

COAST GUARD

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019



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COAST GUARD

The National Magazine of the Australian
Volunteer Coast Guard Association

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019

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QF2 Brisbane's Steve Creevey becomes the first Coast Guarder to be awarded two Commodore's Gold Awards and two National Bravery Awards. Story Page 11. *Photo: Harvey Shore.*

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Editor: Captain Brian Hale

Major contributors to this issue

Rod Ashlin, Jack Djaic, John Gasparotto, Arthur Hunt, Ian Hunt, Harvey Shore.

For all editorial and for
advertising sales, email:
**editor.nat@coastguard.
com.au**

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education, search and rescue
organisation.

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AN INQUIRY RECOMMENDS MAJOR REFORMS OR A MERGER OF QUEENSLAND'S MARINE RESCUE GROUPS

THE Queensland Government review into volunteer marine rescue organisations in the State has recommended reforming or merging **Coast Guard** and **VMRAQ**.

A redacted version of *The Blue Water Review* headed by retired Royal Australian Navy Commodore **Campbell Darby** and released in January said a significant reform program is necessary to address the shortcomings and issues identified in the report.

Commodore Darby said that if Government is of a mind to seek reform in this sector, then there are a range of broad approaches that could be considered including:

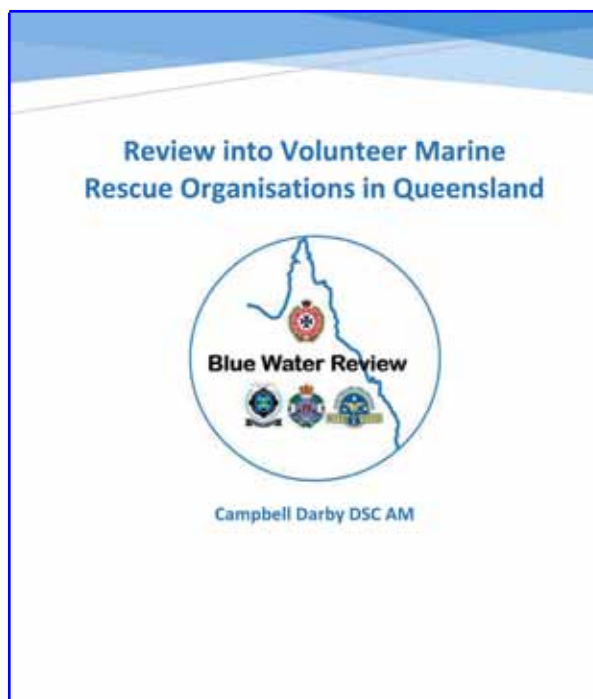
- Undertaking only small reforms that are easy to implement and show some quick gains. Low risk but low return.
- A staged approach undertaking some early reforms but articulating a pathway to major sectoral reform over a five-year period. Medium risk and potentially high return.
- Move straight to major reform and commence the actions necessary immediately. If a fully integrated single volunteer organisation is the desired outcome a time frame of over two years would be required. High risk and potentially high return.

He suggested that the staged approach “has potentially the best outcomes for the least risk (because) it provides the opportunity to engage the sector and take them along a journey of change.”

No action had yet been taken when this issue of *Coast Guard* went to press but it is understood that both VMR and Coast Guard were asked in January to nominate representatives from



Campbell Darby



their state executive to join a working group to review the recommendations. Two rank and file volunteers from each organisation were also invited.

Commodore Darby and his team visited marine rescue units throughout the State and were convinced there was a case for change because “although committed to providing a volunteer search and rescue service in sometimes challenging circumstances, across the sector volunteers express significant disillusionment.”

“This is a result of both internal organisational issues, and their perception of being on the second tier of emergency service volunteers not worthy of recognition or appropriate funding.

“The long-term viability of several (VMRAQ) Squadrons and (Coast Guard) flotillas is questionable, and the lack of a cohesive and integrated state-wide marine rescue capability is obvious. Given this, the case for reform seems clear.

“To achieve significant reform that results in a single integrated, capable and respected volunteer marine search and rescue organisation will be difficult. It will require a long-term view, and both persistent and consistent effort.

“Continuing on a path without significant reform will result in greater operational risks for the boating public and the volunteer organisations, and reputational risks for government.

“Arguably, the Government could expend the same effort in continuing to extinguish evolving disputes and negotiating between different parties, as it will expend in undertaking major reform. And with no reform the sector’s capability to deliver the public good for which it has been established will continue to steadily degrade.”

The report examines operating costs and capital costs, pointing out that the largest capital expenses facing units are the cost of vessel replacement, the cost of major refits and the cost of engine replacement.

The government provides \$10,000 per year per unit for vessel replacement or major refits with the funds available to units after 10 years (matched at least dollar

Continued next page

QUEENSLAND'S BLUE WATER REVIEW

for dollar by the unit) but the report agrees this is a relatively small contribution to the cost of a new vessel – at best between 10% and 30% depending upon the vessel type and this funding may only just cover the cost of a major refit.

This is destined to become a major issue because the report shows that approximately 36% of the primary vessels in the volunteer marine rescue fleet are in excess of 17 years of age. This indicates an approaching wave where about 40% of the primary vessels could need replacing over the next five years.

The review reports that the lack of adequate funding for new vessels was a source of angst in many units and added significantly to the pressure on volunteers to fund raise to continue to build the funds available for major capital expenses, while simultaneously being able to manage operational costs.

“As a number of volunteers quoted – ‘you can’t buy a \$600,000 boat just from selling sausages at Bunnings’,” says the report.

On training, the review says the process (for competent crew) is relatively inflexible and when combined with a risk averse approach by some trainers/executives, volunteers who have good basic mariner skills are put off.

The review also says that “the training requirements of the organisation may be in excess of AMSA’s requirements (Comments relating to AVCGA in particular) which increases the administrative load and time

for volunteers to become qualified.”

This might be because both organisations see their Registered Training Organisation status as crucial and seek as far as possible to provide commercial level certification because “there is a view that AMSA’s Exemption 24 will at some stage be withdrawn and that vessel crew training certification and vessel compliance requirements will be the full domestic commercial vessel requirements.”

But Commodore Darby (a former Director General of Emergency Management Australia) reports that “AMSA advise there is no consideration of changing these arrangements in the short to medium term.”

Most of the section on organisational governance is blacked-out after saying that “previous paragraphs have noted the organisational issues inherent in both AVCGA and VMR – lack of transparency, poor communications, lack of diversity at a board level, limited (or no) strategic vision or goals, and possible conflicts of interest.”

(Later sections on governance and short-term funding as well as the list of people who were consulted also were redacted along with all comments about AVCGA’s strategic review and future direction.)

Amongst other things, the previous paragraphs say “both organisations suffer from poor internal communication, dated constitutions, and a lack of transparency (although) the issue is of far greater concern to Coast Guard members than VMR units.

“They were quite scathing of their State

and National Executives who they believe have lost connection with the Association’s aims.

“The issues commonly raised (which I believe have some veracity) include for example: Lack of financial transparency and potential serious conflicts of interest; Flotilla members being removed without due cause or due process; and, a constitution that allows Executives to entrench their positions,” said Commodore Darby.

“Units feel unable to separate from Coast Guard as the AVCGA National Board consider that they, rather than the Flotilla or the Community, own the assets (including monies in bank accounts). The governance frameworks of both organisations (but more so AVCGA) are in need of major reform to minimise future risks for Government.”

Commodore Darby said there is a risk to Government in working with organisations without strong governance frameworks and practices.

“From a corporate governance best practice approach the lack of diversity on the Boards of both groups is poor practice notwithstanding the view that there is significant expertise (from retired or semi-retired members) in the organisation.

“Similarly, the ongoing long-term tenure of the Coast Guard leadership is a source of risk.

“I also formed the view that a number of Council or Board members did not fully appreciate their corporate governance roles and accountabilities.”

REVIEWERS TOLD TO CONCENTRATE ON RANK AND FILE MEMBERS OF BOTH ORGANISATIONS

THE Blue Water Review was unveiled at the end of July last year by the **Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Craig Crawford**, who said he had asked **QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll** to examine and identify key issues in the provision of marine search and rescue services by the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ) — hopefully to provide a catalyst for policy change to ensure a sustainable and effective volunteer rescue service into the future.

Retired RAN **Commodore Campbell Darby** DSC AM was quickly named to head the review and work got underway at the end of September with Mr Crawford saying the “first stage... will identify key policies impacting service delivery and search and rescue capability.”

Mr Crawford said the volunteers themselves were not under review and the focus of the review would be funding and how the services operate.

He said the government would consider boosting funding,

based on the outcome of the review.

“I want to ensure funding provided for blue water rescue services is delivering value to the Queensland community, and Commissioner Carroll shares my view that it’s now time for an across-the-board review.

“I believe the most critical aspect of this state-wide review, will be for QFES to speak with volunteers in these marine rescue units, and get a real feel for what is going on,” he said.

Extensive consultation was conducted with both organisations, other Government agencies and boating related groups. Consultation concentrated on the rank and file membership.

Only three of the volunteer units were unable to attend meetings. The

experience of other State jurisdictions was also canvassed.

The report represents the views of members and state-wide observations from the reviewing officer.



QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll.

QUEENSLAND'S BLUE WATER REVIEW

FUNDING REFORM IS CRUCIAL FOR QUEENSLAND MARINE RESCUERS

FUNDING reform will be crucial to achieve structural and cultural change in the marine rescue sector which while functional has significant scope to improve in both effectiveness and efficiency, says *The Blue Water Review*.

It points out that units receive a supplement for their operating costs from Government of between \$20,000 and \$24,000 but this generally falls well short of their operating costs which include fuel; vessel maintenance; equipment and facilities; electricity; telephone and internet; insurance; audit fees; administration costs; and vehicle registration. Costs may include in some cases lease fees for buildings, radio towers, and marina berths.

"Units need to raise significant funds for operating expenses and vessel replacement or refit and the Government contribution to operating expenses is minimal compared to the cost for most units.

"Insurance and auditing fees alone exceed the operational payments provided by Government.

"Significant efficiencies could be achieved through for example, an integrated vessel replacement program, common onboard systems, and a single safety equipment supplier."

The report says that depending upon the future emergency service legislative status of the sector the extent to which the volunteer units could access the Government's single source buying power should be investigated.

Like the SES and RFS, they could possibly achieve savings in terms of telecommunications and internet services, fleet vehicle purchases, power suppliers, and some general equipment purchases such as computers for example.

On fuel costs, the report notes that fuel costs particularly in more remote areas is a large challenge for smaller units. In remote communities in Torres Strait fuel costs are 60 per cent to 70 per cent above southern Queensland rates and often receipts are not available.

Fuel costs are generally reimbursed for formal activation, either by Police or Queensland Ambulance Service, but fuel costs only cover at best 30 per cent to 40 per cent of the vessel operating costs. However the arrangements under which the vessels operate (AMSA Exemption 24 and the unit's Deductible Gift Recipient status) constrain how much they could be reimbursed.

This places the units between the proverbial 'rock and a hard place' - they are undertaking tasking for which a reimbursement close to full operating costs (not through life costs) could be expected but they are constrained by the legislation and regulation governing their operations from seeking such cost recovery.

Commodore Darby suggests it may be worth examining whether this sector could leverage off the standard Government Fuel Supply contracts for RFS. A similar arrangement is being explored for SES.

Likewise, QFES is examining legislative reform in the Emergency Services sector. It would be worthwhile considering the way the volunteer marine rescue sector could be included under any amendments to the Act and the benefits that would accrue.

If the sector is included under any statutory provisions, it is understood that the insurance provisions applicable to SES and RFS could be applied to this sector. Such action would be a considerable saving for most Squadrons and Flotillas and remove one source of angst.

Also, RFS and SES vehicles have access to discounted registration fees for vehicles and trailers. Whether this sector could utilise similar arrangements should be examined.



Above: QF3 Redcliffe's CG31 takes a Kookaburra Queen paddle wheeler in tow during the Brisbane floods. Below: QF2 Brisbane's CG23 noses in to the wrecked floating restaurant Drift.

Called out by the Police because of dire emergency in 2011 but entitled only to fuel costs covering at most 40 per cent of operating costs.

Sean Harrison, officer in charge of Brisbane Water Police that month realised well-trained Coast Guard volunteers were vital assets in the escalating drama and called then-QF2 commander **Steve Fleming** to mobilise as many members as possible for emergency duty in the Brisbane River and as far inland as the Lockyer Valley.

The Brisbane River was wreaking havoc; flooding the city, washing away houses, tearing boats off moorings and cars off streets.

Coast Guard crews threw themselves into action, concentrating first on saving lives and making sure no one was trapped in the water, or in drifting boats and cars. They had little sleep as the floods got worse.

Their stories reveal courage and endurance. Commander Fleming himself slept on boats and at the base while the emergency lasted.

His deputy commander **Jason Ferrari** raced back from holidays to join a boat crew and was immediately tasked with a midnight rescue of three stranded teenagers.

Allen Penman had also just started holidays but had a feeling something was brewing so he joined Steve Fleming stocking the base with spare parts the day before flooding started.

Within two hours of being activated for the emergency, QF2 had 38 members and six vessels underway. They remained on duty for many hours, sometimes for days at a time, until the emergency ended more than a week later.

By the time flooding subsided, QF2 vessel engines had clocked well over 400 hours and members had logged nearly 2,000 hours on duty.

Likewise, QF3's entire flotilla was activated with CG31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 all taking part. (11.5m cat through to a 3.5m rib)



TIME FOR QUEENSLAND TO STEP-UP AND PAY JUST LIKE THE OTHER STATES

ABOUT \$3.2 million is provided annually to marine rescue by the Queensland Government but volunteers in the sector are not seen as part of the Emergency Services.

The Government supports both volunteer organisations with funding through a service level agreement which is due to expire in June.

As well, nearly all units have accessed various grant schemes (most notably the Gambling Community Benefit Fund) to provide additional equipment and facilities.

In considering crucial funding reform to achieve the recommended structural and cultural changes, the Review says "reforming the sector will need to encompass examination of different funding models and funding levels."

"The level of funding will need to strike a balance so that unit and community ownership of the assets and operating costs is encouraged (to nurture efficiency and care), and so that the boating public does not view it as a free resource to cover their own laxity."

But it goes on to say that "in terms of funding sources, there are likely to be unintended consequences no matter which approach is adopted."

The review considers other State jurisdictions that have recognised a need for change in the marine rescue sector but have adopted differing frameworks, funding models and operational roles and response arrangements.

In Victoria in December 2017, the government committed \$11.34m in funding over two years (Op ex and Cap ex) and a commitment to resolve a sustainable funding model for the sector.

All current and future MSAR vessels will be 100 per cent State owned and allocated to volunteer MSAR units under a vessel use agreement.

Volunteer MSAR units receive a subsidy for their operating costs. For most MSAR units this will typically cover 75 per cent of their current operating costs.

EMV currently fully covers the cost of insurance for the sector. In addition, EMV recently ran an engine upgrade program whereby 100 per cent funding was provided to change over the engines on 16 existing MSAR units. MSAR units also have access

to a range of grant programs.

In New South Wales when the review was undertaken, the State Government said it was spending about \$6.3 million annually from a levy on boat licenses and regos as well as a \$1.7M as an annual grant from government while about \$2 million was raised annually by units, through either fundraising or grants that they had been successful in obtaining.

But at the end of January, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced a doubling in the marine rescue budget with an extra \$37.6 million pledged over the next four years.

The additional funding will be used to build new rescue vessels, upgrade operational

MRNSW pays for all telecommunication accounts, uniforms, insurances, training, capital works (on a case by case basis and subject to budgetary constraints) and also provides all IT infrastructure and support, HR support, finance and administrative functions and all other back office functions that are required to run a business.

In Western Australia, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) provides Operational funding and Capital funding to marine rescue groups. Capability funding is provided through the State Government's Emergency Services Levy. Additional funding is sourced locally through Federal Government funding opportunities, sponsorship and donations.

DFES are in the process of implementing a State-wide procurement process for Rescue Vessels. This will see a panel of preferred boat builders established through a turn-key model. There will be a Replacement and Refurbishment Schedule that, unless otherwise negotiated, will be based on:

- 5 year refit/refurbishment
- 10 year refit/refurbishment
- 15 year replacement

Through this process, the vessels will be 100 per cent funded by DFES for the replacement/refurbishment costs. The vessel being replaced will be sold and the sale proceeds will be transferred to DFES and deemed the groups contribution towards the new vessel.

All eligible operational expenditure is 100 per cent funded.

Groups are provided

with an Operational Grant each year. The Operating Grant is calculated based on the previous two years operating grants with a 1 per cent CPI increase. The groups are then presented with an offer and have the ability to request a funding adjustment if they believe the group will incur higher operational expenditure that year.

Once finalised, the groups are paid quarterly in advance. At the completion of each financial year DFES conducts an audit of their financials for the previous financial year to determine how much they actually spent versus how much they were given.

Any variances are incorporated into the new offer for the new financial year to ensure over or under payments are reconciled.



A double blessing for Victoria's fleet last year after the Victorian government decided to provide \$11.3 million to marine rescuers over the next two years to help buy vessels, equipment and protective clothing as well as cover fuel and other operating costs with insurance covered separately. Story Page 6 Coast Guard Autumn/Winter 2018.

centres and make improvements to the marine radio network.

The funding will be used to deliver 38 new vessels to 28 rescue units as well as establishing a new rescue unit on Lord Howe Island, funding new or upgraded bases and boat buildings at seven bases and upgrading the marine radio network which the service maintains and operates.

Marine Rescue NSW provides 80 per cent of the cost of a new vessel (unit to contribute the balance) while units are provided between \$10,000 and \$27,000 annually towards operational expenses (namely fuel/amenities) depending on the number of vessels they operate; if they are a radio base, SARCC, boat base or any combination of the above.

QUEENSLAND'S BLUE WATER REVIEW

ANSWERS BY MID-YEAR BUT THE MINISTER IS AGAIN TALKING ABOUT A MERGER

PUBLICATION of the review attracted more publicity than ever before for the Coast Guard and inevitably sparked a political response with the State Opposition claiming the Government was keeping everyone in the dark.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner **Mark Roche** said QFES had formed a working group to consider Mr Darby's review.

"The working group will work with QFES to form the future of volunteer marine rescue services in Queensland by the middle of 2019," he said.

"This report...will assist QFES in identifying any areas where new ideas can be utilised and integrated to support marine rescue volunteers and their communities moving forward."

The long-awaited *Blue Water Review* into Queensland marine rescue operations was released without any public statement or fanfare from Labor and Emergency Services Minister **Craig Crawford**.

Liberal National Party Shadow Minister for Emergency Services **Lachlan Millar** called on the Palaszczuk Labor Government to come clean with a course of action for the state's volunteer marine rescue services.

"Queensland's volunteer marine rescuers are doing their best to protect the communities they serve, and they deserve to know what lies beyond the *Blue Water Review*," Mr Millar said.

"The report is out but the boating community still has no bearing on what the government has planned for the future of marine rescue in Queensland.

"The *Blue Water Review* offered many useful insights into the inefficiencies our marine rescuers struggle with but failed to offer a clear pathway forward.

"We know that the minister has been sitting on this report for months after he announced it in July 2018.

"To only now be considering reviewing the review is completely unacceptable.

"This report cannot be allowed to just gather dust. There are serious questions surrounding funding and the viability of

some of our marine rescue operations right up and down the coast — they need answers immediately.

"The message from both Volunteer Marine Rescue and Australian Volunteer Coast Guard is that the status quo cannot



Old. Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Craig Crawford.

continue and its' time for the Minister to take action on reforming how Queensland does marine rescue.

"Queenslanders are sick and tired of review after review and bureaucratic double speak from this Labor Government that can't make the tough decisions.

"Queensland's emergency service volunteers have spoken in this report—it's now time for government to act."

"To only now be considering reviewing the review is completely unacceptable."

Mr Millar said the review showed tough decisions needed to be made about the future of Volunteer Marine Rescue and Coast Guard but the State Government showed they were indecisive by delaying the report's release and forming a panel to review the review.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services hit back at claims of tardiness saying two cyclones on the back of unprecedented bushfires meant they were too flat-strapped at the time to release the report immediately.

A QFES spokesperson said the operational

responses required across the State in December warranted the report's late release.

"The QFES Commissioner had received the report in early December, which coincided with unprecedented fire conditions in Queensland followed by severe Tropical Cyclone Owen and Tropical Cyclone Penny."

"QFES' focus during this period was its operational response to protect Queensland communities.

"The QFES Commissioner wrote to both associations on December 11, 2018 informing them that the release of the report would be delayed due to significant operational demands."

The spokesperson said volunteers had not been kept in the dark. Both VMR and Coast Guard were asked to nominate representatives from their state executive to join a working group to review Mr Darby's recommendations along with two rank and file volunteers from each organisation.

In *The Cairns Post*, **Chris Calcino** reported that Emergency Services Minister **Craig Crawford** said he would sit down with the two groups to see how they wanted to proceed — with a merger definitely on the table.

"One thing it (the review) refers to is the competition for sponsorship funding," he said.

"Corporate organisations don't want to support one group for fear of putting the other one off-side, so in the end they sponsor neither."

The area from Cape York down to Townsville chiefly comes under the banner of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard with one

exception being Port Douglas which last year switched to Volunteer Marine Rescue Queensland.

"That created a lot of turmoil," Mr Crawford said.

"Another marine rescue unit down in Hinchinbrook has access issues where they can't get their boat out half the time because of silting.

"Other than that, most of the issues are consistent across the State."

Mr Crawford said everyone he talked to wanted a merger — but neither wanted to be subsumed by the other group.

He said they also need a serious PR campaign.

"People have no idea there are thousands of them in Queensland, out every single night for no money helping stranded boaties and hauling people out of the water," he said.

"When you pull them both together it's a similar size to the SES, but they don't get anywhere near the same community recognition as the SES."

QUEENSLAND'S BLUE WATER REVIEW

CAMPBELL Darby DSC AM joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1973.

Sea commands included the Patrol Boat HMAS Ipswich, the Frigate HMAS Sydney and the Guided Missile Destroyer, HMAS Brisbane.

Senior staff positions included the director responsible for all junior officers' career management, Commander Sea Training responsible for operational standards at sea, and as a Captain in Maritime Headquarters responsible for all the RAN's fleet and aviation activities.

During 2002 he attended the Defence and Strategic Studies Course and was promoted to Commodore and appointed as Commandant of the Australian Command and Staff College on completion.

From November 2003 until June 2004 he commanded all Australian Forces in the Middle East area of operations from his headquarters based in Baghdad.

He was Commander Northern Command, and Deputy Commander, Border Protection Command before transferring to the Naval Reserves in 2007.

Upon leaving the Navy he retired briefly before taking up a position as Executive Director, Security and Government Services, in the Northern Territory Department of the Chief Minister in July 2007.

He was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2001, and in 2005 honoured with the award of a Distinguished Service Cross for his service in Iraq.

He joined the Federal Attorney-General's Department in 2010 as Director General Emergency Management Australia.

In that role he was responsible for the coordination of Australia's response to crises, including natural disasters and to terrorist or security related incidents both domestically and internationally.

He managed the operational delivery and policy development of the natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements, and coordinated the delivery of protective security to Australia's holders of high office, events of special significance and to the diplomatic community within Australia.

He resigned as Director General in 2012. Now semi-retired he seeks to share his experiences in national security and crises across the broad national security and disaster management communities so as to improve understanding, planning and preparedness in these areas.

His consulting work has involved him in national security and crisis management exercise facilitation, lecturing, mentoring and course development at the National Security College and undertaking reviews commissioned by a wide range of government departments (Attorney-Generals, Health, Infrastructure and Prime Minister and Cabinet).

When not consulting Campbell manages his beef cattle property and sails his cruising catamaran with his wife.

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TEN YEARS LATE BUT GOLD AWARD FOR REEF RESCUE GIVES US THE FIRST DOUBLE, DOUBLE WINNER

IT TOOK ten years but **QF2 Brisbane's Steve Creevey** has become the only Coast Guard volunteer ever to win two National Bravery Awards and two Commodore's Gold Awards.

The highest operational award in the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association is earned for "outstanding and exceptional service in a search and rescue operation, involving personal danger."

Steve along with **Craig Bowen** was honoured with Coast Guard's top national award for a daring rescue on a dark and stormy night in December 2008 when they made repeated trips into a deadly offshore reef in a tiny rubber duckie to rescue 18 passengers from a sinking dive boat.

Both men received the government's National Bravery Decorations for that rescue.

Coast Guard normally presents Commodore's Gold Awards to its volunteers who win Australian Bravery Awards, but somehow this was overlooked.

Steve Creevey later won a second National Bravery Decoration, for saving a man from a sinking yacht during a wild storm in 2013 that hit Manly following Cyclone Oswald.

Three crew from QF2 (**Steve Fleming, Allen Penman** and **Steve Creevey**) went out at night to rescue a man off the distressed vessel **Amber Mist** which was sinking in Waterloo Bay. (The story appeared in the Autumn/Winter 2013

edition of *Coast Guard*.)

In 2015 all three volunteers received National Bravery Decorations from the Governor of Queensland **Paul de Jersey** and subsequently, all three members also received Commodore's Gold Awards for that rescue.

Last year, Coast Guard realised the two men had not received Commodore's Gold Awards for the earlier 2008 rescue. That omission was corrected in January when Squadron Commodore **Ian Ratcliffe** presented both QF2 volunteers with the rare award.

The 2008 rescue involved Craig Bowen and Steve Creevey repeatedly taking a

Steve brushed off the praise that followed the awards.

What he and his mates did, he told the local paper, was "just the Australian way."

"You see someone in trouble, you go and help," he said.

"Honestly, we are trained for that sort of thing at Brisbane Coast Guard, and in a volunteer situation like this it always comes down to training and funding.

"There are 50 or 60 other blokes in our Flotilla who would do the same thing. A thank you is all they want I reckon.

"I have a lot of faith in the other guys who were out there with me. I would trust them with my life."

It was the eyewitnesses and rescued passengers who nominated them for National Bravery Awards for the *Nautilus* rescue.

The Federal Government Honours Secretariat at

Government House in Canberra researched the nominations. The Australian Bravery Decorations Council then considered them.

Finally, more than two years after the incident, the Australian Bravery Decorations Council recommended to the Governor-General that both men should each be entered into the Australian Honours List and should each receive the government's official Commendation for

**Commodore's
Gold Award**



small RIB into Flinders Reef at night to rescue all 18 passengers off the stricken dive boat, three at a time.

They received National Bravery Decorations from the then-Governor of Queensland **Penelope Wensley** however, they did not receive the traditional Commodore's Gold Awards.

So now, Steve Creevey is a double, double winner. The only member of the AVCGA to hold two National Bravery Decorations and two Commodore's Gold Awards.

Continued next page

Brave Conduct, for their bravery on the night.

(The Commendation for Brave Conduct is a silver gilt sprig of mimosa mounted on a blood-red backing ribbon.)

The original story of that rescue was reported by **Harvey Shore** in *Coast Guard's* Spring/Summer 2009 issue but it is worth recalling what happened on the rainy and moonless night of 27th December 2008.

A good sea had attracted the 70ft. dive boat *Nautilus* to Flinders Reef, a popular scuba spot near the northern tip of Moreton Island.

On board were three crew and 18 passengers who planned a night dive in the area. Unfortunately, towards evening, weather conditions rapidly deteriorated.

A 15 knot breeze sprang up and began whipping the waters off Moreton Bay into whitecaps.

Cloud-cover brought the night on quickly and there was no moon to lighten it.

In rising seas, the skipper of *Nautilus* decided it was time to suspend operations and head back to harbour. His crew got the divers aboard, hoisted the anchor, started the Cat's engines and began manoeuvring towards open water.

Suddenly there was a problem. A trailing line had fouled the vessel's props. *Nautilus* lost way and very quickly the wind and current began pushing her towards the reef. Frantic efforts to clear the prop and get underway failed.

Despite all efforts to save her, *Nautilus* was remorselessly swept onto the black rocks of Flinders Reef.

The vessel's captain promptly broadcast a MAYDAY call, which was picked up by **QF3 Redcliffe** Coast Guard and passed on to Brisbane Water Police and to QF2 Brisbane.

By the time duty skipper **Sam Smalley** and crew arrived at the Coast Guard station, *Nautilus* was stuck fast on Flinders Reef in a rapidly worsening sea and her hull had already been holed.

She was taking in water but did not appear in immediate danger of sinking. Smalley's crew quickly prepared the largest vessel, the 10 metre cat **CG-20** for sea, wisely loading the flotilla's small 3m. inflatable **CG-25** onto the bigger boat's stern deck.

Then, using radar to ensure a clear path through the pitch-black night, they raced for Flinders Reef.

Their arrival at the MAYDAY location coincided with the arrival of two other VMR boats from Redcliffe and Bribie Island as well as the Emergency



Steve Creevey interviewed by TV News in 2011.

Management Rescue Helicopter which hovered overhead.

The chopper's spotlight proved unsuitable for area illumination but revealed breaking surf and jagged rocks between the rescue craft and *Nautilus*.

A small inflatable from the dive boat then attempted to use a narrow gulley in the reef to transfer some passengers to the rescue craft in open water but in the flying surf and bad visibility it soon struck the rocks and disabled its engine.

The gathering rescue craft had no small inflatable assets aboard and could not get near the stranded *Nautilus* to help.

Only **CG-20**, with its small inflatable **CG-25** on the stern deck, was in a position to rescue the remaining passengers.

Luckily this inflatable was equipped with a prop-guard but attempting a rescue in the 2.5m. swell on a pitch-black night in these wild waters was still an extremely risky

was going to require composure and skill."

Despite the obvious danger to life and limb, crewmen Craig Bowen and Steve Creevey bravely volunteered to man **CG-25** and rescue the remaining passengers.

CG-20 moved in close to the reef and used its own spotlights to illuminate the narrow gulley running through the rocks to *Nautilus*.

Without hesitation, Bowen and Creevey took **CG-25** into the gap. On their first trip, they recovered the disabled inflatable from *Nautilus* and brought it safely back to **CG-20**.

They immediately turned their little rubber duckie around and went back to the stricken vessel. This time they rescued several passengers and brought them safely out through the rocks to **CG-20**.

Then they returned through the forbidding waters to *Nautilus* again and again, and again; rescuing a few passengers each time.

Watching from **CG-20**, Graeme Thompson said, "The swell was frightening as they pulled alongside the dive boat. One second they were down level with the keel, then next second they shot up 15 ft. level with the entrance door. They could have been dashed to death in that water, but they kept on going."

In total, they made six trips into the maelstrom that night.

They battled the waters for two and a half hours, only stopping when all 18 passengers had been safely transferred to the waiting rescue vessels without injury.

In the best tradition of Coast Guard service, eighteen souls were saved from an evil sea that night.

The dive boat wasn't so lucky. Her skipper and his two crew members elected to remain aboard *Nautilus* overnight and try to save her as well. Unfortunately by morning although seas had abated, attempts to keep her afloat proved fruitless. *Nautilus* slipped off the reef and sank to the bottom.



The dive boat *Nautilus* on the reef before sinking later.

operation.

According to the crew of **CG-20**, "surf was breaking over the reef, with rocks sticking up all around and manoeuvring a rubber duckie down a six metre gulley through that water at night in poor visibility

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**PROUDLY SUPPORTING
VOLUNTEERS IN THE MARINE
RESCUE ORGANISATIONS**

RESCUED MAYDAY FISHERMEN THIRTY MINUTES FROM DEATH

A PAIR of lucky Victorian fishermen were minutes from death when the Coast Guard plucked them from a raging storm off Warneet.

VF4 Hastings flotilla skipper **Jeremy West** said marine search and rescue volunteers received an “almost incoherent” call about 0700 hours on a December morning.

“They were saying, ‘Help us. This is an emergency’,” Mr West told **Rob Inglis** of the *Mornington Peninsula Leader*.

The two men who made the call had been out fishing in their half-cabin boat for nineteen hours when the weather turned.

As the rain and 3m swell lashed their boat, the men, aged in their 30s, gradually fell into hypothermia.

Luckily the Hastings Marine Search and Rescue unit had recently received a new rescue vessel, equipping them for just the sort of mission they had to carry out on that stormy Saturday morning.

“We actually wouldn’t have been able to render the service we did without that boat,” Mr West said.

“When we got to [the men] they were absolutely drenched and well into advanced stages of hypothermia.

“One of them couldn’t communicate at all. He was shutting down.

“The other was able to talk enough to tell us what happened.”

When they got the rescued fishermen to shore, a paramedic told Mr West that one of the men was only 30 minutes away from



Hastings Coast Guard Flotilla Commander Jeremy West in the new rescue vessel. Picture Andrew Batsch

dying of cold.

The man spent two days recuperating at Frankston Hospital.

The second fisherman was permitted to go home but ended up calling an ambulance when his health began to deteriorate and was taken to Frankston Hospital to be treated for hypothermia.

Mr West warned local boating enthusiasts to always be wary of hypothermia, even in summer.

“These guys were about to die from hypothermia. In summer,” he said.

RESCUE CREW WAITS ALL NIGHT FOR HIGH TIDE AFTER A LOW STRANDS BOATIES

QF14 INGHAM warned boaties to apply basic common sense after a “long and drawn out” rescue on Hinchinbrook Island saw a group of friends stranded overnight, reported **Cameron Bates** of *The Herbert River Express*.

“Log your trip,” QF14 Ingham Commander **Rex Testoni** said in response to the rescue.

“Log your trip with Coast Guard so we know where you are going to be so when we need to go looking for you we know where to find you.”

He said a boat carrying four people moored too high in Zoe Bay, a common mistake on the island, and was left stranded as the tide receded on a Saturday afternoon.

Zoe Bay is a telecommunications black spot and the Coast Guard was contacted by concerned family members.

“We don’t need to know exactly where their favourite fishing spot is but at least where they are going to be in the general vicinity so if we need to go looking for them if they are overdue, we need to know

where to find them,” he said.

Rex Testoni said the group was eventually located.

“It was a group of people visiting Zoe for a picnic or whatever, they went over on the high tide, parked their boat, the tide went



Coast Guard crewman Dave Hanser at the helm of *Snow Stafford* during a patrol off Hinchinbrook Island. Picture Cameron Bates.

out, they got stuck and the subsequent tides were lower and they needed assistance to get their boat back in the water,” Mr Testoni said.

“We went out as soon as we heard. We were able to go out because we had water, but it was dark by the time we got there and

because of the tide we weren’t able to get in there to assess the situation, and it was a low tide then anyway.”

Mr Testoni said the Coast Guard was forced to wait for the high tide on Sunday morning, with the crew of three making the most of the bunks aboard the *Snow Stafford*.

He said the stranded group, who launched from Dungeness, were eventually “hooked up and towed off”.

“I think they were okay, I believe they had food and stuff like that because they

were picnicking over there but they were a bit brassed off they got stuck.”

Mr Testoni said the area had tides that rose or dropped by up to three metres, which posed problems even for experienced boaties.

“If you’re not familiar with the area, and I would say they are visitors or something, they weren’t fully familiar with the area, and got caught,” he said.

“Watch where you anchor. Ensure you

have sufficient water when you want to leave to be able to keep your boat afloat.”

He said trips could be logged multiple ways, including via the Coast Guard’s SafeTrx mobile app or by calling the local Coast Guard’s 24-hour number directly.

THEY CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW THAT THE PRIZES HAVE COME

THE THREE winners of the national magazine's competition to win a set of great binoculars have received their prizes and are looking forward to a magnified future.

ExtraVision's Klaus Misins (far right) presents Phil Smith with a pair of ExtraVision's special Coast Guard-branded binoculars...one of the three prizes in Coast Guard's recent competition, with rescue crew Alana Wood and Terry Heathcote in the background.

A long-time Coast Guard supporter, Klaus has been running ExtraVision at Murarrie for 40 years and built it up into an Optics wholesaler that sells Thermal Imaging and Night Vision equipment as well as rifle scopes, binoculars and telescopes.

The ITEC (his own brand) binoculars with free servicing are Fixed Focus 7x50 Standard Boating Binoculars, built to a high standard and badged with the Coast Guard logo in their own case with neck and shoulder strap included.

Klaus provides binos to Coast Guard and to Surf LifeSaving Australia wide, and also provides those huge 25x150 binos to the Royal Australian Navy.

QF2 Brisbane's prize-winning entry recounted how forty-year Coast Guard veteran Phil scanned Manly Boat Harbour as he began duty in QF2's radio room and couldn't see any boats getting ready to put to sea.



Then he noticed five "very large gentlemen" loading rods and eskies into a very small tinnie at the nearby boat ramp, then heading head into Moreton Bay.

Through an old set of binoculars, Phil continued watching them as they motored some three nautical miles offshore and dropped anchor, noticing the tinnie's low freeboard.

Over the next hour the wind got worse and the sea grew choppy. Phil checked on the tinnie from time to time, and noted it was being pitched around.

Another half-hour passed and, as the wind strength grew, Phil saw the fishermen haul in their anchor and start heading back to Manly, making progress through choppy seas that were getting worse.

A few minutes later the fishermen's tinnie had disappeared!

Phil realised immediately the overloaded

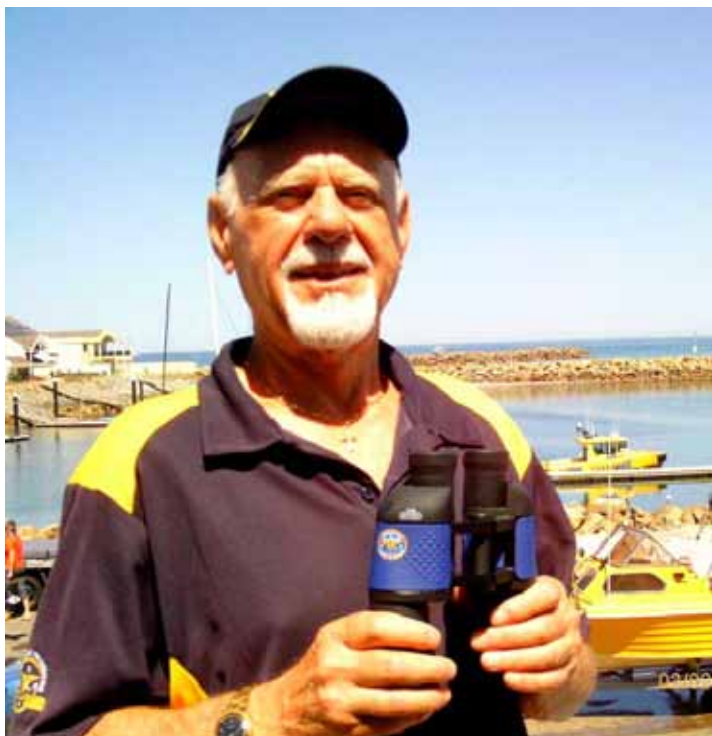
tinnie had been swamped in the worsening seas. A careful sweep with the binoculars revealed the overturned hull and people in the water.

Phil alerted the duty roster, who immediately sent a rescue boat with Alana Wood and Terry Heathcote to the spot. All five fishermen were rescued and brought ashore. Their overturned tinnie was also recovered.

Below right, another prize winner, QF9 Cairns Commander Terry Spurrier, shows off his flotilla's new binoculars watched by Mark Grimston.

QF9 won with a cheeky entry along the lines of "a picture is worth a thousand words" showing a very strange vessel coming into port.

And below left, SAF1 North Haven's Jack Djaic checks the harbour from the deck with his prize.





Allan Tennent (left) and Mark Sherwood searching for the distressed vessel.

NOTHING RIGHT FOR THE LUCKIEST MAN ON THE BAY

DUTY Officer Allan Tennent and his B Roster team had just finished their 12-hour shift at **QF2 Brisbane's** Manly base on a Sunday evening.

It was 1800 hours; the flotilla boats were all closed down, the base was cleaned up and the garbage was put out. Time to go home for dinner.

The team were just walking out the door ...when the phone rang!

Coast Guard volunteers call it 'The Dreaded 6:00pm Call.'

This time, it came from a man, new to boating, who had recently purchased a 7.6m yacht and taken her out for her maiden voyage.

Despite having no real knowledge of boating, and absolutely none of sailing, he'd had a nice day motoring around the islands.

But as night approached, he decided to head for home.

Three things then happened in quick succession.

First, the yacht's motor started to splutter and he realised he'd failed to fill his fuel tank.

Second, he tried raising the sail, but it jammed and he didn't have the knowledge to fix it.

Third, the wind picked up, and he began losing control.

Realising he was in trouble, he grabbed his mobile and called for help.

Allan Tennent took **Mark Sherwood**, **Alana Wood** and **Hugh Webster** aboard a QF2 rescue boat and raced to the rescue.

But when they arrived at the given location, the distressed vessel wasn't there!

By Harvey Shore

This inexperienced boatie had given the rescue crew an incorrect location.

It seems inconceivable that anyone could be boating in coastal waters without knowing where they were, especially in Moreton Bay where clearly visible land and navigation marks are everywhere.

But Coast Guard rescue crews often strike this problem with inexperienced boaties.

On this occasion, after the QF2 crew spent several minutes searching the bay, the keen-eyed Mark Sherwood (who recently gained his Coast Guard coxswain rank at QF2) spotted the distressed vessel three nautical miles away in shallow water, being blown rapidly towards the rocks.

QF2's rescue crew reached her just in time.

They found she had no radio, no working compass, no GPS, no charts, no navigation lights, no EPIRB, no insurance and was not registered.

She did have a 9hp outboard, but it broke free and fell overboard soon after the Coast Guard team arrived.

Allan Tennent and his very polite team just shook their heads, and proceeded to hook her up to a tow-line.

After successfully pulling her clear of the rocks, they towed her to a safe harbour.

Allan summed up the situation as: "A disaster waiting to happen. If he'd lost his mobile overboard, he'd have lost his yacht, and maybe his life."

"He was the luckiest man on the Bay that weekend, but he shouldn't have been on the Bay at all."

War on wrecks claims 111 but hundreds to go

THE Queensland Government's campaign to rid the state's coastline of derelict vessels has moved into overdrive in recent months.

Maritime Safety Queensland (and, in some cases, the owners of unseaworthy vessels) are removing them from Queensland waters, beaches and mangroves by whatever means possible.

Wrecks around the coastline are being hoisted in slings, broken up by heavy machinery, loaded on to trucks and taken away either in whole or in pieces.

In one case, a wreck was even airlifted by helicopter as the War on Wrecks fighting fund has been used to rid the coastline of unsafe eyesores.

So far, 111 wrecks have been removed and plans are in place to remove 77 more, while MSQ says it is also pleasing to note that owners have removed 42.

There are contracts in place to remove 53 more vessels, and compliance plans underway to nudge a further 90 towards the contract letting stage.



There is a total of 240 more unseaworthy vessels currently lying in an advanced state of decay in Queensland's bays, rivers and creeks on which to take action, so the body of remaining work is considerable.

On the 'future' front, the War on Wrecks Parliamentary Taskforce has prepared its report to Government on how to treat the underlying causes of the problem.

In doing so the taskforce has been looking at these underlying causes in an attempt to avoid further problems with wrecks in the years ahead, based on research and public consultation since September 2018.

This is important because the age profile of Queensland's fleet is such that, without intervention, the problem will resurface with a vengeance in the near future.

More than 20 per cent of Queensland's registered fleet of 260,000 vessels is over 50 years old, while only 16 per cent were manufactured since 2010.

That represents a worrisome number of vessels heading into their twilight years!

MAKING WAVES – THE LADIES WAY

South Australia's first ever all female crew

By Jack Djaic

SOUTH Australia has been working on it ardently over a considerable length of time and has finally succeeded in establishing the first All Female Boat Crew.

It's all down to the involvement of four relentlessly determined ladies of **SAF1 North Haven**.

They have shown the skill and competence to be accredited with operating SAF1's flagship vessel *Nautic Star*.

Skipper is **Eliza Camac**, very dynamic, enthusiastic, determined achiever, no effort too hard, friendly personality, cheerful, easy learner...and many more pleasing traits commanding respect. Her seamanship skills are supported by her involvement with the training tall ship *One and All* where she mostly acted as a deck hand. She sailed from Port Adelaide to Ceduna – a trip that takes five days.

She will be looking for a Navy commitment in the foreseeable future.

The Crew: **Brenda Hermesen**, this lady is by now very well-known at all levels of Coast Guard hierarchy being our SA Squadron Training Commodore, a position that she has held, very successfully and to

our appreciation, for a number of years now. Brenda has gracefully accepted to be the part of this crew as the situation requires. Her contributions to our State are above and beyond all the praises. Anecdotally,



she tells us that she still warmly remembers letting little paper boats sail down the streams created by the rains, when she was a very young girl.

The Trainee Crew: **Leonie Rump**, is a person who draws on her considerable yachting experience, that she gained before joining SAF1, mainly by taking part in the

regatta *King of the Gulf* conducted within the waters of the Gulf St. Vincent.

The regatta is organised and conducted by the MYASA – Multihull Yacht Association of South Australia, an organisation that promotes the sailing, cruising and the racing of multihulls in SA.

Leonie has made considerable advancements in converting to power boats by easily learning the specific differences in skills.

The Radio Base Operator: **Christine Robinson**, just half a dozen written lines are not sufficient to describe all the achievements and contributions Christine has dedicated to SAF1 and the SA Squadron.

She presently is the SA Squadron Admin. Commodore. She helps the flotilla duty roster mainly as a North Haven radio base operator and has happily joined the female crew and so completed this valuable group of ours.

Chris also maintains the Radio Schedules during long distance local yacht races.

All of us at SAF1, and the rest of SA for that matter, wish the ladies the best of success and they will be wholeheartedly supported by the rest of the membership.

The SOS Recovery Ladder solves the problem of getting get back on board

SOS MARINE is offering the first 24 YA affiliated sailing clubs that have rescue craft the opportunity to buy an SOS Rescue Ladder for half price.

The Aussie-developed SOS Recovery Ladder will help get the sailors back on board.

It's easy to set up and quick to deploy. Even if you either go intentionally for a swim or fall overboard most boats do not have an ability to get you back on board.

"If you don't have some method in place it is too late to figure how to get a tired and exhausted person back on board," says an SOS Marine spokesperson.

It is difficult or near impossible to lift a person in wet clothes from the water level to the deck of your boat.

The SOS Recovery Ladder's advantage is that it is easy to deploy as it's designed for simplicity and speed.

The compact bag is an integral part of the



ladder.

The SOS Recovery Ladder is incorporated and packed into a high visibility neon

yellow mesh bag weighting around 3.3kilos and folded is only 500mm x 300mm, size.

It has 4 deck attaching points and 6 mounting steps and a deployed length of 2.25 metres.

The SOS Recovery Ladder is rescue-ready as it can be used in conjunction with lifting halyards attached to the outer end of the ladder to assist hoisting a person on board.

Injured or disabled crew can be horizontally lifted with block and tackle or halyard attached to bottom end lifting eye.

The horizontal posture is important for a hypothermic victim.

Coast Guard supporter SOS Marine is keeping it simple by improving affordable rescue equipment for both marine professionals and the leisure industry.

The high quality and unique design of SOS Marine's equipment is so well respected and highly regarded that fourteen national defence forces

worldwide are experiencing the SOS Marine Australian quality. Rec Retail is \$175.00

Australian Volunteer Coast Guard



Anchors moved around in the high water and winds at Mooloolaba Harbour and boats sank as a result.

Higher than high and windy too as Oma got closer

CYCLONE Oma caused havoc for boaties in southern Queensland during February but fortunately did not get close enough to land to cause real mayhem.

Nor did it produce the torrential downpours that drowned the northern parts of the State.

But rivers, bays, marinas and canals in the south felt the effect of Oma before it was downgraded to a tropical low-pressure system while sitting 1100km north east of Brisbane and heading towards New Caledonia.

High winds and swell caused chaos at Mooloolaba harbour where multiple boats ran aground and one sank.

QF6 Mooloolaba was tasked to assist when anchors between boats became tangled and pulled one boat over.

Crews helped tow the tangled boats apart and pulled one off the mud bank.

Unfortunately, one boat took on too much water and sank in the harbour.

Abnormally high tides, large swell and strong winds wreaked havoc across the Sunshine Coast causing erosion, dangerous surf conditions and downed power lines.

Meanwhile in Moreton Bay, **QF3 Redland Bay** performed a number of rescues over the weekend as Oma's impact wreaked havoc.

Redland Bay crew rescued a 36 foot yacht, freeing it from the foreshore and towing it back to Weinam Creek for safe mooring.

A number of Moreton Bay islanders were also left stranded over the weekend amid ferry cancellations caused by the cyclone but when ferry service resumed, authorities warned that conditions remain hazardous in the wake of ex-Tropical Cyclone Oma.

In **Yeppoon**, **QF11** noted that the highest tide for the season was experienced on the Wednesday.

The predicted tide was 5.16 metres. With the influence of Tropical Cyclone Oma the highest astronomical tide for Rosslyn Bay Harbour as marked on the boat ramp was exceeded.

Boats launching at the time did not need to back down the boat ramp too far.

Australian Volunteer Coast Guard 18



Above: In Yeppoon boats didn't go far to reach the water. They were launching from higher than the highest astronomical tide marker. Below: The highest astronomical tide marker on Yeppoon's boat ramp.



Below: In Mooloolaba the water on the ramps was almost in the car park.



KIWIS GET THOUSANDS OF JACKETS OUT AGAIN

THOUSANDS of Kiwis around the country are sporting much safer lifejackets thanks to a **New Zealand Coastguard** water safety campaign.

The annual Old4New Lifejacket Upgrade campaign which ended recently saw 3,462 old, damaged or obsolete lifejackets traded in over the peak summer holiday period for discounted modern fit-for-purpose Hutchwilco lifejackets.

There were almost 500 more lifejackets traded in this summer compared to last year's campaign.

The campaign van (**right, above and below**) was on the road for nine weeks and stopped at 61 different locations around the country. Families brought their old lifejackets to the van and purchased new lifejackets at discounted prices.

As well as selling lifejackets, the Old4New crew distributed 1,603 safety items, such as crotch straps, which prevent a lifejacket from slipping up over your head when in water, and provided advice on best boating practice and safety tips.

Old4New spokesperson, **Sue Tucker** says the van has become a hub for people wanting to find out more about water safety.

"The van attracts a lot of attention and excitement, which is great to see," she says.

"We feel people are starting to realise just how important wearing a lifejacket is. It greatly increases your chances of survival if you do end up in the water."

Many of the lifejackets handed in were



unusable and downright dangerous, and every year there is always one that should be in a museum.

This year it was an oilskin lifejacket surrendered in Greymouth, which was approximately 75 years old and may have

to upgrade old lifejackets but to find out more about how to stay safe on the water."

Patrick says the younger generation can influence behaviour change when it comes to lifejackets.

"Often you see all the young people on a boat wearing lifejackets but not the parents.

"But everyone on board needs to wear one and kids often pester older family members to put one on. A lifejacket never ruins a day on the water."

People also learn about lifejacket use and care when they visit the van, says Patrick.

"Lifejackets that are over 10 years old should be replaced even if they look okay to the eye. Seawater, sun and general wear and tear impact how effective they are and many

old lifejackets won't even float, which is a serious concern in an emergency," he says. Since the campaign started five years ago, over 10,000 old lifejackets have been traded-in and taken out of circulation.

"This means thousands of Kiwis are now safer out on the water. We are incredibly proud of the difference this campaign is making in our communities," says Patrick.



been used during World War 2.

Coastguard New Zealand ceo **Patrick Holmes** says the campaign has grown in popularity since starting five years ago.

"It has been heartening to see the warm welcome the van receives in places and the increasing number of families stopping by to get new lifejackets fitted," says Patrick.

"The van not only makes it easy for people

More lifejackets for fishermen

IN the UK, Plymouth City Council are looking to keep more fishing crews safer at sea by extending their successful lifejacket scheme.

The Council was awarded £77,000 from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the Maritime Management Organisation for the scheme to help reduce loss of life and accidents in the local fishing industry.

Council Leader Tudor Evans (right) said: "Fishing is one of the key industries in Britain's Ocean City, but it is also one of the most dangerous, which is why we wanted to do our bit to support this important sector.

"It's been a phenomenal success. Look at #wearitforthem – families of fishing crews who land catch in Plymouth have been proudly sharing their pictures on social media. We've had calls from across the country, from Cornwall to the Highlands, asking about how they can copy this scheme."

The life-jackets have in-built locator beacons and were distributed by Saltash company, MarineCo. The project was designed with input from fishermen's representatives and the emergency services to create a more coordinated community approach to training and equipment to reduce the number of fishermen's lives lost at sea.










Australian Volunteer Coast Guard

SHOCKWAVE

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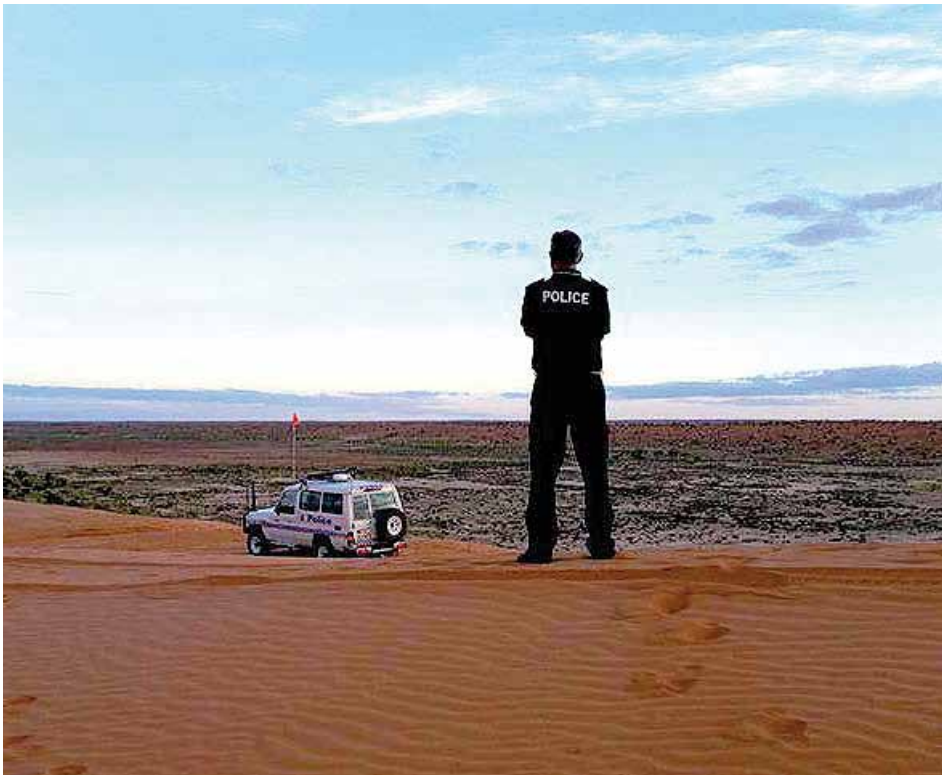
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Senior Constable from Birdsville Police surveys the Simpson Desert from the top of Big Red.
Photo courtesy Queensland Police

SERENDIPITY STRIKES THE RADIO OPERATOR FOR QF4'S DESERT ASSIST

By John Gasparotto

BERN Johnson, the QF4 Caloundra Base Senior Radio Operator (BSRO), had just closed the station at 1700 hours on a Thursday when he noticed a man at the front gate on his mobile phone.

Bern went out to check on him. The man, called Brian, said he had received an unusual message from someone at the International Emergency Response Coordination Centre in the USA regarding his partner Duncan who was out West travelling in the Big Red Bash event (at the Big Red sand dune) west of Birdsville.

Apparently, Brian had been listed as an emergency contact for Duncan, hence this phone call. Brian and Bern played the message several times over and Bern then checked the international calling code for the USA in the caller ID.

It was the correct code.

Brian said he had tried to contact Duncan, but he was out of range. Prior to this, he had tried to call the person who had contacted him from the Emergency Response Centre but couldn't return the call.

Bern asked Brian if he had tried to ring the Birdsville Police and he said that he hadn't thought of doing that.

Both Brian and Bern first thought the phone call was "spam", but both also thought it was worth checking out, so they went into the Radio Room and rang the Birdsville Police — "when in doubt, check it out".

As it happened, Bern knew Birdsville well

as he had been the Principal of the school out there two and a half years ago and was familiar with the terrain and special travel conditions required.

He also kept up with events happening at Birdsville.

Bern phoned the Birdsville Police and spoke to the officer giving him all the details of Duncan's vehicle and of his travel plans.

The police officer said there had been two motorcycle accidents out there just that day and thought that perhaps Duncan had stopped to lend assistance to one of the motorcyclists and had set off his EPIRB to get help.

The following day Coast Guard Caloundra received a phone call back from the Senior Constable who confirmed that yes, Duncan had activated his EPIRB to help a stranded motorcyclist.

Maybe this will go down in history as QF4's first "desert assist".

It was just a tad coincidental that Brian happened upon a radio operator at the Coast Guard who knew the difficult road and communication issues faced by people living in and travelling to Birdsville, on the edge of the Simpson Desert in far south west Queensland!

The coincidence is even more remarkable given that Thursday afternoon was not Bern's usual radio shift!

AND BOATIE GETS REALLY LUCKY AT CALOUNDRA TOO

AT 1000 hours the QF4 radio room phones lit-up with an alert that a boat with one person on board had rolled over on the Caloundra Bar.

The callout crew was called in and tasked to retrieve the distressed vessel while the boatie in the water was picked up by the local lifeguards.

Turned out that a 73 year-old man who was circumnavigating Bribie Island on his day off entered the Caloundra Bar inbound in the wrong position. He realised he was in trouble so turned and returned to sea to put on his lifejacket and secure his valuables, phone wallet, etc. in a plastic bag just in case.



This was a lucky decision because when he came over the bar for the second time the 5m vessel skewed to one side, rose in the air and as he landed backwards the motor was submerged and stopped. The vessel then rolled to the side violently throwing the single occupant into the surf.

Although struck by the vessel, injuring his



leg, the man was able to hold above water thanks to his life jacket and he was rescued by life savers.

The vessel eventually washed ashore and beached but a good Samaritan was able to swim out into the surf and take a line to the QF4 rescue vessel so the tow line of about 170 m could be attached.

The vessel was then towed back to the Coast Guard pontoon where the QF4 maintenance crew was able to carry out repairs.

Two hours later the vessel was restarted and the very thankful, and very lucky, skipper headed home to Sandstone Point via the Inside Passage after his roll-over and swim.



The flooded dive boat waits for QF6 help with the divers moved to nearby boats.

HELICOPTER TRAINING DONE, NOW FOR THE SINKING BOAT RESCUE

Sometimes the best-laid plans surprisingly don't go astray.

QF6 Mooloolaba had arranged to exercise with the Life Flight Helicopters on a Wednesday in early January.

As there were a number of newer crew members who had not had a chance to take part in similar exercises before, we decided to take a crew of eleven interested crew members.

We left the base around 0845 hours with the first sortie planned for 0930 hrs, around half a mile offshore of the Maroochydore beach.

By Rod Ashlin

During the morning there were three sorties deploying a life raft, lowering a chopper crewman to the deck and retrieving him in a wire basket.

As the crewman was being winched up for the final time to complete the exercises we received a Mayday call on the radio.

The vessel involved was a 9m RIB dive boat that was swamped at Flinders Reef off Cape Moreton and there were twelve POB.

Our base was also contacted by the Brisbane Water Police requesting us to

attend ASAP.

The timing was convenient as we were about to disengage from the Life Flight exercises and so we could almost immediately set off for Flinders Reef, which was 26 nautical miles SE of our position.

Conditions were fairly good with a moderate swell and SE breeze of around 10-12 knots.

I did ask if there were any crew members who had urgent reasons to be put ashore, but all agreed to stay aboard for what would most likely be all day and possibly into the evening.

Averaging 22+ knots we arrived at the vessel around 1330 hrs with the Bribie VMR vessel getting to the scene approx 5 minutes before us.

The swamped vessel with the skipper aboard was tied to a permanent mooring

Heading home and movement helps a lot of the water to drain from the distressed vessel.





Safely back at the public pontoon in the Mooloolah River after a day of drama.

buoy near the reef, with the eleven other persons now aboard two small pleasure craft anchored nearby.

Six of these people were taken aboard **Bribie One** and we took the flooded vessel in tow and embarked another five people from a small nearby pleasure boat along with the skipper of the RIB

All loose gear, dive bottles etc. were transferred to our vessel and keeping the swamped vessel on a short towline helped a good deal of the considerable amount of water aboard to drain out over the stern on the way back to Mooloolaba.

Full names and addresses of all the rescued personnel were relayed to the Brisbane Water Police at their request.

All the survivors aboard seemed in good spirits and uninjured, although perhaps getting a little tired after the drama of the day.

We arrived back at the public pontoon in Mooloolaba around 1720 hours with a number of concerned family and media waiting for our arrival.

Our secondary vessel **Rotary III** was heading out of the harbour for another assist just outside the harbour entrance as we arrived.

We were back on our pontoon around 1800 hrs, giving just enough time for some of us to go home, have a shower and return for our monthly Flotilla meeting at 1900 hrs.

That was a pretty full day to kick off 2019 but I am sure QF6 will handle whatever tasks that we are required to do during the coming year.

ASHES, SAREX AND A BOAT TO PUMP OUT FOR QF3 REDCLIFFE WEEKEND

IT PROVED to be a diverse weekend for the volunteers at Coast Guard **QF3 Redcliffe**.

As part of their community service on Saturday and Sunday they provided a dignified service for two separate families in scattering of the ashes of their loved ones in beautiful Moreton Bay.

On Saturday evening crews attended a joint Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) with their colleagues from Queensland Water Police, Marine

Rescue Bribie Island and Marine Rescue Sandgate.

These exercises are vital to hone the skills of the skippers and crews of all organisations in working together so that when they are needed in a real-life emergency they come together as one, to help provide a positive result.

It was getting late and the crews were beginning to feel the effects of a long day, then on their way back to Scarborough Harbour for a well-earned coffee, they

responded to an urgent call from a cruiser taking on water in the Newport Canals.

Once again, the crew worked tirelessly to pump water from the vessel (**left**) and secure it for the very grateful owner.

It was a long day and by now it was a long night but the dedicated crews are always ready to assist whenever required.



MAYDAY NEAR DOUBLE ISLAND POINT NEEDS BOTH QF5 AND QF6 HELP

QF6 Mooloolaba was advised in February of a Mayday call from a sailing catamaran north of Noosa that was rapidly taking on water.

Initially the Water Police activated **QF5 Noosa** to respond and they took a bilge pump to the vessel.

Once on-scene QF5 realised that they could not cross their Bar with the vessel and requested QF6 to meet them as they headed south and then tow the catamaran to Mooloolaba for repairs.

A QF6 crew was activated with Commander **Bill Asher** in charge and they headed north at best speed to rendezvous with QF5's vessel and the catamaran.

Mooloolaba Rotary Rescue with another engine-driven bilge pump onboard met the vessels late at night and proceeded to tow the catamaran safely back to Mooloolaba early the next morning.

It was a great effort by both QF5 and QF6 crews, which saved the catamaran and its two person crew.

It was nice to recently receive the following message of appreciation from the catamaran's crew, including a photo

By Ian Hunt

of the hole that caused all of their problems.

We would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to the crews from Noosa and Mooloolaba Coast Guards who came to assist our sailing catamaran one month ago after it struck a submerged object south of Double Island Point and took on water at a great rate.

Firstly, Noosa Coast Guard crew responded and supplied a life/land line and a hefty pump to aid us in ridding over 1.1metres of water that had entered our port sponson.

The hole in the sponson that almost sank the catamaran.



*Their rescue vessel/crew then shadowed our vessel for over 3 hours until **Rotary Rescue** from Mooloolaba Coast Guard was in attendance.*

The Mooloolaba crew then took us under tow for 25NM into 20-25kts South Easterlies, taking nearly 4 hours and arriving in the early hours of a Saturday morning.

It was a very long night for all (our initial call was at 5pm and we safely moored at 2.30am), in what was moderate and deteriorating conditions.

Thanks to everyone in your teams from the radio operators to the crews that came to our aid that fateful afternoon/evening.

We never expected that we would need the assistance of the rescue clubs, having 2 hulls, 2 motors and sails and on our maiden voyage to deliver the boat from Brisbane to Cairns.

Needless to say, we have now joined our local Coast Guard Club. We had planned

to join once we had the boat in Cairns, as part of my job at home is taking the distress calls for Coast Guard's after hours night watch.

Once again, it is nice to be on the other side of that night and we did try to thank you all in person – only to learn that the crews rotated off shift for 3 weeks following the incident.

Great job.

Take care all and God Bless the volunteers.

Wanda

A TIPPLE OF A FUND RAISER FOR RNLI AT STROMNESS

INSTEAD of sausage sizzles how about a drinkable fund raiser? Former Formula 1 racing driver **David Coulthard** has partnered with Highland Park single malt Scotch to create two special edition whiskies, including a hand-signed, bespoke single cask expression, in support of Scottish charities including **RNLI Stromness**.

David Coulthard has partnered with Highland Park on two limited edition whiskies.

The single cask bottling, Highland Park Saltire Edition 1, and special edition Saltire Edition 2, are both 13 year-old whisky's inspired by Coulthard's 13 Grand Prix victories.

A percentage of the proceeds from the sales of both whiskies will go towards supporting charities in Dumfries, giving back to the region that helped David during the early years of his career.

David's Formula 1 career also inspired the design of the packaging with the saltire logo from his helmet, based upon the national flag of Scotland, featured on the label alongside his signature.

Coulthard personally selected the whiskies during a trip to Orkney.

He said: "I've enjoyed participating in the whisky creation process and I'm proud that Highland Park is helping me bring the project to life. The whiskies are inspired by my Formula 1 career, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard

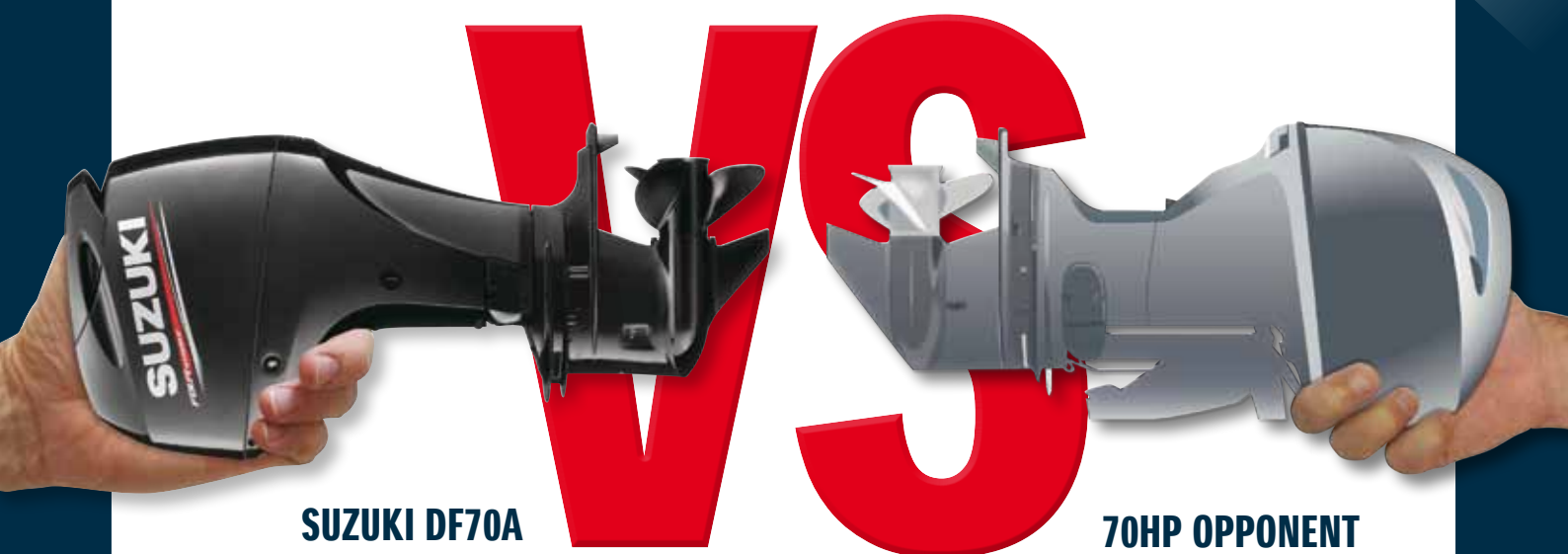


I had 13 Grand Prix wins and this feels like the 14th."

Based in Kirkwall, Orkney, Highland Park distillery has been supporting the community on their island home for a number of years through charity partnerships and collaborations including the RNLI Stromness Lifeboat Anniversary Bottling and Orkneyinga Legacy Centre whisky.

Only 734 bottles of Saltire Edition 1 will be available to purchase at a recommended retail price \$259.

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9.8 LITRES	←	20KN CRUISE SPEED	→	13.4 LITRES

All data is indicative and will depend on sea conditions, weather conditions, loading, driving style and hull condition. This data should not be used as a navigational aid. All data is gathered by Suzuki Technicians using factory instrumentation.



Looking like a mini Coast Guard flotilla the Power Kittens motor down river.

FIVE SHORT BLASTS FOR THE POWER KITTENS OF PERTH

WHEN Perth Festival's Production Manager **Elliot Chambers** turned up at the door of **Shockwave Marine's** cat-building facility in Bibra Lake in Perth, he seemed a little stressed.

It was January and the Festival was due to open in five weeks. One of the 'immersive' performances, *Five Short Blasts* required eleven light craft with in-built speakers.

Inspired by the maritime signal of five short blasts to indicate uncertainty, the performance would invite people to hop on small quiet boats at sunrise and sunset – to listen, to encounter – the sights and sounds of the Port of Fremantle and the people who live and work there.

The builder originally commissioned by the Festival to supply the boats had fallen through.

And as the sand swiftly fell through the hour-glass Elliot Chambers was hoping **Andrew Wright** and team could come to the rescue and rise to the challenge of building the boats, from scratch, in time and at a price to meet the Festival's budget.

Why build you ask? Apparently to supply the exacting brief, it was easier and more cost effective for the Festival to build than to hire and refit.

Andrew Wright and the Shockwave Marine team jumped at the challenge; undeterred by the short notice, instead

inspired by custom designing and building a new craft.

The team made rapid progress as soon as Andrew had speedily managed the quote negotiation, terms and conditions, and purchase orders.

When Elliot Chambers was asked about the project delivery, he explained:

"We are impressed by Shockwave Marine's attention to detail, especially given the tight time-frame, and the drive to improve the product throughout the process. They completed the design, build and fit-out to a very high quality at a competitive price."

"Working with Shockwave, we benefited from Andrew Wright's extensive connections, knowledge and depth of understanding of Australian Maritime Safety Authority regulations, codes of practice, and insurance requirements."

"This saved us much time, clarified areas of uncertainty and ensured every vessel was compliant."

The *Five Short Blasts* artists, for whom the boats were built, are particularly pleased with the results. The vessels are very well-designed, safe and light, which makes them easy to transport to other locations and performances.

The performance sold out at the Perth Festival to overwhelming acclaim and the boats, having now completed their original mission, are available to buy from the Festival or commission your own from Shockwave Marine.

Shockwave Marine design and build power catamarans for water rescue and leisure; and with sister company Stem2Stern, they provide a one-stop shop in Bibra Lake, Western Australia – design, construct, maintain.



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10 X SHOCKWAVE 'POWER KITTENS'

Each fully fitted out with new:

Yamaha F9.9LHA 10hp four stroke outboard electric start tiller manual till
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Survey compliant 2D/2E
Full level flotation for up to 6 pax
Thriller's performance

Sale Price: \$12,100 each (inc GST)



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Bailing Scoop
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1 VHF antenna whip and base - 1.8m
Raymarine Dragonfly 5 pro GPS plotter / Sounder with Auto/N2E charting
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CONTACT

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completely custom built to specification using Vacuum Resin Infusion (VRI) process.

Shockwave Powercats have significantly greater hull strengths and are 30% lighter in weight, than conventional fibreglass boats.

The Power Kittens are light (160kg + motor), which allows easy boarding in shallow water, are stable, sturdy and easy

to manoeuvre. They are also eminently transportable and perfect as a shallow water tender.

Power Kittens: 4.2m x 1.75m, hull only: \$9700, inc GST; built to order.

Five Short Blasts: an immersive experience, was created for Perth Festival 2019 by Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Marie Taylor, Cassie Lynch, Bec Reid and the water communities of Fremantle. More info: www.perthfestival.com.au/event/five-short-blasts.

QF8 Townsville goes digital

QF8 TOWNSVILLE has been thrust into the digital era, swapping their ageing radio systems for hi-tech equipment amid safety fears.

Until last November, the Townsville marine service was one of the few still operating on an analog system.

Money from a successful State Government grant of \$35,000, plus additional funds from the Lions Service Club, enabled the service to make the upgrade.

"We were getting to the stage here where our old equipment wasn't cutting the job," Townsville Coastguard's Ted Winterbottom said. "We were really afraid that we could miss some calls of people in trouble if we continued using this equipment."

The last time the radio system was upgraded was 20 years ago, he said, though there were still older HF radios that were being used. The man who led the push to upgrade the system, **Rex Penrose**, said the radio was beginning to fail.



"It's all about stepping up into the 21st century," said Mr Penrose (below left with **Lee Osbourne**). "We could have possibly got away with it for a little bit longer but radios were starting to fail, which of course is dangerous."

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FUNDRAISING FOR A NEW TRAILER HITS A SNAG AT QF2

By Harvey Shore

QF2 Brisbane Coast Guard recently turned to sausages for help with a new boat trailer.

The trailer was desperately needed for QF2's busiest rescue vessel, the 6-metre **CG-23**.

"She's been launched and retrieved several times a week for the past twenty years," said **Paul Burchell**, skipper of J Roster at QF2.

"Every time she goes into the water, her trailer also takes a dip. It's been dipped hundreds of times a year, and thousands of times over its life."

"We always wash it down after each dip; but no matter how often we wash it, salt water corrosion eventually takes a toll."

"After 20 years, that trailer had developed serious rust damage. So serious, in fact, that it had become a danger on the road."

A new trailer was urgently needed; but since funds from a government grant were not forthcoming, QF2 volunteers turned to sausages instead.

The local Bunnings store at Manly West already had a barbeque set up in their undercover car park especially designed to support a list of local charities and community groups having specific fundraising needs.

QF2 decided to emulate other flotillas and asked to join the list and use the barbeque for sausage sizzles to raise money for a new trailer.



QF2's Paul Burchell and Derek Crowley launch **CG-23** from its new trailer into Manly Boat Harbour.

Bunnings agreed. All QF2 needed to do was buy the food, provide the cooks, and promote the event.

The first Sausage Sizzle was heavily promoted on QF2's popular facebook public page, recording several thousand views and resulting in strong community awareness and support.

As a result, that first Sausage Sizzle drew a lot of customers and raised over a thousand dollars.

QF2 then rostered members onto Sausage Sizzle duty, promoted the event even more heavily, and as a consequence their second and third sausage sizzles raised even more money than the first.

While the sausages were being sauced, other QF2 members were out sourcing a new trailer.

The best trailer on offer came from **SeaTrail**, at a cost of just over \$5,000 including spare parts and service.

So, before long, thanks to some snags, some solid promotion, and strong community support, QF2 had its shiny new trailer for **CG-23**.

Fundraising doesn't have to be difficult. If it's well planned and well promoted, it will usually be well supported by the local community. That's been the experience of QF2.

YEPPOON OPEN DAY PULLS IN THE VISITORS WITH DISPLAYS & TALKS

THERE was a steady stream of visitors to **QF11 Yeppoon** Coast Guard on their Sunday Open Day.

Visitors were able to inspect the flotilla vessels and radio room, join in the Safe Boating course, watch a flare demonstration, talk to staff from Marine Safety Queensland, see the distress beacon locator in action and hear a presentation on Cyclone Marcia by meteorologist **Mike Griffin**.

There was an outside broadcast by **Radio 4NAG 91.3FM**, a colouring competition for children, Mr Mojo ice cream and Ruby's Caravan coffee.

The multi-draw raffle was drawn and Federal Member for Capricornia **Michelle Landry** presented service awards to volunteer Coast Guard members of Central Queensland Squadron.

Coast Guard Yeppoon would like to thank local businesses which sponsored the raffle: **Coolamon Mining, Rifan Marine, Mick Findlay Electrical, The Hideaway at GKI, Mitre 10 Yeppoon, Battery World, Driftwood Boutique & Decor, Crooked Cubby, Scoffins Jewellers, Red Rooster Yeppoon, VUE Wine Bar & Restaurant, Subway Yeppoon, Subah Boutique, The Strand Hotel, Coastal Funk and Aspirations and Beauty Spa.**



COAST GUARD GETS INVOLVED IN THE 'GREAT AUSSIE SNAG DEBATE'

A Queensland farmer who slipped over on a stray onion at Bunnings welcomed the hardware giant's controversial suggestion that the vegetable should be placed beneath the sausage at its charity barbecues.

The 65-year-old from the Mary Valley said he entered Gympie Bunnings to buy a whipper snipper and did not notice the caramelised onion on the floor until he fell over backwards.

"I walked into the store and it happened so fast, I had leather boots on...I went down on my back," he said.

When the placement of onions on a sausage sizzle became a talk-back topic across the nation, Trevor phoned ABC Sunshine Coast to insist it was no laughing matter.

"It is serious stuff, this onion thing," he said.

Trevor said when he returned to a Bunnings store after the incident, he had a panic attack and could not go hardware shopping without "checking the floor for onions".

Bunnings' request to community groups to stop putting onions on top of the sausage at fundraising events at its hardware stores around the country made national headlines.

Chief operating officer **Debbie Poole** said the recommendation was recently introduced.

"Safety is always our number one priority and we recently introduced a suggestion that onion be placed underneath sausages to help prevent the onion from falling out and creating a slip hazard," she said.

"This recommendation is provided to the community groups within their fundraising sausage sizzle welcome pack and is on display within the gazebos when barbecues are underway.

"Regardless of how you like your onion and snag, we are confident this new serving suggestion will not impact the delicious taste and great feeling you get when supporting your local community group."

Trevor said Bunnings had offered to get him an ambulance after his slip, but he declined thinking he'd "be alright".

The next day he realised how seriously

he had been hurt and he worried about an injury to his new hip after having had a hip replacement.

"I had to have an MRI scan to ensure my hip wasn't damaged," he said.

Trevor decided to take the case on himself and pursued Bunnings for the emotional stress the incident caused.

"I used to be an amateur boxer and I learnt the punch is not going to kill you; it's hitting your head on the concrete that is going to," he said.

"When I went down, that is the first thing I thought of — 'don't let your head hit the



Bill Asher (centre) from Coast Guard Mooloolaba says putting the onions beneath the sausage makes it safer for all.

concrete'.

"I went to another Bunnings a couple of weeks after and I had a panic attack.

"Every time I go into Bunnings now I look on the floor — I look for onions."

While Trevor was originally pushing for Bunnings to stop customers being able to eat the sausages inside the store, he has welcomed the company's instruction to community groups.

So too has Coast Guard **QF6 Mooloolaba**, which relies on sausage sizzles for its fundraising.

The group's **Bill Asher** said it would make it easier for volunteers.

"We thought this was a much better idea [having the sausage on top]," he said.

"When you get 136 volunteers and the bulk of us are between 70 and 80, you have got to take the risk factor out."

Mr Asher said QF6 would sell up to 1,100 sausages on a Saturday morning and nearly half of those between 11:00 am and noon.

"When you are jostling around the bench and you have got bits of onions falling off and all of a sudden an old granny with the bucket in one hand and the shovel in another slips on onions, it's not a good look," Mr Asher said.

Mr Asher added that educating the volunteers on the change was not tricky.

"It was just a case of a simple edict, onions on first, sausages on second," he said.

But some customers had been harder to convince.

"The only query we sometimes get is 'where are my onions?' and then we point out they are at the bottom of the sausage, safely tucked away," Mr Asher said.

Celebrity chef **Matt Golinski** said it did not really matter where the onion was situated in terms of the best eating experience.

"I'm a total sucker for the weekend sausage at the hardware shop," he said.

"The fanciest I go is grabbing the American mustard bottle.

"But maybe we can put it to a vote — it can be the ultimate democracy sausage."

Even **Prime Minister Scott Morrison** agreed, taking time out to weigh in after his meeting with Indonesian president Joko Widodo at the ASEAN Summit in Singapore.

He said whether the onions were on top or underneath, he would happily partake wherever sausage is.

"It is part of our Australian life," Mr Morrison said.

"It is part of what we do and frankly I will not give them any recipe hints."

Maurice Blackburn lawyer **Jillian Barrett** praised Bunnings for the initiative.

"Bunnings should be praised in this situation for taking steps, identifying an issue, and taking it up," Ms Barrett said.

She said for a compensation claim to be successful, a customer "would have to prove the business knew about the hazard".

The amount of compensation would differ on each case as it would depend on "the pain and suffering a person goes through, the reimbursement for medical treatment, and loss of wages".

QUEENSLAND'S SILENT PROTECTORS GET \$4M FIX

FOUR ship-tracking radars at sites along the Queensland coast are to receive a \$4 million upgrade this year to make sure they stay at the top of their game.

Radar installations at **Hammond Island (Torres Strait, pictured)**, **Point Cartwright (Sunshine Coast)**, **Woorim (Bribie Island)** and **Nudgee (Brisbane)** are all at or near the end of their useful lifespans.

After providing over ten years of service, all are to be replaced with next generation technology that will be compatible and integrated with the systems underpinning Maritime Safety Queensland's new \$36 million Vessel Traffic Services Decision Support Tool.

The Queensland Government is wholly funding the upgrades to the Point Cartwright, Woorim and Nudgee radars while allocating 40% of the funds to upgrade Hammond Island, which is operated in partnership with the Australian Government.

With over 5600 ship movements a year through Moreton Bay to the Port of Brisbane, and more than 3200 ships travelling through Torres Strait to Australian or international destinations, these sites are key to protecting the environmentally



sensitive Moreton Bay Marine Park and Torres Strait.

A Brisbane-based company, Australian Maritime Systems Group, won the contract to upgrade the stations. Work is scheduled to conclude by July.

The radar stations are seen as silent sentinels safeguarding the Great Barrier Reef, the marine parks, beaches and bays from the impacts of a potential shipping incident—which is why they've been given a \$4 million boost!

Mostly out of sight and, as far as most people are concerned, out of mind, the radar stations day and night, scan the major navigational entry and exit points through the Torres Strait, Great Barrier Reef and

the ports.

They pinpoint the precise locations of the ships that pass through them to import and export the goods that sustain and enrich our lives.

While there are many components to the systems that keep the ports ticking over without shipping mishaps, including highly skilled humans in various roles, it is fair to say that without uninterrupted radar coverage the ship monitoring systems could not function efficiently.

The radar stations, often housed in remote locations or rocky outcrops, feed information through to the Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) systems and operators on a 24/7 basis.

They combine with information obtained via other sources such as marine radio and ships' Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) to provide a highly accurate real-time surface picture of exactly where ships are within the shipping lanes.

While the monitoring systems would not be totally blind without radar, they'd certainly be in urgent need of 'coke bottle glasses' in the form of temporary fixes until radar is available again.

Which is why investment is needed occasionally to ensure not only that the radar stays in full working order, but that it also communicates effectively with the constantly evolving hardware and software in the Great Barrier Reef and Port VTS centres.

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Swift response to sinking boat and pumps go into action (above left) then with the vessel secured alongside the pumps keep water in check.

Pumping prevents early morning sinking

QF11 Yeppoon's Delta Crew opened their maritime safety watch early one morning, with a large number of recreational boats heading out to enjoy favourable weather conditions.

But it wasn't quiet for long.

At 0515 hours the owner of a fibreglass power boat returning to Rosslyn Bay Harbour from North Keppel Island with two people on board made a phone call requesting urgent assistance as his vessel was taking on water and was sinking.

A rescue crew was quickly assembled and **Marine Assist Rescue** (Skipper: **Jim Goodsell**) departed the harbour at 0545 hrs with two pumps on board.

The stricken vessel was quickly located two nautical miles from the harbour towards North Keppel Island and was immediately secured alongside the rescue vessel.

The pumps were activated but a slow return to the harbour was required to minimise water ingress.

Both vessels and crews arrived safely back at the boat ramp at 0723 hrs.

Subsequent inspection revealed that the 6.5m fishing boat had split open in the bow section (**right**) after hitting a relatively small swell.

The vessel owner was a Marine Assist contributor and was very appreciative of the rapid response from Coast Guard so early in the morning.





Harvey Shore with Commodore Roland Zwicky at the US Coast Guard base in Honolulu.

LEGALITIES CHANGED SOME US COAST GUARD AUXILIARY TRAINING BUT STILL MUCH IN COMMON

By Harvey Shore

WHEN the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) was formed in 1961, it was modelled on the US Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCG Aux).

The USCG Aux – a uniformed volunteer organisation of civilians – was itself formed to support the active duty Coast Guard, to promote recreational boating safety, and to assist with search and rescue operations at sea.

Having broadly similar roles fostered similar training for the volunteers in both organisations. If you visited the USCG Aux in the AVCGA's first two decades, you'd have found their training very familiar.

However, in 1982, the US Congress directed its Coast Guard to review policies for towing and salvage of disabled vessels, in order to conserve valuable Coast Guard resources and minimise competition between Coast Guard

and commercial towing and salvage companies. The US Coast Guard responded

Commodore Roland Zwicky and an auxiliariist practicing manoeuvring.



by introducing a Maritime Search and Rescue Assistance Policy (MSAP), which effectively offloaded much of its basic Marine Assistance work to the commercial towing industry.

These days, if a vessel calls the US Coast Guard for assistance at any level below a Mayday, Coast Guard watchkeepers will routinely refer her to a commercial operator such as Sea Tow or BoatUS.

Only if a commercial operator is unable to respond will the US Coast Guard get involved.

This policy change led the USCG Aux to re-focus its training more on boat handling, manoeuvring, navigation, boating safety, and cooperation with the active duty Coast Guard.

In Australia, by contrast, there has been no government intervention in the commercial towing and salvage area.

Our volunteers continue to train for, and respond to all calls for assistance; and will commonly take distressed vessels under tow while rescuing their crews.



Double/double award winner Steve Creevey (left) with Lieutenant Jeffrey Janaro, Commander of the US Coast Guard Cutter *Flying Fish* in Boston harbour.

Consequently, in addition to boat handling, manoeuvring, navigation and boating safety, AVCGA training strongly emphasises knowledge of towing, and conduct of Search and Rescue operations.

These days, when AVCGA volunteers visit the USA and join USCG Aux training sessions, they will notice these differences in emphasis.

But they'll also notice the many common elements we still share.

Commodore Roland Zwicky commands the USCG Aux in Hawaii, and is one of its senior training officers.

He's also an honorary member of the AVCGA, and is always keen to invite our volunteers visiting Hawaii to spend a day training with his USCG Auxiliarists.

Commodore Zwicky's Australian guests might join his regular training sessions ashore, or go aboard the USCG Aux 31-foot utility vessel, which departs from the US Coast Guard base on Sand Island in Honolulu, to practice manoeuvring in local harbours or to work several nautical miles off Waikiki Beach on Air Drop training with C-130 transports from the Coast Guard Air Wing.

Commodore Zwicky notes the different training emphasis in our organisations these days, but says we still have all the basic elements of good seamanship and boating safety in common.

His training sessions begin every Saturday at 1000 hours, on Sand Island.

He believes it's important to break up every training session into theory and practice, to maintain student's attention.

"We begin these sessions with a review of last week's training.

"Then we pick specific tasks like navigation or manoeuvring; aiming to sign these subjects off in a volunteer's PQS (Personnel Qualification Standards) workbook

"I want our volunteers to understand each subject, not just learn it. So, whenever possible, I take them out on the water every session, to put theory into practice. Nothing beats practical experience."

Repetition is also important to Commodore Zwicky, "so the knowledge becomes ingrained"; and he also believes in "having fun while you're learning."

Commodore Zwicky says several AVCGA members from Victoria and from Queensland Flotillas have joined his fun training sessions this year.

He's always happy to hear from more AVCGA volunteers who want to join USCG Aux training sessions, share experiences and promote friendly links in the future.

"It's important to stay friends, and learn from each other," he says. His bottom line: "Anyone who contacts us from the AVCGA can always expect to be welcomed with Aloha."

A Coast Guard C-130 'Hercules' overflies Commodore Roland Zwicky during Auxiliary training off Waikiki Beach



MAN CHARGED FOR MISUSE OF RADIO DURING MAYDAY ASSIST

QUeensland Police reported that during an afternoon and evening a man was heard broadcasting on Channel 16, VHF marine radio in an improper manner.

Channel 16 is a designated emergency frequency primarily for calling, distress, urgency and safety priority calls between ships and coastal radio stations.

The broadcasts contained vulgar and offensive language, insults and targeted marine rescue volunteers conducting listening watches between the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.

At times the man was rambling, and his transmissions were repetitive and unintelligible.

He was politely requested to keep the emergency channel clear and desist from transmitting further broadcasts.

But he continued his reckless and belligerent conduct for hours during which time water police and volunteer organisations were following up on a



search and rescue incident involving a genuine Mayday call.

The actions of the man caused substantial interference and disruption of the emergency frequency by recklessly occupying the frequency without reason and potentially putting lives at risk.

Water Police Brisbane subsequently conducted an investigation which resulted in a 41-year old man from Manly being taken into custody.

He was issued a notice to appear in relation to unlicensed operation of a radio-communication device and recklessly causing interference with radio-communications.

Water police would like to remind recreational boaties that all broadcasts on the emergency frequencies are recorded and there are serious penalties for misuse.

The Australian Communication and Media Authority website contains information on correct marine radio protocols and how and where to obtain a marine radio licence.



The runaway boat doing tight turns at 18 knots and proving difficult to catch.

OVERBOARD WITH NO LIFE JACKET AND NO ENGINE LANYARD BUT A GREAT AMOUNT OF LUCK

THE luckiest fisherman on Queensland's Sunshine Coast has vowed to always wear a life jacket after a lucky escape from a boating accident that narrowly avoided him joining the boating fatality list.

The 24-year-old Coolumb man was on his own when he fell overboard from his 4.5m runabout about 7nm out to sea off Mooloolaba.

As well as not using a life jacket he wasn't wearing a safety lanyard that, when

attached between the helmsman and the ignition, automatically stops the motor if he falls over or gets thrown out.

Commercial fisherman **Bill Gilliland** said he felt sick when he came across the out-of-control boat circling at high speed.

Mr Gilliland was heading closer to shore as conditions were too rough further out when he noticed something wasn't right.

"I saw a boat in the distance going around in circles and I continued to watch it and I

thought after I saw it do about 40 circles in the same spot, 'There's something wrong here'," he said.

"So I went over to the boat and there was no-one in it.

"I called **QF6 Mooloolaba** Coast Guard immediately and it felt rather sickening when you just don't know where to look.

"It's a horrible feeling. You don't know how many people were in it, how long it has been going around in a circle for.

"You have no idea where to start."

Mr Gilliland said the driverless boat continued doing circles at high speed when he approached another boat nearby and asked for help.

"They said, 'Well, it's your lucky day mate, we just picked him up'," he said.

"It was my lucky day that the first boat in the distance had the bloke on board, so it was a miracle."

Mr Gilliland said he could only speculate what had led to the incident but, with the number of sharks and rubbish around, being in the water was the last place he would want to be.

"The conditions must have been a lot rougher than he expected and obviously something went wrong and he popped over the side," he said.

"He was just so lucky it's unbelievable. It's his lucky day. He's a lucky, lucky man."

Coast Guard Mooloolaba commander **Bill Asher** said the rescued 24-year-old man was unhurt and "shaken, but not disturbed".

He was taken back to Mooloolaba for a police interview, but declined media interviews.

The man told the Coast Guard that he would wear a life jacket from now on.

Mr Asher said, with seas up to 1.5m at the time, it was pure luck that the out-of-control runabout didn't hit him.

"It was a lucky escape," Mr Asher said.

"The lucky part is that he didn't get hurt getting thrown out of the boat.

"If he would have been knocked



unconscious or something he would have drowned.

“He was lucky it was a good day with lots of other boats out there but, if it was a bad day and he was on his own, it is a long way to swim back in again.”

Bill Asher the situation was “most uncommon” but had happened before.

“It was only a few years ago up in Cairns the skipper of a mothership fell out of his dinghy,” he said.

“The dinghy was going around in circles and came around and ran over him and he drowned.”

While this man was safe, the rogue boat was adjacent to a busy shipping channel where cargo boats were waiting to enter the Port of Brisbane.

It was also a threat to other fishing vessels in the area.

With this in mind, the Coast Guard deployed its large rescue boat to bring it under control.

“Water police advised us they were going to put up a helicopter and we were tasked to go out and see what we could do,” Mr Asher said.

The QF6 crew used their vessel to ‘T-bone’ the boat, which straightened it up and reduced its speed.

The runaway boat was doing tight turns at 15 to 18 knots but the QF6 rescue crew managed to unhook the runaway’s anchor and also get a rope around the outboard.

With the chain and anchor dangling in the water at the bows and the vessel trailing a length of rope at the stern, the runaway was slowed sufficiently to enable one of the crew to safely board and cut the engine.

Bill Gilliland, the skipper who found the rogue boat, said it was a confronting safety reminder.

“It certainly shakes you up a bit and makes you start to think about your own bad habits, that’s for sure,” Mr Gilliland said.

A spokesman from Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) said it was “strongly recommended” that skippers of all boats have a safety lanyard attached to their wrist or life jacket.

“This ensures the engine cuts out the instant the skipper is not next to the engine, such as in a man-overboard situation,” the spokesman said.

“By taking the additional simple step of clipping on your safety lanyard you can prevent a mishap becoming a serious incident.”

MSQ also recommended a life jacket when boating alone or at night.

According to the department’s figures, in the 25 years to 2017, 135 recreational boaties drowned or were presumed to have drowned in Queensland waters. Only four were known to be wearing a life jacket.

But Bill Asher said “very few people” actually wore life jackets — even those who could not swim.

“We have had to go out and rescue people who have come out of a boat or couldn’t



swim,” Mr Asher said.

“Very few people wear life jackets — I don’t know whether it’s a comfort thing or a macho thing.”

He said there were legislative requirements for wearing them, but it was also common sense.

“For any vessel under 4.8m the operator

has to have a life jacket on; that is a rule for crossing the bars,” he said.

“Once you cross the bar you can take that life jacket off and just sit out there, and in calm conditions people get away with it 99 times out of 100.

“But when the seas are up, it’s just a good idea to put them on.”

Crew manage to get the runaway’s anchor and chain in the water and a rope on the motor.



Below: Finally back at the pontoon in the Mooloolah River. Boat and skipper safe.



POLICE GIVE AWARDS TO THREE QF7 REDLAND BAY COAST GUARDERS FOR RESCUING TWO IN FLOOD

THREE Coast Guard volunteers at QF7 Redland Bay Coast Guard have been presented with QPS Commissioner's Certificates of Appreciation.

Flotilla Commander **Jason Boon** and crewpeople **Salli Chapman** and **Allan Bell** were awarded Commissioner's Certificates of Appreciation for saving the lives of two people trapped by dangerous flood waters in the Logan River.

QF7 said the Police Commissioner, **Ian**

approx 10 - 15 knots of flow at different parts of the river, worsening further upstream.

During this flooding, one such event called on the volunteers at Coast Guard based at Redland Bay, being the closest marine rescue unit to the Logan River, located 5nm from the river's mouth.

They were called on through a Mayday, when a vessel capsized and threw three people into the fast flowing waters of the



Salli Chapman receives her award with Jason Boon looking on.

Stewart APM, recognised and honoured the professionalism and fortitude of the three Coast Guard members from Redland Bay who were among dozens of QPS Officers and civilian staff who received medals and certificates for their achievements at the Awards Ceremony.

It's been two years since Cyclone Debbie devastated South East Queensland including parts of Logan and images of SES saving a family from the rooftop of a house just before the house was washed away still is fresh in many minds.

Meanwhile, unsung heroes at Coast Guard, SES and VMR units were on standby as flood waters rushed downstream from rivers and creeks breaking the banks and creating widespread flooding.

Water tanks, pontoons, trees, boats and other debris flooded out of the Albert and Logan Rivers, suffering from the worst flooding since 1974.

Water speed in the river was estimated

Logan River.

Fearing for their lives, the call received was brief and didn't provide a definitive position.

The on-call crew at Redland Bay had already done some reconnaissance of the Logan River previously, and leapt into action using local knowledge while base operators called other emergency services for support.

Using local knowledge, experience and training, the crew at their own personal risk navigating fast flowing murky waters and large debris, in overcast conditions with periods of showers, located the upturned vessel and had two of the three crew onboard in just 22 minutes.

One crew member managed to grip onto the upturned hull, with the others thrown into river and swept downstream.

One managed to swim across the currents, over to an island in the middle of the river.

The other crew member was located,

stranded waist deep on a shallow bank in the middle of the river.

Water Police arrived on scene and took the final member on board the police vessel.

An amazing response and show of skill and bravery from the police and volunteers, which has resulted in the three volunteers being acknowledged and praised by the Police Commissioner.

Coast Guard acknowledges the brave and swift actions of these three members without thought of their own personal safety, to rescue three members of the community, in addition to the ongoing selfless day-to-day efforts of other local volunteer heros at SES and volunteer marine rescue units and thanks the Queensland Police Service for acknowledging these community volunteers.

Jason and Salli with their awards.





Boat and fishermen stranded on Flat Island (Photo courtesy Keppel Barge)

TWO MEDIVACS AND THE USUAL ASSISTS AS THE WEATHER TURNS FINE

HUNDREDS of recreational boats took advantage of fine weather on the Capricorn Coast at the end of March and Rosslyn Bay Harbour was a busy scene, with up to twenty boats manouvering near the boat ramps at times.

So it probably was not surprising that QF11 Yeppoon had a busy time.

A relayed Mayday call sparked frenetic activity.

The call was received by radio from a boat in the vicinity of Flat Island which had observed a boat capsize after hitting a rock near the island.

The two occupants sustained lacerations to their bodies and heads as they made their way onto the rocky shore of Flat Island.

QF11 was tasked by Queensland Ambulance Service to transport two paramedics to provide medical assistance.

The *Keppel Barge*, which was heading

By Arthur Hunt

south from the Military Training Area, responded to the request for assistance and a Water Police RIB was also despatched to the scene from Rosslyn Bay Harbour.

Gormans Removals Rescue (Skipper: **Kinglsey Bartle**) departed Rosslyn Bay at 1115

hours with the paramedics on board and while en route was advised by radio of a power boat with two POB stranded with a flat battery at the north end of North Keppel Island.

Keppel Barge reached Flat Island at approximately 1200 hrs, took the stranded fishermen off the island, provided immediate first aid and recovered the capsized boat.

Gormans Removals Rescue arrived at Flat Island at 1245 hrs but the paramedics

were not required to provide additional treatment.

The Police RIB transported the paramedics back to Rosslyn Bay Harbour, the *Keppel Barge* carried the two fishermen and *Gormans Removals Rescue* took the salvaged boat in tow.

GRR reached the second stranded boat at North Keppel Island at 1400 hrs, restarted it with a battery pack and shadowed it back to Rosslyn Bay Harbour, arriving at 14.50 hours.

The week's next crisis was a radio call from a 12m recreational displacement fishing boat that was returning from a fishing trip to NW Island.

One of the crew had suffered the loss of part of one finger after it was caught in an anchor winch.

The Coast Guard requested assistance from QAS and a paramedic was sent to Rosslyn Bay Harbour.

Gormans Removals Rescue (Skipper: **James Fleming**) departed Rosslyn Bay Harbour at 1455 hrs with one paramedic on board.

The two boats met at a position 5nm East of Barren Island at 1642 hrs and the patient was transferred to the rescue vessel with some difficulty as the fishing boat had stabilising outriggers on each side and a dory on stern davits.

The patient was given pain relief during the return trip which concluded at 1755 hrs.

The patient was transferred by ambulance to Yeppoon Hospital and subsequently to



The damaged boat after return to Rosslyn Bay Harbour.

Rockhampton Hospital.

Otherwise it was a week of the usual type of assists.

Two occupants of a 4m tri-hull called Coast Guard Yeppoon by phone at 1035 hrs one day after suffering fuel problems just after leaving Rosslyn Bay Harbour.

GRR skippered by Kingsley Bartle was diverted from training in Statue Bay and took the boat in tow, returning to harbour at 1100 hrs.

Another day QF20 *Keppel Sands* Coast Guard received a radio call requesting assistance from a 5m power boat with two POB that had broken down NE of Miall Island.

GRR and Kingsley Bartle responded and departed Rosslyn Bay Harbour, returning with the boat in tow at 1400hrs.



The damaged boat ready for tow from Flat Island.



Mary was warned by fishermen and an experienced mariner not to attempt the voyage.

Night, strong wind, low tide, rocky coast, no life jacket, no liferaft, no radio, GPS, EPIRB or charts...no hope

A WEEK after she left a Cornish port to sail to her north Devon home, there was still no sign of 65 years-old Mary Unwin, or her body, after she set off on a doomed voyage that would bring out half the air-sea rescue forces in the south-west of England.

They scrambled three lifeboats, two helicopters, a plane, cliff rescue parties, and no fewer than 150 Coastguard staff and all they found were a few broken pieces of her boat.

But the story that emerged at an inquest in March was staggering. The 31ft sailing yacht named *Seagair*, priced at \$62,000 was purchased just three days before she disappeared seven years ago.

She and her husband viewed the boat at Falmouth Yacht Brokers, inspected it and discussed a survey but the surveyor could not crane the boat out of the water until the following Wednesday, something that did not fit into Mary's plans.

She had a four-hour sailing lesson the next day and sailing conditions were perfect in the sheltered waters around Falmouth as the boat coursed through gentle waves but her instructor advised her against making the journey home around Land's End to north Devon, suggesting instead she hire a skipper and crew.

Mary relished the moment as she went through her paces on board with Nick Jordan, the owner of a local boat hire company and an experienced mariner.

The 31ft boat had been a wedding present from Mary's 61-year-old husband Carol, whom she had remarried just a week earlier after their divorce about three years before.

"She wanted to refresh her skills on that Australian Volunteer Coast Guard 38

trial run," said Mr Jordan. "She'd only just got the boat and couldn't wait to sail it. I asked her to promise me she wouldn't go off on her own in it, but she didn't really reply."

Her plan had been to sail her new boat from Falmouth in Cornwall around Land's End to Appledore harbour, next to Bideford, but there were glaring early signs that her skills were not up to it.

Mr Jordan said: "She thought it was about 60 miles away but I told her it was more like 140 nautical miles. I showed her on my own chart how far and how difficult it would be, and said she needed to do it with an instructor or a crew.

"I had an experienced crew prepared to go

The 30ft yacht bought for \$62,000 the day before the fateful voyage in treacherous seas.



with her on the Sunday, which would have cost her £430."

Mr Jordan recalls there were no charts on *Seagair* when they sailed together on that trial voyage.

In fact, he had to get his own charts so he could warn Mary of just how arduous her intended journey was.

On Friday night, after Mary and Mr Jordan had been out sailing together, she appeared agitated when she dined at Falmouth's Marina Bar, choosing a table which looked out over the water and ordering sea bass and a fruit juice.

"She was hoping to sail up to Appledore the next day," recalled waitress Nicole Pliatsikas.

"She seemed quite upset that everyone was telling her she shouldn't go, that it was too dangerous, and that she had to get a crew to go with her.

She was adamant she could do it. She struck me as a lady who knew what she wanted and was determined to get it."

Mr Jordan's heart sank the following morning at 7am when he arrived at his harbour-side offices to see that *Seagair* had gone.

"I was astounded. I hate to say it, but I did think: 'You bloody stupid woman.'

"It was crazy, and I've racked my brains trying to work out what on earth she was trying to do. I was one of the last people to see her alive, and that is a burden."

She reached Mousehole about 40 miles further along the coast on Saturday and was seen crashing into a boat as she moored in Mousehole harbour and failing to use fenders to stop her boat scraping on the harbour wall.

She spoke to two fishermen who she asked to help her tie-up the boat.

Fisherman Mr Jones said: "She was scatty and unsure what she was doing. But she was very determined. There was no stopping her."

She told them her plan to set off for Devon on the evening tide and they expressed amazement at such a single-handed trip

by a pensioner, in the dark, with a swell approaching five feet, winds varying around and above Force 5, without a beacon, and in a boat lacking a functioning radio or charts. Nor did it have lifejackets.

"I asked her where she was going and she said 'round the corner,' which I knew meant round Land's End. I thought she was joking, but she was deadly serious.

"I told her it was way too dangerous, but she seemed absolutely determined. I have beaten myself up about what happened since then, but I couldn't stop her," said Mr Jones.

"No different," she told them, "to driving a car at night" – a remark that belied her claims that she was an experienced sailor.

One friend, and the instructor in Cornwall, said she showed them a coastal skipper's certificate of some vintage, but her brother-in-law said he had never known her go sailing in the 10 years he had known her.

At the heart of this strange story is the enormous question mark over Mary's sailing abilities.

According to a neighbour, Mary used to present her coastal skipper's certificate to those who doubted her skills on the water.

Another friend says Mary claimed she was a petty officer in the Royal Navy, though the Ministry of Defence says it has no record of her having served in the armed forces.

Anyway, at around 6.30pm, after a nap, with darkness



Mary Unwin. Described as flamboyant and impulsive.

almost fallen, Mary set off on what would have been, even in good conditions, an exhausting, 18 to 24-hour sail.

As she left, she bumped into the quayside and was never seen again.

Detective Constable Martin Hearn told the inquest that Mrs Unwin did not have a life jacket and the *Seagair* was not fitted with GPS or a liferaft.

On the day of leaving she said she didn't need a life jacket because she could swim, Det Con Hearn said.

Det Con Hearn, from Devon and Cornwall Police, told the inquest: "Experienced fishermen, Coastguards and lifeboatmen have told me they wouldn't ever try to sail at night single-handed in the way she attempted."

Cornwall's assistant coroner Stephen Covell said: "She did not have the requisite skill to sail the boat single-handed in daylight, let alone the dark."

Recording an open conclusion, he added: "She died on or about 14 October 2012 when the boat she was sailing foundered on rocks between Land's End and Sennen."

Mrs Unwin's husband Carol said: "Mary in attempting to surprise me had taken on a challenge too great. It was her own strong-willed confidence that led to this tragic accident."

Those who know Cornish waters believe *Seagair* went down in an area known as Longships near Land's End, where treacherous granite rocks are notorious among even the most seasoned of sailors.

At night, without charts, they are deadly, and especially at low tide, when Mary would have been navigating them.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FLOTILLAS' MAJOR SAREX WITH EMERGENCY GROUPS

SAF1 North Haven and SAF6 O'Sullivan's Beach again took part in the State's annual emergency services search and rescue training exercise in the waters of the Gulf of St. Vincent, writes **Jack**



Djaic.

As every year, before the exercise the State's emergency service agencies gathered together on the first day of December to once again take part in a make-believe search and rescue scenario.

As with SAREX's in other States, the intention is to refine all of the agencies' abilities to perform in a real situation should there be one as the time goes on.

The exercise brought together **SA Sea Rescue Squadron, State Emergency Services, SA Ambulance, Coast Guard SAF1 and SAF6** and, of course, **SA Police** who naturally were responsible for organising and conducting all of the activities on the day.

All of the appropriate electronic equipment was put to use and it was pleasing to find out that all of the vessels involved in this exercise carried out their tasks faultlessly.

SAF1 was represented with their flagship *Nautic Star* as well as with the stand-by vessel *Intrepid*, while SAF6 was represented with their vessel *Kathy Seeley*.

The three Coast Guard vessels were manned by several experienced coxswains, competent crews and trainees.

The exercise was successfully completed with all the given tasks achieved to the satisfaction and warm commendation by the SAPOL to the participants.





Happy birthday: Carrum Coast Guard members and family came together to celebrate 50 years of service. *Picture: Gary Sissons*

VF7 CARRUM CELEBRATES ITS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

VF7 CARRUM has blown out the candles in celebration of their 50th birthday.

The Coast Guard was established in a chook shed half a century ago, and has now grown to a membership of around 50 volunteers.

The *Chelsea Mordialloc Mentone News* reported that Carrum volunteer Matt Semmens said the 50 years had been full of history.

"We started in a chook shed at the Patterson River Marina 50 years ago, now we're quite

lucky to have the building we've got today at the Paterson River boat ramps.

"That was purpose built and opened in 1990, so we've been there 28 years and still going strong," he said.

"We're keeping very busy, we're based at the busiest boat ramp in Melbourne, so we've always got lots of activity going on and lots of calls for help."

Mr Semmens told the newspaper that changes to the Coast Guard were always occurring, with a few big developments in recent times standing out.

"We've come a long way with funding. In the last couple of years with the help of the government, we're now partially funded for our operation expenses.

"We've renovated and upgraded our buildings and vessels, and we've now got a new secondary vessel as well," he said.

In addition to their work on the water, the Coast Guard gets involved with community events as well.

"We've done a lot of public events over the years. We often help with sausage sizzles at local community events, like at the opening of the [Carrum to Bonbeach] bridge a couple of months ago," Mr Semmens said.

The longest serving members of the Carrum Coast Guard have been there for up to 30 years.

TONY'S LONG SERVICE AWARD

VF10 Werribee Coast Guard volunteer Tony Barbara says he has enjoyed volunteering with the Werribee Coast Guard for the past 17 years – even the time he fell in the water.

The *Star Weekly* reported that Mr Barbara recently received a National Service Award from Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, in honour of his long service with the organisation.

The 75-year-old joked that he is both "the oldest and longest-serving member" of the Werribee Coast Guard.

Mr Barbara joined the Coast Guard in 2002, after he retired, because of his fondness for fishing and the water.

He started as a Coast Guard volunteer and soon became a familiar face to many in the community, as one of his main duties was manning the Werribee South boat ramps.

His duties included collecting fees, assisting people to get on and off boats and helping boats that got into trouble.

"One of the funniest things which occurred was when I tried to help



a fellow with his boat and I fell in the water," Mr Barbara said. "I had my wallet in my pocket and all, it was fun."

Mr Barbara said his favourite part of being a Coast Guard was the other volunteers.

"I enjoy the company of all the people there," he said. "We're always looking for new volunteers, the more, the merrier."



IT'S not every meeting night you get to celebrate a great volunteer's 90th birthday.

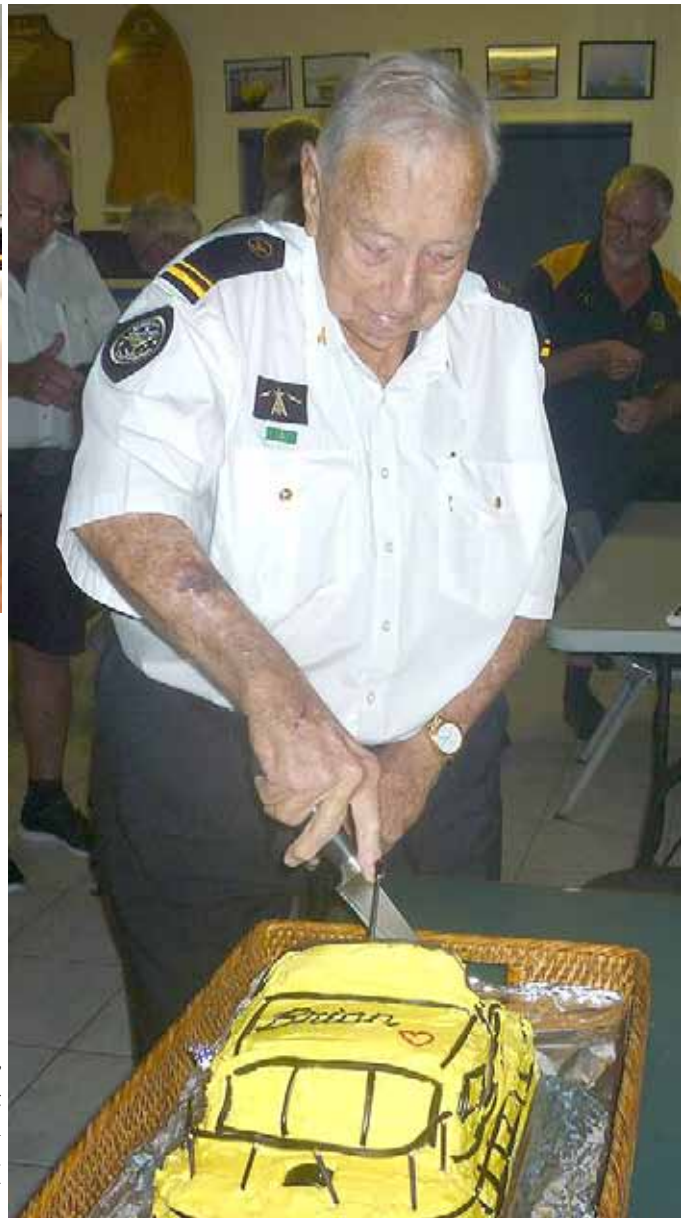
So **QF6 Mooloolaba** made a little fuss when **Bill Cunningham** (ABOVE) reached that milestone. Bill joined QF6 in May 2005 and was also a boat crew member for many years, as well as becoming the Radio Training Coordinator.

Happy Birthday Bill. They will start planning your 100th very soon.

QF17 Tin Can Bay's oldest member, **Brian Morris**, (RIGHT) also celebrated his 90th birthday recently and the flotilla had a rescue vessel cake to celebrate.

Brian is not as active around the flotilla as he used to be but in the past he was one of the top fundraisers, manning the raffle stall at the Tin Can Bay markets and selling raffle tickets outside BCF in Gympie. Congratulations Brian - still going strong!

VF4 Western Port provided its smaller rescue vessel *Sealite Rescue* for the local Festival Street Parade (BELOW) and everyone thought it looked great going down the high street. The primary rescue vessel *Rescue 301* meanwhile was kept busy on the water completing a couple of assists and finishing the day with an assessment for a new coxswain.



AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER COAST GUARD

OPERATIONAL BASES

QUEENSLAND

QF25 **Cape York**
Tel. 07 4069 3030 **VMR425**

QF16 **Cooktown**
Tel. 074069 5655 **VMR416**

QF9 **Cairns**
Tel. 07 4051 2192 **VMR409**
& 07 4051 2384

QF15 **Innisfail**
Tel. 07 4063 2396 **VMR415**

QF12 **Tully**
Tel. 07 4066 9300 **VMR412**

QF23 **Cardwell**
Tel. 07 4066 2052 **VMR423**

QF14 **Ingham**
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08 8553 5333 Emu Bay

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SEARCH AND RESCUE OPTICAL SYSTEMS

GUIDE THERMAL IMAGING DEVICES

We have a range of Thermal Imaging products to satisfy many applications. Our hand held models are light and easy to use designed specifically for surveillance and search and rescue situations.

Thermal systems register the heat radiation from objects so what you see are true images of shapes be it people or boats etc in shades of white (hot) through to black (cold). Some models allow you to change this to black being hot and white being cold. Either way you will see an image graded from white to black depending on how much heat is being radiated from it. For example a body floating in the water would be easily seen at night providing it is alive and producing some heat. Unlike Night Vision Thermal can also be used in the daytime. It is not light sensitive as such. Another example is that a person who is completely surrounded by smoke due to a fire and cannot be seen with the naked eye will be seen with a Thermal Imager. Possible fire hazzard hot spots in boats can be detected easily and prepared for.

Prices start at \$3900

For more information visit our web site or call us on the numbers below.

Demonstrations can be arranged.



PULSAR NIGHT VISION DEVICES

Unlike Thermal systems Night Vision devices are very sensitive to light. They need some light to operate be it star light, ambient light from the surroundings or a light source like an infrared torch. **THEY SHOULD NOT BE USED IN THE DAY.** They are particularly good at picking up reflections for example going into an unknown bay looking for an anchorage objects like partially submerged logs or rocks would be easily picked up providing there was some ambient light or you had an infrared light source. Most of our products have the IR light source already built in. In a Search and Rescue situation where a body was no longer alive and not producing heat a Night Vision device would be better than a Thermal device because it would pick up reflections coming from the clothes, exposed skin etc.

The optimum Search and Resuce Surveillance kit should include both

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