

VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE *Journal*

Autumn 2012



FREE



The Official Journal of the

**Volunteer Marine Rescue
Association Queensland Inc.**

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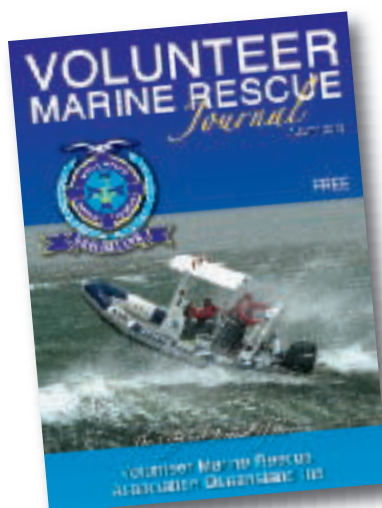
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VMR MORNINGTON ISLAND	VMR 457			YES	YES
VMR BURDEKIN	VMR 481	80	YES	YES	YES
VMR BOWEN	VMR 487	21	YES	YES	YES
VMR WHITSUNDAY	VMR 442	81, 82, 22	YES	YES	YES
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VMR MACKAY	VMR 448	80, 21	YES	YES	YES
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from the President's Chair



John Jacobsen

Following on from my last report, I feel it is an opportune time to voice my concern for the future of Volunteer Marine Rescue and Australian Volunteer Coastguard. Many of our units

are struggling to maintain service to the boating public and without increased funding assistance the sustainability of our service is at risk.

Along the Queensland coast the Australian Volunteer Coastguard has 22 bases and Volunteer Marine Rescue has 24 bases. They are manned by volunteers. Members are available either immediately or on call out at any time day or night and in all weather conditions. Members from both organisations are prepared to risk their own safety to assist others. During 2011, the two associations provided assistance on 3,408 occasions which involved a total in excess of 7,400 persons. Many of

these "assists" were of a routine nature but on the water a "safe" situation can turn to disaster very rapidly. The Queensland public has come to rely on these services for the safety of themselves and their families. Politicians from all parties have openly and repeatedly stated that the government could not provide this life saving service without the volunteers.

In return for these services, the associations receive some funding from the Queensland Government although the majority of our funding comes from the fund raising efforts of members. In 1998, government funding amounted to a maximum of \$20,000 per year per rescue unit to assist with operating expenses, e.g. fuel, maintenance, purchase or replacement of equipment and general running costs. Similarly funding of up to \$100,000 was available once every 10 years to each rescue unit for the replacement of their primary rescue vessel, at that time this amounted to approximately 50% of the cost of building and outfitting a new vessel. Other funding was

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provided on an annual basis to assist with the administration and training of members.

By way of example we have or are in the process of launching three new rescue vessels, VMR Victoria Point, VMR Burdekin and VMR Raby Bay, with a further two squadrons looking at replacing their vessels within the next two years, and both VMR Weipa and VMR Burketown are in the process of refurbishing their current vessels. Between VMR Burdekin and VMR Raby Bay the cost of these two vessels is in excess of

AU \$ 1.4 million. These vessels will be in service for at least 15 years, but in reviewing these statistics it is obvious that without increased funding from the Queensland Government VMR will not be in a position to replace vessels in the future.

Volunteer Marine Rescue throughout Queensland has over 1,400 working members, all dedicated to the preservation of life to the boating public of Queensland. Our needs are simple.

- We need to be recognised in legislation as an essential emergency service

- We need an immediate increase in funding from government

We need the public to acknowledge that we are volunteers (non-paid employees) and assist us in lobbying the Government to keep our very worthy organisation afloat

- My counterpart in Australian Volunteer Coastguard, Mr Mike Vosti ESM, and I will be putting a joint statement out to all squadrons and flotillas in the near future for our working members to contact their local member to gain their support.

We have been abandoned and are in need of rescuing.

Safe Boating
John Jacobsen ESM
President

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from the Vice President's Chair



Tony Hawkins

Communication, Prepared to accept Change & Thinking outside the Square.

Well with those opening words it could describe many situations we face within Marine Rescue Queensland,

however this can only describe my experience within my own squadron and my experience in the last six months with the new vessel construction for VMR Raby Bay.

As I write this Vice President's report the new vessel has undergone preliminary sea trials and just today we returned it back to the builder for slight modifications, this vessel, unlike many other vessels that have been built previously over the years, is not a standard vessel modified to meet the needs for Marine Rescue, but a fully customised vessel that I believe will be suitable for extended service within Marine Rescue. This new vessel has been custom built for search and rescue with medical evacuation capabilities.

It has been very surprising to hear some comments filter back from throughout the state from various locations about this vessel. One of these comments was that Raby Bay was only building this vessel to resell, this could not be further from the truth. This vessel in itself has very limited possibilities for resale in its present configuration without major modifications. Yes Raby Bay has gone with change and incorporated a diesel generator into the vessel, this is very much needed when you consider power consumption on extended search and rescues. Many times I have been out searching and after five to six hours using a couple of Bow Spots, a couple of Tower spots and two handheld spotlights each drawing nearly 10 Amps each we see dramatic battery failure. This is without adding the amount of consumption required for radar, GPS, and sounder and steering etc. can easily add another 40 to 50 Amps. With most current four stroke outboards charging restricted at slow revs it does identify a huge problem we will need to overcome as we advance forward with new navigation systems.

In regard to new navigation equipment I can only say how impressed we are with the new style LCD monitors used on this vessel with the Furuno Nav-net system along with the FLIR unit installed on the vessel. This particular FLIR unit is the ML625 which is the low light camera along with the thermal imaging camera. My first experience with this unit at night was just this weekend when Keith Williams and I completed some night trials on the vessel, the night could not have been better for the trials. No moon and throw in 20 or so sailing vessels of different sizes scattered all over the areas of Moreton Bay. With the FLIR operating it was very easy to identify the vessels between 500 and 1000m away,

crab pots floating in the water and we were also able to identify people walking on shore over 1500m away. This new technology is a must for all future vessels we fit out for marine rescue in my belief. Please feel free to contact us if we can assist in arranging a demonstration next time you are down near Brisbane.

As for my opening comments I for one had to accept change and had to think outside the square to build this vessel and to equip the vessel with all requested items from the committee of VMR Raby Bay.

Tony Hawkins
Vice President

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bundabergVMR



A 10m catamaran with engine problems is towed back to Burnett Heads.

expressing his appreciation of a professional rescue in quite difficult conditions. He subsequently advised that a total of five fuel filters were blocked and that even though he had owned the vessel for 15 years the discovery of all the fuel filters was a learning experience.

The “out of fuel” call was the issue for another three activations.

One involved a new vessel and the skipper’s inexperience with fuel consumption. Another was the result of an alarm raised as an “out of fuel” incident by a visit to the base after a mobile phone call to home. It appears it was a case of not checking after, “Dad said there was enough fuel for the 16 mile”. This may have been the case, but the lads demonstrably went

Activations

VMR 488 crews were involved in 12 activations during the previous quarter. The occasional bouts of bad weather during the summer season can usually be relied upon to produce some challenging jobs with vessels in difficulty. This season saw two such activations conducted in moderate to rough seas generated by 20-25kt winds.

On December 30, Bill Ker’s C Crew were activated to assist a 40ft sailing catamaran 28nm north of Burnett Heads with gear box problems and a damaged rudder. *Bundy Rescue* departed at 15:00 in rough seas and safely towed the vessel back to Burnett Heads in a 9.75 hour operation.

The next heavy weather activation arose from a call at 16:00 on January 12 that a 10m motor cruiser was “dead in the water” 13nm SE of Lady Elliott Island in “atrocious conditions”, en-route from Lady Musgrave Island to Rooney’s at Fraser Island. Gary Dick’s B Crew was placed on stand-by as the cruiser’s skipper was hopeful it was just a fuel issue he could resolve. The 16:30 advice was that a fuel filter change allowed the vessel to get underway again for Rooney’s. We did recommend that the vessel head for Burnett Heads given the sea state, that Rooney’s was still 35nm to the SE and to minimise time for assistance and risk to VMR crews for any subsequent calls for assistance. The skipper accepted this advice.

A call for assistance did come just before station closure at 18:00. *Bundy Rescue* departed at 18:45 for the cruiser, now 30nm NNE of Burnett Heads and drifting under a sea anchor. The 10 hour job was successfully completed at 05:00 the next morning. A very grateful skipper promptly covered the cost of the activation, added a generous donation and sent us a letter

much further out, were not really sure where they were, had a dodgy radio, no torch and after setting off one flare were unable to fire a second on request from *Bundy Rescue*! Relief skipper Terry Farrar’s crew did not find the 5m fibreglass half-cabin at the specified position and eventually located it some 2.5nm SW, now with a flat battery. In the third incident a 4.5m tinny ran out of fuel 500m east of the Burnett Heads lighthouse.

Is the increasing frequency of the “out of fuel” incidents a symptom of the current economic situation? We hope not. These incidents highlight need to reinforce the 30% rule – 30% *outbound*, 30% *for return* and 30% *for the unexpected*.

Boating and Marine Safety Expo

A Boating and Marine Safety Expo was held at VMR 448’s Base at Burnett Heads on February 11. The day was organised as an open house one-stop event to inform the boating public on marine safety issues. We rationalised that an informed public should assist us in our goal of saving lives at sea.

Erwin Hoffmann and Dennis James developed the concept for the Expo and were successful in attracting participation from the Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Queensland Water Police (QWPS), QPS SARMC’s, CUSTOMS Service, Marine National Parks and one of our major sponsors, Boats Galore and Bargara Rotary to run the sausage sizzle.

Geoff and Paul from the Boating and Fisheries Patrol were kept busy explaining safety equipment requirements for different classifications of waters, the updates to safety regulations from January 2012 as well as the finer points of fishing regulations. Unfortunately both QWPS and QPS were involved in real time emergencies on the 11th in the Sandy Straits and near Bundaberg. Thus an assistant QPS SARMC was available only for part of the day to explain how VMR



Paul Nicols from Boating and Fisheries explains safety equipment requirements (right)
Marine Parks rangers confirm local Marine Park boundaries and permitted recreational activities (far right)



supported the SAR system. The customs display showed how the boating public could assist with border protection. The customs 6.6m Stabicraft vessel attracted quite a lot of attention. Marine Parks' staff provided the latest zoning maps and discussed approved activities in local marine parks. Peter Clements from Boats Galore had a new runabout fitted out with all the latest requirements in safety equipment and discussed the benefits of fuel additives for extending the life of unleaded and E10 fuels in the marine environment.

We were extremely happy that an estimated 200 people interacted with the displays. Very positive feedback was received for UTC John O'Callaghan's demonstrations of flares and fire extinguishers. Many attendees admitted it was the first time they had seen a flare activation and were not aware of the safety

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Pete Debus dealing with membership enquiries in the training room (top); John O'Callaghan and Erwin Hoffmann demonstrate use of a smoke flare (above).

issues associated with use of flares and when best to use them.

VMR vessels, the radio room and training facilities were also open for inspection. We were most appreciative of the support received from Cast's Supa IGA and Bargara Rotary for the sausage sizzle and drinks van. Overall it was a very successful day and worth considering for a re-run in 2013.



News coxswains (L-R) Graham Kingston, Erwin Hoffmann and John O'Callaghan receive their skipper's epaulettes from Marine Rescue Bundaberg President Garry Dick.

New Skippers

Three new skippers have been added to VMR 488's in-shore SAR call-out list. Erwin Hoffmann, Graham Kingston and John O'Callaghan were presented with skippers epaulettes at the January committee meeting after completion of the MSQ Commercial Coxswains (VMR restricted) qualification and the additional VMR SAR and Duty Officer requirements.

One of the SAR/Duty Officer assessments was a northern extension of the SAR exercise conducted by VMR 466 and Coast Guard Sandy Straits. Our scenario involved an overturned boat and a missing person 4nm east of Elliott Heads. The exercise was controlled by a QPS SARMC, with the probable search area defined in plot by AMSA. This exercise demonstrated the importance of local knowledge and feedback from the OSC to the SARMC. The rescue dummy and sea anchored drums were not located in the "search area" and *Bundy Rescue* was running out of sea room on some legs. A recalculation of the datum using local knowledge of tidal currents resulted in discovery of the targets well to seaward of the designated search area. A similar reassessment was productive in an actual SAR mission some years ago off Burnett Heads.

Graham Kingston
Public Relations Officer
Marine Rescue Bundaberg

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Friday, November 4 saw the opening of the first Gold Coast Marine Expo, giving the public the opportunity to see the marine manufacturing facilities firsthand. VMR Jacobs Well was invited to participate, with a display, as part of the marine theme, giving us the opportunity to converse and advise mariners on all aspects of our local waters. The three day Expo saw thousands of interested boaties and their families pass through the gates, giving VMRJW financial assistance by way of raffle tickets and new memberships.

Particular interest was shown to *Rotary 2*, our latest edition to the rescue fleet, especially by the children, who lined up to have their photos taken on board. The continuous activities at the Expo retained the public interest, with the involvement of the rescue helicopter, and various offshore power boat demonstrations. On the whole the Expo, (first of its kind) was considered a success, and we hope to be involved again next year. A special thanks to all the volunteers who helped over the three day event.

Regards
Ron Thomsen



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bribie islandVMR

Channel 9 News Broadcasts From VMR Bribie Island Pontoon January 27, 2012

Below is a picture of Channel Nine's weatherman Garry Youngberry doing the Friday night January 27, 2012 weather from the foreshore in front of Marine Rescue Bribie's Pontoon where *Energex Bribie One* and *Energex Bribie Two* are moored. Bribie Island recorded the most amount of water over two days than anyone else in the state. Bribie Island Road was cut by water several times.



Garry Youngberry broadcasting Channel 9 News from VMR Bribie Island Pontoon.

Marine Rescue Bribie Members Awards

At the general meeting held on Saturday, December 10, 2011 two very special awards were presented to two of our volunteers.

The first was to Maree Scott who was awarded a VMR plaque for her many years of service to Marine Rescue Bribie as a duty officer.

The second was to Ray Fox who was awarded a National Medal for his 15 years of voluntary work at Marine Rescue Bribie.

Maree said "It was a great honour to receive the award."

Ray said "That his medal belongs to all the volunteers he has worked with over the years."



Marine Rescue Volunteer Ray Fox receiving his National Medal from John Jacobsen State President of VMRAQ.

Horrie Hunt Marine Rescue Bribie training officer presenting Maree Scott with her VMR plaque.



VMR Receives Donation From BI Bowls/Fishing Club

Marine Rescue Bribie Island Inc., would like to thank the Bribie Island Bowls Club and Fishing Club for their kind donation of \$300. Being a volunteer organisation these funds go a long way to help us survive. Thank you very much.

RSL Golf Club Donate to VMR

Sunday, January 15, 2012 President of the RSL Golf Club Mr Chris Roberts and Captain Mr. Ernie Hall presented Marine Rescue Bribie Commodore Wayne Sclater with a donation cheque of \$1000. Each year the RSL Golf Club gives a donation to local volunteer organisations and charities.

Marine Rescue Bribie would like to thank the RSL Golf Club for their patronage.



RSL Golf Club President Chris Roberts presenting VMR Commodore Wayne Sclater with donation cheque of \$1000.

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Busy Day for Marine Rescue

On December 1, 2011 Marine Rescue Bribie was busy with several callouts to vessels that were dragging their anchors. At approximately 1600hrs we were activated to assist a yacht with two men on board. The 40kt winds and three metre swells made it a very difficult task. The two men on board the yacht were treated by QAS on arrival back at the base. One for hypothermia and the other for asthma.



Energex Bribie Three assisting the yacht in very unforgiving weather.

Vale: Ross Cameron Sugars (12/08/1950 - 11/01/2012)

Ross Sugars was a member of VMR Bribie for three years. He was a member of Red Saturday Crew. Our condolences go to Jenny (Ross' wife) and family.

He will be sadly missed at our base.

Vale: Laurence Smelt

Laurie Smelt passed away January 26, 2012. Laurie was a crew member on *Blue Saturday* before his illness and he was a member of VMR Bribie for 17 years.

Laurie was a bricklayer by trade and President of the Bribie Gem Club for 2 ½ years. He was also a member of Sandgate Yacht Club and had been coming to Bribie Island for holidays since he was a child. He had a Caper cat and a trailer-sailer. He enjoyed camping and fishing with his family – but he loved his “sailing”.

VMR would like to extend their condolences to his wife Elaine and his family and friends.



McDonalds Come Onboard

Marine Rescue Bribie is proud to announce that McDonalds, Bribie Island Restaurant, has come aboard with a three (3) year sponsorship.

Mr Matt Grut, McDonald's licensee of the Bribie Island and Bribie Interchange Restaurant said that they are happy to be able to donate to VMR to support safety on the water. Mr Wayne Sclater – Commodore of VMR Bribie Island said that the sponsorship would help to support a number of safety initiatives.

McDonalds are also supporting Bribie Island Surf Life Saving Club.

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Emergency Services Hold Open Day at VMR to Support the Jamie Jackway Fundraiser.

On March 3, 2012 Marine Rescue Bribie will host an Open Day with all funds going toward the Jamie Jackway Appeal.

Jamie, a QAS rescue helicopter paramedic was injured during activation and is now a quadriplegic.

Emergency Services including the QAS, Parks and Wildlife, Qld Police Service, Energex and VMR will be present at the VMR Base (Marina Pde) Bellara, on March 3, 2012 from 11am - 2 pm.



Emergency Services at full strength coming together to show support for the Jamie Jackway/Open Day event. Pic kindly contributed by Peter McNamara.

Busy Fingers Christmas Party

One of the hardest working groups on Bribie Island "Busy Fingers" had their annual Christmas Party at the Marine Rescue Bribie's Base on Sunday, November 13, 2011.

Busy Fingers support many groups on Bribie Island including Marine Rescue Bribie and they all appreciate their support.



Busy Fingers Christmas Party 2011 Sonia Christensen and Sharon Fisher enjoying their afternoon.



Busy Fingers Christmas Party L to R: Louise Hadland, Wendy Ozegouic, Lee Kennedy, Jeanette Fuller, Isobel Patience and Lorraine Humble enjoying the afternoon.



Busy Fingers Christmas Party held at Marine Rescue Bribie's Base on Sunday, November 13, 2011. L to R: Alma Hinde, Carol Seligmann, Zell Nicholls, Karen Highland and Val Kenney enjoying their afternoon.

Kevin James – Radio Officer

Our most recent radio officer has stepped down from his duties and has handed over to our new radio officer Peter McNamara. Kevin stepped down on Wednesday, October 19, 2011.

Kevin became a member of our squadron July 17, 2002. He began his solo shift December 25, 2005 as a radio operator.

Kevin and his wife Bev left Melbourne in 1999 to travel around Australia and ended up being out and



Kevin having a break and enjoying a coffee.

about for three years. They found Bribie Island very appealing, as Kevin was interested in cruising on water this area appealed to him and Bev and they decided to settle here.

Kevin's time at VMR also consisted of training courses for radio operator's duty officer. He began as a duty officer March 27, 2007. Kevin also has been involved with call out crew now called "Emergency Response Crew" Kevin tells us he has logged up 1700 hours on radio.

Well done, Kevin, you have certainly earned a break.

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Working Bee At Base

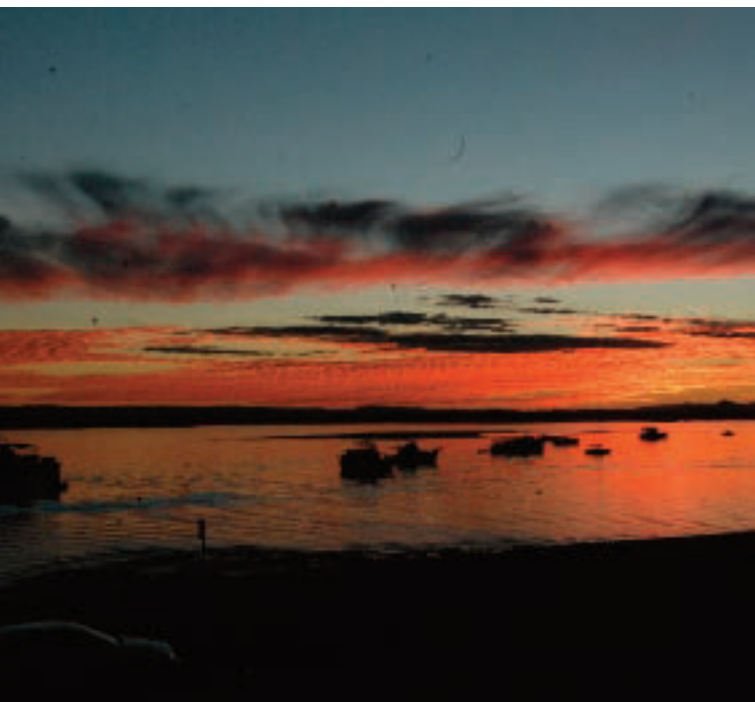
On Friday, February 17, members rolled up to participate in a Working Bee that had been arranged to bring our balcony up to safety standards.



Members at work on verandah.



Old habits die hard.



“Red Skies at Night Sailors Delight” The sunset taken from the balcony of Marine Rescue Bribie, the “Home of Safe Boating” Bribie operates three rescue vessels *Energex Bribie One*, *Energex Bribie Two* and *Energex Bribie Three* and as seen here has the best views over the Pumicestone Passage from their base. Picture by Peter McNamara.

CBEC Award For Marine Rescue Bribie

The Caboolture Business Enterprise Centre (CBEC) has awarded Marine Rescue Bribie Island as February’s winner of the Business MERIT AWARD. Community member Ms Heather Watson nominated VMR Bribie for the award.

Clint Fullgrabe – (JRC) - Unit Resource Controller accepted the award for VMR Bribie on behalf of the executive and squadron at the breakfast on Wednesday, February 22.



Clint Fullgrabe with the Business Merit Award from CBEC that he accepted on behalf of the Executive Management and members of VMR Bribie Island Inc.

The *Blue Sunday* Coxswain Maurie Biela congratulates Adrian Westerman on his first stripe in VMR colours. Both Maurie and Adrian are old salties of the sail kind and regularly race together in regattas so it's good to see both of them can handle a bit of power on the water.

Mr Ron Watson, Group Manager Corporate Communications with ENERGEX and our Commodore with this year's sponsorship between the two organisations. Ron said the continued support of VMR Bribie was in recognition of the similar roles the two organisations play in keeping the community safe.

Till next issue, stay safe on the water and remember to log on and log off.

Marine Rescue Bribie, “The Home of Safe Boating”.





bowenVMR

President Adrian Tilney was re-elected for his fifth term and Ben Homewood is now Secretary. Sue Gatkowski is in her second term as treasurer.

2011 saw a change in our training officer and a training schedule organised. As a result, *Rescue Bowen* completed 10 training runs and five maintenance runs. Also we did a maintenance run to our repeater on Holbourne Island by helicopter.

During the year, Bowen VMR base was used as the comms centre for the Burdekin to Whitsunday leg of the Variety Jet Ski Bash.

During the 12 months, Bowen VMR squad was involved in two flare sightings, two overdue vessel reports, two Mayday calls, four drifting vessel reports, one missing person's search, one hoax call, one attempted suicide from a moored coal ship and attended six disabled vessels. It was interesting that the majority of our activations were the result of phone calls from the Water Police or the vessels themselves.

The squad this year is hoping to formulate a plan to list our needs and objectives for the next five years. Also we are planning a recruitment drive to attract some new younger, active members to take the reins from us older members. Sometimes we find it hard to muster up a crew for a mid-week callout. Also we are not getting the majority of our recreational fishers to use our log in service on weekends.

During the year the squad hosted a coxswain's course VMR certification by Bob Brock with members of Northern Zone squads attending.

A Rough Night

On December 27, at 1835 hours, we were activated by Townsville Water Police, who had received a 000 distress call from the vessel *Timilgab* with two POB, which was disabled approximately 25nm NE of Bowen. The weather at the time was bad with severe thunderstorms stretching from the Whitsundays to the Burdekin. Skipper Lex Borgh and crew Brett Holzheimer, Ron Gould and Paul Cullen, after a risk assessment, set out at 1930 hours to the co-ordinates given by *Timilgab*. Don Rose was controller. The rescue helicopter was also dispatched from Townsville to locate and confirm the position of the vessel, which it did after sighting a red flare. *Timilgab* had also activated its EPIRB. At 2130 hours, *Rescue Bowen* had commenced its return to base with the 6m vessel in tow. The rescue helicopter had departed the scene to refuel at Bowen before returning to Townsville. At 0115 hours, *Rescue Bowen* arrived back at our pontoon after a very wet and rough in severe stormy conditions. The QAS was on hand to meet the two crew of *Timilgab* as we understood one of them was very seasick. They checked out okay, but were shaken up by their ordeal.

Assistance in Whitsunday Search

On the same night, while the above rescue was in progress we were asked by Whitsunday Water Police to help in a search for a missing person off a charter boat which had capsized in a severe storm that evening near Hamilton Island. The search was to start at daylight so we had to borrow two crew from Burdekin, as we could only get a skipper from Bowen squad, due to the previous night's activation and Christmas holidays. Skipper Ian shield with Bob Kennedy and Lionel Tappenden took *Rescue Bowen* down to the search area and conducted a shore search until mid-afternoon with two of the Whitsunday squads; unfortunately without success.

D. Rose,
Controller

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hervey bayVMR



We have been fairly busy this last quarter, not only with activations, but with the revamp of our radio room, which hopefully, as this issue goes to print, the work on the new facility will have been completed and operational.

This year has once again seen a lot of time and effort put in by us all in the areas of marketing, public relations and the ongoing training that we all have to embrace. The unit can only progress onward and upward with such dedication and enthusiasm with the calibre of people within the unit.

I am pleased to report that the contract for the replacement vessel of our aging *Boat Club Rescue* has been signed, and construction is well underway, with the delivery approximately early February. The cost of the vessel is a staggering amount, but with hard work and commitment to VMRHB we have been able to raise the capital needed. I must express my thanks to the boat building committee – Rod Love, Leith Lindsay and Bruce Lee for their input in getting the new vessel to the completed stage.

We have been lucky to source at auction a replacement trailer for the current *Boat Club Rescue*. This when the time comes will make it so much easier to market and sell *Boat Club Rescue*.

Whilst on about vessels, we have been extremely fortunate to have been donated a 9.9m Westerly Longbow Cruising Yacht by Dr Kris Gerhardt so that we can raise some funding for the unit. We at VMRHB profusely thank Kris for his generous donation. If you would like to inspect this vessel and possibly place a tender, please contact our office.

Sadly this unit is going to miss the support of one of our longest sponsors. As a major sponsor of our rescue vessel, *Fishermans Corner Rescue*, Jim Sullivan, the owner of *Fishermans Corner* has been an ardent entity in support of this Unit for many years, but due to the financial situation has had to withdraw his sponsorship. As Commodore of VMRHB, I would like to thank Jim and all his staff for the support and camaraderie to this unit over many years. Thank you Jim.

I would like to remind everyone leaving the harbour, or any boat ramp in our vicinity, to log on and then on your return, log off. Also whilst you are out on the water, when you change your position also let the radio operator know, as if in the unlikely chance something untoward happens, we have a starting point to mount a rescue. I know that this magazine goes to members, but hopefully others will read it as well. You don't need to be a member to use our services, although it is preferable and will work out cheaper for you if you need our assistance.

Tom Hudson,
Commodore
VMRHB



Keep your feet on the deck, your hands on the helm, your eyes on the horizon and your beer in the fridge.

Medivac: November 5, 2011

19:30hrs, Saturday, November 5, I received a phone call from the RGC concerning a QAS activation for a person injured in a tobogganing incident on Fraser Island. I proceeded to the base, and with the arrival of the crew, *Fishermans Corner Rescue* was launched and berthed on our pontoon to await the arrival of the paramedics. At 22hrs, with Shelle the paramedic on board, we departed the base to proceed to Kingfisher Resort.

From what we had been told, a 20+ year old male had been sand tobogganing on the easterly side of Fraser Island and had had a nasty spill causing amongst other things multiple broken ribs and possible shoulder injuries.

The night was perfect, calm seas, moonlit night; the only thing amiss was the falling tide which meant a long trip around the top of Big Woody.

On arrival at Kingfisher Bay, the ambulance had just arrived and our timing could not have been better.

During consultation with the ambos and our paramedic the decision was made to leave the patient strapped to the stretcher he was on and then place him across the stern on the deck. Shelle the paramedic administered morphine to the patient as a precaution against rough seas, but as luck would have it, the wind and tide worked in our favour and the patient



was speedily transferred to our base where an ambulance was waiting to transfer our patient to hospital.

The crew worked extremely well and the job was carried out professionally.

Previously to this activation we were tasked also to do a medivac of a young man who had been riding a motorcycle with friends, and he had crashed off a wooden bridge on Fraser into a gully which resulted in a broken shoulder blade. Once again using *Fishermans Corner Rescue* in accompany of a paramedic we proceeded to the old wharf at Ungowa, picked up the patient and on return to our base transferred him to an awaiting ambulance. This trip was not as comfortable for the patient, as the seas were quite choppy, with the ambos having to administer happy gas to the patient so that he was reasonably comfortable.

**Tom Hudson,
Skipper, VMR HB**

It's a Shame

Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) or Marine Rescue Hervey Bay provides a number of services to ensure the boating public stay safe and secure. They strive to ensure the assistance they give is to a very high professional standard and to do this comes at a cost. Vessels must be maintained in survey and be ready to go at any time. Crews, radio operators and administrative staff must be trained and able to perform the tasks required of them. All things combined are in order to ensure the return worried crews of disabled vessels to the safety of loved ones.

As the name states this is a volunteer organization and like fellow units around the state they are not funded by Government to provide water side assistance programs. What meagre government funding based on 1992 calculations is received is dedicated purely to search and rescue operations and the training for such activities.

Members of such units due to demographical and geographical factors must devise their own means to fund operations. One such common way of doing this is to provide

a class of membership that allows non working members through fees paid to receive a discount against costs incurred. Non members of course will always be given assistance however at an increased rate. In all cases the fees charged are not there to make a profit but to ensure the day to day ongoing costs of running the required vessels, bases and training are able to be met. What is sad is that some people who ask for and receive assistance feel totally uncompeled for one reason or another to assist Marine Rescue in cost recovery.

In recent times and no doubt attributed at least in part to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) some boat operators feel they are now able to thumb their nose when it comes to reimbursing volunteers for services rendered. This is not the case and hopefully those involved will recognize their safety and security was granted to them at the expense of others. Here are a couple instances of such occurances.

One local vessel owner in his 23ft powerboat on two separate occasions within a two month period required his vessel to be towed due to mechanical breakdown, over considerable distances and long hours, to safety. This good person obviously failed to recognize the time, effort and many hundreds of dollars expended by Marine Rescue to get him home safely as to date he has refused to assist with the cost recovery.

A retired gentleman who resides on a vessel asked for assistance during the recent bad weather and was naturally given it albeit with the situation it not being a life threatening situation. It was certainly sad to hear later that he then informed the unit that, as he was a pensioner he should not have to pay.

These of course are only a couple of instances of people who, although knowing prior to being assisted that costs will be incurred, are prepared to take the offered hand and then snub their nose at coving the costs incurred.

So please remember if you are in need in of assistance on the water we will always be ready and will always respond ... but please do the right thing and meet the costs incurred to help us to help you and others in the future.

**L R Lindsay
Boat Skipper**

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SAREX

Being a recently retired radio operator from VMR Hervey Bay with only some time to spare, I still like to contribute whenever I can to my old unit. So when Commodore Tom asked would I make my vessel *Lady Di* available as the incident vessel in a search and rescue exercise I was glad to oblige. Also it was another excuse for a day on the water ... but rising at 0400 hours was damned tough!

The scenario was our vessel was the victim of a gas explosion. Everybody on board was injured and we had no communications whatsoever ... a person from on shore registered the initial call-out by mobile phone.

So 5:15 hours on November 24, saw our merry band of matelots (unsuspecting VMRHH crewies who had been press-ganged for the voyage) cast off from the marina and head out to sea for our adventure. We had on board four "victims" (all conveniently wearing their injuries on cards around their necks, as you do), three dummies (real ones) and Assistant Unit Training Coordinator Trevor Lovelock, who was going to referee the whole shooting match.

Shortly before arrival at the designated location for the pending "disaster" our three dummies were unceremoniously chucked overboard. Sorry fellas, but if you don't behave on my boat, over the side you go! Two live ones were put ashore on Fraser Island at the Ranger's Station jetty and told to stay near the beach. One was to go into the trees, just out of sight – but within hollering distance in case a hungry dingo fancied breakfast.

We then proceeded a short distance from the jetty to anchor up and set up the "incident" and Trevor made the call to the VMR base to report a vessel sighted on fire, and the position.

First on the scene was Coast Guard Sandy Straits vessel, *Pride of Maryborough*. They transferred a member of their crew, who rendered first aid to the survivors of the explosion and fire, which had been our exercise scenario. Shortly after, VMR's *Fishermans Corner Rescue* and *Boat Club Rescue* arrived on scene, and two Fire Brigade officers came aboard to follow up the primary first aid, and the *Pride of Maryborough* crewman transferred to *Fishermans Corner Rescue*.

The Furies completed a fire situation check and decided that the fire was out and that it was safe to remain on board and continue rendering first aid to the survivors, while *Fishermans Corner Rescue* checked out the situation on the beach. On their return they passed over a stretcher in order to prepare to transfer the unconscious victim. (Reg did a great job of being unconscious, whilst I kept the march flies off him ... but made a swift return to consciousness briefly when I removed my size 10 thong to whack one that was about to bite him in a sensitive area!)

The transfer of the stretcher patient was simulated for safety reasons, and the "walking wounded" transferred safely to *Fishermans Corner Rescue*, which then joined *Boat Club Rescue* at the Rangers Station jetty, where a simulated helicopter medivac took place. The most seriously injured were flown to the mainland, while the remainder were taken by rescue vessel to Hervey Bay for ongoing treatment. A shoreline search was then conducted from the rescue vessels, and all three "bodies" recovered.

On return the exercise concluded with a short debrief back at the Base, which was followed up with a more in-depth session a few days later.

Adrian Smith





SARS Day

At 05:00 Saturday, February 11, the first rescue crews were called in to start the search for a person missing in The Great Sandy Straits. The VMR Hervey Bay after hours radio operator had received a call from the Water Police that nobody wishes to receive – a person was missing at sea and a search and rescue operation must commence immediately. The first rescue boat departed base shortly afterwards and was soon joined by our second rescue boat along with two rescue boats from Coastguard Sandy Straits. Fortunately the weather was good, in fact it could not have been better for the crews who were scanning the waters of the Great Sandy Straits and the shorelines of all its islands and sandbars. With sophisticated computer modelling of tidal patterns in the area the Police were able to outline specific search areas with some certainty and these areas were intensively searched.

Around midday a crew swap was performed at River Heads and replacement crews continued the search through the afternoon. The constant scanning of the waters together with the heat of the day and the bright sunlight tires the eyes very quickly and it is good practice to refresh the crews on a regular basis. The opportunity was also taken to attend to a small engine problem on one of the boats – thanks must go to the team at Barney's Marine for coming down to River Heads at such short notice and wading out to the boat with all the necessary test equipment before quickly making the necessary repair.

With the weather being so good the weekend saw a large number of recreational boats out on the water and radio traffic was almost non stop for the duration. For VMR Hervey Bay it was all hands on deck as we used as many volunteers as we could to ensure our regular customers were looked after while the search teams were supported in the best possible manner. Administration staff and radio operators joined in with the boat crews to take on whatever role was necessary to support such a large operation. The training and planning that our teams put in for such an event mean that although the base may at times look and sound like chaos, it is an organised chaos where all of us understand the seriousness of the task at hand and how best to go about it.

Around dusk on the first day the boats returned to their respective bases for the night where they were refuelled ready for a start at daybreak the next morning.

On the second day our larger rescue vessel transported a group of SES volunteers to Fraser, Big Woody and Little Woody Islands so that they could conduct shoreline searches on foot. Meanwhile the other boats continued their planned search patterns. After a short stop for lunch the searching continued until nightfall before a return to base. Again, with the assistance of volunteers who had come down to the base for the evening, the boats were refuelled, cleaned and re-provisioned ready for another start at daybreak on Monday morning.

At dawn on the third day the VMR, Coastguard and Police vessels went out to commence further searches for the day. Being a business day not all our volunteers are available but we managed to plan a full day of searching with some crew members willing to stay on and help out for both morning and afternoon.

Sometimes there is a good result from a search and rescue operation and sometimes there is a result that you do not want but must be prepared for. So it was on the third day of this operation when the body of the missing person was located. The atmosphere that falls over the base at this time is difficult for all. There is nothing that can compensate for the loss of a loved one and the thoughts of our search and search support teams have been with the family for the duration of the operation and that will continue to be so for the days to come.

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DUTY Day

Sunday, October 31, was just a regular duty day for skipper Tom Hudson and the rostered crew, and dawned calm and clear. However the action was about to warm up.

A 6.7m centre console vessel reported overdue the previous evening had become the subject of a Police activation, but ten minutes after *Fishermans Corner Rescue* departed the base for Rooney's Point the Water Police advised that the vessel had been located, and the VMR vessel returned to base.

Two hours later there was a call from a 10.3m yacht, also near Rooney's, with eight people on board. This vessel reported that it had lost power, but was sailing south and would require assistance. *Fishermans Corner Rescue* set off to rendezvous with the yacht ... still in pleasant conditions. The rendezvous was made at 1230 hours, and the return trip commenced. However the weather conditions deteriorated, with a strong south-easterly and increasing seas making the five hour, slow tow uncomfortable, with the result that one member of the VMR crew suffered seasickness.

At last they arrived back safely in Urangan Harbour and were directed to put the yacht on a berth which had been arranged at the marina. Unluckily for Alex, still feeling a bit squeamish, the allocated berth was next to a vessel named *Pork Chop*!

The job was completed at 1820 hours, and the tired crew were certainly happy that there were no further call-outs that night!



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Obituaries

Robin Quick

Robin joined VMR Hervey Bay in late 2008. At the time he was studying for his Coxswain through TAFE and VMR provided additional sea time to assist him with his qualifications whilst at the same time enabling Robin to make a contribution to the community.



With 40 years experience of recreational yacht racing behind him, Robin brought valuable maritime knowledge to our organisation and consequently was a valued and respected member of the boat crew.

Robin received his Coxswain certification in October 2010.

Sadly Robin recently had to stand down from active duty due to ill health but he regularly kept in touch and was always keen to get back on duty as soon as possible.

Fred Woffenden

Fred grew up on the south coast of England before emigrating with his family to Australia as a 15 year old in 1952. Sadly Fred's mother died on the voyage out but his father and siblings continued with their new life in a new land.



In his later teen years Fred was to be found fencing the great stations of the outback but later working life saw him mainly in the Cairns area and in New Zealand. Fred and his wife Anne retired to Hervey Bay in 1995.

Fred joined VMR Hervey Bay a few years later as a crew member and radio operator – performing both roles until he retired from the boat crew in 2009.

Other aspects of VMR benefited from Fred's input – he and Anne used to run the office once a week for many years. He also filled the Provodore's shoes, ensuring supplies were always on hand for the office and the boats. Fred was a key player in the mailing out of the VMR quarterly magazine and a regular contributor to our fundraising sausage sizzles.

VMR Hervey Bay members attended a function for emergency services volunteers in Maryborough a few years ago, with the Queensland Premier, Director General and Minister for Emergency Services in attendance. Fred was there and went in to bat on our behalf. He made a point of nailing the Premier, the Director General and Minister (one of whom thought that VMR's role was to rescue injured marine wildlife) making it very clear to all of them what our role was, how much we save the Government by preventing small marine incidents from turning into major incidents ... and how little Government assistance we received. He pulled no

punches and received an assurance they would all look into improving the situation.

Fred's role in the radio room soon expanded to include the after hours oncall roster and the teaching of public radio courses, which he did with an excellent student pass rate for four years.

Joining the VMRHB Management Team, Fred took on the radio group co-ordinator role in 2007 which he held for two years. Stepping back into the role in September 2010, sadly it was to be only a short assignment before he became ill the following summer.

Fred contributed much to various emergency services over the years, including being one of the first on the ground in Darwin after Cyclone Tracey hit on Christmas Eve 1974. He was awarded the RSL ANZAC Award for Community Service in 2008 and the National Medal in 2010.

In December 2011 Commodore Tom Hudson visited Fred at home to present him with his 10 year service award from VMR Hervey Bay. During those 10 years Fred's cool, calm and collected voice on the radio would always inspire confidence in anyone calling for assistance – he just had a way of reassuring them that help was on the way, everything was under control.

Fred, you always had things under control. Bon voyage.

Donations

VMR Hervey Bay is extremely fortunate in having great support in the form of donations of various kinds from community organisations and the boating public.

Recently these have included a 9.9m Westerly Longbow cruising yacht, which was generously donated to assist with fundraising. This pretty little yacht has been put to tender, and anyone interested in looking her over and submitting an offer is welcome to inspect her at the VMR base at Uranang.

The Blue Water Boat Club at Burrum Heads works hard throughout the year raising funds which are distributed among local organisations. VMR crew member John Zielke recently presented Commodore Tom Hudson with a cheque for \$250, which is another very welcome addition to our unit's funds.

Alao the ladies from Bayside Handicrafts recently presented a cheque for \$816. Their loyalty and hard work has resulted in a total in excess of \$3,000 being raised for our unit during 2011.





If it weren't for donations such as these, VMR Hervey Bay would be unable to continue the costly business of maintaining and fuelling our rescue vessels and training crews and radio operators ... keeping boaties safe.

Remember Shipmates

“Remembering shipmates we have recently lost, this sunset over Hervey Bay from our rescue vessel seemed appropriate.

Vale Robin Quick and Fred Woffenden.”

**Cheers,
Eirlys Kennett
VMR Hervey Bay**



Crew Member Receives Community Service Award

Congratulations to John Zielke, VMRHB’s nominee for the 2011 RSL ANZAC Award for Community Service. John is an enthusiastic member of our rescue vessel crew and regularly assists in many other ways around the base, including helping at fundraising events. John received a handsome plaque to keep, and has donated the \$500 cheque to the unit. He joins an outstanding group of VMRHB volunteers who have received this award over the years. Well done, John!



At February’s crew training day Alex Hujber, Kevin Heitmann and Graeme Stanton were awarded their anchors as senior crew. Well done, guys ... great effort!

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burdekinVMR



Marine Rescue Burdekin has begun 2012 with a flying start, attending four rescues in January, plus taking delivery of our new primary rescue vessel, *Delta One* at the end of February. We are also celebrating our squad's 40th anniversary on March 10, and hosting the launch and blessing of *Delta One* the following morning.

Guests from VMRAQ and other squadrons will join Marine Rescue Burdekin with a sit-down dinner at the Bridge Restaurant in Home Hill on Saturday, March 10 at 6.30pm.

The launch and blessing of our new 9.9m Kevlcat 3700, (*Delta One*) at Molongle Creek boat ramp on Sunday morning beginning at 9am until 1pm is open for any interested parties to participate. Pastor Les Hennaway will do the blessing, and food and drinks will be available.

For those who are unfamiliar with Molongle Creek's facilities, there is a pier where *Delta One* can tie up making access to the boat just a step across. The sea trials were performed on the Sunshine Coast from the Kevlcat factory, and SARCO Arty Woods, with skipper Russell Young, put *Delta One* through its paces and were extremely impressed with its performances.

Marine Rescue Burdekin is launching its drive for more active members to participate in both the boat crew and radio roster areas. At present we have three full boat crews and the radio roster results in two to three days on weekend duty per year.

Many of our active members need to renew their First Aid and CPR certificates. These courses should be organized for the time as close as possible following the launch of *Delta One*, and another radio course will also be held soon.

Fundraising has taken up quite a lot of time these past few years, with barra burgers, fish in beer batter and chips as part of the Ayr Water Festival in the Tastes of the Burdekin evening. Without the help of Pam Bolam from Pro Quality Seafoods and donations of Barramundi from the local professional fishermen, this wouldn't have been able to take place. Neil and Leanne Green livened up the 2010 Water Festival dinner by hosting mudcrab races at the Water Festival dinner. They had the crabs dressed up as though in tuxedos on their backs, and the night was a huge success.

Burdekin is one of the rare districts where professional and recreational fishermen work together to help fundraise for Marine Rescue Burdekin. Several other clubs donate part of their fundraising event to our squadron. Masonic Lodge springs to mind.

Marine Rescue Burdekin purchased the stretcher and defibrillator for *Delta One*, helped with a donation of \$5000 from the Fuller Masonic Lodge. The lodge wanted their donation to go towards the purchase of the abovementioned items.

Well after such a positive start to the year, we hope to keep the momentum going and be able to purchase other equipment throughout the year.

We wish everyone a happy and safe year enjoying your time on the water.



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The summer holiday period was a busy time particularly with medivacs. At last count we had 25 evacuations from the island during Dec/Jan and I would suggest that Marine Rescue Raby Bay had a high number as well. Though it would be nice if people were to be sick, injured or go in to labour they would do it 9-5, but that is of course, not how it works. 2am callouts were few but did happen and we old blokes take the rest of the day to recover but it is good to know that we can provide this valuable service for both locals and visitors. The QAS do fabulous work and John Bradbury and his team are to be thanked for the care of their patients at all hours.

John also runs the Advanced Resuscitation and First Aid Courses for us on NSI at the UQ Research Centre at Dunwich and put 24 of us through his course over two weekends in January. During the year, John intends springing scenarios on us without notice to give us valuable practice in responding to emergencies in real time. Using oxygen therapy and the defib are things we need to be both familiar and confident with if we are to be prepared for the real thing.

On a disappointing note, we had a couple of occurrences where we launched the boat to collect stretcher cases from the pontoon at One Mile only to find boats tied up to it. This is okay for the public to do so provided they are there for no

longer than 20 minutes and someone can move the boat if required. Signage on the pontoon makes people aware of this. Unfortunately, a couple of skippers decided that it did not apply to them and went off to have a meal and a drink at The Little Ship Club. We found one skipper but not the other. As this section of the pontoon is the only place we can load stretchers straight onto the boat, we wasted valuable time in making alternative arrangements in order to get a patient in considerable distress onto the boat and to the mainland.

Redland City Council have met with us in an attempt to improve this situation.

Recently one of our skippers, James Griffith, had an interesting situation which he solved with his smart phone. James got a call from the master of a disabled boat who reckoned he was broken down somewhere between Amity and Moreton Island. On giving James his coordinates, they indicated the boat was somewhere off Cape Moreton, a long way from where he thought he was. James got the skipper to take some photos back to the respective islands with his phone and email or text them to him. On receiving them, James was able to pinpoint where the boat was and went straight to it.

We have dealt with a number of tows for varying reasons, two of which involved boats running aground on Bird Island



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just off Dunwich. One vessel was a 68ft flybridge which we stood no hope of moving. The next high tide at 2am was the best chance but they didn't have enough anchor rope to take the anchor out into the channel so our skipper tied our tow rope on to their anchor and dropped it in the channel. She fully expected to see them still there early in the morning but when she checked they were gone, tow rope and all. We tried unsuccessfully to raise them for the next two days so contacted the Water Police. We then received a call from a contrite owner down the Gold Coast with all manner of apologies. The rope was returned. Wonder if it had anything to do with the Police?

On Saturday, February 11, we were activated along with Marine Rescue Raby Bay to help with a boat and five POB that had overturned between exposed rocks known as The Group and the rocky headland between Frenchman's and Deadman's beaches. The five people had been dragged from the water by local lifesavers within minutes and apart from one casualty, no real injuries were sustained. On checking the boat the following day, it had been well and truly driven up onto the rocks by driving surf. The following week, MSQ came over to the island to inspect what was left. Just before sitting down to write this article, I saw a very large helicopter with rope and sling removing the wreck and depositing it on a low loader on the oval at Point Lookout. A very quick response from MSQ.

We were activated yet again on Wednesday 15 as there was a report of an EPIRB being set off between Shag and Flat Rocks off Point Lookout. By the time we got to the area, a Lifeguard had already performed a search on his jetski. We both found nothing but a search helicopter soon pinpointed the EPIRB as being an unregistered 243 on a boat on a hill outside some guy's house.

Both incidents had satisfactory outcomes but it did bring home to us of the need for a quick response to any incident on the waters off North Stradbroke Island beaches. Being based at Dunwich, and though being the closest unit to these beaches, it still necessitates us getting a crew to the

base, putting the boat in the water by tractor and getting down Rainbow Channel, through the bar and up to these beaches. This all takes valuable time. It has prompted us to officially liaise with both Point Lookout Lifesavers and the Lifeguard coordinator to ensure any initial response and coordination of an SAR could well be undertaken by them.

I reported in the previous journal issue of the generous sponsorship provided by SIBELCO through their Sandmining Community Benefit Fund. Our base now has new signs reflecting both our change to the Marine Rescue name and all our sponsors. More importantly, this sponsorship money has allowed us to budget for the future ensuring that we will be able to continue to provide our invaluable services to the residents/visitors on Straddy as well as to the boating community of Moreton Bay and outside waters. Along with the extra input of grant money, we will be putting new motors on our medivac vessel, *North Stradbroke 1* along with new pods and an electrical refurbishment. This boat is a good boat and with this work should allow it to be used long after the current personnel have retired from active service. The base (very tired as some of you may know) will have an internal makeover allowing us to provide a dedicated training area as well as a more efficient use of space and materials.

All of this requires the generous input of time, ideas and energy. We are fortunate to have many contributors but in particular, our President, Richard Dunn and Base Administrator, Colin Haigh who I swear has been working a Monty Pythonesque 26 hours a day. Colin has got our new computer system current with this century along with the redesigning of forms, data bases and myriad other things that are being thrust upon us by others. Colin has also recently completed a course allowing him to do our unit training along with our long standing UTO, Rob Kenyon.

We have also been fortunate to have some very good new recruits join us. All in all, we are looking forward to a good and safe year.

Doug Fraser



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