

# RESCUE

VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES

Autumn 2018

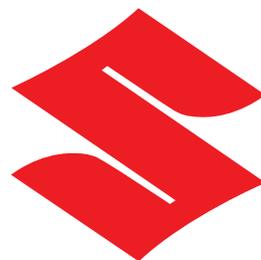


Official magazine of  
**MARINE RESCUE**  
QUEENSLAND

**FREE**

# “I SHOULD’VE SWITCHED SOONER.”

*Karl Stubbs the Commuter*



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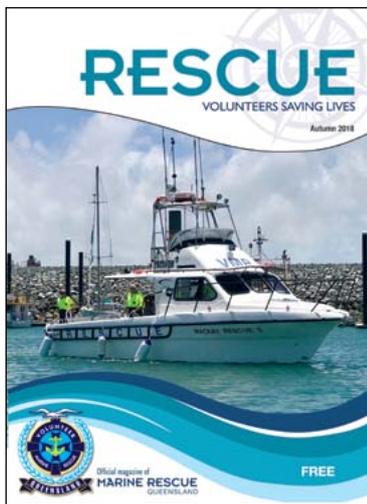
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## MARINE RESCUE QUEENSLAND



### FRONT COVER:

Pracs on  
Mackay Rescue.

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## RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

### 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

### AFFILIATED SQUADRONS

VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE ST PAULS	Moa Island	C/- Thursday Is.	0428 713 073
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE THURSDAY ISLAND	PO Box 1018	Thursday Is. 4875	0477 040 440
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE WEIPA	PO Box 580	Weipa 4874	(07) 4069 7535
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE AURUKUN	C/- Shire Council	Aurukun 4871	(07) 4060 6120
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE KARUMBA	PO Box 163	Karumba 4891	(07) 4745 9999
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BURKETOWN	PO Box 68	Burketown 4830	(07) 4745 5101
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE MORNINGTON IS	PO Box 1854	Gununa 4871	(07) 4745 7336
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BURDEKIN	PO Box 167	Ayr 4807	(07) 4783 1014
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BOWEN	PO Box 130	Bowen 4805	(07) 4786 1950
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE WHITSUNDAY	PO Box 298	Cannonvale 4802	(07) 4946 7207
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE MIDGE PT.	PO Box 624	Midge Point 4799	0408 946 940
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE MACKAY	PO Box 235	Mackay 4740	(07) 4955 5448
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE GLADSTONE	PO Box 797	Gladstone 4680	(07) 4972 3333
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE ROUND HILL	PO Box 282	Agnes Water 4677	(07) 4974 9383
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE BUNDABERG	PO Box 566	Bundaberg 4670	(07) 4159 4349
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
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE JACOBS WELL	PO Box 279	Beenleigh 4207	(07) 5546 1100
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE SOUTHPORT	PO Box 866	Southport 4215	(07) 5532 3417
VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE CURRUMBIN	PO Box 99	Currumbin 4223	(07) 5534 1000



## from the PRESIDENT'S CHAIR

**H**ello everyone. I am proud to say that in my first column 2018 I can report some significant achievements within Marine Rescue Queensland and that will lead to the next feature in this article – recognising the input of our people, as none of these achievements would be possible without our such dedicated efforts.

The first achievement of note is the launch of MRQ's Portal in Microsoft Office 365 SharePoint. The Portal is now our go-to for all training resources, activation information, and storage of documents such as Standard Operating Procedures for sharing between squadrons. There is also a squadron specific storage option. The Portal also offers members an email facility. If you don't have access just get onto Keith.

The transition from the Extranet database to the Portal did not just happen with the flick of a switch. It was the result of many many hours of hard work by our Chief Information Officer, Dave Paylor. Being a Chief usually means there must be 'Indians' and in fact

Dave had support from a great team of folks inside VMR and from his professional associations.

Rob Brock and his training team have done an excellent job to have a professional quality training resource for the MAR package migrated to the Portal so that there is a consistent standard of training resources available to all squadrons. This package has AMSA endorsement which is why our RTO is accredited to deliver commercial standard outcomes. Work is underway to reduce the paper work associated with assessments. A special thank you goes to Tom Hudson, a volunteer state training officer. Those of us who have interacted with Tom know that he is always available to make a convenient arrangement for a training or assessment visit over a massive territory stretching from Hervey Bay to the Gulf and Torres Strait.

The next achievement of note is the release of our new website. Thank to Tanya and Keith Williams for progressing this project. One of the benefits of the

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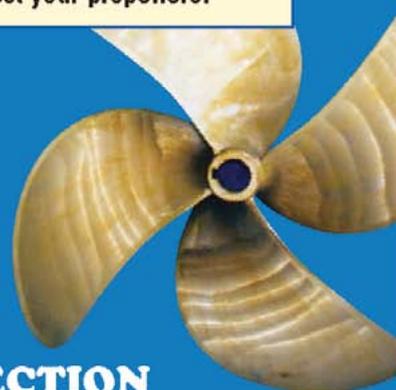
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Trivia masters – Keith and Dave mining the Portal at Round Hill.

new website is our ability to easily install updated information, so it is up to all of us to ensure content is current. I do know that the site is accessed by the general public due to the number of calls I get about vessels in difficulty, flare sightings and membership enquiries for non-weekday squadrons.

To manage the latter issue into the future our General Manager has acquired the 1 8000 RESCUE number for MRQ so that we will have a one stop shop for assistance calls. VMR Southport's 24 hour radio room will be the initial call centre for directing calls to appropriate squadrons. Note 1 800 RESCUE is owned by Marine Rescue NSW.

Of course, we cannot function without appropriate funding and that will be one of the topics for discussion with the government during negotiations for the next Service Agreement. Because of the large gap between Service Agreement dollars and the never-ending fund raising from our supportive communities, we rely heavily on grants from agencies such as the Gambling Community Benefit program. These grants are not as simple as 'the cheque is in the mail'. Again, success relies on the efforts of our people. In this instance I highlight the spectacular success of our Vice President, Glenn Norris, who over the past three years has attracted \$988,526 for squadrons across the state for projects as diverse as replacing outboard engines, replacing tractors, re-fitting primary rescue vessels, installation of a VHF

repeater to improve boating safety and upgrading launching ramps to facilitate all-tidal access to the water. It should also be noted that Jocelyn Ashcroft and some individual squadron members have been successful in acquiring grants from other sources.

The volunteers in the squadrons are our most valuable resource, but we have limited opportunity to celebrate and thank them for the dedicated efforts that maintain VMR. One small token is the awarding of Years of Service badges. Two hundred and fifty four of the recently

minted service badges have been distributed to members who have served from five to more than 35 years. Because we support National Search and Rescue resources and can be exposed to potentially traumatic situations, our members qualify for the National medal available to emergency services personnel after 15 years of service. We recently awarded 18 to members of VMR Burdekin and five long-serving members at VMR Round Hill. Thank you people.

As you are perusing this issue of the journal take a moment to think about where the content comes from, how is it funded and who does the massive editorial job. Firstly, we rely on our members for the content; funding comes from the advertising. Sponsorship is a two way street. Advertisers and sponsors will return provided there is value to them from the ad. So please support our advertisers and ensure the journal has wide circulation in maritime outlets. Lastly the journal only happens because of the long-term and dedicated efforts of our volunteer editor – Jocelyn Ashcroft. Thank you Jocelyn.

I was particularly proud of our state council members for the professional and collegiate approach to some challenging issues at the recent council meeting. We rapidly and successfully resolved an anomaly in the constitution and agreed on a policy to advance the capability of Marine Rescue Queensland to meet potential challenges.

**SOME OF THESE CHALLENGES INCLUDE:**

- Preparing for a potential review of marine rescue in Queensland. We will be seeking guidance from our members for thoughts on the future of marine rescue and have already made suggestion to QFES for key issues for review.
- With the transition for oversight of Domestic Commercial Vessels (including VMR vessels) from MSQ to AMSA by June 2018, there is still uncertainty about application of levies and charges to our operations. This issue is being addressed by MRQ Management and the National Marine Search and Rescue Committee.
- We can report signs of progress to address the gap in VHF marine weather forecasts when BOM withdraws this service from non- seven day VMR bases. A text to VHF voice facility has been developed by Maritime Radio in Tasmania. This system has very real prospects of filling the above gap if the ACMA review of the VHF spectrum can allocate channels 1-5 for marine weather and safety information.

By way of closing I return to the Portal. VMR Round Hill hosted State Council to a barbecue for the Friday night dinner. Our general manager and the

chief information officer provided the after-dinner entertainment with a trivia session based on the Portal. Dave was online with his smart phone.

**QUESTIONS:**

- **What is the average age of a VMR volunteer?**  
Answer: 54.5 years
  - o Challenge here is to attract and retain younger members.
- **What is the balance of male and female volunteers?** Answer: 81% male, 19% female
  - o Our active female members are spread across the spectrum from skippers, boat crew, radio operators and administrative areas.
- **What is the current amalgamated years of service for our volunteers?** Answer: 13,500 years.
  - o WOW.

It may have been called a trivia session, but the statistics are outstanding and very meaningful. Just a small demonstration of the power in the Portal.

**Graham Kingston**  
**President**  
**Marine Rescue Queensland**



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## VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

For the past few months I have been tripping around to several squadrons and keeping up to date with what has been happening. It's been a very mixed result around town. Some squadrons are very busy, some have been very quiet. I know my home base at VMR Southport, on the Gold Coast, has been chaotic, busier than I have ever seen in my 22 plus years service. I recently visited VMR Raby Bay. The day I was there, they were experiencing an extremely high number of calls for assistance, even having to call on a neighbouring VMR squadron North Stradbroke Island to assist to clear the backlog of jobs. I have spoken to members in the north of the state, they report it to be unusually quiet over the past couple of months. Whether it be busy or quiet, one thing stands out. That is the members willingness to be able to respond to a call for assistance when needed. The high spirits of the members within our organisation is our biggest asset. Once again I applaud all squadrons for their enthusiasm.

### ALL SQUADRONS ON THE EAST COAST ARE NOW PARTICIPATING, KINDLY LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER'S MEMBERS IN THEIR TIME OF NEED ON THE WATER

I have continued working with squadrons chasing financial grants of late. We have been very successful through the Qld Government's, Office of Liquor and Gaming's, Community Benefit Fund Program. VMR Jacobs Well were successful in sourcing funding to renovate their rescue base amenities and training room, VMR Round Hill received funding to repair and further extend a section of their boat ramp. VMR Mackay requested and received funding to install a lift at their rescue base to ensure their disabled members can continue to comfortably perform their duties. VMR Burketown are now in the process of organising the installation of a radio repeater station

on Sweers Island. This will be a huge safety benefit for vessel operators in the lower half of the Gulf of Carpentaria. An uninterrupted marine radio service has never been available before. This radio repeater will hopefully solve that. VMR Bribie Island are now busy getting their smallest Rescue vessel re-fitted. They received funding to bring this vessel back to the standard they require to capably undertake their role. VMR Thursday Island were successful in securing funding to install a telescope atop the island so that tourists and locals can further enjoy the beauty of the area. This also creates a fundraising opportunity for that squadron, in that revenue raised from the telescopes operation goes back to help run their operation. Federal Government MP Warren Entsch was instrumental in supporting VMR Thursday Island in getting this funding, as was Warren in helping VMR Weipa to source funding to assist in fitting out their new training room at the Weipa rescue base.

Every squadron has a wishlist of projects they need funding for. I enjoy helping these squadrons to get this funding. Its difficult, competition is fierce, however, its a challenge and everyone is up to that. We are very lucky and appreciative that we have opportunities to earn this available money and sincerely thank those who make VMR squadrons successful.

The Reciprocal Rights program I have been working on for some time has gathered pace at a rapid rate. All squadrons on the east coast are now participating, kindly looking after each other's members in their time of need on the water. This gives members an extra benefit with their membership, which in turn will hopefully encourage more people to join their local VMR, increasing much needed revenue to squadrons.

As Easter approaches we can expect another busy period on the water and I urge everyone to take care. I look forward to hearing the stories of the great work you do in protecting the boating public. Your efforts are very much appreciated.



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# VMRPOEM

**V**olunteers saving lives  
**M**ake friendships for life  
**R**escue those in need  
**V**ery good at adhering to Standard Operating Procedures.....mostly  
**O**ur families give up too  
**L**augh at the boat ramp antics  
**U**ppdate the SMS's...it never ends  
**N**ot allowed to fish off the boats  
**T**raining, training and more training  
**E**thical and empathetic  
**E**yes on the horizon when it's rough  
**R**ain, hail or shine we are there  
**S**wimming in a lifejacket is never easy  
**A**ren't overly keen on getting wet  
**R**opes, knots, splices and whipping in a flash  
**E**veryone works as a team  
**F**undraising takes a huge effort  
**A**mo's and Water Police... we work together well  
**B**oat cleaning and maintenance keeps us busy  
**U**p the creek without a paddle? We are the paddle!  
**L**ove our skippers.....even when they yell  
**O**pen, smooth and partially smooth waters are where we go  
**U**nderstanding and diplomatic  
**S**OLAS is our number one focus

"Don't ever  
 question the  
 value of  
 volunteers.  
 Noah's Ark was  
 built by  
 volunteers; the  
 Titanic was  
 built by  
 professionals."

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MAN OVER BOARD SYSTEM

## WEIPA

**A**t the time of writing Weipa is awaiting its first cyclone of the year. The wet season has turned up again this year a little latter than it should. It is a time for the crew to pull out the wet weather gear and see what has eaten what since its last appearance sometime back in April last year.

Weipa in conjunction with the state training team hosted a coxswain's course during the month of February. It was attended by 12 crew all of who did very well. It was a Gulf zone initiative some years back to run coxswain courses to enable those who wished to take a faster pace in their training. I think it has been a resounding success and in no short way to Robbie Brock and his teams efforts.

Activations have been around the norm and it was very pleasing to see nil call outs over the main Christmas holidays. Following a recent call out it has been decided to slow down our latest addition to the fleet, the 6.5m RHIB with a 90hp on the back. It was that or we would need to get some of our skippers a pilot's license to fly the thing. Thanks to the assistance of our state vice president Glen we have received two grants for the construction of our new training room. It will be supported by a large mezzanine floor above the boat deck in the base and in time will be a training hub for the gulf zone. On the subject of the base, our new 2500 litre duel axle fuel

tanker trailer got its first workout under fire the other day. The crew were very pleased with the operation and the speed of the fuel delivery.

On the training side, Bill Garnaut our beloved training officer has been working very hard to bring the Weipa data base up to date and has been putting in the hours to make the coxswains course a good experience for all. Bill attended the recent SAREX on Sweers Island (Lat 17°06.14S Long 139°37.07E) with crews from Mornington Island, Burketown, Karumba, Aurukun and Weipa. These get together are the only time these crews get to sit down and have chat and a beer and so much more aside from the training that takes place. Zone meetings are also held over these weekends and it is a great opportunity for those who do not get to attend one to have their two cents worth. I would hold one every year just to see the effect these weekends have on the morale of those that attend. The population of two that live on Sweers were as welcoming and friendly as ever. Despite the rather embarrassing cartoon that has been circulating of the gulf president following and unfortunate interaction with a triple road train. Tom Hudson who was in the car enroute to Karumba with said gulf president will no longer travel in a vehicle with said president. Thank you to Tex and Lyn for your assistance in making the weekend flow. And the cartoon which I



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**Maritime Safety Queensland**

# BOTTOMS UP? ALCOHOL AND BOATING DON'T MIX

**Recreational boat skippers must remain under 0.05 and are also responsible for the safety and alcohol consumption of their passengers.**

**Where can I get more information?**  
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Queensland  
Government

understand is now appearing on stubby coolers and coffee mugs.

Rio Tinto has been constructing a new 2 billion dollar mine across the harbour from Weipa and around 25kms south. A fair amount of travel by construction crews has been done via water, As a result Goodline, the town's major contractor to the mine site has stripped our jetty and landing ramp for use down at the mine site to get staff on and off the boats on arrival. With the road access now complete we are hoping we will be able to reinstate our walkway and pontoon over the next few months. It has been away for around 18 months.

The raffles continue of a Friday night at the Weipa Bowls club and as I have said in these pages before, I am not sure we would have much of a unit in town without their never ending cash support each and every week. It is such a waste of golden volunteer hours having them spend so much time, far more than they would ever do rescuing people, just to keep the ship afloat. There would not be a boatie anywhere in Queensland that would begrudge a \$20 increase on their boat licence fee if you told them they would have a far better life saving service at their disposal. 221,000 registered boats in the state

by \$20. That's \$4,902.000 and the state could keep their 2.6 million they spend on us now. Anyway, what do I know.

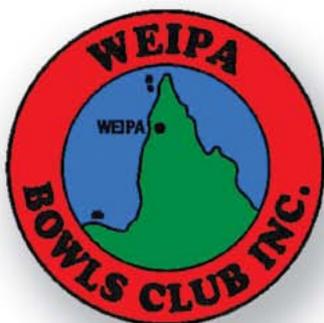
Overall the unit is going well. It has over the past couple of years gone through the four stages I have seen all organisations go through at some time or

**THE RAFFLES CONTINUE OF A FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE WEIPA BOWLS CLUB AND AS I HAVE SAID IN THESE PAGES BEFORE, I AM NOT SURE WE WOULD HAVE MUCH OF A UNIT IN TOWN WITHOUT THEIR NEVER ENDING CASH SUPPORT EACH AND EVERY WEEK**

other. All begin with the 'Forming' stage which is then followed by the 'Brain Storming' phase and then comes the great bit where the unit or whatever kicks into the 'Performing' sector. Hopefully the 'Mourning' stage will not fall upon us for some years yet where we will have to start the process all over again.

That's it from Weipa. A short article this time but not a lot happens between the 3m of rain over the wet.

# WEIPA BOWLS CLUB



## Trading Hours:

Monday - Sunday: 10am - late

## Sunday Social Bowls:

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## ST PAULS

For anyone that has spent any time in far North Qld, you will be familiar with how extreme the temperatures can be all year round. This article focuses on a small island in the Torres Straits, approximately 40nm north of Thursday Island, called Moa Island. The wind blows quite strongly, almost gale force, for the majority of the year, the salt air is extremely harsh, and the temperature averages 33°C. The islands population of approximately 500 people are indigenous, with boating being the most popular form of transport for the residents. VMR has a Squadron situated on the eastern side of this island at a settlement called St Pauls. Thirty dedicated people of the islands population are members of VMR St Pauls, and they operate a rescue vessel that generally covers a 30nm diameter of Moa Island.

VMR St Pauls are activated by the Thursday Island Water Police in times of marine search and rescue, and their current rescue vessel is a 9m NAIAD Rigid Hull Inflatable powered by 2 x 250hp Suzuki engines. This vessel has served the squadron for over eight years, and despite it no being the ideal vessel, it has fulfilled its role very well.

In February 2017, the Executive Committee of VMR Qld, along with the Management Committee of VMR St Pauls, decided this rescue vessel was in need of a refurbishment, and that funding should be sought for this to be carried out. The vessel had been vandalised in the previous year, and a lack

of repair resources in the Torres Straits, along with the extreme costs of repairing vessels, had seen the vessel become unuseable. A Grant Application was submitted to the Qld Governments Gaming Community Benefit Fund, and in July 2017, VMR St Pauls were named as a successful recipient of \$35,000 for this purpose.

The vessel, which had been on Thursday Island for some time was shipped back to Cairns, then road transported to the VMR Raby Bay base at Cleveland in Brisbane, as this squadron had generously offered a covered area in their boatshed for repairs to be undertaken. Brisbane was much easier for repairs, with an availability of supplies and suppliers which could not be as easily sourced in the north.

The vessel needed a major makeover, all the windows needed to be removed so that the frames could be powder coated and all the seals and latches replaced, the engines required stripping down and a thorough service. All of the electrics and electronics needed replacing, from the navigation equipment through to the radios and radio aerials, search and spot lights, windscreen wipers, and the helm switch panels. The seats were in need of being replaced and the trailer also needed significant repair. The vessel needed a super good clean as well.

VMR Qld agreed to manage this project, and work begun. The windows were removed, repaired and replaced, the engines were thoroughly serviced, the



The pontoon bags before the refurbishment.



The pontoon bags after the refurbishment.



The stern and engine legs before the refurbishment.



The stern and engine legs after the refurbishment.

electrics and electronics were removed, rewired and replaced, new seats were purchased, the trailer was repaired, all new safety equipment was purchased, lots of incidental repairs were carried out, and the vessel was cleaned and detailed and then put back into survey.

The budget was managed well, however, an overspend was necessary, fortunately not breaking the bank in doing so.

Throughout the whole process of this repair, VMR St Pauls were kept updated, remembering it was the pride and joy, and a valuable asset of the island community.

By December 2017, the VMR St Pauls vessel was beginning to look very smart again.

At the VMR Qld Executive Meeting of that same month, it was decided that, after consultation with VMR St Pauls, the Thursday Island Water Police, the VMR Qld State Council, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, that this vessel should not be returned to VMR St Pauls, and a better suited vessel should be sought. We definitely needed something different.

Currently VMR Qld is in the process of liaising with these stakeholders to source a better suited vessel, given the harsh weather and sea environment of the Torres Straits, the type of activations undertaken by the squadron, and the cost to operate and maintain a vessel in this region.

In January 2018, a gentleman undertaking training at VMR Raby Bay, on behalf of Marine Rescue Tasmania advised that it was possible that his organisation would have a use for the vessel and negotiations began to have the vessel valued. A very decent price was agreed upon, and the vessel was sold to Marine Rescue Tasmania.

This money from the sale will now be used to purchase a new vessel for VMR St Pauls, when a suitable vessel is decided on.

As a part of the project team, I must thank several people who contributed extraordinary efforts in seeing the success of this project through, VMR Qld State Training Officer Andy Ross, who has an engineering background, spending hours on everything from angle grinders to screwdrivers to effect repairs, VMR Raby Bay member Cliff Matfin, who had a solution for all the difficult tasks encountered, following through, doing the work himself to ensure all the new model parts fitted the the old model holes, Rex Scott from VMR Southport, who, as only Rex can do, spent hours of hard labour meticulously cleaning and buffing the vessel, only stopping because the power was turned off so he couldn't continue. A handful of members from VMR Raby Bay also contributed, launching and

retrieving the vessel so work could be done on the trailer, as well as constantly water testing the vessel after repairs were carried out.

State Training Manager Robert Brock, who was the courier, taking parts to and from repair shops, and organising the sale of the vessel. VMR Qld State

## THE BUDGET WAS MANAGED WELL, HOWEVER, AN OVERSPEND WAS NECESSARY, FORTUNATELY NOT BREAKING THE BANK IN DOING SO

Manager Keith Williams, who lent several items of his personal equipment to undertake some of the work, along with organising all the required paperwork to transfer the ownership of the vessel. You all should be proud of the result.

The project is now complete, and we hope Marine Rescue Tasmania are able to successfully utilise this vessel in meeting their role of saving lives at sea.

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# AN OVERVIEW OF LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE

## HISTORY

### LATITUDE

Both the Phoenicians (600 BC) and the Polynesians (400 AD) used the heavens to calculate latitude. Over the centuries, increasingly sophisticated devices, like the gnomon and the Arabian Kamel were designed, to measure the height of the sun and stars above the horizon and thereby measure latitude.

The first instruments used at sea to measure latitude were the quadrant and the astrolabe, both of which had been used for years by astronomers to measure the inclination of stars.

But knowing your latitude wasn't enough. To determine your exact location, you also need to measure your line of longitude.

### LONGITUDE

Great minds had tried for centuries to develop a method of determining longitude. Hipparchus, a Greek astronomer (190–120 BC), was the first to specify location using latitude and longitude as co-ordinates. He proposed a zero-meridian passing through Rhodes. However, his method required an accurate clock, something yet to be invented.

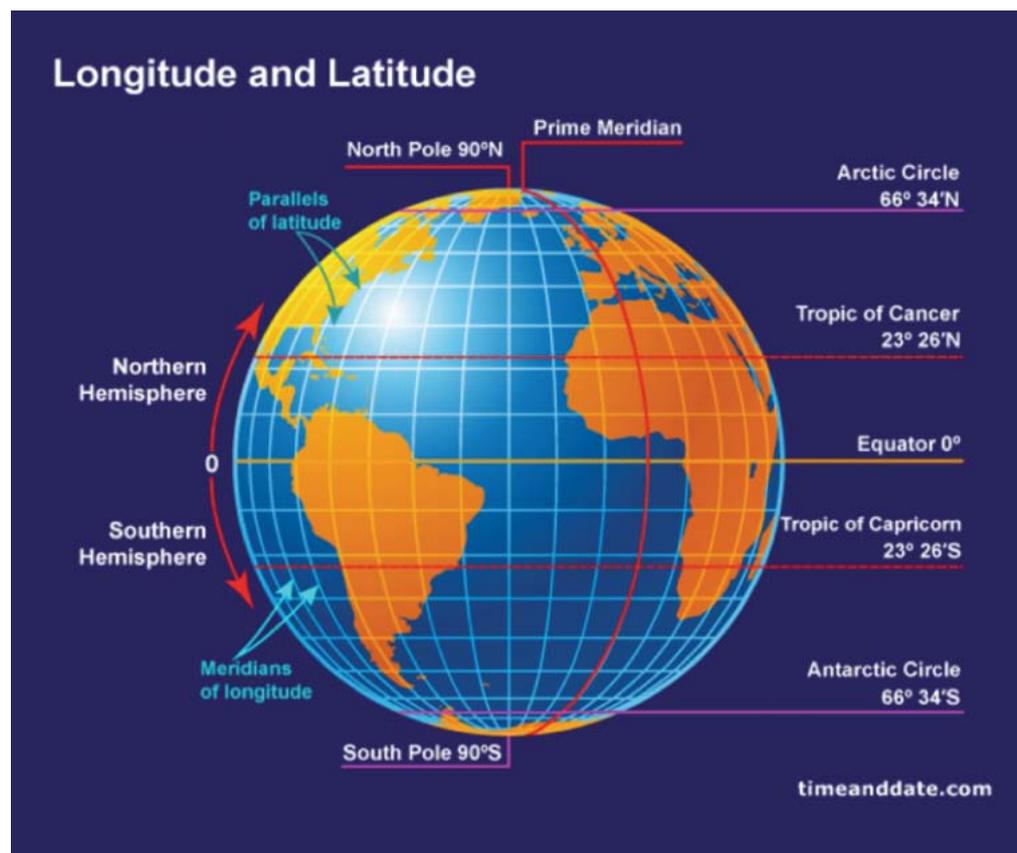
In 1667, the Italian astronomer Cassini was persuaded to visit the Académie Royale des Sciences observatory in Paris. The eclipses of Jupiter's moons were timed in Paris using a pendulum clock. In 1681, Cassini travelled to the island of Goree in the West Indies to repeat his measurements. Absolute time was found on the island by observing the eclipses, and this was compared to local time (obtained using the sun), so enabling the island's longitude to be calculated.

The problem of determining longitude on land had been solved, but the method was useless at sea because a ship's movements made it impossible.

After decades of diligence, John Harrison, a Yorkshire carpenter and amateur watch smith eventually produced his marine chronometer, H4, a spring-driven clock that on a voyage from England to Jamaica in 1761–62 lost just five seconds in over two months at sea. It was now possible for a navigator to determine local time by measuring high noon, and compare this to the absolute time, referenced to which had been set on an accurate chronometer at the start of the voyage. With this information, he could then determine the number of degrees of longitude that he'd traversed during his journey (the Earth revolves through 360° in 24 hours, so every one degree of longitude corresponds to four minutes).

An astronomer by the name of Charles Green assisted a certain Lieutenant James Cook to obtain longitude by a complex process involving observations, astronomical angles, and almanacs on his first voyage. However, Captain Cook used the newly developed marine chronometer, an instrument as revolutionary as GPS in its time, on all of his subsequent voyages.

### GRID MAPPING THE EARTH



The horizontal lines that cross the earth are called parallels of latitude. The vertical lines that cross the earth are called meridians of longitude. Each latitude and longitude line is numbered. This numbered grid system enables any place on Earth to be located easily at the point where the lines of latitude and longitude cross.

## LATITUDE

Imagine a protractor at the centre of the Earth, projecting lines out to the Earth's surface. 0 degrees points to the equator, which forms the longest line (or parallel) of latitude. 90 degrees points to the North Pole, and minus 90 degrees points to the South Pole. The poles form the shortest parallels (or points) of latitude. You can then project any angle between 0 and 90 degrees and draw a circle around the earth's surface. Moreton Bay lies on the 27 degrees South parallel, an imaginary ring around the Earth which it shares with Easter Island and Santa Caterina in Brazil, as well as well as a number of places in South Africa, Namibia, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay. Have a look on the globe above, 27 degrees South is just below of the Tropic of Capricorn line.

## LONGITUDE

The lines of longitude are vertical lines that encircle the earth. If we put our protractor on the North Pole and look down on the Earth, we can draw the lines (or meridians) of longitude. 0 degrees goes through the Prime Meridian which is a vertical line running from the North Pole to the South Pole that crosses over Greenwich, England. The lines of longitude are then drawn from 0 to 180 degrees west, and 0 to 180 degrees east. Where 180 degrees east and west lines meet, near Samoa, we have the International Dateline. Moreton Bay lies on the 153-degree East meridian which it shares with Woodlark Island in PNG, and Rasshua in Russia, as well as other places in Antarctica, PNG, Russia and the Pacific Ocean.

Have a look at the 0 degrees Prime Meridian on the Globe. You can see it passes through Greenwich in London, France, Spain, Algeria, West Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, and Antarctica.

So, the position 27 degrees South, 153 degrees East is unique to Moreton Bay. Don't forget to state that it's south latitude, and east longitude, north and west is a completely different place. And don't forget to state latitude first, confusion between the two isn't a great problem in Moreton Bay, but it can be in other locations, such as looking for a good diving location off Cape Greco in Cyprus, as both latitude and longitude are 34 degrees.

## LAT/LONG AND THE GPS

Basically, the Global Positioning System relies on a number of satellites orbiting the Earth, keeping exact time with each other, and sending out time signals.

The GPS receiver on your vessel or in your hand compares the time delay differences from a number of satellites (the more the better) caused by distance. This information is used to calculate how far your GPS receiver is from each satellite. As the satellites are at known locations in space, your position on Earth is unique to the distances measured from all the tracked satellites. The GPS receiver/chart plotter then overlays the calculated position on a digital map. Calculations and plots can be made in seconds and overlaid on the map on your GPS screen, to show a track line of where you've been, and a vector line to predict where you're going.

Most GPS receivers give latitude and longitude in three different ways (or notations).

1. Degrees, minutes (1/60 of a degree), and seconds (1/60 of a minute). As an example, 153 degrees, 17 minutes, and 11 seconds East is typically written as 153°17'11"E
2. Degrees, and decimals. For example, 153.28645°E
3. Degrees, minutes and decimals. For example, 153°17.187'E

Australia and Europe use DD°MM.mmm' (type 3 above) notation on marine GPS, America uses DD.dddd° (type 2 above) notation. As you can imagine a misunderstanding in notation can cause confusion, so please ensure you set your GPS to type DD°MM.mmm' notation when in Australia.

Many phones and tablets have GPS capability, and are very useful when vessel electrics fail, or the chart plotter refuses to give the position. There are a number of free and paid GPS apps which can give your position immediately. Unfortunately, the Emergency + app uses the American DD.dddd° notation but can be translated to the DD°MM.mmm' notation.

It is advisable that VMR members and associate members obtain a GPS app for emergency purposes, if they are able to do so.

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## BUNDABERG

### ACTIVATIONS

The past quarter generated 16 activations for VMR Bundaberg that resulted in 38 people being returned to safety. The activations included two for supply of fuel, two with fuel blockages (one with water contamination), two for yachts with loss of steering and two for training with the RACQ LifeFlight helicopter, one flare search and one EPIRB search.

After a busy morning training with the Life Flight RACQ helicopter on January 8, *Bundy Rescue 2* was activated by Gladstone Water Police at 14:30pm to assist with a mono hull sailing vessel that had suffered propulsion and electronic equipment failures 26nm north of Burnett Heads. *Bundy Rescue* two rendezvoused with the Water Police RHIB for assistance with rigging a tow line for the tow. The job was compounded by the fact that the solo sailor had no power for radios or lights, had no steering and was unable to get his head sail fully down. This required streaming a sea anchor behind the vessel to ensure tracking behind *Bundy Rescue 2*. The five hour tow was uneventful however, difficulty was experienced in anchoring him in the Burnett River due to the stiff breeze and not being able to fully get the head sail down. A tired crew finished this activation at midnight.



Setting up the tow for the disabled yacht.

*Bundy Rescue 2* was activated at 14:50 on January 13 to assist a 7m plate boat with three people on board. The vessel was returning to Burnett Heads from the Warrego Shoals when it developed an unresolved fuel blockage, some 16nm north of the river. The situation was challenging – for the fishermen as they had lost their anchor while fishing and the northerly had picked up to 20kts+ and for our crew in determining the actual position of the vessel. The cursor on the target vessel does not always correspond with the actual position. *Bundy Rescue 2* departed at 15:49. Once outside the river speed was constrained to around 11kts due to the oncoming sea with close packed waves of up to 2m in the freshening northerly. Quite a lot of white water

on the front deck. The drifting vessel was intercepted at 17:10 and taken in tow, after the fishermen were asked to don life jackets. *Bundy Rescue 2* had the vessel safely docked at Burnett Heads by 19:35, with the fishermen very grateful to be back safely, as winds were forecast to strengthen further ahead of a strong wind warning for Sunday.

This activation was a classic example of VMR's early intervention preventing escalation to an emergency if an EPIRB was activated or Channel 16 distress call had been placed after 18:00. The latter would then have required involvement of Government emergency service resources. Our afternoon weather broadcast on that day was instrumental in a vessel opting to return from Lady Elliot Island ahead of the forecast strong wind.



The sea was rising ahead of a SWW for this tow.

*Bundy Rescue 2* was activated just before 16:00 on January 11 to assist a charter boat with 12 POB and failure of both engines just to the north of Burnett Heads. The charter vessel had been returning to Burnett Heads in a 15kt northerly when one engine failed. The second gave out shortly after, leaving the vessel at anchor in sloppy seas. It transpired that water in fuel was the problem. The job was all wrapped up by 18:00 with some very happy and sea sick customers back on safe ground.

On January 16 we had one of those dream jobs. *Bundy Rescue 2* left in reasonable seas, to assist a competent solo sailor and VMR member for an uneventful tow and recovery. This all commenced at 12 midnight the previous night for our sailor who had lost the rudder off his 40' ketch, about 8nm north of the Burnett River. He anchored and spent an uncomfortable night in sloppy seas. He didn't want to call out VMR in the middle of the night and opted to make contact at 06:30 to ask for assistance. His reasoning was that he was safe and believed the recovery would be better effected in daylight. Whilst we appreciated his decision don't ever be afraid to call for assistance in a timely manner. The tow back to the Burnett River was uneventful. Luckily for him he was a VMR member and because of coverage with a towing levy, there was no charge to him.



This ketch had lost its rudder.

A VMR member and his two fishing buddies were grateful for the assistance of *Bundy Rescue* on February 25 after the water pump on the outboard motor of their 5.5m runabout overheated and failed when they were some 16nm east of Burnett Heads. The straight forward tow was completed in relatively calm conditions and they were safely returned to the Burnett Head's boat ramp just before sunset.



Weighted line coming down.



High line is on Bundy Rescue.



Receiving the tow hook.

VMR Bundaberg has exercised with the RACQ LifeFlight helicopter on two occasions this quarter. These exercises are required for helicopter pilots and flight crew reaccreditation on a three monthly cycle. The sorties involve deployment of a dummy life raft / communications package and its recovery by VMR; the transfer of a crewman from the chopper to our vessel and recovery of a swimmer from the ocean. There is always a debrief to review and improve the exercise. The exercise on February 27 was conducted in 1-1.5m seas, with *Bundy Rescue 2* underway at 6kts, with the wind at 30° off the port side.



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## BUNDABERG



Pilot's view of Bundy Rescue underway.

the river. This footage was used in a news item on the importance of training for VMR crews and will also be used in a promotional video for the Fishing Classic.



Video of setting up a tow.

### VMR BUNDABERG FAMILY FISHING CLASSIC

How time flies. We are now well on the way to organising the 13th VMR Bundaberg Family Fishing Classic for June 29 to July 1, 2018. Last year we attracted a registration of 1,479 people. This year the lucky prize draw pool again includes three Quintrex boat and outboard packages valued at \$41,000. There will be two 2 x 390 Quintrex Explorer runabouts with 30hp outboards and trailers as well as a Quintrex Renegade 420 with a 40hp Suzuki outboard. The boat packages include registration and safety packs. We are negotiating to have a major fireworks display as the finale to the Saturday night program. As we say – “mark the date – get the bait”, but you don't have to fish to be in the lucky draws.



Happy winner of a similar 420 Renegade in 2016.



Vision and sound also captured for EPIRB search.

Just before Christmas we teamed with one of our major sponsors (Harvey Norman Bundaberg) to assist Santa deliver the Harvey Norman toy run to the children's ward at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Santa was one of our own and he had actually sailed in the Arctic.



Loading to toys at Harvey Norman.

### PROMOTIONS

We have a strong ethic at VMR Bundaberg of promoting the work we do to maintain our connection with the community. To this end we regularly forward stories, photos and videos to our local TV channels. On January 24 we hosted a WIN Network camera crew to get updated footage of a training session in



Santa arrives at the hospital.



The new Ford Ranger for VMR488.

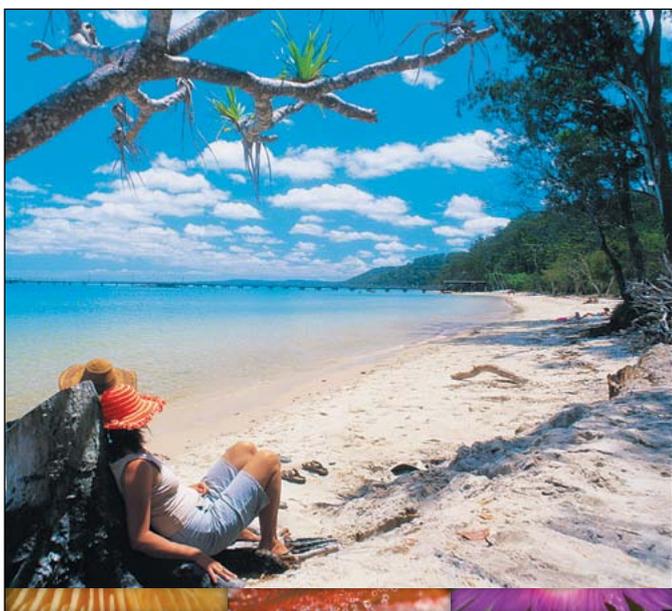
In other promotions we have just upgraded to a new Ford Ranger 4x4 vehicle to tow our 5.5m inshore vessel. The vehicle was purchased locally with prominent signwriting done by SignRite in Bundaberg.

For many years we have had *Bundy Rescue* replica aluminium donation boxes at several commercial supporters in Bundaberg. In response to requests for more donation boxes our enterprising and tech savvy volunteers resorted to 3D printing of 10 plastic donation vessels. They are certainly outstanding and thanks to SignRite for the stick-on livery.



3D printed plastic donation vessels.

Graham Kingston  
Public Relations Officer



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## GLADSTONE

## RAFTING FOR A CAUSE

The annual Boyne River Raft Up party has held on February 10, 2018 and VMR Gladstone went along to keep an eye out for the rafters. It all started back in 2014 when a prank gone wrong on a camping trip at an isolated spot called for the RACQ Capricorn helicopter to come to the rescue in the middle of the night.

Organiser Chris Faux said "Over 10 years ago a group of mates and I used to float down the river on rafts for a bit of fun. After my rescue, I wanted to organise an event where we could raise money and give back to organisations like RACQ Capricorn Helicopter Service. I called on my friends to get together to go rafting for a good cause and the event has been building ever since 2014."



"It has always been a big success with people from all age groups from the community joining in the fun," said Chris.

This year the event raised over \$1600 with the proceeds going to the RACQ Capricorn Helicopter Service and VMR Gladstone.

For the last few years, VMR Gladstone has been on hand at the Raft Up. "QGC Rescue III was keeping an eye on the rafters making sure that all returned to land safely," said Mike Lutze, President, VMR Gladstone. "I would like to thank Chris and all participants for their kind donation of \$500 to us," said Mike.

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH VMR GLADSTONE

What else do you do on a Sunday but head to the local Emergency Services Community Day. Organised by PCYC, VMR Gladstone along with Water Police, SES, Surf Life Savers, Fire Brigade and MSQ just to name a few.

A number of volunteers were on hand to answer questions from the locals about VMR. The big drawcard was QGC Rescue III, with lots of budding volunteers keen to climb on board and have a look.



Mike Lutze and Jeff Caldwell set up and waiting for the crowds.



Jeff Caldwell with some future volunteers on board QGC Rescue III.

"It was great to see so many members of the community interested in all of the organisations on display," said Mike Lutze, President VMR Gladstone. "This type of event gives us the ability to talk with those in the community who aren't necessarily boaties, making them aware of what we do and how rewarding it is to volunteer with us," said Mike.

The event was such a success that organisers are looking at making it bigger and better next year.

### THANKS!

A big thanks to Jill's Petcare for the \$300 donation to VMR Gladstone in recognition for the time and effort put in to the search for *FV Dianne*.

"One of the best parts of being part of an organisation like VMR Gladstone is the amazing support we get from our locals" said Mike Lutze, President.

Thanks Jill's Petcare your donation is very much appreciated.



Mike Lutze (President) with Jill and Hamish McLeod (Chief Controller).

### I SAW THE SIGN!

Gladstone boaties will soon see a new sign at the VMR Gladstone base. A large LED sign will be placed near the boat shed and will be used to communicate boating safety messages including the all-important log on and log off message.

"VMR Gladstone were awarded \$30,000 for the sign through the QGC Communities Fund" said Mike Lutze, President VMR Gladstone. "The sign can be programmed with variable messages for example the weather, tide times, safety alerts in the harbour and general boating safety messages. This type of sign can also provide messaging in a timely manner on any emerging issues of boating and community safety," said Mike.

The QGC Communities Fund provides grants to not-for-profit organisations based in Gladstone and the Western Downs Regional Council areas to deliver community projects. QGC has long been a major supporter of local organisations and continues to do so through the Communities Fund.

Mike said "We are always looking for ways to encourage anyone who goes boating to use the free log on and log off service. When the weather is great and the carpark is overflowing, it is disappointing to see that less than half of those out on the water have logged on with us. With QGC's support on this project, we will have a highly visible reminder of this service."



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# DISTRESS FLARES

A flare is a type of pyrotechnic that produces a brilliant light or intense heat without an explosion. Flares are used for signalling, illumination, or defensive countermeasures in civilian and military situations. Projectile pyrotechnics may be dropped from aircraft, fired from rocket or artillery or deployed by pistol like flare guns or handheld percussive tubes.

The earliest recorded use of gunpowder for signaling purposes was the 'signal bomb' used by the Chinese Song Dynasty as the Mongol led Yuan Dynasty besieged Yangzhou in 1276. These soft-shelled bombs, were timed to explode in mid-air, were used to send messages to a detachment or troops far in the distance.

Flares produce their light through the combustion of pyrotechnic composition. The ingredients are varied, but often based on strontium nitrate, potassium nitrate, or potassium perchlorate and mixed with a fuel such as charcoal, sulfur, sawdust, aluminum, magnesium or a suitable polymeric resin. Flares may be colored by the inclusion of pyrotechnic colorants. Calcium flares are used underwater to illuminate submerged objects.

SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea) has standards for visual signals, including both handheld and aerial flares. Handheld flares must burn for at least one minute at an average luminosity of 15,000 candela, while aerial flares must burn for at least 40 seconds with 30,000 candela average luminosity. Nations which are members of SOLAS require vessels to carry visual signals on board.

There are three different types of flares carried on board ships; red handheld, orange smoke and parachute. These are designed for day or night use and are used to attract attention of other boats or passing aircraft.

Flares must be regularly inspected (expiry is three years from date of manufacture) and stowed in a readily accessible position in a watertight container away from heat. It is vital that everyone onboard a vessel know where they are kept and the correct safety precautions and firing procedures. Operating instructions may differ depending on the manufacturer. Instructions must be read and carefully followed.



by Sharon McLean

## EFFECTIVE RANGES OF FLARES IN CONDITIONS OF GOOD VISIBILITY ARE:

### At night:

- Parachute flare – 25-35nm;
- Hand held – 5-10nm.

### By day:

- Orange smoke – very limited, up to 1.4nm, better from the air;
- Red (hand and parachute) may attract attention by day.

There are severe penalties for misuse of flares and any offender may also face the costs of labour undertaken, risk incurred, or loss sustained in consequence of misuse.

You must dispose of your expired flares as soon as possible. Expiry dates are stamped on the side of each flare. For a list of flare disposal locations, refer the MSQ website <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Distress-signals/Flare-disposal-locations>



Flare kit.



Parachute flare.



Orange smoke flare.

I don't know if I am getting old or soft from living and working in air-conditioning (or both) but this summer certainly felt hotter than normal. Daytime temperatures in the high 30's with apparent temps well over 40 are extreme for our coastal community, and this wasn't just for one or two days but for weeks. The good news was that after an extremely dry January we did record close to average rainfall in February and while this drove the humidity through the proverbial roof it did lower the temperature.

## LATEST WEATHER OBSERVATIONS FOR MACKAY

IDQ60801

Issued at 2:02 pm EST Wednesday 3 January 2018 (issued every 3

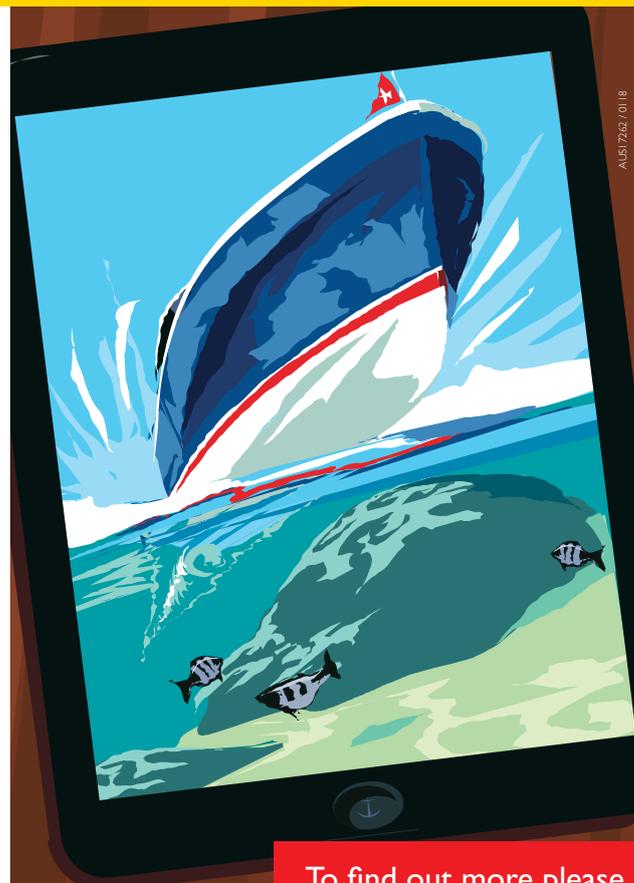
[About weather observations](#) | [Map of weather stations](#) | [Latest w](#)  
[Station Details](#) ID: 033119 Name: MACKAY M.O Lat: -21.12 L  
 Data from the previous 72 hours. | See also: [Recent months at Mac](#)

Date/Time EST	Temp °C	App Temp °C	Dew Point °C	Rel Hum %	Delta-T °C
03/02:00pm	37.1	42.4	25.9	52	8.1

It was during one of those hot, humid nights that the VMR448 duty skipper was awoken by the Water Police for an EPIRB activation 2nm from the Mackay harbour. This activation was surprisingly similar to the incident we attended in late 2017 where a small vessel was travelling at night and overturned resulting in two persons in the water. Happily, in this case both persons were recovered from the water and safely returned to Mackay where they were checked out by the waiting paramedics. In both cases the weather and sea conditions were no more than 'moderate' but the common denominators of small boats travelling long distances in the dark should be a wakeup call to all boaters to avoid doing this unless absolutely necessary. On a good note, the master of the vessel had a grab bag handy which even contained a water proof, hand held two-way radio and was able to relay messages from the hull of his upturned boat. This activation had one other point worth noting. The vessel had been heavily modified by the owner and proved impossible to right in the water. This meant a slow tow home before the boat was tipped back over on the boat ramp using a four-wheel drive and ropes.

The weather during the period also witnessed a series of severe thunder storms rolling through the district, mostly at night. Reports of 50kt gusts were common from Mackay out to the reef and with calm days there were a number of vessels caught out as the cells rolled through. Luckily, no vessels were damaged or lost during these storms although VMR448 did respond to an EPIRB activated by a 30ft boat that was partially disabled and having trouble navigating through the shipping channel. While a number of 'standard' activations for mechanical and fuel issues has kept the squad busy, one other activation was of interest due to an outstanding coincidence. VMR448

## Wrong zoom factor?



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## MACKAY



was activated by the water police just after sunrise to investigate a reported flare sighting. While flare sightings can be a bit hit and miss when reported by members of the general public, this sighting was first reported by a staff member in the airport control tower. This in itself

was enough for the water police to activate not only VMR but also send the RACQ rescue helicopter skyward but then a second reported sighting was phoned in by not only a member of the public but by off-duty VMR448 skipper Charles Linsley who witnessed the red light from his home in North Mackay. In this instance, nothing was found by the search parties with the source of the light unknown although triangulation of the two sighting's placed it possibly over land.

These activations have proved the perfect platform to introduce our newly appointed VMR coxswains to the day to day duties that come with the position. Congratulations go to Tony Curtis, Tyson Polgardy, Emanuel Darmanin, Peter Hay and Adrian Graf on completing their training and being appointed by the committee. As new coxswain they will work closely with the existing skippers and are subject to certain restrictions as they gain valuable experience on the water. Tyson is also to be congratulated on gaining his Commercial Coxswain qualification while in another boost to the squad's qualifications, Charles

Linsley has gained his Master <24m ticket. With two current skippers now holding this qualification and two commercial NC coxswains, VMR448 has an enviable depth of experience in our ranks.

Crew numbers have also increased significantly following a recruitment drive that

yielded over 20 applicants. With experience levels amongst the new trainees ranging greatly from non-boat owners to a Master 3 Captain, the input of new ideas and skills will be of massive benefit to the squad. Squad UTC Don Bowden along with assistant UTC's Charles and Tyson now have the mammoth task of getting the new recruits up to speed and equipped with their Elements of Shipboard Safety qualifications.

### INFLATABLE PFD'S

With the recent focus on checking life jackets for rotten webbing and discussion on the pros and cons of using inflatable PFD's instead of regular jackets, I would like to add a personal note to the topic.

In my own vessel (a 5m side console sports fisher) I carry

a standard life jacket for each person onboard but also carry PFD's we use at times when underway. I have religiously self-tested these jackets annually and replaced the gas canister on each using the manufacturer's instructions. I also have a Cyalume light stick attached to each jacket. One year ago, I bought an extra PFD and somehow missed the annual inspection of the original units. It wasn't until I inspected the new jacket this year that I realised this fact and frighteningly it could have had serious consequences.

Upon opening the Velcro sides, it was immediately evident there was severe corrosion on the gas canisters. Self-testing is normally accomplished by inflating the jacket manually using the mouthpiece and ensuring they remain inflated for an extended period, but when I did this neither one held pressure. Out of interest I inflated both using the gas canister and while they did inflate, it highlighted there were pin holes worn through the fabric where the rusted canisters were in contact. Both jackets went in the bin and were replaced. These jackets had been well cared for, being hosed off after use and hung in the shade to dry before being returned to the vessel. On hindsight, perhaps opening the sides so the canister and internal fabric can dry completely would be a good idea, but it does not diminish that fact that these units were not inspected when they should have been



Don Bowden and Tyson Polgardy.

and would have been of poor assistance if I was in the water and depending on them.

One highlight however was the Cyalume sticks. They had been unchanged on the jacket since new and when I tested one it worked perfectly, staying bright for over two hours. So, the moral of this story is if you have inflatable PFD's on your vessel ensure they are inspected and tested every 12 months as required and keep a record of the inspection and cylinder replacement onboard.

## MEET THE VMR448 MACKAY SKIPPERS

This quarter we introduce **Don Bowden**.

### Began with VMR:

I joined in August 2012 as crew after being introduced to VMR Mackay by Geoff Ray and Charles Linsley who were involved with VMR as skippers.



### Why VMR:

I joined VMR because it was a worthy community based organisation and I had a boating background. On joining, I was employed as a fire fighter with Queensland Fire and Emergency Service and as a TAFE Teacher. I have since retired and have applied my training back ground to VMR and I am the UTC and skipper for VMR.

### Most memorable activation:

Well it's hard to single out any one activation but two come to mind.

We were called to a SAR after we received a report of a yachtsman who had been lost off a catamaran at the Percy Islands, 65 miles south of Mackay. While it had been a period of rough weather (30kts plus), when we were tasked to travel down to the islands the weather had abated somewhat but the seas were big, and winds were still averaging over 20kts. When we arrived, we were tasked with searching the immediate area while other resources were being assembled. We enjoyed the hospitality of the island and had stewed goat for dinner one evening with the island residents. We continued searching through the next day until we were relieved by a fresh crew from Mackay. Throughout the search we experienced strong currents and large waves in and around the islands. Sadly, the yachtsman was not found.

The other job of note was when we were activated for an EPIRB four miles east of Bailey Island. We assembled the crew and put *Mackay Rescue 6* in the water and were preparing to leave when we were stood down from the activation and tasked with the

recovery of a body. We changed vessels to *Mackay Rescue 5* and embarked two police officers who were to accompany us. The winds were 15-20kts and darkness was approaching. Under police direction we left the harbour and made best possible speed in the conditions, and coordinated for the RACQ Rescue helicopter to be over head on our arrival. When we arrived in the vicinity a flashing light could be seen and the helicopter directed us to the overturned vessel with the aid of a search light. A small RHIB was launched and taken to the vessel where the EPIRB was retrieved and the deceased person located and recovered. A request was made to recover the vessel if possible and an attempt was made to right it, so it could be towed the 20nm back to Mackay. Due to the sea conditions and night operations the attempt was abandoned, and extra flashing lights and floats were secured to the boat. In the ensuing two days a large search failed to locate the hull and it was thought to have sunk. It was eventually recovered a month later when it drifted onto a reef some 20 miles south of Mackay.

### Have you been involved in any life threatening situations or emergency activations?

We had strong winds 25-30kts when we received a call from a yacht that had motor failure and required assistance. The yacht was requested to continue sailing towards the harbour while we organised a crew.

Upon leaving the marina and entering the commercial area, the situation was further complicated by the fact a large ship was leaving the berth and while the pilot vessel requested the yacht to turn around and standoff he failed to adhere to these instructions and continued into the harbour heads under sail. We were also informed that the yacht was trailing ropes and be careful not to foul them. With a freighter and two tugs bearing down on us and the yacht surfing in on a large swell we were not able to turn him around, so it became a race to get a line to him and clear the area.

The ship had to be held in the harbour while skipper Graham Brake was able to bring *Mackay Rescue 5* alongside and secure the yacht.

### What are your current roles in VMR?

I am currently the squad UTS, and active skipper and a committee member.

### Interests outside of VMR:

Now retired, I race my sailing boat with the Mackay Yacht Club and attend race week in the Whitsundays. Fishing, community visiting and assisting family as required fill up my days.

I plan to travel overseas this year with my wife.

# 'DISTANCE OFF': IT APPLIES AMONG THE WAVES TOO!



**The temptation to get out amongst the waves when they're really pumping is simply too big for many of us to ignore.**

That includes personal watercraft operators and others who favour small recreational craft. And, judging by what we saw from quite a few of them when ex-Tropical Cyclone Gita passed by southeast Queensland en route to New Zealand, the temptation is in fact so big that it can make some of us forget our safety obligations.

On the beaches of the Gold Coast and elsewhere, PWC operators and their tow-in companions were out there among the waves whipped up by the storm, looking to get their share of the excitement.

Which was all very well, provided they were prepared to abide by the law.

The problem was, some apparently weren't. We saw plenty of evidence of PWC operators ploughing through the waves with skiers in tow, in close proximity to, and showing scant regard for, swimmers and surfers.

Let's be clear – the skin, muscle and bones of the average surfer or swimmer among the waves are no match for the fibreglass hull of a PWC travelling at speed.

In a collision there would be no contest. But it's equally certain there would be not one, but two certain losers – the badly or terminally injured surfer or swimmer and the prosecuted PWC operator!

The Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 establishes a general safety obligation on persons involved in the operation of a ship (which includes a PWC) not to cause the ship to be operated unsafely. The Act further establishes that a ship is operated unsafely if it is operated in a way that causes a marine incident. A marine incident can include the death or grievous bodily harm to a person caused by a ship's operations, or just danger to a person caused by a ship's operations.

The maximum penalty for a marine incident that causes the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person is 5,000 penalty units or imprisonment for two years.

When you look at what is provided in the Act there would be little point in a PWC operator who has caused death or grievous bodily harm to a swimmer arguing that the swimmer should have seen the PWC coming. It really wouldn't matter, because the Act places the obligation on the operator of the ship.

However, Maritime Safety Queensland has not been prepared to wait for the point to be proved in a court of law. At the popular beaches and inlets of the

Gold Coast the potential for tragic interaction between swimmers and tow-in surfers is such that MSQ has developed a tow-in surfing Code of Conduct, endorsed by Surfing Queensland and the Gold Coast City Council, that reinforces the intent of the Act by making it clear that, among other things:

- It is the responsibility of the PWC operator, when not carrying an observer and engaged in tow-in surfing, to give right of way to all other boating or ocean recreation activities
- PWC operators must not operate their watercraft at a speed of more than 6kts within 200m of all persons in the water other than the person being towed, all paddle surfers in the water, and all other ships or watercraft in the water (the 'distance off' rule).

Further provisions of the Code of Conduct can be found here.

The purpose of this article is not to malign PWC operators in general. We know that most PWC riders do so responsibly and in compliance with the law.

But we're willing to bet that those who exhibit the most need to be familiar with the rules are not, by nature, avid readers of legislation or codes. They

## PWC OPERATORS MUST NOT OPERATE THEIR WATERCRAFT AT A SPEED OF MORE THAN 6KTS WITHIN 200M OF ALL PERSONS IN THE WATER

are probably more likely to be into social media. So we recently created a short video available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads Facebook page that gets the essential 'vibe of the thing' across in just 41 seconds.

<https://www.facebook.com/TMRQId/videos/1688311457878397/>

It's worth a watch because it just might save a life and prevent a prison sentence. If you know anyone who needs to see it, or who could benefit from a refresher on the relevant legislation, we'd be delighted if you could share this article or its links with them.

In the meantime we'd simply like to say to any PWC operator looking to enjoy the next set of big waves, wherever they may be: by all means do so, but observe your 'distance off' requirements. There should be enough water for everyone.





*Signature*

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## HERVEY BAY

This period has been busy for us with activations and activities involving our members around the community. Some interesting activations from this period:

A medivac from Kingfisher Bay Resort for three patients at the same time; crew were aware of two when they left the base but the island paramedic managed to find another one as well.

Five weeks partnering Surf Life Saving Queensland: A stinger awareness program became a real education program for crews involved as well as boaties and campers all along the north-west coastline of Fraser Island.

A Jet-ski broken down with a couple of sharks keeping watch had a lady very pleased to step onto our rescue vessel. She was a little concerned regarding her partner who had blood trickling down his leg from an earlier injury.

An imported \$300,000, 8m open speciality fishing boat with a 300hp outboard out of 2-stroke oil. We delivered 20 litres of oil and suggested that they follow us back to the harbour!

### **SURF LIFE SAVING QUEENSLAND INITIATIVE**

A new initiative by Surf Life Saving Queensland saw Marine Rescue Hervey Bay take lifeguards over to the western side of Fraser Island each day from December 27, 2017 through until January 21, 2018. The surf lifesavers were conducting stinger drags and



actively educating campers on the potential dangers of marine stingers in the water.

This turned into a public awareness and education campaign for our crews as well as holidaymakers and beachgoers on the Fraser Island. Drags were undertaken along the main beaches as well as in the many creeks and waterways that flow from the island.

A spate of serious stings on Fraser Island reported in 2016/17 led to SLSQ conducting some drags in January 2017. Nothing was found by SLSQ in 2016/17 but this year was a different story. A number of Irukandji were discovered in the creeks.

SLSQ regional manager Craig Holden explains the discovery of the Irukandji means beachgoers on the western side of Fraser Island must remain extra vigilant about their personal safety. While conditions are hot and humid, SLSQ recommended that everyone stay out of the water entirely on that western side of the island. He urged that "If anyone is stung on Fraser Island they should douse the area with vinegar as soon as possible and immediately call triple zero to seek emergency medical assistance."

"We don't want to cause widespread panic, but it is really important for people to exercise caution and put safety first at all times. This includes taking a bottle of vinegar with you if you are heading to the island, to be prepared to treat a sting."

Marine Rescue Hervey Bay are lucky to have been donated stinger suits for the use of crew members who may have to get into the water. Thanks to Home Grown Brands Australia.



## WELLNESS SUPPORT GROUP

What, you might ask, is this??

For a number of years, John Smith, Commodore of Marine Rescue Hervey Bay has been trying to get a local peer support program up and running. All emergency services (and many workplaces) have people within their ranks who are there to chat about any issues that a working member may have.

Marine Rescue Hervey Bay now has a Wellness Support Group. Seven of our members have undertaken training put together by Lifeline. This is about maintaining good mental health for all of our working members.

Picture a search and rescue, where we are involved in searching for a missing person. Even if WE do not find the person (dead or alive), this type of activation takes a toll on EVERYONE that is involved. Just to sit and talk it through with others who may be feeling

Workplace Support Group members with Commodore John Smith and Lifeline Trainers.

similar emotions to you, is important for a person's mental health. We are not talking about counselling, psychologists or psychiatrists although they may be an option if necessary. Sometimes just the smallest of things 'rattle our cage' and bring back past memories. If these 'memories' or the incident keep you awake at night, then it is important to have a chat about it with someone. This is what our Wellness Support Group members are here for.

We thank them for their commitment to this task and know the benefits that it will make for our working members.

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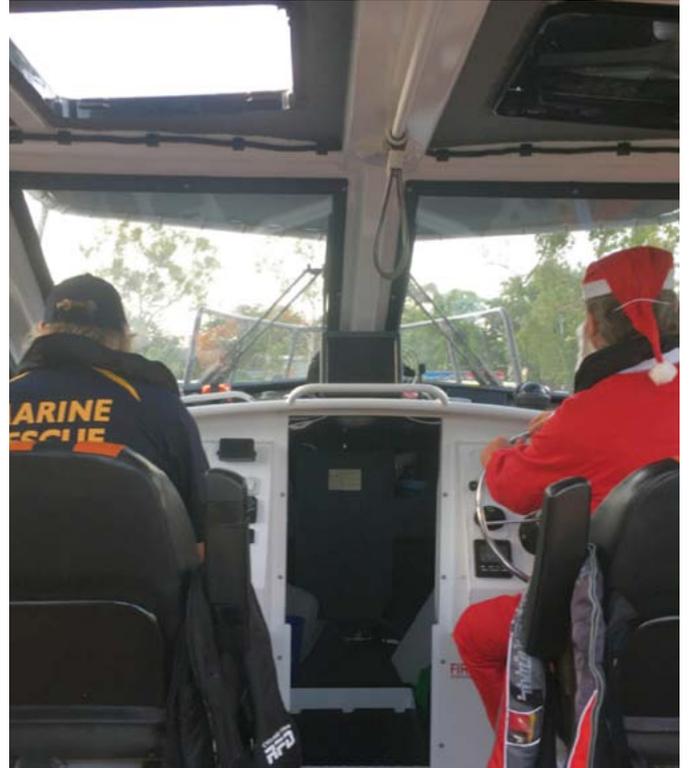
  
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## MIDGE POINT



**ABOVE LEFT:** Santa Claus being inducted by Gary.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Navigator Mal with skipper Santa Claus.

The squad's active member numbers have continued to grow in the last two years, along with the financial members. Midge Point's footprint in the local and surrounding communities is on the rise and people are now aware of the squad and its operations.

The squad were invited to set up a display at the Bloomsbury Community Christmas Party in December, along with SES and the Rural Fire Service. Santa Claus made an appearance and made a beeline for Midge Point Rescue. After being inducted onto the rescue vessel by President Gary Considine, Santa decided he was going to become a skipper and use the vessel to get around in due to his reindeer being a bit too slow. He finally gave up the boat and handed out lollies to the waiting children.

On a recent training day on the water, the squads phone rang, and the crew were activated to assist a vessel that had broken down and didn't really know where he was located. He was found after a small search and as the crew approached the stricken vessel, they realised that it was one of the active members and his family, the scenario was part of the training run and had been kept secret. The crew were able to tow the vessel back to Laguna Quays Marina. This was great training for the new crew members onboard.

At the recently held ESS course in Bowen, the squad had five people attend. We welcome our new members to the VMR family. Everyone came home with many new skills and are all keen to continue with the crew training. We would like to thank VMR Bowen for holding the course and for their hospitality over

the weekend. Paul manned the barbecue and cooked up a storm, after all it is hungry work learning new things!

The next sausage sizzle will be held at Barra World in Proserpine on Saturday, March 24. We would like to thank Lindsay Dobe of Barra World, for his continued support.



**VMR Bowen's Paul Cullen.**



We have just come through one of the hottest summers experienced for many years and along with the good weather of course we saw an increase in activity on the bay. However there were periods of blustery weather which kept the boat ramps empty on some weekends.

Overall the combined rosters put on a total of 96 hours and 40 minutes sea time over weekends and public holidays during the months of December, January and February. This equates to just over 439 crew hours logging a total of 55 activations in this period which included 18 activations for rescue and recovery operations.

December started with a rescue off Thompsons Beach where a person had parted company from their PWC. The crew of B roster managed to launch, retrieve the person from the water, safely return the person to their PWC and return to base all within 20 minutes of launching *VP1*. That same weekend they attended a PWC caught on a sand bar with two POB. Sand bars don't show mercy to even the shallowest of drafts and it's not uncommon to get calls of this nature on our bay. On this occasion the pair decided to sit out their predicament until high tide to save possible ingress of sand in the ski intakes by attempting a tow. In these cases we can only monitor the situation and remain on standby until all involved are safe.

So over the summer period, engine failure came up as the most common cause for towing assistance. Surprisingly the majority of those stranded for this reason reported they had just had their engine serviced. But before we blame the service mechanic we should always maintain some basic checks. Make sure your water cooling pump is working well by checking there is a strong 'tell tail' flow when you start up and when running. It's always possible to pick up foreign matter at the water intake which can cause overheating. This can especially be a problem when stirring up mud or sand in some of the shallow waters.

Fuel problems are lower down the list but nevertheless a tow job is often the only solution. Always make sure your fuel is not too old as this can often gum up carburettors. Of course running out of fuel will keep the carbies clean but does little to keep your boat moving. Always ensure you have 20% more fuel than you need for your planned trip. If you rely on electronic gauges, dip the tank to check if the gauges are calibrated. A case in mind was a debriefing we received from our friends at Raby Bay who had the envious task of towing a 65' cruiser which ran out of fuel with 800 litres showing on the gauges.

Here at the base, as with all VMR units, we have a dedicated crew of boating officers who go over our rescue vessels every Monday to make sure the rescuers do not become the rescued. All incidents and defects if any are reported by the preceding roster and the team is straight onto it. Safety equipment, tow lines, batteries, filters, oil levels are checked and other operating equipment kept in top condition.

Sometimes their routine is broken. The last Monday of summer saw them called out to retrieve a stricken vessel off the Coochie Yellow.

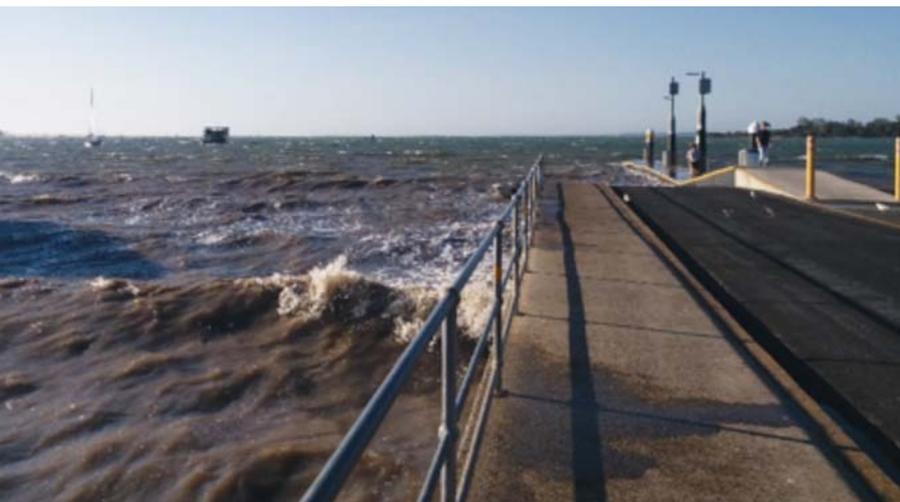


## VICTORIA POINT

Two ladies, intent on enjoying a sparkling day on the water called our after hour's number and reported engine failure. When our friendly boat crew reached them they found the engine was ticking over beautifully. Gear selection was checked as working fine.

One small problem was detected. They didn't have a propeller. Obviously something not many of us check before heading out and that's the split pin holding the castellated nut tight on the prop. Something to think about next time you plan to get the hull wet.

Some of our more difficult tows involve manoeuvring larger vessels with engine problems through



restricted waterways such as Eprapah Creek to the Redland City Marina for repair. High tide is always the key to this difficult waterway.

Loss of power in this size yacht weighing some 12,000kg requires a good deal of experience from the rescue skipper and crew. All the training well worth it when these jobs come up.

Eprapah Creek hosts a reasonable size shipping industry with Redland City Marina as well as Aluminium Marine who build large vessels for the likes of the Reef Tour Companies along the Great Barrier Reef.

In February we were requested by VMR Raby Bay to attend a yacht at the entrance to the Eprapah creek. The boat had three POB who were heading for Dunwich for lunch. Unfortunately they missed one of the red markers leaving the creek and became fast on the mud outside the channel. As the yacht came aground on a falling tide the only option was to wait for the high tide. VMR crew ensured the yacht had plenty of water for their high tide vigil but unfortunately were unable to help them with their lunch appointment at Dunwich.

Not all sunny days end up cosy out in our wonderful bay.

A recent blowy weekend kept most people off the water and the conditions at the boat ramp were poor to say the least. So a pretty quiet day – until the last minute as always.

We had returned on *VP1* after being out on a training run down to Jacobs Well. It was a great trip and good training for all in those windy conditions.

At day's end on that Sunday, having just put both vessels away and cleaned them down, we were activated by a member of the public who had spotted three kayakers in trouble with a strong SE squall that hit quite hard and quite suddenly. But not without warning.

We launched *VP Papillon* and found the first boy who had climbed aboard the large white houseboat near our mooring. After confirming he was safe we told him to stay put until we came back for him.

The other two were found near the far end of Point Halloran amongst the moored vessels. One was in his kayak and safely got aboard another nearby moored vessel as we neared. Again we ensured he was safe and told him to stay put. The third one was in a kayak trying to tow another 'upside down' kayak which was acting more as a sea anchor than a boat. As we approached his boat capsized in those rough conditions. We got him safely aboard and managed to get a tow line on both boats. We even managed

to retrieve the paddles. We delivered our first load back to the jetty and returned to assist the other two. All were returned safely back to the jetty. Water Police were kept informed throughout.

Three more of their group with two canoes were still on Coochie but thankfully moved away from the water and wisely decided to take the barge home.



## FUND RAISING

As always we sincerely thank those travellers to North Stradbroke at Toondah Harbour for their generosity and friendliness towards our members seeking funds support at the barge queues. Your support is crucial to our operations.

And if you attended our Boaties Market on March 25, we also appreciate your patronage. If you missed out, then put October 14 down in your calendar for the next market. Not only can you pick up a bargain at the many and diverse sellers, but there are also great prizes to be won courtesy of our valued corporate supporters.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER BENEFITS

We are pleased to announce that we have some added benefits for our valued members. Not only do you have the peace of mind that VMR is watching out for you out on the water, but now through the generosity of local businesses you can make savings by showing your membership card to the following companies:



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### FARNHAM ELECTRICAL SERVICES

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We appreciate local business getting behind us and hope you take advantage of their generous offers. As always we wish you all safe and pleasant boating and don't forget to log on when venturing out on the bay.

**Happy boating all.**

**Neville Brown – Victoria Point VMR**

# THROUGH THE PORTAL

We finally made it! The new Portal was released mid-January to great fanfare – well a plastic whistle left over from a Christmas cracker which was near enough.

Other than a few minor teething troubles, all seems to have gone very smoothly so well done to you all on being flexible and willing to try out the new solution. I have had a few reports of some of our more senior and less IT literate members commenting how easy it is to use so if you have not tried it out yet then take a look.

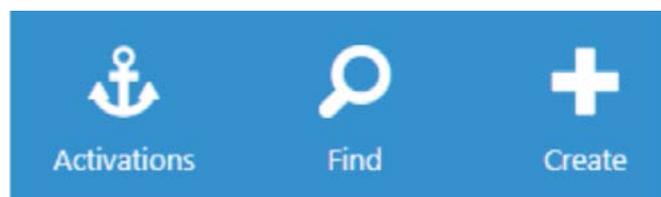
<https://portal.mrq.org.au>

## NAVIGATING AROUND



When first logging in you will see the main menu at the top of the page. This might vary depending on your permissions.

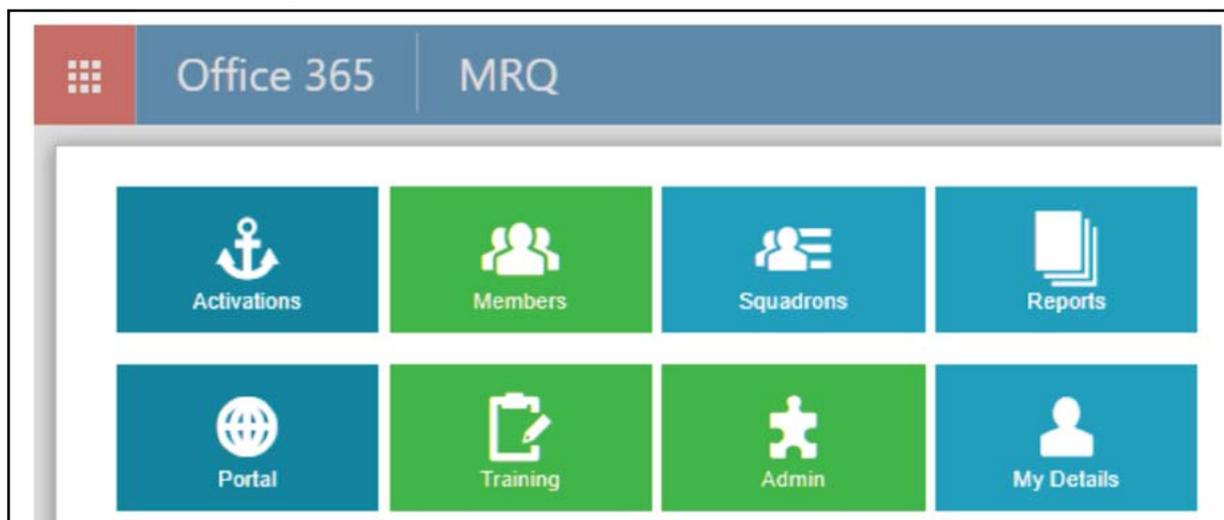
This top menu is context sensitive, so when you click to go to a different area – eg Activations then you will see that the menu changes:



Again, this will vary depending on your permissions – so you might not see the + allowing you to create new activations.

If you wish to get back to the main menu then you have a few different options.

Clicking on the orange waffle menu at the top left corner will always present the main menu:



Clicking on the MRQ link on the top bar, will return you to the home page:

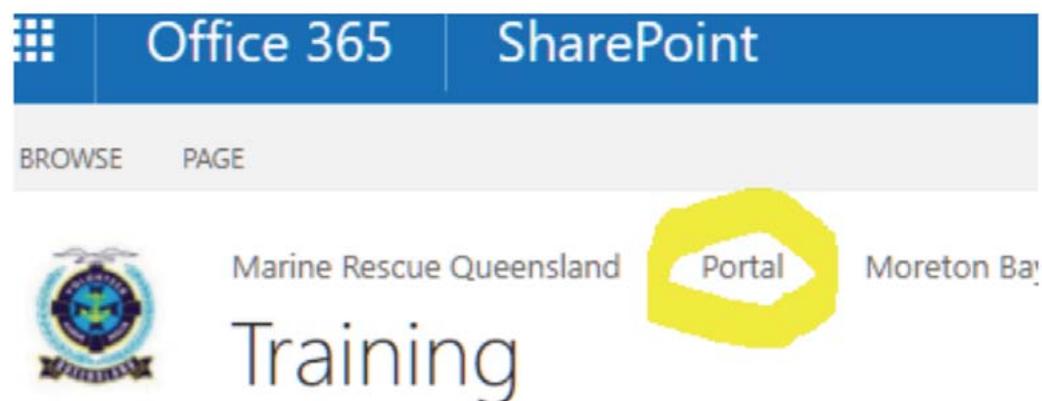


You can also select, Portal from the main menu to return to the home page.

### MAIN AREAS

- Activations – create, view and find activation details
- Members – create, view and find member details – this includes sea time and training progress
- Squadrons – view and edit details about your squadron including Rosters, Vessels and Locations
- Reports – view reports
- Portal – link to the Portal home page
- Training – link to the Training site on our O365 document portal
- Admin – an administration section for selected individuals
- My Details – a link to your own member page – this will only be active if you are logged in with an individual account

Note that there is also a link to the new Portal home page from the O365 documents portal:

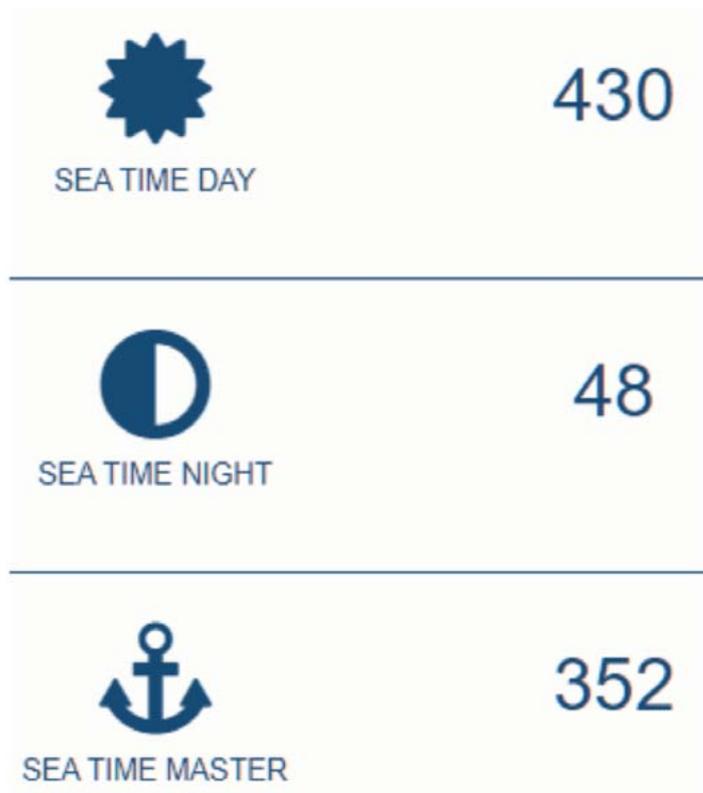


Note that both parts of the Portal share user accounts so you will not be prompted for a password when switching from one to the other.

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## GENERAL

**SEA TIME**

Sea time is available on your member page – either click on My Details if logged in with an individual account or go to the Members area and use Find to search for your member details.

Sea time is presented in three different ways.

The statistics section includes high level summary figures:

Note that these will tend to be the least accurate but any variance should be minimal.

Below the initial member details is a Sea Time Summary section:

Again this is a summary but should be an accurate record of your hours. Note that night hours are considered any times after 1800 and before 0600.

Finally, above the statistics there is a button to get a detailed sea time report:



This will generate a PDF report and depending on the browser you are using will likely prompt you to save or open it. Note that Chrome may block the popup so keep an eye open for a message at the top right of the URL bar.

**SUMMARY**

A huge thanks to everyone who carried out some testing in the final days and weeks before we went live. All the little niggles and issues they found ensured a better experience for everyone else.

We are already working on enhancements so if you have suggestions for improvement then please advise Keith Williams who is helping coordinate and prioritise these.

Thanks also to everyone for the positive words – it makes it all worthwhile?

Thanks – Dave

## RADIO ROOM STATISTICS TO FEBRUARY 28, 2018

**YTD:** 2187 Calls, 635 vessels logged on, 51 Vessel Assists, 30 overdue vessels, 4 Vessel Tracking, 227 Sitreps 1, Sécurité Broadcast, and 215 Radio checks.

VHF 77%, 27MHz 10%.

## VMRBI COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



2017/2018 VMRBI committee, from left: Graham Gibb, Ces Luscombe, Treasurer Doug Lythgo, Commodore Nathan Gundry, Secretary Noel Wendt, Allan Tranter, Ray Gibbs, and Peter McNamara. Vice Commodore Liz Radajewski was absent on holidays.

## RADIO COURSE – OCTOBER 28 & 29, 2017

An LROCP course was conducted at VMRBI base over this week end, there were 15 participants from various backgrounds. This course has changed now to include a practical component as well as the theory. Cost of licence has now risen to \$83, plus another \$40 if you wish to purchase a handbook from the Australian Maritime College (Tasmania).



Assistant Radio Officer John Bodycombe runs through a practical assessment with a student.

## MAYDAY CALL – NOVEMBER 6, 2017

Monday night November 6, 2017 started off as just a routine exercise for the after-hours radio operator (Dennis O'Neil) to man the radio room for a night training exercise on the Pumicestone Passage and to South Cardinal, in our primary rescue vessel *Bribie One*. It soon turned into a real life rescue with a Mayday call from a yacht sinking to the east off

Moreton Island. Coxswains Allan Tranter and Gary Voss with their crew Noel Wendt, Lindsay Crompton and Rod Chad headed directly for the coordinates that the yacht had provided.

The 40ft fibreglass yacht *Wahoo*, which had just recently been purchased was being sailed from Southport to Hamilton Island. Just east of Cape Moreton, the occupants of the yacht felt a number of jolts and the vessel started taking on water, at which time (1919hrs) they radioed MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY. The assistant radio officer, John Bodycombe joined Dennis in the radio room to assist where needed. These guys did an amazing job in managing communications across multiple agencies and radio channels.



*Wahoo* in action, was a seasoned Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) ocean racing campaigner with many races to her credit, including the Rolex Sydney Hobart, Gosford to Lord Howe Island, Pittwater to Coffs Harbour, and Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Races. She is a Frers 40 design, built by Prestige Yachts, LOA 12.35m, Beam 3.83m and Draft 2.30m.

The yacht was not making any headway and taking on more water in the very heavy seas of 2m-3m so they turned 180° and headed back south. The vessel's automatic identification signal (AIS) then failed, so the crew of *Bribie One* were relying on the last location reported by the vessel. When *Bribie One* arrived at

## BRIBIE ISLAND

that location, there was nothing but darkness and wild seas. The stricken vessel was asked to set off a series of flares, barely visible on the horizon, but enough to guide *Bribie One* to the yacht, which was by then five miles south of the last reported position. There had been a helicopter hovering above, (it had been training at south end of the bay), but it had to depart due to lack of fuel just before *Bribie One* arrived on the scene. In the meantime, the yacht's motor had stopped due to ingress of water, and the occupants were preparing to abandon ship – with the woman in the small inflatable dinghy, and the two men clinging to the stern of the yacht.

*Bribie One* made several passes of the sinking yacht to recover the occupants and recovered the dinghy which still contained the yacht crew's important personal items. It was extremely lucky that *Bribie One* was exercising at the entrance to the Pumicestone Passage at the time the Mayday call was received, which resulted in the saving of three people's lives in very rough conditions.

*Bribie One* arrived back at the VMR base around 2300hrs where the VMR crew provided hot food, drinks and dry clothes for the survivors. After some police interviews, the three sailors booked into the Bribie Island Hotel about midnight.



The lucky survivors the morning after with skipper Allan Tranter behind them aboard *Bribie One*. In foreground the life raft and life buoys the only thing left of the *Wahoo* yacht.

VMRBI had a static display at the Sandstone Point Hotel's annual Oyster Festival, where the owner Paul Comiskey, was presented with a framed photo of our three rescue vessels in appreciation for his ongoing support to VMR Bribie Island.



Vice Commodore Liz Radajewski presents the framed photo to Paul and Erica Comiskey and Carla Comiskey.



Manning the display at the festival were: Charles Guesdon, Liz Radajewski, Noel Justo, Graham Patrick and Peter McNamara.

VMRBI also manned a display at The Bribie Island Bowls Club Prestige Tournament. The club has recently become a sponsor and we look forward to working with them in the future.



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## BRIBIE ISLAND



Bribie Three at the northern end of the rink.



Jon Price and Gary Beros manning the display.



Commodore Nathan Gundry with Andrew and his wife Julie who own the Spinnaker Sound Marina. The Marina ran a raffle on the day of their Christmas Party and raised over \$2000 for VMRBI.



Small gifts as a thank you were delivered to our major sponsor Busyfingers by Vice Commodore Liz Radajewski, with Busyfingers Treasurer Derek Rawle, Peter McNamara as Santa and Sandra Tommy.

## LIFE MEMBER RETIRES



Commodore Nathan Gundry and Vice Commodore Liz Radajewski present Life Member Robert Warman with a framed photo of the Three Rescue Vessels on his retirement from active duty. L to R: Allan Gough, Liz Radajewski, Bob Skinner, Robert Warman, Allan Tranter, Nathan Gundry and Ian Grimes.

## CHRISTMAS LOLLY DROPS IN CANALS @ BRIBIE



Phil Couper bringing B2 into a pontoon on Marina Boulevard Canal, skippered by Simon Middap whilst Santa (Stewart Bell) delivered lollies.



Bribie Three skippered by Bob Skinner and crewed by Noel Wendt and Nigel Cleminson, accompanied Santa's boat delivering lollies to residents throughout the Bribie Gardens canals at Bongaree.

## BRIBIE ISLAND



January 3, Bribie Two ensuring yacht is secure after the windy conditions.



Thursday, January 4, 2018 – VMR Bribie's Emergency Services Liaison Officer Graham Gibb presenting the plaque for Emergency Services Event, Winner of the best display for 2017 to Jacob Thomson Lifesaving Services Co-ordinator Sunshine Coast for the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service which put on several displays of rescues and landed at the base for people to inspect the helicopter and talk to the rescue crew. Picture by Peter McNamara.



Vice Commodore Liz Radajewski (seated in Bribie Three), Susan Lamb MP, Coxswain Bob Skinner, Coxswain and Committee Member Ray Gibbs, Competent Crew and Committee Member Ces Luscombe and Coxswain, Training Coordinator and Committee Member Allan Tranter, discussing the refurbishment of Bribie Three with \$10,000 grant from the Stronger Communities Grant Programme.



This boatie with his family on board was travelling from Mooloolaba to Brisbane on Saturday afternoon, January 13, when he developed engine trouble. The weather blew up and the anchor was not holding, it looked like he might end up on the swimming beach at Woorim. Initially with Bribie 2, who was already on the water exercising, the heavy 11m wooden classic was put under tow and made safe until Bribie 1 was manned and dispatched to complete the task. End result was a very relieved wife and daughters.



January 15, vessel adrift at Woorim was towed in heavy conditions back to Bribie Island before towing back to Tangalooma later in the week in more favourable conditions.

Training for 2018 started with a Plan and Navigate Practical Assessment. The weather was good to us and after plotting the route it was time to put it to practice on the water. Participants were: Assessors Vice Commodore and Commercial Coxswain Liz Radajewski and Commercial Coxswain Gary Voss, and training crew Denise Inggs, Noel Wendt, Les Oldmeadow, and Ces Luscombe.



Denise plotting a three point fix.

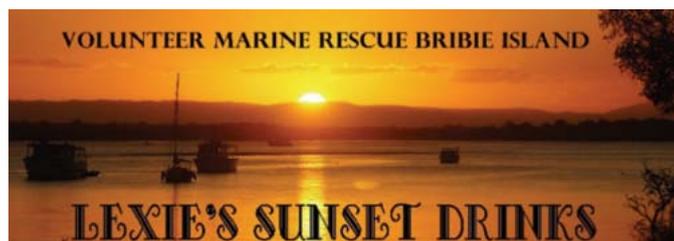


Some of the 40 members/guests enjoying the evening.

## HAPPY HOUR

Friday, February 9, 2018

Some 40 members and guests turned out for the Happy hour held Friday, February 9, 2018. Bar snacks were provided along with drinks at the usual competitive prices.



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018

Despite inclement weather Sunset Drinks was well attended and included 10 new members. The ladies of the social committee provided a lovely meal of crumbed fish and salad for the princely sum of \$5. Music was provided by Trevor Botham and two raffles were conducted for \$20 vouchers.

## RECIPES FROM THE GALLEY



### BATTERS

Tempura Batter  
 ½ cup plain flour  
 ½ cup cornflour  
 1 egg  
 1 cup ice water

Mix ingredients to smooth. Roll fish/prawns / calamari in cornflour before dipping into batter mixture. (Crisp Tempura batter results from ice cold batter – put in hot oil – couple of ice cubes can be put into batter).

Serve immediately while batter crisp.

### BEER BATTER

½ cup cornflour  
 ½ cup SR flour  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 ½ teasp baking flour  
 ½ stubby beer

Add flour and salt to a large bowl. Gently whisk in 1 cup of beer until smooth. Roll fish in cornflour before dipping into batter mixture. Use immediately.

Serve with Tartare sauce.

### TARTARE SAUCE

½ teas Capers (crushed/chopped)  
 2 tabs Lemon juice  
 ½ cup Mayo  
 Mix all ingredients



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## SOUTHPORT

### NOTEABLE JOBS

A man contacted VMR recently to advise that he required first aid on a hand he had accidentally cut with a Stanley Knife. A VMR first responder was sent to the man's vessel and found him in extreme pain, with a very large gash from the top to the bottom of the hand. The wound was cleaned and bandaged, pain relief was administered, and a rendezvous with the ambulance at the Grand Hotel pontoon was organised. The man advised that he was making a new fishing net and as he cut the attaching rope the knife slipped. He contacted VMR later in the day to offer his thanks, reporting that he received 19 stitches for his efforts.

VMR Southport received a call on Boxing Day to assist the owner of a vessel that had no propulsion near Wavebreak Island. The vessel's engine would start but when put into gear it would stall. On arrival the VMR crew requested the man raise his engine from the water. On doing so, a crab pot rope was removed from around the propeller and the man was on his way.



**Marine Rescue 1.**

A crew was called on Christmas Day to assist a small half cabin vessel that had broken down just inside the north wall of the Gold Coast Seaway. On arrival the owner advised he had been fishing the fast flowing outgoing tide for the past few hours and when ready to leave his engine wouldn't start. The VMR vessel attached a tow rope and advised the man to lift his anchor. On his doing so the anchor rope broke. Luckily the VMR vessel was in control of the tow. It would have been a quick trip through the Seaway had VMR not been in attendance.

A jetski owner called VMR recently to advise that he was somewhere north of Couran Cove, tied to a green beacon, without navigation lights on this craft, and was requesting assistance. As it was approaching sunset a crew was activated hastily, whilst the VMR radio room attempted to source a better location. The man then advised his mobile phone was running low on charge. The man and his jetski was eventually

found tied up to a houseboat near Millionaires Row. The jetski was towed to Runaway Bay.

Another jetski owner also found himself in difficulty on the same weekend when he became stranded in the mud behind Brown Island. VMR arrived to find the man almost 150m from the channel and with no hope of being rescued until the tide had risen significantly. The man advised he was happy to sit and wait as it was his only option. Approximately five hours later VMR were advised the man had managed to float across to North Currigee campgrounds, however, his jetski had ingested copious amounts of mud and would not run. VMR returned the jetski and the owner to the Spit boatramp.

The owner of a 65ft cruiser called VMR on New Year's Day to advise his anchor winch had stopped working due to an electrical problem, and he needed help to retrieve his anchor. He suggested eight VMR people would probably be needed to help him with the lift, if they were available. The man was quickly advised that his problem would better be rectified by him finding a marine electrician who VMR would transport to his vessel. On second thoughts, the man agreed with VMR's suggestion.

A VMR crew handing out promotional material at the new Broadwater boatramp were called into action recently when a loud crash was heard. A man launching his jetski had disconnected his craft prematurely from the trailer winch and as he reversed his vehicle down the slope of the boatramp his jetski prematurely launched itself onto the concrete boatramp. Several other boat owners and the VMR members assisted the man to lift his jetski back onto the trailer where his embarrassment was evident. The jetski suffered significant damage.

The 2017 / 2018 Christmas / New Year period was one of the busiest on record for VMR Southport. Crews were kept on their toes from Friday, December 22 through to Monday, December 15, with in excess of 130 rescue activations performed over this time. Activations ranged from towing broken down vessels due to mechanical or lack of fuel issues, battery jump starts, and ungrounding of vessels, through to providing transport for emergency paramedics to medical incidents on the water and South Stradbroke Island.

The weather was very favourable for boaties to be out and about, with standing room only in certain parts of the Broadwater. Vessels of all types, sizes and makes filled the waterways from sunrise to sunset, making it an M1 of marine activity.

On several occasions all four VMR Southport rescue vessels were on activations at the one time and on one occasion three VMR vessels were on the beach at the Spit boat ramp, after each having towed broken down vessels into that location.

Given the huge number of jetskis (PWC) within the Gold Coast region, making up approximately 25% of all vessel registrations, and the additional huge number of these on the water during this time, VMR Southport surprisingly assisted very few of these craft (less than 10% of all activations).

The highest percentage of assists was made up of vessels in the 3-7.5m range, with a very low percentage of larger vessels, >15m, assisted.

The Qld Ambulance Service (QAS) were also kept busy with marine activations. Usually averaging two to three requests for assistance per month, one week saw six requests for marine transport of emergency paramedics.



VMR vessels in Australia Day mode.

The nature of the incidents requiring attention was also somewhat different to normal. VMR Southport and the QAS attend to a lot of cases involving fractured bones (arms and legs), however there were a lot more high acuity activations, including a patient having a heart attack, and two patients having allergic reactions. These patients were rapidly conveyed to the mainland for transport to hospital.

The Qld Fire and Emergency Services ( QFES ) also requested assistance from VMR Southport on two occasions as a result of calls for vessels on fire. On

the first occasion, the situation was all steam and no fire, and on the second occasion a small engine fire had been extinguished prior to their arrival.

In addition to all this work on the water, our radio operators who man the VMR rescue base and Gold Coast Seaway Tower (SWT) had their hands full with an extra large number of vessels transiting the area, creating a huge workload. In good weather more than 150 vessels a day can log their journeys with the SWT, making large amounts of radio traffic sometimes cram the airwaves. These radio operators do a fantastic job and are commonly the first point of contact in any emergency.

A couple of enthusiastic members also spent many hours distributing membership and tide time brochures around boat ramps in the area and plenty of boaties took up the opportunity to become new members of VMR, while several renewed their expired memberships. This is vital income to keep our operation running.

In perspective, nearly 10,000 hours of volunteer time was contributed, 5000 litres of fuel was used, more than 500 people were returned to safety, and only two complaints were received, one because during a busy time we were unable to respond

immediately to a vessel with a flat battery, and the second because we were unable to assist a houseboat which was unable to be ungrounded because of its actual distance from water. The drunken, irate owner couldn't understand skull dragging wasn't an option.

Thank you to those people who we did assist and appreciated our service, and an extreme thanks to all of the VMR Southport members who got us through this period of extreme workload. Soon it will be Easter and this will happen all over again, albeit for a shorter period.

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## BURDEKIN

**B**urdekin Volunteer Marine Rescue have kicked off the year with in style with a gala night at the local Kalamia Hotel in Ayr. The night of festivities gave the organisation a chance to recognise a combined total of over 13 centuries of service and award three new life memberships to Joe Linton, Russell Young and Patrick Toohey.

Among the awards, Diane Schultz received the Dedicated Service Award after securing a number funding grants allowing the VMR Burdekin to continue refurbishments and upgrade equipment and facilities.

Shadow Minister for North Queensland and VMR Burdekin patron Dale Last attended the night to present National Medals with current life members Allan Shand, Ken Young, Ernie Rose and Matthew Patane among those awarded.

### **NATIONAL MEDALS WERE ALSO PRESENTED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

Claude Sutcliffe  
 Russell Young  
 Des Helender  
 Doug Adams  
 Fred Wright  
 Les Jones  
 Joe Linton  
 Harry Booth  
 Ron Sutcliffe  
 Patrick Toohey  
 Lionel Tappenden  
 Greg Milburn  
 Vince Papale

VMR Burdekin's Gala dinner was also a chance to recognise key achievements within the organisation. Currently VMR Burdekin has 84 active members with an average of 16 years service in waters from Abbot Point to Cape Cleveland, of those 22 are female and 21 are under the age of 35. Two long serving active members were recognised for over 45 years in the squadron while a further 16 members were awarded for over 30 years at the organisation.

Tools are going and renovations are well underway at the Burdekin VMR boat shed with the aim of upgrading the facility after receiving both state and federal level funding. The boat shed will see a fresh lick of paint, improved air conditioning and refurbished amenities by mid-year.

VMR Burdekin will see four new crew members after Mikayla, Aaron, Sarah and Gina completed their Shipboard Safety Skillset training recently in Bowen. Under the guidance of Tom Hudson, our four new crew members are able to work towards becoming competent crew and skipper.

Amidst state government preparations to begin vital works to ensure all tide access at Molongle Creek, VMR Burdekin were tasked when two divers were reported missing at the *Yongala* wreck. Unable to

deploy due to low tide, the crew were forced to wait for waters to rise risking human life. Fortunately the divers were located by another vessel and tragedy was avoided. The incident highlights the importance of having all tide access in the district, with time determining the difference between life and death in circumstances such as these.

On lighter notes the VMR Burdekin has been successful in securing the continuation of the weather service from Bureau of Meteorology with plans for a pilot project ensuring automated weather broadcasts on a VHF channel. April will see a working group formed including representatives from the VMR Burdekin, Marine Rescue Queensland, Maritime Safety Queensland, Australian Maritime Safety Authority and Bureau of Meteorology.



**State Training Manager Robert Brock presented Dianne Schultz with her Dedicated Service Award.**



**State President Graham Kingston presented Russell Young with his life membership at the VMR Burdekin Gala Dinner.**



**ABOVE RIGHT:** State President Graham Kingston presented Joe Linton with his life membership at the VMR Burdekin Gala Dinner.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Doug Adams with VMR Burdekin Life Member and Inaugural VMR Burdekin president Allan Shand.

VMR Burdekin will travel to Airlie Beach April 7-8 to participate in a SAREX hosted by VMR Whitsunday. The two-day event will see crews conducting night time searches as well as FLIR and RADAR exercises. April will continue the busy period with the highly anticipated Bowen Offshore Superboats returning for 2018. Last year saw around 40 members and their families travel to Bowen for the event and this year the organisation expected similar numbers for 2018. VMR Burdekin will continue south two weeks later for the Mackay Offshore Superboats for the third time May 12-13.



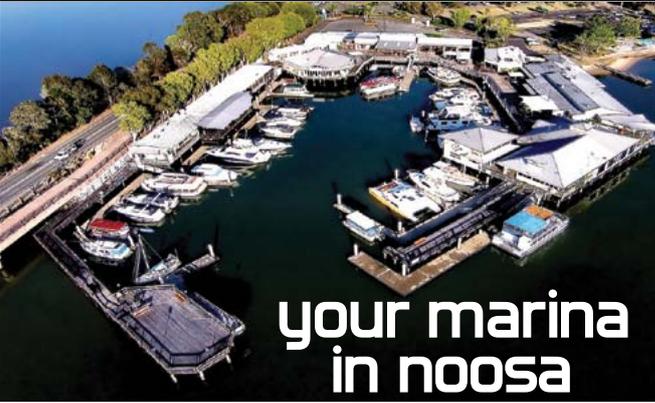
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# PEEL ISLAND: CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

HOSTED BY CLEAN OCEANS AUSTRALIA'

**Interviewee:** Blair Jedras, Founder, Clean Oceans Australia

**Contact:** blair.jedras@griffithuni.edu.au

**Date:** Thursday, 8 March 2018

**Interviewed by:** Isabella Cheng, Journalist and Vice President of Griffith University Students for the Environment

On Sunday, March 4, 2018 Clean Oceans Australia partnered with Griffith University Students for the Environment and volunteers from University of Queensland's Dive Club for Clean Up Australia Day.

Clean Oceans Australia (COA) is a not-for-profit organisation which is dedicated to educating and protecting the marine. COA hosts clean-ups both on land and in the ocean. The founder, Blair Jedras decided to take fifteen students to Peel Island in Horseshoe Bay to empower and educate young volunteers on their daily use and dangers of single-use plastic.

COA's partner, Griffith University Students for the Environment (GUSE) advocate and educate its members by promoting inclusivity; creating a positive impact; and educating their members of sustainable practices through science-based evidence. Together, COA and GUSE, encourage their members to stay aware of their environmental impacts, and to spread knowledge, leading by example.

Founder, Blair Jedras said, "80% of marine debris comes from land-based activities which wash into the ocean and 20% comes from marine based activities."

This year they COA and GUSE targeted Peel Island traveling there on his personal boat. The Island is a popular attraction with beautiful marine life and abundance of birds. However the damaging impact of popularity are evident in the rubbish that is left behind.

COA and GUSE collected approximately 2000 pieces of plastic covering Horseshoe Bay alone. The most interesting finding was 286 50-millimetre-long pieces of 16mL irrigation tubing along with hundreds of foresting seedling pots. Predominately the waste came from food packaging, for example there were 71 bottle caps and lids and 127 pieces of plastic bags.

The findings opened the eyes of many young volunteers to the terrible realities our planet faces. This motivated GUSE and COA to plan another trip later in the year

## A LITTLE HISTORY ABOUT CLEAN OCEANS

When asking Jedras about his goals for protecting the ecosystems within the waterways, he stated, "I want it (waste) to stop entering our waterways by educating people about the daily use of plastic. I mainly help people to source reduction programs. Since studying a Bachelor of Engineering with honours in Environmental Engineering, I've realised it's not just the plastic: it's the energy, water, and rubbish that goes into the manufacturing of these goods that we use for five-to-ten minutes. By refusing straws, using Keep Cups, taking your own containers when you're buying food – that can have a significant impact on the marine debris problem."

Jedras founded COA 12 years ago when he was amongst friends in North Stradbroke Island volunteering for Stradbroke Wildlife Rescue. In 2006, he found his passion when rescuing seabirds. One touching story involved an Eastern Osprey ('Pandion Cristatus' large raptor water-dependent bird of prey and has a 1.7m wing-span<sup>1</sup>) which had three gang hooks through its legs and a fishing line wrapped around its talons. Jedras frequently visits North Stradbroke Island to feed the Eastern Osprey. Jedras started to become more aware of marine debris as an avid diver he continued to see an increase amount of plastic and this began COA.

His curiosity grew and continues to host Clean Up's and collects data for Clean Up Australia and National Marine Debris Database called, Tangaroa Blue Foundation which is accessible to the public. Through this database you can find: the maps, the source, and other findings Australia Wide. Furthermore Reef

Check Australia have been instrumental to COA and hold marine reef farm surveys on a global scale using a standardised system of data collection when comparing reef health.

### COA ALSO TAKES VOLUNTEERS DIVING

Most of the Clean Up's hosted by Clean Oceans Australia are held in North Stradbroke Island, Amity Point, Flinders Beach. COA's clean ups are also underwater with volunteer scuba divers due to the amount of people fishing at Amity Point. COA's data – see Tangaroa Blue Foundation database – has collected over 100km of fishing line.

Clean Oceans Australia is constantly teaching students and advocating not for profit but out of compassion. Jedras left me with these words, "The water in the Moreton bay area of Quandamooka country has given me so much joy. I get to SCUBA dive with Manta Rays, Grey Nurses, Sharks and Humpback Whales because it has given me so much joy it would be irresponsible of me not to give a little back and care for the country some."

If you would like to get involved with Clean Oceans Australia either on land or scuba dive while creating a positive impact contact Blair Jedras on [cleanoceans12@gmail.com](mailto:cleanoceans12@gmail.com); or be apart of Griffith University Students for the Environment contact the club: [griffithenvironmentclub@gmail.com](mailto:griffithenvironmentclub@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10585>

## STATE COUNCIL – FEBRUARY 24 AT ROUND HILL



### BACK ROW L-R:

Glenn Philip (Delegate), Keith Williams (Manager), Robert Murolo, Vince Papale, Peter Graham, Paul Poole, Lionel Tappenden (visitor).

### SECOND ROW L-R:

Robert Brock (State Training Manager) Graham Kingston (MRQ President) Adrian Westerman (MRQ Treasurer) Ross Tindall, Bob Skinner, Simon Naawi.

### FRONT ROW L-R:

Andrea Hindle, Ann Ivory (MRQ Secretary), Josie Meng.

Missing from the photo Mike Brooks and Janine Bloem.



**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.**

## ROUND HILL

Christmas and New Year were quite busy with good boating weather and plenty of boaties in town. For the period November to February we have 13 activations including eight breakdowns, one grounding, two insufficient fuel, two searches, using 2,270 litre of fuel and 2,936 radio calls logged.

As I write this we have had three vessels aground on or near the bar as they have not sought local knowledge prior to logging on, thankfully they were okay.

### THE ADVENTURES OF SPICE!

**December 13, 2017 – 0630hrs** *Spirit/Spice* 43ft yacht and a 2.2m draft (the owner thinks?) aground on the bar, small vessel endeavouring to assist to no avail, due to the tide this will need action later. This person was advised NO TO ENTER the creek due to its draft, but no ignore and expect all to help!

Water Police assessed the situation later in the morning and then we couldn't locate the owner for some time. At approximately 1615 *Round Hill Rescue* and Water Police located the owner onboard as they were about to move the vessel to safe anchorage in the creek following a Harbour Masters Directive (December 13, 2017). Water Police discussed various issued with the owner. The owner advised he needed to return to NSW and that another vessel in the creek was 'looking' after his vessel. *Round Hill Rescue* returned to shed and home 1830hrs.

Harbour Masters Direction was again given to us (January 16, 2018) to assist with the vessel *Spice* to be re anchored in a safe position to hopefully ensure the safety of other vessel's in Round Hill Creek. She was placed on VMR Round Hill registered mooring following discussion with our skipper, MSQ and Water Police (another two hours with this vessel)

On February 1 at approximately 0635hrs I was advised by phone that the vessel *Spice* had sunk on our mooring and moved in the weather conditions during the night – oh dear!

Phone call where made to MSQ, Water Police and Harbour Control re this event and actions to take. MSQ placed a yellow buoy with flashing light to assist the boating community and VMR Round Hill put out Sécurité as the vessel continued to drag up stream in the creek.

After some time and countless effort to get the owner back he was given another Harbour Masters Directive to remove the vessel from the creek by March 2, 2018, which he has abandoned. Now we wait for the Harbour Master to call the task and eventually get our mooring returned to its rightful place.

We conducted a flare demonstration in January and again a good response from the boating community and others. (See photo below).

February saw the efforts of the salvage vessel *Bay Lass* and various other tugs and dedicated crews finally raise the *FV Dianne*, our thoughts are with the families and friends.

On behalf of the Gladstone Regional Council VMR Round Hill assisted in a Public Consultation process for the DRAFT Marina Precinct Parking over the Christmas holidays by walking the caravan park and car parking areas and various other places to ensure the boating community were aware of this possible change.

We held an open day in January with about 70 people coming through Our annual flare demonstration was also a great success and this time more fisherman that had never left off a flare.





VMR Round Hill hosted the State Council Meeting over the weekend of February 23-25 and we sincerely thank state for coming to visit our community it was a morale booster and financial boost to our meeting / accommodation venue and all can highly recommend a visit!

A highlight of the state meeting was the meeting dinner with local member for Burnett Stephen Bennett and Mayor Gladstone Regional Council Matt Burnett joining us with other special guest for the presentation of the national medals to five VMR Round Hill Members Neale Inskipp (skipper and president) Laurie Rapa (skipper and committee) Doug Meng (vice president, controller) Ruth Tidy (radio operator) and Josie Meng (radio operator, secretary etc) totalling 134 years of service oh so proud of our small squadron.

*Safe boating all – Volunteers Saving Lives*



Real training in Round Hill Creek.

## YACHTSMAN ASSIST



Round Hill Rescue safely in the creek.



The crew and Peter.

On Saturday, March 10 VMR Round Hill was activated in very poor conditions to assist a yachtsman off Round Hill Head, he was unable to retrieve his anchor in 30kt winds and at one stage thought the anchor had snapped and was drifting. Round Hill Recue went to assist After some time and all efforts were exhausted the owner made the decision to abandon the vessel and jump into the water for the rescue crew to retrieve him – a great job by the crew in such difficult conditions.

## WHITSUNDAYS

There are two consistent themes that we are encountering when *Abell Point Marina VMR1* is called out for an activation. Firstly, lack of proper maintenance and preparation often result in the need to call for our assistance, and I must say that I cringe when I see a recently launched boat having trouble starting before they even leave the boat ramp – and then they decide to go out around the islands for the day, potentially putting themselves and their passengers at risk! Surely starting problems might be an indication that all is not well, and we respectfully suggest that the more sensible approach is to have the boat checked before deciding to go further afield. And always carry spare fuel!

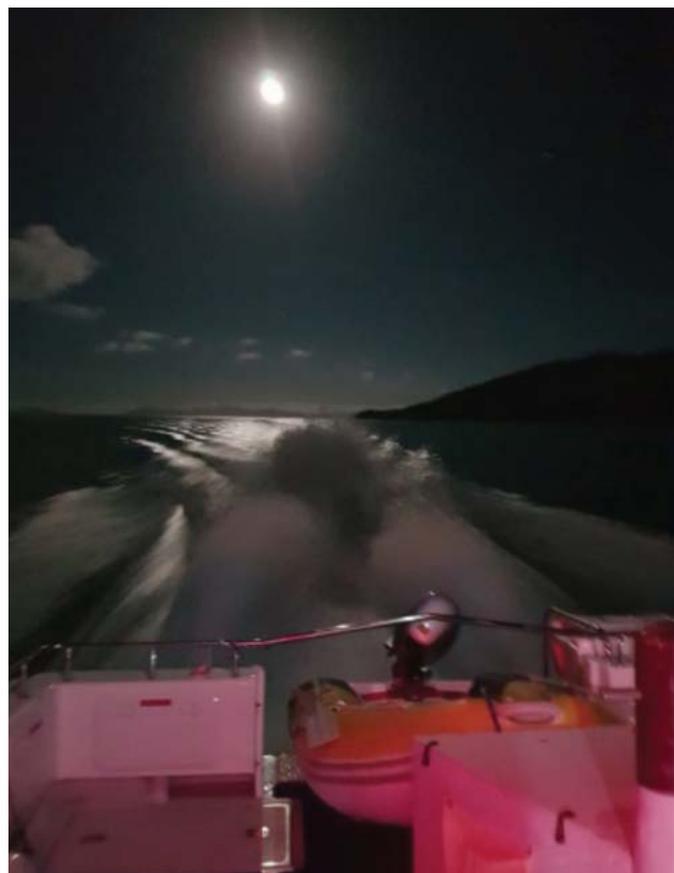
The other problem that we often have to deal with is an incorrect position report. All too frequently we go to a GPS coordinate that has been provided and find an empty sea. It is most important that vessels requiring assistance give us an accurate and correct position, and that means the position of the vessel and not the position of the cursor! Please take a few minutes to get to know how your GPS works and what the information on screen actually means, it may save precious time in an emergency - and in an emergency time may be paramount.

Some of our more interesting activations follow.

**Activation: December 5, 2017**

**Task: Medivac from Tongue Bay**

Captain Fin rang at 7.05pm, just after dinner. I wasn't going to mention that but Michel had to eat his steak whilst driving to the boat! A female had trodden on



something near the shore and was in pain. We got under way at 7.45pm into a very dark but warm and windless night.

We had an uneventful trip across the passage and down to Tongue Bay, and watched a beautiful moon rising as we passed Hook Observatory.

After arriving at 8.50pm, paramedics transferred across for the evaluation and had the patient and her husband ready to travel by 9.15pm. As they had been aboard a charter yacht, there was a slight delay as the husband gave anchoring instructions to the skipper who, with his wife, was left with all the kids. Lucky chaps.

The trip home was easy although the bit through Hook Passage was a little bumpy because of the flooding tide. Once through the neck though the water was like a mirror. It would have been a wonderful shot with the Moonlight and a decent camera.

10.40pm saw us at the fuel dock where we unloaded our passengers and we were on our way home by 11.10pm. Thanks to the gods and a great crew for a perfect night.

**Crew: Michel Del Aguila, Richard Atkinson**

**Skipper: Geoff Smith**

**Activation: December, 23 2017**

**Task: Tow sailing vessel with engine problems**

It might be Christmas, but VMR is always on duty! I (Paul) received a call from the radio room reporting a vessel having engine troubles in Nara Inlet. The stricken vessel originally decided to try sailing to Abell Point Marina and were simply asking VMR for assistance to berth the vessel. No problem. We figured we had a few hours before we'd be needed so leisurely continued with our Chrissy preparations.

It was a short-lived reprieve however, as it was only about 40 minutes later that we received another call asking for a tow. Apparently the sailing wasn't going too well as the wind was causing issues and they were drifting towards the rocks.

So ... all systems go! I met Geoff and Michel at *Abell Point Marina VMR1*, and we proceeded to Nara Inlet scanning the sea for a dark blue sailing vessel with its main sail up ... which was the information we were given. As we passed Hannah Point on North Molle I received a radio call from the vessel which was straight off our port bow ... and which turned out to be the vessel we were looking for, but was white with a blue stripe and off North Molle Island. So important to get accurate information ...

We were unable to find our bridle so we jury-rigged one up and got under way with the vessel towing nicely at 8kts. The owner said it was the "fastest his vessel had ever gorn!" ROFL Half way to Pioneer Rocks we struck a little problem ... the vessel's anchor had chafed through one side of our make-shift bridle and it had snapped.



We thought we might still have time for a beer and some Chrissy dessert ... but it wasn't to be. Whilst re-fuelling we heard VTS talking to a sailing vessel which had gone aground on the eastern Gloucester Passage reef with two on board. Apparently the yacht was slowly listing and those on board were worried they would sink at the bottom of the tide. We didn't want to leave then get called back out after opening a beer so decided to hang around for a little while. VTS were talking to Mackay Water Police who agreed we should attend but did not 'activate us'. As it was a little vague we contacted Bill who is one of our search and rescue experts ... he also thought we should go.

Meanwhile, VTS were still talking to the stranded vessel who reported they had holed and were taking water but the electric bilge pump was coping. Bill was talking to Mackay WP, VTS and our 24hr phone holder who were all trying to clarify the 'activation'. At this point, we left Abell Point Marina again at 7.20pm, heading for Hydaway Bay as the tide was still dropping therefore making time very much of the essence if we were going to be able to do anything when we got there.

Just north of Grimston we spoke to the water police again who informed us the vessel hadn't been holed and was wedged in nicely and standing up okay. The owner was going to stay on board and get off at the next high tide. That meant we could go home. Whoopee! Christmas cake and beer ... here we come! Got back at 8:15pm.

Thanks to the great crew who, with patience and tolerance, spent their Christmas helping others.

**Crew: Michel del Aguila and Trevor James**  
**Skipper: Geoff Smith**  
**Activation: January 7, 2018: Vessel aground on Hardy Reef**

It was late on a lazy Sunday afternoon when a call came in of a police activation for a steel 11.5m yacht aground on Hardy Reef. We had a GPS position for the vessel (which later proved to be very accurate) and with approval to proceed, set off on *Abell Point Marina VMR1* at 3.20pm in a 15kt E/SE breeze with a little swell.

Additional communication then revealed that there were two persons in the water and that a helicopter was on its way as well ... so we ramped up the speed! As we approached the reef systems the breeze, swell and tidal influences built up and we were extremely grateful for the improved handling characteristics of our new vessel as it would have been quite a bit more challenging on the 'old' boat.

Updated information provided the news that all crew were safely back on board the grounded vessel, that she had a 15° list at the bottom of the tide, but was intact and had an anchor deployed. She had drifted into the lagoon area over the reef proper so we would

No drama though as by this stage we had located the correct bridle so we hooked it up and got under way again, asking the vessel's skipper to tie up the anchor to stop possible chafing.

We experienced a bit of a roll off the leads at Abell Point Marina which made it tricky to put alongside, but all went well and we got the vessel back in her berth with the help of Abell Point Marina staff.

Thanks very much to the crew.

**Crew: Geoff Smith and Michel del Aguila**  
**Skipper: Paul Coggan**  
**Activation December 25, 2017: Rescuing a member with electrical problems ... plus more!**

Well, at least we squeezed in Christmas lunch! The call came in at 2.30pm on Christmas Day ... Mackay Police had received a satellite phone call from a VMR member asking for assistance. Dropped the second piece of Christmas cake (that we didn't need anyway) and rushed off to *Abell Point Marina VMR1*, setting off at 3.30pm in glorious conditions and heading to Crayfish Beach, South Mackerel Bay. After arriving at 4.30pm we organised a quick pick up and proceeded to Hook Passage to do the paperwork as it was a little choppy with an Easterly picking up. We left Hook at 5.25pm and after an uneventful 15kt return run, dropped them off at the Abell Point Marina ramp at 6.45pm.



## WHITSUNDAYS

be unable to reach her until daylight and a better tide. We were still 30 minutes away but police were still requesting us to attend, assess and assist if needed.



Aerial photo courtesy of RACQ rescue.

Once at the scene we established that the vessel and all on board were safe and that they had created a plan to try to kedge off at the next high tide in the early morning if possible or wait until the higher tide Monday afternoon.

It was agreed between the vessel, *Hay Point VTS* and the police that our presence was no longer required so we headed back to base and were refuelled and tied up by 12.30am. Thanks to the crew and compliments on great information gathering by all concerned.

**Crew: Ray Lewis, Ken Bryce, Michel del Aguila**  
**Skipper: Ron Roberts**  
**Activation: February 6, 2018: Double medivac from Hamilton Island**

Medivacs are not usually quite this novel! skipper Mal said "The Australian Warship *HMAS Parramatta* (He had looked it up later on marine traffic) was coming up fast on our starboard side as we approached Daydream Island and made for Unsafe Passage." Uh ... oh ...



But let's start from the beginning. *Abell Point Marina VMR1* had been activated by QAS (Qld Ambulance Service) for a medivac of a patient from Hamilton Island. I received the call from phone holder Bill just after 3:00pm saying that we were to meet the paramedics near the fuel dock at 3:30, which meant we had to hustle to move the boat from its temporary berth on O5 to be there on time. As it turned out,

we then had to wait for the paramedic as QAS were concerned that as the patient was suffering from a suspected spinal injury from an industrial incident, sea conditions (winds 20-30kts plus and a moderate sea) may have made the transfer by boat quite difficult. And then we heard we may have a second patient to transfer at the same time. Already this was panning out to be a tricky situation ... but it goes on ...

Bill had advised the QAS that the return journey would be downwind and with the prevailing seas, so in due course the paramedic Damien was on board, and we departed Abell Point at 4:15pm. As mentioned earlier, we had seen the warship at the southern end of South Molle Island, making its way around the eastern side of Daydream as we made our way towards Unsafe Passage. I had slowed down while I watched them for any course change because;

- 1) they were on our starboard side and had right of way, and at that stage they were going to pass ahead of us,
- 2) they were bigger than us, and
- 3) I did not think they would have really tried to go through Unsafe, and
- 4) they had big guns!

As I was reaching for the radio I noticed that they were slowing, and starting to alter course to port – at that stage it was throttles down again and we passed them on their starboard side, cleared Unsafe and set course for Hamilton, using the shelter of Bauer Bay as long as we could as seas in the Passage were short and steep, with a lot of wind on top. We had to reduce speed to 15kts at times but once again the new boat handled the conditions superbly, and we pulled into Hamilton Island Marina around 5:15 and waited for our patients.



After carefully loading our stretcher patient and swapping our own QAS stretcher with the Hamilton Island paramedic, we assisted the other patient on board and departed Hamilton at 6:00pm. The air conditioner was running to make things more comfortable for our patients.

Caution was the order of the day on the return trip in deference to our stretcher patient as we picked our

way through the passage, varying boat speed all the time to give the best possible ride. Again, the boat handled the conditions superbly and we arrived back at Abell Point for the transfer of the grateful patients to the Ambulance for the trip to Proserpine Hospital.

After refuelling and cleaning the boat, we were on our way home to a late dinner at 8:00pm. Thanks to the crew for a long job well done.

**Crew: Roger Wodson, Ken Bryce and Rick Brown (trainee)**

**Skipper: Mal Priday**

**Activation: February 24, 2018: Medivac for cruise ship passenger**

It turned out to be a long day at the office! I (Ray) was completing a morning shift at the radio base and having a long chat with the person taking over from me ... when we received a call from QAS (Queensland Ambulance Service) that they needed our assistance.

A person on an overseas cruise ship which was anchored near Hamilton island was in some distress and we were required to take two QAS officers to Hamilton Island to assist the patient back to the Proserpine hospital. Okey dokey! I had been looking forward to some lunch but luckily we have 'emergency food supplies' on board.

*Abell Point Marina VMR1* departed the marina at 1:20pm. The conditions were overcast but we made our way to Hamilton Island where we quickly collected the patient and his wife and returned to Abell Point Marina. We fuelled up and were on our way home at 4:00pm. Not too long for everyone else but I'd been on radio duty since 7:00am so it was a nine hour shift! As a side note ... the patient was on a four month cruise aboard the cruise ship *Silver Whisper*, and intended to re-join the cruise ship at Townsville. Thanks to the crew.

**Crew: Ron Roberts, Ken Bryce and Rick Brown**

**Skipper: Ray Lewis**

**Activation: February 24, 2018: Vessel broken down on the outer reef**

Sunday morning early and it isn't church so it must be a callout. A vessel broken down and anchored at Black Reef, a non-member. Just enough time to make a quick coffee then head back down to Abell Point Marina. Crew member Ray received a rousing cheer when he arrived with a bag full of hot Brumbies pies.

With the crew assembled and vessel checks done we were off at 06.40. With clouds looming, squally rain around us and a 10-15kt northerly it looked like a long trip out to the GPS coordinates outside Circular Quay Reef. The FLIR unit is of major assistance in these conditions and passed the test once again.

Here is where the story carries a familiar tune. On reaching the coordinates, we find an empty ocean, so back to the radio, contact the vessel requiring assistance, the fellow on board doesn't know the

boat's name and oh sorry, here is a new set of coordinates. (Sounds like the not very unusual cursor coordinates, and not the vessels). Only 8nm as the crow flies, but over the top of two reef systems and back the way we had just come and with a rapidly dropping tide. So dodging the reefs and about 20 miles later we have him in sight, anchored 10m from the reef proper with about 5kts of current but flat water and little breeze.

A hastily rigged raft-up so we could push him against the current to assist in his anchor hoist, and we motored him out into clear space for the paper work and assessing the problem.

One man in a 16ft boat with a single outboard, 50 miles offshore, overnight, despite the possibility of thunderstorms and heavy rain in the forecast! Flat battery, but two batteries in sight from my position on the fly-bridge, and a stunned shearwater bird padding around the cabin sole in a large puddle of water eating the blokes bait. And he had gone out there alone. Okay, so Ray Lewis goes aboard with the jumpstart kit. The terminal nut for the engine lead is loose, so this is rectified in two seconds. The motor starts on the third attempt without the use of our battery booster!

I wish I had a camera with me at that moment Ray looked up at me with the unused kit in his hand, the offending outboard running happily, a wild sea-bird eating bait at his feet and an unusual look on his face.

The vessel elected to follow us back to Airlie Beach as his GPS was now without power, so we untied and powered up for a 23kt drive home with the assisted vessel using our slipstream for flatter water.

We refuelled, washed down and prepared *Abell Point Marina VMR 1* for her next activation by 13.20.

I have seen one other battery lead which was more expensive, but it was on a Boeing 747 B.

Good work by the crew; Ray Lewis, Rod Wilson, and Michel del Aguila. Skipper, Ron Roberts.



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## RABY BAY



As per tradition, *RBII* spent the morning of December 25 motoring through the Raby Bay Canals playing Christmas carols and with Mr and Mrs Santa on the back deck handing out lollies to children on the pontoons.

### VESSELS AND FACILITIES UPDATE

*RBIII* is overdue for an engine replacement and we are eagerly awaiting the availability >300hp outboards to do the change over.

### GENERAL BASE UPDATE

The base has had plenty of activity and challenges over the summer period, due to the record summer temperatures and periods with high wind and rain.

The summer involved a total of 166 activations, including 49 breakdowns, 42 medivacs, five sinking vessels and two searches. In total, 188 people were returned to safety and total fuel consumption was 13,200 litres.



A successful tow completed over the busy Christmas period.

As usual for the Christmas period, the base was kept open from December 23 for a 10-day period to assist the large number of boaties heading out over that period. Jet skis were high in numbers and on one particular day, five jet skis were towed.



Raby Bay ramp area 'packed' with jet skis.



The new RBIV, freshly painted.

Our other new vessel, the RBV RIB has received a warm welcome from the base. It is an incredibly versatile and comfortable small craft that we now use for a variety of applications. Importantly, our members appear to have great fun driving it!



RBV was warmly welcomed by crew.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Continual progress is being made in the training area, with the 2018 program of fortnightly training sessions having been kicked off. So far, Seamanship, Local Knowledge, Handling a Vessel To 12m and Colregs have been completed.

Also, the annual CPR refresher and First Aid have been done, with the radio course being scheduled for early April.



Phil Baker and Jason Young during a CPR refresher.

For the first time, VMR Raby Bay will be offering its operational skippers advanced resuscitation training, to enable the use of the oxygen equipment already available on the vessels. The first course is scheduled for early April.



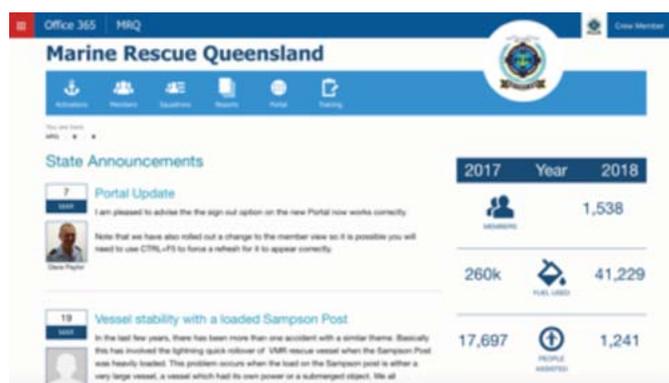
CPR oxygen kit.

The base added an operational skipper to its ranks, with Geoff Newton successfully passing his assessment. Congratulations Geoff!



Geoff Newton (L) being congratulated by Duty Officer Ray Pearson (R).

The new VMRAQ portal has been presented to the management committee with positive feedback. The intention is to introduce it to the membership progressively over the next couple of months, once the portal is ready for full rollout.



The new MRQ portal.



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## RABY BAY



**Drone trial.**



overnight shelter. The vessel was towed in coordination between three vessels, with the new RBV successfully acting as 'tug boat' inside the marina, to assist maneuvering the vessel in a very tight area.

### **Stone fish sting.**

A person with a stonefish sting presented to the base, with severe pains and extreme muscle contractions in his arms. A quick call was made for an ambulance, whilst the crew provided first aid and sought to calm the patient. Thankfully, the ambulance arrived quickly to take over the care of the patient.

## **ACTIVATIONS AND EVENTS**

VMR Raby Bay hosted a drone trial for VMRAQ and representatives from other squadrons in early March. The objectives of the trial were to assess the logistics of launching a drone from a vessel and to test the camera performance in an on water search environment.

*RBIII* was dispatched with the drone, with *RBII* following to dispatch a target for the drone to locate.

Feedback from the trial was positive, with the camera providing very high-resolution images of the search target. VMRAQ and the squadron representatives also had the opportunity to discuss range of real life drone application issues, including the need for operators to have a commercial drone license.

## **LARGE MOTOR CRUISER ASSISTANCE**

A family with children on a very large motor cruiser ran out of fuel just off Cleveland Point. With the weather turning foul the family called VMR Raby Bay for assistance.

Given the size of the vessel, *RBII*, *RBIII* and *RBV* were dispatched to assist, with the objective of getting the vessel into Raby Bay marina for a re-fuel and



**Large motor cruiser assisted to calmer waters.**



**Qld Stone fish.**

Stonefish are well camouflaged and easy to miss and accidentally step on. Whilst the sting is highly painful and potentially lethal, there are no recorded deaths of Australia from stonefish stings. The recommended first aid is to apply warm/hot water and not to remove any embedded spines from the wound. If unconscious and not breathing, follow DRSABCD. Always call 000 or 112 for ambulance.

## **NEW YEARS EVE**

Two vessels headed up the Brisbane River this year to support the New Year's Fireworks. With the recent rain there was significant debris in the river, which was a navigation hazard. *RBIII* was tasked with locating logs and other hazards during the event.



**The New Year Eve's Crew at Brisbane River.**

No vessels or pontoons required our assistance and both vessels made it back to base with nothing but good times to report.

## NORTHERN ZONE NEWS

### ESS COURSE

Recently an Elements of Shipboard Safety course was held at VMR Bowen. The course had 15 participants, with six members from VMR Bowen, four from VMR Burdekin and five from VMR Midge Point. The Burdekin participants are all under the age of 23 years, which is a credit to the squad.



Course participants.

Tom Hudson, VMRAQ State Trainer, delivered the training and many new skills were learnt by all in attendance. The pool activity of the 'congo line' turned into a race between the women and the men, with the women beating the men to the end of the pool.



The flare training was conducted on vacant land opposite the base and drew local spectators, who watched on with interest as orange smoke was drifting on the breeze.



Two of Bowen's new recruits are fire fighters, and a third is a volunteer fire fighter. After Tom put everyone through their paces with the fire extinguishers, the crew were given a demonstration by a professional.

### OFFSHORE SUPERBOAT RACE

Bowen will host round one of the Offshore Superboat Race on April 28-29. The small seaside town will treble in size with visiting race teams, spectators and VMR squads from the Northern Zone, who will provide safety on the water. There will be a street festival on the April 28, with VMR squadrons taking part in the street parade, and setting up a display in the street.

Round two will be held in Mackay on May 12-13. VMR squadrons will again provide water safety. These events are great for the region and raising the VMR profile in the communities.

### SAREX

VMR Whitsunday will host the Northern Zone Sarex in April. All zone squadrons along with Whitsunday Water Police and SES will participate in both day and night exercises. With all squads having new crew members, this will provide valuable training.

## STATE COUNCIL COMES TO TOWN

VMR Round Hill hosted the Marine Rescue Queensland (MRQ) State Conference over the weekend with councillors from all over Queensland here. VMR Round Hill held a social barbecue for the councillors and their partners on Friday evening at the base and a state dinner at Lagoons 1770 on Saturday with local member for Burnett Stephen Bennett and wife and our Mayor Matt also in attendance.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of national medals to members of the VMR Round Hill squadron.

These medals recognise diligent long service in organisations that protect life and property at some risk to their members. The medal is awarded to persons for long service in eligible organisations which fulfil the 'primary function' of their organisation and meet other criteria. Fifteen years eligible service is necessary to qualify for the medal. Clasps are available for each additional 10 year period.

## OUT OF THE ZONES

### MAYOR MATT AND STEPHEN BENNETT MP PRESENTED MEDALS TO:

#### Neale 'Skippy' Inskip VMRAQ Coxswain April 24, 2006

Twenty one years of service in some extremely dangerous weather conditions both day and night mostly in open waters including the search for missing children in Round Hill Creek in 2001, various searches in 2004, 2008 and numerous medivacs some with paramedics onboard other without. Most recent major incident and SAR was for the *Spirit of 1770* fire May 2016 where Neale was skipper of *Round Hill Rescue* and on scene coordinator for the operation returning 46 persons to safety with the assistance of other vessels.

#### Laurie Rapa VMRAQ Coxswain 02/05/2006

20 years of service mostly at Neale's side.

#### Doug Meng

Thirty eight years of service as SAR controller both at Beenleigh where Doug is a foundation member (1979) and Round Hill (1991). Doug's been involved in all areas of the squadrons from crew to management.

#### Ruth Tidy

Twenty two years of service as radio operator, as one knows a calm voice is always helpful in emergencies.

#### Josie Meng

Thirty two years of service beginning with Beenleigh as radio operator and boat crew and Round Hill since 1991 radio operator and management committee. Josie has been involved in most of the major SAR (Search and Rescue) activities at Round Hill.

Not bad for a small squadron 134 years of service - Oh so proud.

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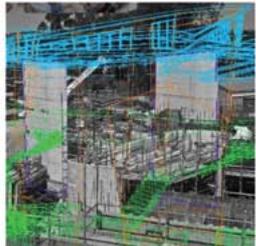


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