

# Volunteer Marine Rescue Vsheet

FREE ISSUE

DECEMBER 2016



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# A day in the life of VMR Southport



Andrea Curtis and Paul Burt visit the Seaway Tower



New motors come in King Size



Members from Jacobs Well, Southport, Currumbin, and Point Danger attended a Southern Zone Meeting



Favourite sunglasses returned from the deep



Marine Rescue 2 joins the SYC Sailpast.



How close can you go?



Gardening exercise for Crewies



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2016 - 2017

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# From the Wheel House



It has been six months since our last Vsheets, and during this time as President of VMR Southport I have not been idle in improving the day-to-day running of the squadron and creating a stronger public profile. All of this activity however, has resulted in missing the print deadline for the September issue and therefore it will be merged into the December 2016 issue.

This edition showcases presentations to four of our long serving members. To think these members have collectively volunteered over 125 years' service is indeed testimony to the type of dedication being shown by our members and an inspiration to those in the 15-20 year bracket to continue.

The experience and knowledge passed on by these members to the young and enthusiastic lower ranks is a guarantee the professional standards will remain at the forefront of our organisation in the years to come.

I am forever on the lookout for chances to increase our profile. A chance meeting with the enthusiastic local correspondents of Channel 7 Gold Coast has built what I hope will be a long lasting partnership in the sharing of stories, events and other newsworthy items. To support the news events and to ensure these are all tastefully handled, Channel 7 has generously supplied VMR Southport with 4 GoPros in the hope that on-water happenings can be uploaded to Channel 7 in time for the Gold Coast News.

Further work has culminated in Optus generously offering to assist in the upgrading of our internet connections, ensuring we can continue uninterrupted within the ever increasing social media, the growing demand for rapid communication over the internet for training, emergency situations and being able to respond to any situation that is presented to us, hopefully this will be completed by Christmas, our busiest time.

Recently we have had several occasions where the Water Police, Queensland Ambulance and Queensland Fire Services have been involved in incidents on the Broadwater. These appear to have been resolved satisfactorily ensuring the community is the winner.

The weather is warming up, the festive season is approaching and I wish you all safe boating, remember that alcohol and a day on the water don't mix.

*Dave Macdonald*  
President



Front Cover photograph courtesy of  
**Andrea Francolini Photography Pty Ltd**

**PROUD SUPPORTERS OF VMR SOUTHPORT**







by Glenn Norris

A man called VMR recently from South Stradbroke Island stating that 2 youths were stranded on the beach and couldn't swim back to their small tinny that was anchored about 100 metres offshore from the beach. They wanted VMR to pick them up from the beach and take them to their boat. After conferring with the caller, and as the sea conditions were moderate, he was advised to tell the youths to walk across the island and a VMR vessel would collect them on the inside and take them to their boat, as this was the safest option. Soon after, the youths appeared on the inside of the island and were picked up by VMR. The youths were actually young boys, aged 8 and 10 years old. They had gone surfing north of the Seaway, and as the swell had risen, they weren't strong enough to swim back to their boat, hence their predicament, choosing to swim to the beach instead. VMR returned to the vessel, which was in quite a dangerous position, took it in tow and re-united the boys with their boat inside the Seaway. After many thanks, both boys pleaded with the VMR crew not to tell their parents what happened.

Two of the VMR 1st Responders were called into action recently when a man arrived at the Rescue Base with a nasty laceration to the side of his head. The patient had beached his vessel next to VMR and as he was disembarking he lost his footing in the soft sand and fell backwards striking his head on the bow of the boat. An Ambulance was called and while the bleeding was being controlled and the wound cleaned, a man who was attending a training course at VMR came over and identified himself as an Emergency Department Doctor. He asked to have a look at the patients injury and on inspection he advised the man that seeking medical attention immediately was required as there was a possibility of a small skull fracture, and an X-Ray should be undertaken to check this. The Doctor also praised VMR for their quick actions in notifying the Ambulance, and the initial treatment given. The man was taken to hospital where we later heard he had received 7 stitches to his injury.

A boatie called VMR late afternoon recently requesting assistance with his large cruiser that had run aground in the Broadwater. A VMR crew attended to be informed by the irate boatie that his Beacon to Beacon book was incorrect and his navigation by the charts contained therein had caused the dilemma he was now in. A little puzzled by his comments the VMR Skipper advised the man that he as well outside the channel and that his best action would have been to navigate through the middle of the red and green beacons that were about 40 metres to his starboard side. The water was very deep between these beacons. In his current situation VMR could not assist, as the vessel was almost completely out of the water. Not prepared to just accept that he didn't correctly follow the Beacon To Beacon charts, the man looked puzzled and innocently commented " Maybe I was reading the book upside down ". The man waited for high tide to float out of his predicament.

VMR were called upon to assist a vessel offshore that reported engine difficulties due to a low level oil alarm. Locating the vessel approximately 12 nautical miles south east of the Seaway, a tow line was connected and the vessel towed back to the Seaway. Once inside, the vessel owner signalled that he was now ok and could make his own way back to the boat ramp. The tow line was disconnected, the vessel started and commenced making way. Travelling about 100 metres, VMR were flagged down and told the oil alarm was sounding again. The towline was re-connected and another tow commenced. About 200 metres from the boat ramp the owner flagged down the Rescue vessel again and said he was ok, he could motor into the boat ramp. The tow line was again disconnected and the vessel started. Soon after, VMR were flagged down again requesting to tow the vessel to the beach. When asked if the alarm had started sounding again, the boatie replied ' No, my engine just seized '.

A VMR crew on a training run near the Seaway observed a yacht sailing into troubled waters when it appeared to be heading directly towards the pipes of the dredge working in the area. The Rescue vessel tried to notify the yachts Skipper by frantically waving and blasting the horn at him to alter his course. The yacht pulled up in a hurry and the Skipper signalled to VMR as if to say ' Whats up '. When advised that he was going dangerously close to damaging his vessel if he continued on his current path, the foreign, limited English speaking Skipper threw his hands in the air as if to say, ' Where do I go then '. The VMR crew escorted the yacht away from danger and then proceeded to explain to the Skipper on what the dayshape signals displayed on the dredge indicated. The Skipper, obviously not understanding, continued on his way, confused at what all the fuss was about.

**ACTIVE MEMBER PROMOTIONS**

Active Members who have achieved higher ranking  
Congratulations to:

**Recruit**  
Merv Waters

**Senior Crew**  
Martin Lott

**Radio Operator**  
Wayne Sticher  
Margot Bender

<b>SOME STATS</b>					
ACTIVATIONS	JUNE 2016	JULY 2016	AUGUST 2016	SEPT 2016	OCT 2016
Towed Vessels	24	31	22	35	53
Jump Starts	2	5	1	6	9
Pump Outs			2	3	3
Transporting	1	1	2		1
Fire		1			5
Standby	2	3	4	4	1
Medical	3	1	2	1	4
Searches		4	2		
Dispersals	2			2	3
Public Relations		1	2	6	5
Crew Training	35	84	77	65	54
Groundings	2	4	1	4	5
Other	15	7	7	5	1
TOTALS	86	142	122	131	144



# Safety Equipment

with Acting Senior Sergeant Gavin Peachey  
GOLD COAST WATER POLICE

During recent months there has been an increase in the number of vessels heading offshore to take advantage of the milder winter conditions for some fishing or a chance to spot a migrating whale. Unfortunately, Water Police have noticed an increase in these vessels not having their required safety equipment.

It is essential that all required safety is carried and that the equipment is in good working order and not past the expiry date for replacement or service. Registered vessels that operate beyond smooth or partially smooth waters are required to carry a V-Sheet, two red and two orange handheld flares and suitable life jackets for all passengers. If these vessels operate more than two nautical miles from land they are also required to have a registered EPIRB.

Personal Water Craft (Jetskis), are exempt from the carriage of flares and V-Sheets if operated within 0.5 nautical miles of shore.

The fines for not carrying the required safety equipment start from \$243 on top of having to pay for the new safety equipment. A simple check prior to heading out may not only save you some money – it may actually save your life if something goes wrong.

A comprehensive list of required safety equipment is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website, [www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Safety-equipment-recreational-ships](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Safety-equipment-recreational-ships).

Not only is it important to carry your required safety equipment it must be readily available to grab in an emergency and you must know how to use it. Before you head out for the day, everyone on your boat should know where the safety equipment is, particularly the life jackets. If your life jackets are kept in a place that is not clearly visible, you must display a 'Lifejackets' sign to indicate where they are stowed. The owner or master should give everyone on the vessel sufficient information about where the safety equipment is kept and how to use it in an emergency.

Water Police continue to ask boat operators that are planning to go offshore to research weather conditions prior to heading out and keep an eye on the weather in case it deteriorates while you are out. There are a number of excellent coastal boating and weather apps available and up to the minute information is also available on the Bureau of Meteorology website.

When planning a trip across the Seaway or one of our coastal bars, boat operators should consider their own skill levels, how their vessel handles in rough seas, be familiar with the rules of crossing bars and



should consider liaising with local Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) groups before negotiating a bar crossing.

All vessels transiting out of the Seaway should, without exception, contact the Seaway Tower by radio and provide the following information:

Name and registration number of vessel;

Number of persons on-board;

A contact mobile telephone number on-board the vessel;

Destination; and

Estimated time of arrival back to the Seaway.

As soon as you return, or if you are going to stay out a bit longer than expected it is important that you contact the Seaway Tower and update your details. All overdue vessels are reported to Water Police who then activate a search and rescue mission to locate the overdue vessel. Often we find that the vessel has actually returned home and the master simply forgot to advise Seaway Tower. Water Police must take all reports of overdue vessels very seriously and the timeliness of our response may save lives. Please remember to keep the Seaway Tower or your local VMR advised of your movements.

**Be aware** of your speed and wash, distance off the shore and people in the water

**Under the influence**—don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs

**Pay attention** — look out while underway, follow the rules and watch the weather

**Safety Equipment** — know where it is, be able to get it and know how to use it

**Respect**—respect your and your vessel's capabilities, other waterways users and residents

Enjoy your day on the water safely.

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# CAN YOU RECOGNISE THE

# VMR SOUTHPORT VESSELS

by Glenn Norris

## ON THE WATER?

Quite often when calls for assistance are received at our Rescue Base the caller will be told to sit tight and wave down the Rescue vessel when they see it approaching. Many of the boat owners VMR Southport assist have no idea what the VMR Rescue vessels look like, so here they are.



**MARINE RESCUE 1** is the mother ship of the fleet, or Primary Rescue vessel as we like to refer to it as. This vessel is a Noosa Cat 3100 series and is powered by 2 x 300hp Mercury Verado outboard engines. Fuel capacity is 1000 litres, 100 litres of water. You will most commonly see this vessel utilised for offshore marine Search and Rescue, transportation of Emergency Paramedics to marine medical incidents and for towing larger type vessels. Being a cabin vessel, this provides the crew with protection from the elements, and the fold down suspension seats allow a stretcher to be placed upon them for comfort and ease of treatment of the medical patients VMR Southport regularly transports. This vessel is equipped with radar, GPS, VHF marine radios, AIS, joystick steering, and comfortably cruises at 24 knots, using approximately 32 litres of fuel per hour.



**MARINE RESCUE 3** is the baby of the VMR Southport Rescue vessels. This vessel is a 6.3 metre NAIAD Inflatable, powered by a recently acquired 150hp Mercury 4 stroke outboard engine. Most commonly used for towing of jetskis, and small tinnies and for VMR crew training. Inshore activations are the norm for *Marine Rescue 3*.

With a draft of only 600mm, shallow water work is very easy and given the large number of sandbanks in the VMR Southport operational area, retrieval of passengers from grounded vessels is also a common task. Using only approximately 12 litres of fuel per hour, from its 140L capacity fuel tank, the newest Skippers within the Squadron are often seen out and about on the water honing their skills.



**MARINE RESCUE 2** is the workhorse of VMR Southport. Known as the secondary vessel, this high speed, open cockpit Noosa Cat 2700 series is powered by 2 x 250hp Mercury Verado outboard engines. Fuel capacity is 800 litres, this vessel is by far the most used vessel in the fleet. Always moored at the VMR pontoon, a 4 minute trip to the Gold Coast Seaway is all that is required in an emergency situation, should it occur. The low cut windscreen allows for excellent visibility in both day and night activations, and the large back deck area allows plenty of working space for the crews when handling ropes during activations. Using approximately 28 litres of fuel per hour, and equipped with GPS, VHF marine radios, and AIS, *Marine Rescue 2* can perform most types of work required of it, and is the favoured vessel by most VMR Southport Skippers.



**MARINE RESCUE 4** is the newest vessel in VMR Southports fleet. This vessel is a Noosa Cat 2400 series Walk-around, and is powered by 2 x 150hp Mercury Verado outboard engines. Acquired in November 2014, the increased workload undertaken by this Squadron saw the need for the purchase of this vessel. Most commonly used for towing vessels up to 30 feet in length, *Marine Rescue 4* provides an excellent backup to *Marine Rescue 2*. Fuel capacity is 440 litres of fuel and using approximately 24 litres of fuel per hour, this vessel is also equipped with GPS, and VHF marine radios.



# RADIO TALK

with Diana Gibson



VMR Southport Radio Operators and Crews receive extensive tuition on operating marine radios as part of their general training. Most commonly this training is on VHF or 27MHz radios, and involves learning to listen very carefully, make transmissions clear, concise and correct, and to keep calm at all times. As with everything, practice makes perfect, and VMR Radio Operators are not immediately thrown into the deep end, with an 8 – 10 week training period the normal timeframe before a person can operate solo. Often a new operators first shift alone is very daunting, and as with everything, is generally the experience where they find out, 'I didn't learn that bit, or that wasn't in my training'. Many thoughts also go through ones mind "Is that a call to us?" "What did they say?" "What's the boat name?" "What was the mobile phone number?" "Oops, didn't get all the information." "What is that other noise?" Sometimes patience goes a long way to assisting in a difficult situation

So, how can you, on the other end of the message, help our trainees and qualified Radio Operators? Make your transmissions clear, concise and correct, and also, you should also keep calm!

As one who is still astounded when lights come on at the flick of a switch, there is no claim to any depth of knowledge of how this radio thing works, but it has been learnt over the years that some things make it better and easier for all concerned. Here are some checks you can make.

- Ensure your CHANNEL selector is showing the right working number. Gold Coast Seaway Tower (SWT) and VMR Southport both use VHF Ch.73 and 27MHz Ch.91 as working channels. *VHF Ch.16 and 27MHz Ch.88 are emergency channels and only used for initial contact to ask for the working channel. If you call on these channels, unless it is an emergency, you will be asked to go directly to Ch.73 or Ch.91. If you are moving out of Southport range regularly it might be a good idea to ring VMR and ask for a listing of other radio bases and their listening/working channels.*
- On the VOLUME button, about a third (1/3) up is about right, but each radio has its own foibles, so be prepared to go louder or softer to suit the situation.
- Find the SQUELCH knob – turn it till you get a static type noise, then back it off until you just loose the noise.
- On the handpiece microphone, PRESS the button when you want to SPEAK. LET GO when you need to HEAR.
- Speak directly into the handpiece microphone, preferably out of the wind! (Wind is often that sssshhh noise we hear over a transmission). *Ask for a radio check if you want to confirm status of your transmission.*
- Keep your transmitter turned ON and volume UP when aboard. *Some reasons for this include: Securite messages of weather changes or condition warnings may be broadcast, or maybe another vessel may need your attention, and most importantly, if you are late returning, someone will be calling you (and checking your mobile phone number if it has been given). Remember, as a safety watch we are required to report overdue vessels to the Qld Water Police for follow up. Its better you hear from and report to us, than having them on your trail!*

Now let's proceed to routine calling and replying over marine radio, remembering that you don't need to sit listening to make a call, or wait around to receive a call. Most other operators are doing something else in the meantime. So, when transmitting

- Listen for a couple of seconds to the channel you plan to use. This is a courtesy to ensure you don't cut into someone else's transmission.
- Press the microphone button, say the called station name three (3) times, give your call sign (boat name or registration number) then release the button.

- Wait until the called station responds with your boat name or registration number.
- Give your message – slowly and as clearly as possible.
- Station called should respond to you with either ROMEO (which means "all understood" in marine radio speak) or often say in case of the SWT, ON/OFF THE LOG or EXTENDED (just so you know we got it!) or perhaps you may be asked to repeat some bit of info.

Transmissions should also use the words OVER and OUT, but never together!

OVER = at the end of a message to indicate "I have said all I want to say right now and it's over to you to respond"

OUT = at the end of the total call to indicate "all good, there is nothing more we need to say to each other, goodbye"

So, here's a sample transmission to the SWT for a vessel going off shore:

**Seaway Tower, Seaway Tower, Seaway Tower this is Little Duck. OVER**

Little Duck, this is Seaway Tower OVER (or sometimes we say LITTLE DUCK GO AHEAD)

**Seaway Tower this is Little Duck, registration Xray Delta 456 Quebec, 3 people on board, going to 24 fathoms south east, returning at 1300 hours mobile phone 0400 999 999. OVER**  
Romeo (or ON THE LOG) Little Duck. Seaway Tower OUT

Remember, your marine radio is a very important safety item, ensure it is in good condition, the radios aerial is in good condition and that you know what channel to use to broadcast and receive transmissions. It always good to leave it on whilst in your vessel, just in case that important transmission you didn't expect, or that uninviting weather forecast you didn't want to hear break the airwaves.





# PROLONG THE LIFE OF

# your covers and upholstery

Between my father, two brothers and I, we have been in the industry for about 100 years, and have nearly seen it all when it comes to boat servicing and maintenance. When it is your boat, most will do the mechanical side first, i.e. - engine service, batteries, trailer bearings etc. and that is where it finishes. But what about your covers, clears, seating and bunk beds? You're just happy to be getting out on the water.

With summer fast approaching, more and more people will be using their boats. If the boat has sat idle over the winter months, then there are a couple of things you can do that will help prolong the life of your covers and upholstery.

The best thing for your zips, clips and everything in between, is use. Time and time again we have seen where people haven't used their boat in months and eventually they have a nice weekend with nothing else planned except to be out on the water. But there is a zip that is seized or they have un-clipped a cover and it pulls the stud out of the fibreglass, and you now have a hole.

All it takes is a little bit of preventive maintenance, before and after you use the boat. After you have washed the boat, and removed as much salt as possible, grab a can of silicone and spray the zips. Also, spray the zip runner and put a little bit of Vaseline on the clips. Before cleaning the clears, hose them down with fresh water then clean them with a soft white rag. This will help to stop small scratches appearing in your clears.

We are asked on regular basis about using Mr Sheen on clears, but we don't recommend this as it can void the manufacturer's warranty. Mr Sheen does not have the additives in it to support the elasticity in the clears. This is required to give them the flexibility to form the complex shapes that are required on your boat. All you are doing is saving a couple of dollars today that could cost you much more down the track. Most boating stores will stock clear cleaning products. If you can't find these, call your local marine trimmer. The best way to protect your clears and the inside of your boat is to get a canvas or mesh screen around your clears. During summer the sun dries out your clears and any other upholstery you have. This in turn causes clears/vinyls to become brittle and crack.



This is a picture of the 2 x 550 clips, and is an example of using the wrong screws. The clip on the left has the correct size 6 gauge screw and the one on the right has an incorrect 8 gauge screw.

**Custom Marine Trimming**

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The name of the stainless steel clip on your boat is called a "550". These are screwed on to the boat using a 6 gauge counter sunk screw or a 1/8 pop rivet. If this clip is pulled out of the fibreglass, the biggest mistake people make is to use a bigger gauge screw or pop rivet to put the new clip in. This will cause the clip to change size, and this will mean the clip in the cover will not pop on. If this happens, you then have to move the clip in the cover or have the hole filled by a boat builder. If you ever have a clip that is stuck together, a small flat head screw driver is the best way to separate the clip.

There is nothing worse than having water leaks or water dripping through your covers. To help prevent this, try using seam sealer. This can be purchased from a camping store. Always try on a small area on the covers first before doing the lot. If you have mould starting to form, clean off using mild soapy water, with a soft white cloth. Don't use boat/truck wash, as this will remove the UV coating.

There are products on the market that will assist in the maintaining of vinyl cushion and fabric bunks and keep them soft. Check to see if your cushions have breather holes in the bottom to help let moisture out. If they don't, once again your local marine trimmer can help. With fabric, try and keep them as dry as possible. If they get wet, place them in the sun. It doesn't hurt to throw a couple of moisture absorbers in the cabin.

As always when it comes to boats, preventive maintenance is the best maintenance. It doesn't take long, and if you ever have any doubts call your local marine trimmer for advice.



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WOULD YOU LIKE TO

# FINANCIALLY ASSIST VMR SOUTHPORT IN UNDERTAKING A MAJOR PROJECT?

Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport is currently undertaking a project to replace the concrete boat ramp at its Main Beach Rescue Base.

Since 1987, when Air Sea Rescue Southport, now known as VMR Southport, relocated to its current location, this ramp has seen our rescue boats launched and recovered many thousands of times.

Unfortunately, over this time, the concrete on the ramp has cracked due to natural causes and the unsettling of the rock foundation underneath has resulted in the inability to safely launch the vessels at low tide, creating an Occupational Health and Safety hazard. Despite expensive repairs over the years, professional advice now indicates that more modern designs would eliminate these problems.

In order to rectify this situation and allow VMR rescue crews to safely and quickly launch the rescue vessels in emergency situations, we must take action in the very near future to replace this boat ramp.

Current indications suggest that approximately \$75,000 is required to undertake this project, and VMR Southport is calling on our Members and Supporters to assist us in funding this.

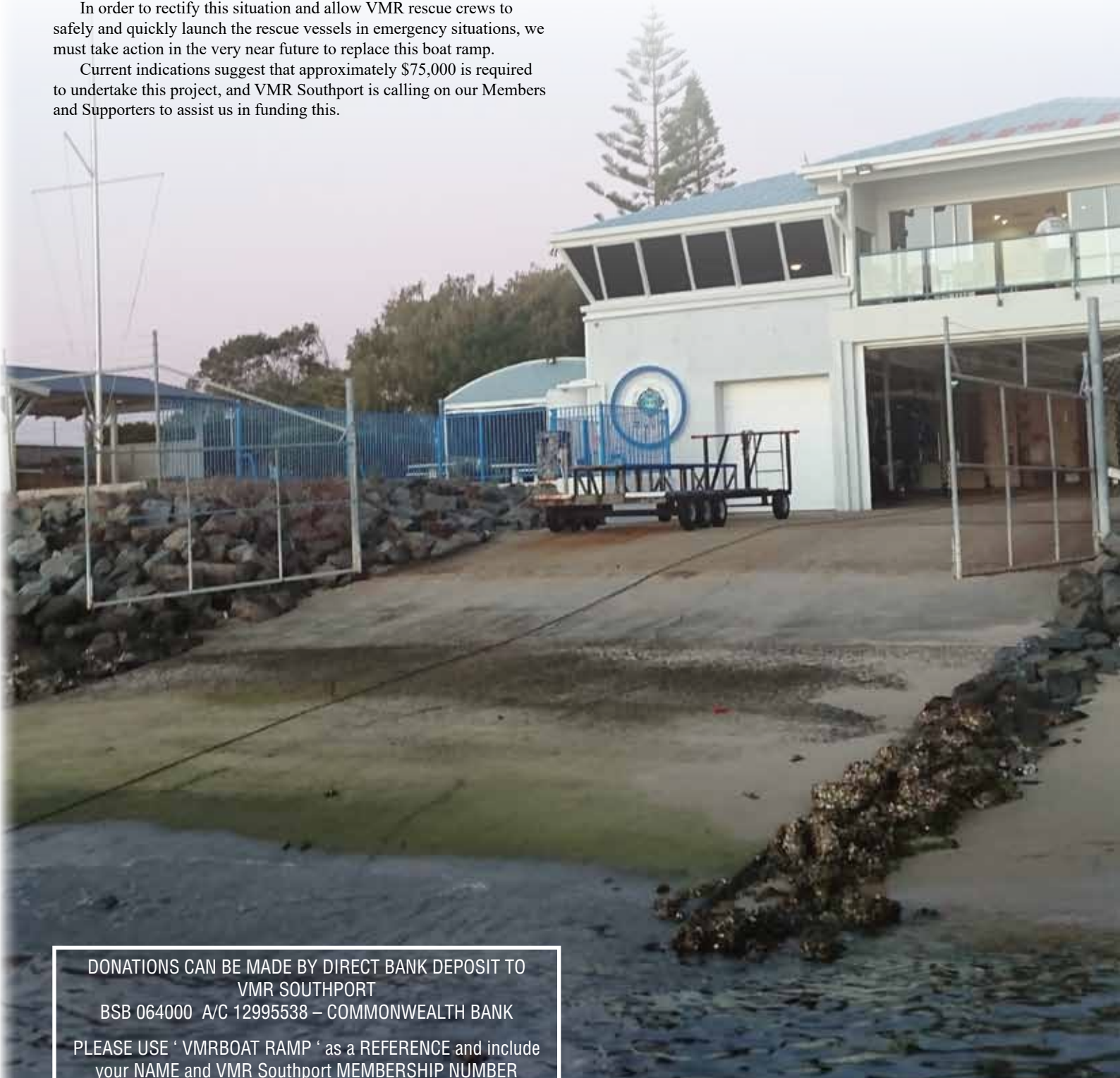
Donations of materials, labour, equipment or in monetary form to this Organisation to assist in replacing the boat ramp would be enormously appreciated.

This project has been included in the capital works program of VMR Southport for the 2016 / 2017 Financial year.

Donations are tax deductible, and all donations will be recognised in our Squadron Magazine, the *Vsheet* by way of an Acknowledgements page.

Companies or Businesses contributing towards this project will also be afforded advertising space within this magazine, if desired.

We thank you for your support in anticipation.



DONATIONS CAN BE MADE BY DIRECT BANK DEPOSIT TO  
VMR SOUTHPORT  
BSB 064000 A/C 12995538 – COMMONWEALTH BANK

PLEASE USE 'VMRBOAT RAMP' as a REFERENCE and include  
your NAME and VMR Southport MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

# Management Team 2016 - 2017



left to right: Diana Gibson, John Kaus, Bev Weldon, Martin Walsh, Dave Macdonald, Alan Coy, Helen Stanfield, Glenn Norris, Merv Handley, John MacDonald.

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# 125 YEARS OF SERVICE TO VMR SOUTHPORT

On the evening of Tuesday 5 July 2016 VMR Southport had the pleasure of inviting Marine Rescue Queensland President Keith Williams to our Rescue Base to present four of our long serving Senior Skippers with their 25 year service National Medal clasps. The National medal is presented to members of recognised government and voluntary organisations who have given 15 years of diligent service, risking their lives or safety to protect or assist the community in enforcement of the law, or in times of emergency or natural disaster. A clasp is awarded for each 10 years service after this.

Collectively these 4 member recipients, Bruce Andersen, Trevor Park, John Wise and Greg Turner have contributed in excess of 125 years service to Air Sea Rescue and Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport.

Enjoy their stories

## GREG TURNER

Joined Air Sea Rescue Southport on the 30th of September 1980. Greg was the youngest ever person, at 18, to be awarded a Skipper ranking of any Marine Rescue Organisation in Queensland. His natural talent behind the helm, and his lifelong employment in the marine industry have made him an outstanding Skipper in all types of vessels, especially those belonging to VMR Southport. Greg is a Senior Skipper and Life Member of VMR Southport and has in his time with VMR Southport also been the Operations Controller and Search and Rescue Controller. Greg has also received the Emergency Services Medal for services to Marine Rescue in Queensland and his name is synonymous with the rescue of a hot air balloon and its occupants that plunged into the ocean, seriously injuring several people in 1990. Greg was also active on the day a helicopter joy ride turned to tragedy on South Stradbroke Island in 1991. The helicopter crashed and seven people received fatal injuries in this event. Greg is regularly found around the Rescue base, training and assessing up and coming members, socialising with his many VMR past and current friends, or filling in as a crew member on rostered shifts.



Senior Skipper Greg Turner

## BRUCE ANDERSEN

Joined Air Sea Rescue Southport on the 15th June 1987, now known as Volunteer Marine Rescue, Bruce has participated as a crew member, skippered rescue vessels in situations that could only be described as horrendous, where lives have been lost, vessels destroyed and where only the most experienced rescue vessel personnel would venture. Bruce has attended numerous major incidents in his time with this Organisation, including a multiple beach drowning on South Stradbroke Island, the rescue of a racing yacht that beached on the Northern NSW coast in horrific weather, during the Sydney to Gold Coast Yacht Race, and several other incidents where life has been lost in vessel capsizes and man overboard situations. Bruce is a Senior Skipper and Life Member within VMR Southport, and contributes huge amounts of time training and assessing up and coming crew members and Skippers. Bruce has also been Treasurer and Committee Member of VMR Southport. Bruce is often seen at the Rescue Base promoting VMR Southport through other Clubs and Organisations he is involved with.



Senior Skipper Bruce Andersen

## JOHN WISE

Joined Air Sea Rescue on the 11th of November 1985. John is a Life Member and Senior Skipper, of Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport. John is a very experienced rescue vessel Skipper and has participated in hundreds of rescue activations in his time with the Organisation. John has been a President and Secretary of VMR Southport, and his 'no nonsense approach' to the duties undertaken by the volunteers he associates with, has made many of these people exceptional rescue vessel operators and crew persons. John still remembers the days of his little 'row boat' back in England as a kid, and his love of the ocean has made him a fine mariner. All members of VMR Southport have enormous respect for John who attends rostered crew days when available and his love of training the 'young ones', as he calls these people is his inspiration to keep coming along to VMR Southport



Senior Skipper John Wise

## TREVOR PARK

Joined Air Sea Rescue Southport on the 25th October 1986. Trevor is a Life Member and Senior Skipper of Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport, as it is now known. During his time with this Organisation he has Skippered rescue vessels and acted as a crew member in many difficult and dangerous situations. Trevor's experience in manoeuvring rescue vessels, reading the ocean and its wave movements is impeccable, and he is always very happy to pass on his experience and knowledge to up and coming crew members Trevor has been instrumental in raising huge amounts of funding for VMR Southport, been a former President of VMR Southport, and during this time, was instrumental in seeking funding to have a rescue vessel donated to VMR Southport. Trevor still participates in rostered crew days, and is regularly seen at the various functions and events that occur at the Rescue Base.



Senior Skipper Trevor Park

# VALE -

## Long-term VMR Friends and Workers

October brought the sad news of the passing of two stalwarts of our Association. Vale, Life Member Joan Anderson and Phyllie Bridgford, supporter extraordinaire - two ladies who, in their own way, provided invaluable assistance to VMR Southport over many years. Both ladies retained their interest and association with VMR Southport and its present day members long after they ceased their physical involvement.

Joan and husband Chas, were hands-on workers in the VMR gardens and with Base maintenance. Joan was also an integral member of the Ladies Auxiliary, raising funds in the early days of VMR Southport for the "new" Base. Phyllie came along to help her friend Jill in the Admin office, then set about coercing friends to attend and buy raffle tickets at VMR Luncheon Club functions, and personally provided major funding for the erection of 'Leechies Lean-to', the outdoor area at VMR.

Interestingly, whilst Active Members, neither of these ladies were involved in the core activities of VMR Southport, ie providing emergency marine assistance (Crew) or marine safety radio coverage (Radio Operators). However, both gave vital support to this 99% self-funded voluntary Association and their endeavours were very much appreciated by all "frontline" members.

Both of these ladies will be very sadly missed.



Phyllie Bridgford



Joan Anderson

Your

## SPARE TIME

*can be put to good use*

VMR Southport's "general staff" provide much needed and vital support for one of the busiest marine rescue bases within Australia and our Admin staff are the reason you are receiving this publication via the information contained in the membership database.

There are a myriad of tasks to keep things running smoothly and maybe, just maybe, someone reading this has an under-utilised talent or some spare time that would ease the workload of an Active Member! Obviously any database operators would require training in our programme, but certainly a somewhat computer literate person who could commit time Wednesdays and/or Thursdays would be welcomed by Jill and Beris. (Thank you Sonia Curtis for your 10 years of backup support and enjoy your further travels.) Rex would certainly appreciate a keen gardener or two to assist in our recently renovated gardens. Like tinkering around with maintenance issues? I am sure Glenn could find a paint or repair job or two to occupy some time.

From time to time there is a need to provide lunch/snacks for meetings or small functions – could you be available on an ad hoc basis? Many utilise our facilities on the beautiful Broadwater for their celebrations, and maybe your social attitude could assist Merv and Glenys in providing support and Sand Bar services at these functions. Hey, it's all good fun and being part of team can be rewarding and self-fulfilling.

You may, or may not, have missed an issue of your Vsheet, and you may, or may not, have the ability, talent, time, inclination, inspiration, dedication or any mix of these to assist in future issues, in whatever capacity you may be able to offer. Editor/Publisher would be great but just an on-hands person to keep us all on track would not go astray

If, however, you have a thought that you'd like to find out more about regular, rostered Active Crew or Radio Operator positions, we'd love to hear from you anytime too!

And I'm sure no Management Committee would turn down a group who wished to provide a new fundraising venture or start of support "club". Thinking caps on Associate Members – we need YOU.

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# FUEL

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VMR Southport has had a mutually beneficial relationship with Sanctuary Cove Marina Operations for many years, particularly at International Boat Show time. The provision of a mooring for display and fund raising operations from *MARINE RESCUE 1*, and the opportunity to offer ferry services to moored visitors provides VMR Southport with its major fundraising venture each year.

It is with pleasure we can now offer VMR Southport Associate Members discount fuel purchased at Sanctuary Cove Marina Operations fuel facility.

On provision of your current VMR Southport membership card there will be a discount of \$0.02 per litre of fuel on a minimum purchase of \$300.00.



# GALAHS ATTACK

*VMR Lifeline*

Installation of new Marine Radio equipment at VMR Southport has not gone unnoticed. The local Galah population has mustered its forces and attacked the expensive wiring that provides marine radio services to Gold Coast Boaties every hour of every day.

Continued attack could endanger the life of anyone of us in the case of an emergency.

The photo on right shows that chicken wire is no protection.



# Ramp Rage



with Peter Holliday

As summer begins to heat up, we are starting to see tempers flare at boat ramps again. As the crowds get thicker and the queues get longer, tempers seem to get shorter. Of course, boating is a pleasant, relaxing pastime. We all know there is no need to rush. But watching some of the people out there can be so frustrating. Watching some of the silly things they do makes you wonder why there aren't more accidents.

The idea, of course, is to get your car and trailer down the ramp, get the boat off (or on) and get out of the way. Do it as quickly and efficiently as possible, we all know that and most of us do it, but some people make you wonder. They hold the queue up, they abuse others at the ramp. They damage their boats and they put their families and friends at risk

So what should we do to get ourselves on the water and off the ramp quickly?

It starts at home. Before you leave home, run through your checklists. Make sure all the equipment you need is where it should be. Whenever you can, get the boat loaded before you head out. If you can't do that, then load it well away from the ramp. Loading your boat from the boot of the car whilst on the ramp is something that should never be done. Ensure ropes and fenders are where you want them. Check all the electricals on boat and trailer. Make sure the motor will start and that batteries are well charged. Check your tie downs and make sure they are not only secure, but can be released easily. Check the winch cable or strap and the safety chain. Make sure you can undo that rusted shackle. (And carry spares) Does your electric winch work properly? What about your manual winch? Do you have the winch handle. Do you have the bungs? What about spare ones? If you like to trim your motor right up, think about putting a red flag on it. (Remember to remove it before you launch.)

Once you are at the boat ramp, do not start to reverse down until everything is ready. Stop well clear of the reversing area and get things ready. Nothing is more annoying than watching someone hold up the line for 10 minutes or more while they load lunch, bait, fishing tackle etc into the boat while they are taking up one or more lanes of the launching ramp. Load your gear, undo tiedowns, put the bungs in before you reverse down. Don't undo the winch strap or the safety chain though, unless you want to risk a premature launch onto that unforgiving concrete pad. One thing that worries me here is when people load their children under 10 and their elderly grannie into the boat before they launch. A broken strap on the ramp can be bad enough, but it could be disastrous with people on board.

Now you can reverse down the ramp if it is clear and it is your turn! Queue jumpers can expect to be told. Just a hint – if parking is in short supply, it is often a good idea to let someone recover their boat and leave their parking spot before you try to launch. When reversing, be aware that not everyone is watching. Avoid backing over pedestrians and parents – please keep the kids from wandering into the reversing lanes. Don't speed. Take it easy. You don't want to put the car in the water. Personally, whether pushing off or driving off, I like to have as much water under the boat as I can when I launch the boat. Decide whether you need to trim your motor up and by how much. You really do not want to let it hit the concrete.

If you push off, don't forget to have a line attached to control the boat. Now you should be able to undo the strap and the safety chain and get the boat on the water. Get it to the beach or pontoon quickly and then move the car. Be as efficient as you can. A second driver to move the car off the ramp as soon as you have launched will be a bonus.

Reversing a trailer takes practice. If you are not good at it, practice away from the water. Abandoned carparks are excellent. It is hard to practice when there are 5 boats waiting behind you for their turn. Just use one lane on multi lane ramps. Be fair. And when you park, try to take up just one parking space. Tempers can easily flare when someone has to go a few hundred metres to find a legal park because other people have parked poorly or illegally. Obey the parking signs. Most spaces in boatramp carparks are for cars with trailers only, and the nearby streets often have signs saying that parking there is for cars without trailers only. Yes, Council parking inspectors DO work on Sundays, and they often book you without leaving a notification – it arrives in the mail a few weeks later.

Please think about where you park. If your beautiful car is parked where inexperienced people are trying to reverse an awkward trailer then you are asking for trouble. At the ramp I use, you often see expensive vehicles restricting access to the reversing area. They are legally parked, but they don't leave beginners much room for error.

Recovery is pretty much the same in reverse. Prepare fully before reversing down, tie down etc well away from the reversing lanes. Clean up at home. I like to have a lot of trailer in the water if I am winching up, but just the tip of the trailer in the water if driving on. If you drive the boat onto the trailer, remember that you only need to get the front of the boat onto the back of the trailer. Then, if you have good rollers, you can use the motor to straighten up and to push the boat on and up.

Just a last word though. Be patient. If someone is having difficulties it is better to help them than to yell at them. Remember, we are all going out to relax.

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# Operations Controller's Report : 2016

The 2015/2016 year has been a very successful period for Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport. I am exceptionally proud and honoured to have been Operations Controller of an organisation that has excelled in all areas of its operation.

Requests for marine assistance have been constant, slightly increasing on the previous year, crews have been readily available to assist when needed, the level of professionalism shown by all Active members, both Radio Operators and Boat Crews in what has been required has been first class, and the most critical and pleasing factor is that none of our volunteers have been injured in any significant way in the course of their duties throughout the year.

Marine breakdowns still contribute more than 60% of activations, with vessels out of fuel, jump-starts of flat batteries, and engine failures composing this figure. In 2015 / 2016 VMR Southport activated for a marine assist on average 2.5 times daily, with a random Wednesday in February, outside of holiday period, contributing nine requests for assistance between 1100 hours and 2000 hours. These assists ranged from an Ambulance Medivac, to a vessel that had lost all engine power being swept towards the Gold Coast Seaway rock wall, along with numerous engine failures.

Vessel groundings, fouled anchors, vessel capsizes, and pumping out of sinking vessel activations have all been on par with previous years, however, it has been observed that those vessels running aground have been in the larger size bracket, and the result of doing so has resulted in serious injury to passengers on board on several occasions.

Jetski owners have continued to provide a steady source of work.

VMR Southport has maintained its good working relationship with the Gold Coast Water Police and Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, with activations to assist both these Emergency Services attended throughout the year. Queensland Ambulance activations have been at average levels, usually two to three a month, however, on several occasions activations have been for multiple patients. The QAS First Responders attached to VMR Southport have provided great assistance to Paramedics and have learnt valuable skills in the process. Five additional First Responders commenced training in March 2016 and are well on the way to qualifying.

2016 has seen some very time consuming and difficult processes result in a successful outcome in relation to the renewal of the lease on our Rescue Base property, with occupancy entitlements renewed and validated until the year 2030. This has been a 4 year process in sourcing this renewal.

The new Radio Aerial Tower was finally completed in October of 2015 giving VMR Southport uninterrupted marine communications 24 hours 7 days a week. This \$180,000 project was also four years in planning. Unfortunately, soon after completion the local birdlife also decided that they enjoyed chewing on the plastic aerial cabling, resulting in significant damage, however, this has had no effect on transmission ability. VMR Southport still maintains the only 24 hour 7day radio listening watch on all emergency marine radio frequencies in the Gold Coast area, and is one of only two full-time, non-closing Marine Rescue Bases in Queensland. Without the dedication of our volunteers this wouldn't be possible.

The four Rescue vessels have given very little trouble. MARINE RESCUE 2 was taken off the water toward the end of 2015 for a minor refit. Repairs to, and repainting of the engine pods were carried out, new deck matting was installed, and stainless rail modifications were undertaken.

All vessels are regularly professionally detailed and antifouling touch-ups are conducted every few months when required. These vessels are our pride and when you have white boats, maintenance is a continual must to keep them looking in a prime and pristine condition. I thank the Active Boat Crew members for their care and respect shown in how they use these vessels.

Members have continued to dedicate many hours to training and results have shown this, with many progressing through rankings due to their efforts. The Squadron now boasts in excess of 25 Skippers, with several more in the making. Congratulations to all members who have achieved their goals. You are contributing to making this organisation very strong.

Recruitment has been very slow, with minimal enquiry, however, those that have enquired have been of a very high standard. Across the board for all volunteer organisations, competition for volunteers is immense and we must capitalize on all opportunities we get to recruit new members.

Fuel costs for the vessels continue to be the largest expense to the organisation.

Membership levels have maintained over the period, with the transition to a one only price membership of \$66 being well accepted. This was the first type of price rise of any kind in more than 10 years.

The biggest fundraising event of the year, the Sanctuary Cove International Boatshow, was another huge success, generating a very valuable income for the Squadron.

Submission of Grant Applications for various available funding programs was constant, with several successful.

2016/2017 will be a year of capitalizing on what has been achieved this year and I look forward to entering my 16<sup>th</sup> year as Operations Controller of the largest, and best, volunteer operated Marine Rescue Squadron in Australia.

Thank you one and all for your support, each of you has made a contribution to making VMR Southport what it is today. Keep up the great work.

Glenn Norris  
OPERATIONS CONTROLLER

Month	Assists	Training	Fuel Used (litres)
July 2015	79	66	3341
August	64	60	4606
September	47	47	3068
October	73	86	4573
November	57	62	3536
December	113	49	4093
January 2016	106	95	5232
February	48	56	2694
March	86	69	4176
April	83	69	4153
May	67	47	3418
June	49	35	2236
TOTAL	872	741	45126
Monthly Average	72	62	3760.5

VESSEL	Engine Capacity	Engine Hours	Fuel Used Litres	Fuel Average (L/P/H)
Marine Rescue 1	2 x 300hp Mercury Verado	397.5	12417	31.24
Marine Rescue 2	2 x 250hp Mercury Verado	756	17542	23.20
Marine Rescue 3	1 x 175hp Evinrude E- TEC	565	4886	8.65
Marine Rescue 4	2 x 150hp Mercury Verado	651	10281	15.8

# Watch this space: Change is on the horizon

A few simple changes have been made to the marine safety laws. These changes preserve or relax existing regulatory requirements. The changes were required due to recently introduced Commonwealth legislation that triggered changes to Queensland's legislation.

Remember, you're the skipper, you're responsible for checking you know and follow all marine safety laws when heading out on to the water.

## What laws may change?

As a consequence of the Commonwealth's *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* (National law), changes have been made to these laws:

- *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* (TOMSA)
- *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004* (TOMSR)
- Related Standards – such as the Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Recreational Ships Miscellaneous Equipment) Standard 2006 (Miscellaneous Equipment Standard). This has been amended to apply to Queensland regulated ships. Some other Standards have been removed as they only relate to commercial and fishing ships which are covered by the National law.

For updates on changes to marine safety laws visit [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au) or email: [marinesafetylaws@msq.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinesafetylaws@msq.qld.gov.au)

## New terms

From September 1 2016, new terms have been introduced to describe the way ships are regulated in Queensland.

- **National law** (Commonwealth's *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012*) regulates domestic commercial vessels, which are vessels used in connection with a commercial, governmental or research activity.
- **Queensland regulated ship** is a new term that covers all ships regulated under Queensland's marine safety legislation and includes a 'recreational ship' and an 'other Queensland regulated ship'.
- An '**Other Queensland regulated ship**' is a commercial ship that is not covered under the National Law. The most common examples of these ships are surf lifesaving, school and community group vessels. Also, within this category, ships that are:
  - 6 metres or more in length; or
  - designed to carry more than 12 persons on the ship; or
  - operating more than 15 nautical miles from land, are identified as a 'prescribed other Queensland regulated ship', and may have some additional requirements and/or conditions for registration.

Examples of 'prescribed other Queensland regulated ships' are:

- A school ship engaged in marine studies carrying more than 12 persons (e.g. 17 students)
- A community group ship that is 6metres or more (e.g. 6.5metres) and operates beyond 15 nautical miles from land (e.g. Up to 50 nautical miles). For example, a community organisation taking a group off-shore fishing
- A surf lifesaving ship that is 6metres or more (e.g. 6.1metres).

*\*Disclaimer – this document is a guide on proposed changes only. Please refer to the appropriate legislation from 1 September 2016.*



Queensland  
Government



# Boating in New South Wales



with Peter Holliday

With summer approaching we will all be out boating again and inevitably some of us will go down into New South Wales and some from there will come north to Queensland and of course the confusion about rules will be with us again. It would be nice if the rules for recreational boating were the same from state to state, but they are not and probably never will be.

Take licencing for example.

In Queensland you need a boat licence to drive a boat with a motor over 6 horsepower. If a licenced driver is on board and able to take immediate control, then anyone can drive, but the licenced person is responsible.

In New South Wales you need a licence if you are in charge of a boat that will be driven at more than 10 knots. I assume that others can drive but the master is in charge, but I am not sure.

You can get a licence in either state at 16, but New South Wales also has a Young Adult Licence for those between 12 and 16. They are not valid in Queensland. The junior licence does not really seem very useful, because a junior licensee can never drive at more than 20 knots, cannot exceed 10 knots unless accompanied by a licenced driver, cannot exceed 10 knots after dark, and cannot be involved in organised boating activities. It isn't valid for PWCs (Jetskis) either.

Both states require a PWC licence to drive a Jetski. They handle them slightly differently, but in both cases a PWC licensee will hold a boat licence.

To get a licence in Queensland you need to do a course, pass a test, and demonstrate competency in a few practical skills on the water. In New South Wales you need to do a course, pass a test, and complete a log book detailing at least 3 trips. Valid licences from each state are valid

in all other states. Queensland licences are valid for life, so they don't need renewal. They are virtual, so you don't need to carry your boat licence in Queensland. You do need to carry proof of identity however.

In New South Wales licences need to be renewed, and there is a renewal fee. If you let it lapse for more than 5 years then you need to start all over again. You need to carry your boat licence in New South Wales. Fines apply, so Queenslanders, please remember to take your boat licence with you when on the water down south. It will probably be on the back of your car licence.

Registration is different too.

In Queensland a recreational boat must be registered if it has an engine powered at 4 horsepower or more.

In New South Wales it must be registered if the power is over 5Hp, or it is a sailboat over 5.5m, or if it has a marina berth or mooring.

Both states issue registration labels which go on the port side. For planing boats in Queensland the registration numbers go on both sides of the boat, easily read and clearly visible and at least 200mm tall. Queenslanders should not use the 150mm tall numbers used in the same way in New South Wales. Both states have 100mm as the height for PWCs.

Speed limits, distances that you need to stay away from things, required and suggested safety equipment are also very different, and I will deal with these in later issues.

To find out more, the state boating guides can be found at:  
<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/maritime/licence/boating-handbook.pdf> and  
<https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/recreational-boating-and-fishing>

The Maritime Safety Queensland site has a wealth of related information at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au) and [www.qld.gov.au/transport/boating/licences/recreational/#confirm](http://www.qld.gov.au/transport/boating/licences/recreational/#confirm)

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## CIGUATERA POISONING

In recently talking to someone who has suffered from ciguatera poisoning, I thought it opportune to do some research on this very nasty illness.

CIGUATERA is a food borne illness caused by eating certain reef fish whose flesh has been contaminated. This contamination is produced by a group of marine organisms, called dinoflagellates, that live in tropical and sub-tropical waters. These organisms bond to corals, algae and seaweeds where they are eaten by herbivorous fish, who in turn are then consumed by larger carnivorous species. In this way, toxins move up the food chain and accumulate.

It is quite uncommon for people in this area of Queensland to be diagnosed with ciguatera due to distance from the tropics. However, fish species infected can venture into the area and inadvertently be caught and consumed. Some fish species known to cause ciguatera include a few types of mackerel, snapper, parrot fish and amberjack. These are predators near the top of the food chain. Many other species can cause occasional outbreaks.

Ciguatera toxin is odourless, tasteless and heat resistant, so infected fish cannot be detoxified when cooked.

Symptoms of poisoning make suffers very ill and those who have contracted such often wonder how sick they have to be to die! Most commonly symptoms will include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, followed by severe headache, muscle ache, numbness and often hallucinations. Symptoms can last from weeks to years and in extreme cases, as long as 20 years, leading to long term disability.

by Glenn Norris



Most people slowly recover over time, relapses can however occur after symptoms have seemed to disappear.

**\*WARNING\*** Symptoms of ciguatera have been known to affect healthy males and females following sexual intercourse with a partner suffering poisoning, signalling that the toxin can be sexually transmitted. Diarrhoea and facial rashes have also been known in breastfed infants of poisoned mothers.

There is no effective treatment known for ciguatera poisoning, however steroid treatment and vitamin supplements are prescribed to support the body's recovery rather than to reduce the toxin's effects.

In a nutshell I guess, if you are afraid of contracting ciguatera poisoning, then don't eat fish. However, as previously mentioned, this is usually only associated with fish caught in tropical reef waters.

Most importantly, remember if you feel sick after a feed of fish, close the bedroom door!

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