kingston had flown into Mackay and their flight was delayed due to the weather. When they eventually landed and picked up their hire car, they were confronted with very heavy rain and a slow drive up the Bruce Highway to Cannonvale with reduced visibility. When the heavens open in this part of the state, it buckets down. The heaviest of the rain stayed over the Mackay/Whitsunday region.

With some people in town for some or all of the events, it seemed like VMR had taken over Airlie Beach. The camaraderie between the squads in the Northern Zone is such that is like an extended family getting together.

Saturdays SMS course was run by Mick Bishop from AMSA. This was a great chance for all involved to find out what AMSA's requirement is for the safe operation of VMR vessels and to learn the skills needed to identify and manage risks, and to also implement an effective SMS. Guest speakers were Michaela Moss (AMSA) who is a former President of VMR Whitsunday and Dick Emery (MSQ).

The AMSA SMS workshops were originally designed for the professional fishing industry, but after a discussion between Mick Bishop and Vince Papale (Northern Zone Vice President), a workshop was put together especially for VMR.

Sundays LLN course was run by VMRAQ trainers and it was a train the trainer's course. Giving them valuable skills and knowledge to identify when support is needed, and to be able deliver appropriate training for trainees with language, literacy and numeracy needs.





## **VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE** **ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.**

# **WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

The Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland Inc. accepts the principle that the Workplace should be a healthy and safe place and therefore requires that its member Squadrons should adopt a standard Workplace Health and Safety Policy.

# **SQUADRON**

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

The Squadron shall:

- (a) Ensure by all practical means, the observance of Workplace Health and Safety Standards as may be required.
- (b) Ensure that all Squadron working/active members should have regards for the Health and Safety of themselves and others.
- (c) Conduct appropriate Health and Safety educational programs.
- (d) By periodic Safety Audits, identify unsafe or unsatisfactory equipment, conditions or practices and take steps to rectify these.
- (e) Maintain records of work associated illness or injury.

## VICTORIA POINT



Simply Red concert – Sirromet Winery.

**BOATING**

**T**he weather, has again not been very kind to boaties. I suppose it is usually windy at this time of year, at least this is what the experienced boaties keep telling me! The weather dictates of course, how busy we are and we have not been out on breakdowns as much. However, we have had many boats breaking their moorings and going aground in the strong winds. This has provided us with plenty of work and the chance to hone our skills.

**FUNDRAISING**

VMR Victoria Point have been very busy with fundraising. Sirromet Wineries kindly offered us the chance to park cars at four of their 'Day on the Green' concerts. Unfortunately we could only accept two of these, as we just don't have the numbers at our base to do four concerts in a very short space of time. The first one, Simply Red, was last Sunday and was a complete sell out. Although it was a long, hot, tiring day, we all had a great time together. We just have time to recharge our batteries before the next one, in two weeks time. We are very grateful to Sirromet for these opportunities to fund raise. Our thanks also go to the many wives and family members who come along on these days to help and to keep us all fed and watered. Without these people we would not be able to keep going! After that it will be collecting at



Non AU coin donations.

the barges for Easter weekend and then our Boaties Market on April 17. We have been asked to help at the 'Tuff Mudder', another busy but rewarding day. This all helps put valuable funds into the coffers for our next huge project, a new building! I, personally, am so excited about this project. It will be lovely to have a bigger building after 25 years in a converted council toilet block!

**TRAINING & RECRUITS**

We have managed to keep most of our last intake and they are all keen and progressing well. VMR Victoria point will be advertising for new recruits again this year, as we have had some members move away and others retire from volunteering.

Our Vice-Commodore's wife, Bridget, has just become the person to do our CPR and First Aid courses. Although Bridget is a nurse, she undertook an intensive training course to be able to do this for us. We congratulate her on this achievement and thank her for doing this for VMR Victoria Point.

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