

# PORT CHATTER



SPRING 2019

## MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

*'Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water'*





## MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT

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## VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

### UNIT APPOINTMENTS

<b>Patrons:</b> Kate Washington MP, State Member Port Stephens Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson Stephen Bromhead LLM MP, State Member Myall Lakes The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne The Hon. Bob Baldwin		<b>Awards and Recognition</b> <b>Technical Services</b>  <b>Protocol Officer</b> <b>Corporate Services</b> <b>Administration Officer</b>	<b>Iain Blackadder</b> Lee Ryman Brian Richardson Peter Baldwin Robert Johnson Dieter Greiter  <b>Harold Gibson</b>  <b>Colin Couper</b>
<b>Unit Commander</b> <b>Deputy Unit Commander</b> Gift Shop Manager Events Coordinator Social Committee:	<b>Colin Foote</b> <b>Peter Merlino</b> Sandra Scheuber Dee Gilliland Lisa Lodding, Heather Perry-Comley	Jenny Fitzsimons/Deb Buckley Angus MacKenzie John P Smith Loris Webster/Erica Smith Peter Baldwin Julia Lynch Trevor Brighton /Steve Harris Margaret & Andrew Morrison Maureen Wheatley Paul Farnill	
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<b>Emergency Services Liaison</b>	<b>Colin Cahill</b>		

**Contributions** are most welcome from all members, advertisers, sponsors or other interested community members. They should be accompanied by the author's name, address and phone number, and can be emailed to the editor at [editor.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au](mailto:editor.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au). Contributions are subject to review by the Executive Committee prior to publishing.

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**Sponsors** can make **tax-deductible** donations to Marine Rescue NSW Port Stephens. All sponsorships will be acknowledged in *Port Chatter* if requested.

**Cover Photograph** - Tony O'Donnell

## OUR GOAL

To be the most effective Marine Rescue Unit in NSW

## OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Saving lives at sea on open and closed waters in and around Port Stephens

### MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT SERVICES PROVIDED



**Category One Marine Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre (SARCC).** Located at the former Inner Light and now Heritage Site at Nelson Head, 32°42.632 S; 152°09.667 E (overlooking Shoal Bay and looking out through the entrance to Port Stephens). Accredited by the State Rescue Board.

**Communications Centre, Nelson Head - VMR217.** Operated by trained and qualified volunteers, 24 hours a day; 7 days a week; 365 days a year. Monitoring 27MHz, and VHF marine frequencies, emergency and calling channels. Open during each day to the visiting public.

Apart from radio coverage generally to the local boating community, the Communications Centre offers:

- Emergency support to vessels in trouble
- Emergency and routine after hours communications for Rural Fire Service operating in the Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley districts
- A Marine Radio Safety (MRS) service – Boat Register
- A checkpoint and radio coverage for recreational vessels transiting up and down the coastline adjacent to Port Stephens.
- Weather readings and local conditions observations and
- Current Bureau of Meteorology weather forecasts and tidal information. (These can be obtained by contacting the Comms Centre by phone or radio and are also offered in regular radio skeds).

**Accredited Rescue Vessels** Available on a 24 hr call-out basis, subject to Police tasking. (See 'Rescue Vessels' page).

**Weather recording facility** Accredited by the Bureau of Meteorology. Regular reports on local conditions are electronically communicated to the Bureau, as well as to Radio, TV and Print media outlets in the local area.

**Nelson Head Reserve and Heritage Inner Light Cottage.** The Nelson Bay Unit of Marine Rescue NSW is responsible to the State Government for upkeep of this heritage precinct, through its 'Nelson Head Lighthouse and Rescue Station Reserve Trust Management Sub-committee' (which includes a representative of the Port Stephens Historical Society).

A small museum is operated by volunteers and is open to the public, 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

A portion of the building is leased to a private operator for morning/afternoon teas/coffee and lunches.

Wedding Ceremonies. Bookings can be made to hold these in the grounds (see Lighthouse Weddings page).

Below the Comms Centre, on the ground floor, is a tourist Gift Shop operated by Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Without profits from the Gift Shop, together with support from the local community, clubs and businesses, the Unit would find it very difficult, if not near impossible, to operate.





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## UNIT COMMANDER'S REPORT

### UNIT COMMANDER

With Winter now behind us we are preparing for the busy period leading in to the Summer months.

Although generally quieter in Winter, our Comms Centre and Boat crew were involved in the tragic loss of life when a catamaran capsized off Stockton Beach. Both Port Stephens and Newcastle Marine Rescue worked in conjunction with Westpac and CHC helicopters in dangerous and trying conditions.

In a second incident two people were rescued east of



Refurbishment of the Comms Centre

Broughton Island after spending two nights on the water. A co-ordinated search pattern was established by the Police Marine Area Command involving multiple Marine Rescue and Water Police vessels. Marine Rescue Port Stephens located the vessel and towed it safely to Nelson Bay Marina.

In addition to keeping two boats on the water and our Comms Centre open 24/7, we have also completed the major building reinforcement project. This has involved a significant external structural installation as well as replacement of internal walls, including a new kitchen in the Comms Centre. Our Project Team lead by Ian Peacock ensured that we were able to stay on air without interruption while we moved the Radio operations downstairs into the Command Centre and subsequently back upstairs.

As preparation for this project we had support from two local companies, **Hazmat Services** and **Nelson Bay Steel**.

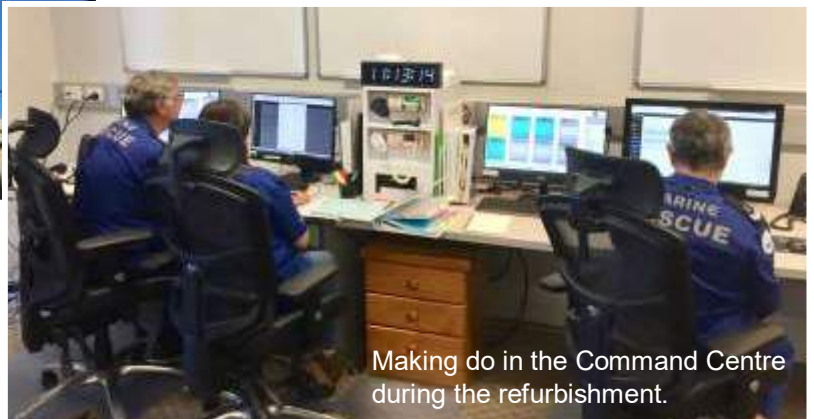
Hazmat Services conducted a Hazardous Materials inspection for the entire site and Nelson Bay Steel installed a new handrail and landing to our Comms Centre. We thank them for supporting us.

While the building reinforcement project was happening

we had to postpone training courses for new members. In addition to the new members who commenced in July, we had another Information night at the start of September for prospective members. It is essential that we continue to attract and train new members so we can fill 120 Comms Centre shifts each month and have Boat Crew available to protect the boating public.

Having finished the Comms Centre project we will shortly be carrying out a refurbishment of our Rescue Vessel Dock. At a total cost of approximately \$180,000 we have been fortunate to receive support from one of our major Benefactors together with funding from Marine Rescue Head Office a number of local Fishing Clubs and Nelson Bay Bowling Club. However, we still need to find \$80,000 to finance the project, which we want completed by the end of November.

Social interaction is important so that our members can meet each other and become an integral part of 'one



Making do in the Command Centre during the refurbishment.

team'. In August we enjoyed a bus trip to Brooklyn to spend time on the River Boat Postman. It was good to see members and partners having fun together. There is more coming!!



Members at the Riverboat Postman excursion

Enjoy your reading of the Spring issue of Port Chatter.  
Take care on the water and above all.  
Stay Safe.

**Colin Foote**  
*"Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water"*

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## COMMUNITY RELATIONS & NELSON HEAD TRUST

### COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Recently, the president of the **Anna Bay Tavern Fishing Club**, Darrin Saunders, presented the club's annual donations to community organisations. Our Unit Commander, Colin Foote, and Deputy Unit Commander, Peter Merlino, gratefully accepted a cheque on behalf of Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Darrin said the Club selected Marine Rescue for their fine service to fishing club members as well as the wider boating community.

Other Community recipients were Anna Bay Public School, Suicide Prevention Network and Horse Haven (a horse rescue volunteer organisation).

We thank Anna Bay Tavern Fishing Club for their ongoing support of the work we do. Our Unit Commander

indicated the funds would be put towards the refurbishment of the rescue vessel dock – an urgent and expensive project.

**Iain Blackadder**



### TRUST CHAIRMAN

19 members of the Newcastle Probus Club visit Nelson Head Reserve on Wednesday 21 August 2019 to take in the views and refreshments. The memorial garden is taking shape and the gardens should be very impressive in Spring.

The Trust has been advised that he is a semi-finalist. We await the results in due course.

The Nelson Head Lighthouse was nominated in the Department of Planning and Industry Individual Excellence in Crown Land Management Award. The first round of judging has been completed and the nomination was held in very high regard by the judges. However, the nomination unfortunately did not reach the Semi-Finals in this category.

**Kevin Griffey**



The Trust nominated **Harold Gibson** (pictured) in this years Department of Planning and Industry Individual Excellence in Crown Land Management for his contribution to the Nelson Head Lighthouse.





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## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### A DECADE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Marine Rescue NSW is marking a decade of volunteer service to the boating community on the State's waterways.

1 July marked the 10th anniversary of the service's official establishment.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos thanked the thousands of volunteers who had selflessly given their time, energy and commitment to serve the NSW community over the decade.

"Our volunteers are remarkable. They are skilled, experienced and saving lives is in their DNA," he said.

"Today we have 3,000 volunteers based in 44 rescue units along the coastline and on two high-risk inland waterways. Each of them can be rightly proud of their achievements and service."

Over the decade, Marine Rescue NSW crews have launched more than 25,000 rescue missions, including more than 7,000 in response to life-endangering emergencies, and returning more than 50,000 boaters to safety.

"Our crews are committed to our mission of saving lives on the water, often placing their own safety on the line to rescue boaters in peril in hazardous seas, bad weather and under darkness," Commissioner Tannos said.

"When boaters call for help, our radio operators are on duty 24/7 to answer. These communications experts have handled almost 2.4 million calls over the past eight years alone, including Logging On more than 583,000 vessels to track their voyages and ensure they make it

safely home."

When it was created in 2009, Marine Rescue NSW brought together volunteers from three organisations that had served with distinction for decades: the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association marine fleet.

Commissioner Tannos said the service had transformed over a decade with two new units on the Alpine Lakes and Murray River at Moama and professional volunteer training and equipment, including 91 new and refurbished rescue vessels, worth more than \$21 million.

"We could not have developed and grown without the ongoing financial support of the NSW Government and the boating community, who contribute to our operations through a levy on recreational boating licences and registrations," he said.

"The State Government's landmark commitment of an additional \$37.6 million to Marine Rescue NSW over the next four years ensures that we are now set for a second decade of service as strong as our first.

"This funding will enable us to expand our rescue capability further by accelerating the delivery of 38 new vessels, upgrading our operating facilities and further improving the state's marine radio network."

**Iain Blackadder**



### VESSEL LOG-ON

When Marine Rescue Port Stephens (and other Units) logs-on a vessel, we always ask the number of the mobile phone that is being carried on-board today. Some



Skippers are perplexed why they need to repeat this every time they log-on.

Mobile phone communications in an emergency may be vital. Say for example the vessel has lost all electrical power and the radio is not working. Now the mobile

phone can be a life saving device. A recorded incorrect number becomes useless.

People change telephones, telephone numbers etc. so it is important we are sure of the contact number for this and every voyage. Asking for the contact number also gives us the opportunity to check our records are accurate.

For those Skippers who use the Marine Rescue NSW Mobile Phone App to log their voyage, may we ask that you check the mobile number you have

recorded in the App as your contact number. Check your profile in the App. We have found a few errors over the past few months. The APP is not permitted to automatically pick-up the contact number of the mobile phone being used for security reasons which is required by Apple and Android developers.

**Our focus is on your safety at sea.**



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## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### MOBILE INCIDENT COMMAND VEHICLE

NSW Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott has

Commissioner Tannos thanked the Minister for the new asset and the NSW Government's strong investment in Marine Rescue NSW.



NSW Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott, Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Member for Tweed Geoff Provest

"The Government's generous commitment of an extra \$37.6 million to Marine Rescue NSW is valuable recognition of our volunteers' work to assist and protect the boating community," he said.

"The funding will deliver new purpose-built rescue vessels, upgraded operational centres and improved marine radio infrastructure.

"This new mobile command post will be deployed along the coastline during programmed works to modernise the marine radio network, enabling our units to remain on the air during the installation of new and upgraded

officially handed over a new \$200,000 Mobile Incident Command Vehicle to Marine Rescue NSW.

Mr Elliott said the NSW Government was proud to support Marine Rescue NSW volunteers with additional funding for upgraded resources to assist in their vital work to save lives on the water.

"The 2019-20 NSW Budget is delivering total funding of \$1.7 billion for our emergency services first responders," he said.

"Over the next four years, Marine Rescue NSW will receive an additional \$37.6 million in funding to deliver 38 new boats, provide new and upgraded operations bases and other facilities and reinforce the State's marine radio network."

Mr Elliott said the modified Iveco Daily van would be used to provide critical command and control during major response operations and serve as a back-up communications system for units.

"This versatile vehicle can accommodate two radio operators and quickly be deployed in urban, regional and remote areas," he said.

"It's fitted with marine radio communications, IT and audio visual equipment and stand-alone power, including solar panels."



equipment in their Comms Centres.

"It also will be a valuable resource during extended and remote response operations, with a retractable awning and external video screens for outdoor operational briefings for crews."

The vehicle replaces the organisation's 26-year-old communications truck that had reached the end of its operational life.

**Iain Blackadder**



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## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### PORT MACQUARIE AWARDS

Awards for life-saving Marine Rescue Port Macquarie team

Ten Marine Rescue Port Macquarie volunteers have been presented with awards to recognise their courage, skill and service during a challenging operation to save three seriously injured men from a sinking motor cruiser.

The men sustained a number of injuries, including broken bones, severe lacerations, punctured lungs and a spinal injury, when their 10m cruiser struck a submerged object off Crescent Head in the early hours of April 14 this year.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos will present Marine Rescue NSW Commendations for Courage to Chris Condon and William Richardson for their bravery in boarding the holed vessel and ensuring the three men made it off the sinking boat to safety.

Commissioner's Citations will be awarded to Port Macquarie 30 crew members Reg McGlashan, Yolanda Bosschieter and Tony Hallett; Port Macquarie 20 crew members Robert Breskal and Owen Coulls; watch officers Graham Gibbs and Gary White and Unit Commander Greg Davies.

Commissioner Tannos said the volunteers' courage, determination and dedication throughout the six-hour mission had ensured three lives were saved.

"These 10 volunteers are deserving of recognition for their commitment to the Marine Rescue NSW mission of saving lives on the water, working together as one to rescue the stricken boaters," he said.

The MR Port Macquarie team has also been shortlisted as one of two finalists in the Outstanding Team Contribution to a Maritime Search and Rescue Operation category of the 2019 International Maritime Rescue Federation Awards, to be announced in London on September 10.

Commissioner Tannos paid tribute to the professional response of the rescue vessel crews and the Watch Officers in the unit's Comms Centre, who all worked seamlessly on the operation.

The Comms Centre received a Mayday call from the stricken cruiser at 1.07am on April 14 but the location given by the caller – later found to have sustained a broken jaw – was difficult to determine.

As the Watch Officers persisted in their attempts to gain accurate coordinates for the vessel's location and Unit Commander Davies worked with the NSW Police Marine Area Command to coordinate the response, the rescue crew searched under darkness to locate the boat.

"After searching north from Port Macquarie, the crew

eventually located the damaged cruiser with the assistance of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter just south of Crescent Head," Commissioner Tannos said.

"When PM 30 arrived on scene, Mr Richardson and Mr Condon bravely boarded the holed vessel to provide emergency first aid to the three people on board.



"As the cruiser began sinking, without regard for their own safety, the pair ensured all three injured men escaped, painstakingly extricating the patient with the spinal injury from below deck where he had been trapped among debris.

"All five men were rapidly retrieved from the open ocean by the crew of Port Macquarie 30 and transferred to shore, rendezvousing en route with Port Macquarie 20, which had NSW Ambulance paramedics on board."

Commissioner Tannos said the MRNSW and international recognition of the crew was well deserved.

"Our volunteers do not join our service for glory and awards but it is always pleasing to acknowledge their skill and capability," he said.

"They devote a great deal of time and effort to their operational duties and training to ensure they can operate at the most professional of standards and they deserve our thanks and praise."

**Iain Blackadder**



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## TRAINING

### FORTUNATE TRAINING LOCATION

The boat crew training on Saturday 24 August, was situated in the Fingal Bay area – as luck would have it that was very fortunate.

Training exercises included recovering a person from the water, resuscitation, navigation exercises etc. We also practiced anchoring in Fingal Bay. Both vessels (PS30 and PS31) were anchored a little south of the Fingal Spit.

This Spit of sand leads to Fingal Island and the historic



lighthouse. Sadly, many people have drowned crossing this spit over the years walking across the sand when the tide is low and trying to return at high tide and being washed into the sea by the waves, collapse of the sand etc.

If people must walk across to the island then be aware of the tides and do not get caught by a rising tide.

During the “anchoring” practice, our crew noticed three people trying to cross back to the mainland with waves breaking over the spit. The sand itself had been seriously washed away by the large seas earlier in the week.

PS30 approached the three young guys on a fishing adventure and confirmed they needed help.

They were directed to the other side of the spit where the water was calmer. Our boats went around the island to meet them. PS30 went into the beach and picked them up and then transferred the three to PS31 which took them to Nelson Bay.

We were pleased the young men decided to turn back and not to cross the churned-up waters which could have certainly ended in tragedy.

We wonder what would have happened if our boats were not coincidentally in the area at the right time. All speculation – the three are safe and back home. We were thankful we didn't have to put into practice what we had trained for that morning.

**Iain Blackadder**



“I did not realize you had so much reflective material! If all boats had a few pieces they would be much easier to find at night. We have a wide stripe about half way up the mast. Makes it a lot easier to find our way home when we come back late. And it would be easier for a rescue at night to locate us. I may go up the mast and put some more up there. I like the look!” said **James Cole on Facebook.**



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## OPERATIONS

### SEARCH AND RESCUE

On Wednesday, 7 August, Marine Rescue Port Stephens was tasked by the NSW Marine Area Command to assist in the search for an overdue vessel. This vessel left Swansea Monday morning and was reported as not having arrived at its final destination, Forster, on Tuesday afternoon.



PS31 was tasked to search between Port Stephens and Seal Rocks and support a large search from Forster to Swansea (involved vessels from Marine Rescue Forster, Lemon Tree Passage, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie plus Water Police assets).

PS31 departed the dock early and first

searched the outer islands of Port Stephens. The next area was to search the inlets of Broughton Island. On leaving Esmerelda Cove and heading east, the crew noticed on radar a vessel to the north east. On investigation it was the target vessel - great relief.

The target vessel was anchored as it had experienced drive problems along with communication difficulties. They had been anchored for 2 nights before being discovered and rescued.

PS31 towed the vessel and the 2 POB back to the safe waters of Port Stephens.

Congratulations to the Marine Area Command for a well-planned and coordinated search.

Unfortunately, on 15 August, the vessel sank while moored at the public wharf in Nelson Bay.

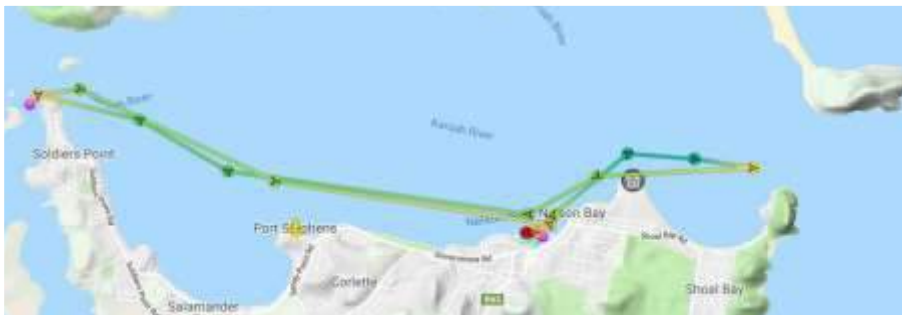


It was subsequently refloated and pumped out. The Water Police, RMS and NSW F&R were quickly on the scene to ensure there was no pollution threat.

**Tony O'Donnell**

### VESSEL IN TROUBLE

On Sunday night 28 July, the Watchkeeper at Marine Rescue Port Stephens' Comms Centre took a radio call from a vessel which was returning to the port and had simply run out of daylight. The skipper was experiencing navigation problems and was not fully familiar with the port entrance. On such a dark night, he was having difficulty determining exactly where he was. The Comms Centre was being asked for assistance to find their port entrance.



Some may be critical however situations like this can happen. The important thing is to call for help.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens has a policy of not talking people into the port. If a vessel is unable to find their way into port for any reason, we would work with the Water Police and send a rescue vessel out to meet with the distressed vessel and either lead it or tow it into safe

waters. This is the safest option.

This is what happened on that night. After conferring with the Marine Area Command of the NSW Water Police, PS31 was despatched to assist the vessel. The Water Police were in direct contact with the distressed vessel.

As it turned out PS31 rendezvoused with the vessel inside the heads and then lead it safely to the ramp at Soldiers Point. All ended up well. Marine Rescue vessels have the equipment for night navigation and

naturally the crew are well trained. A vessel in trouble which does not call for help may very well end up with serious problems.

Once again, we strongly recommend that Skippers have installed on their smart phone an App which can assist with navigation / location should primary navigation equipment fail. Examples are the free **Marine Rescue NSW App** the free **Emergency App**

or the **Compass App** which is installed on many phones. Knowing how to use these Apps may assist Marine Rescue or the Water Police determine your location.

**Tony O'Donnell**

## OPERATIONS

### OPERATIONS

*(Comms Centre, Rescue Vessels and the Callout Officer Group).*

Over the winter months the operations group has had to deal with quiet times and also respond to some challenging situations

The July Year to Date Statistics give an overall picture of our activity.

STATISTICS OF OUR OPERATION YTD JULY 2019	
Category	Statistic
Marine Incidents Managed by our Comms Centre	139
Number of times our rescue vessels were tasked to assist *	64 Times
Managed RFS Incidents	777

*\* Marine Incidents do not necessary require a rescue vessel to be tasked, the Port Stephens Water Police may respond etc.*

### Rescues

The work we do out on the water can range from assisting a boat with a flat battery to a Mayday call where lives are at risk.

The Comms Centre Crews are the first people to be contacted in the event of an emergency big or small. They must always be ready to respond to a call for help. Once received they follow well trained and proven procedures to commence rescue operations. They always work through the NSW Water Police.

Three examples of rescues we have responded to recently are:

A call from the Water Police that an EPIRB had been activated off Stockton Bight. On scene first was the Westpac Rescue Helicopter who reported an overturned catamaran with survivors and sadly loss of life. PS31 and Newcastle 30 were

vessel with a very young child on-board. The Skipper reported he had lost his engine and due to the wind direction was unable to enter the port and was being blown towards rocks.

Our Comms Centre put out "an all ships call" for assistance while our Duty Callout Officer assembled a boat crew. The Boating Safety Officer (RMS) responded to the "All Ships" and was able to get the yacht under tow. PS31 was very quickly on the scene and took over the rescue. It was pleasing to tow that vessel to safety and to see the relieved look on the face of the mother of the young child.

On a Saturday in August our boats were training in the Fingal Bay area. The crew noted that the Fingal Spit had been somewhat washed away by the gale force storms earlier in the week. As the tide was coming in waves were breaking over the Spit.

The Skipper of PS31 noticed three people trying to cross back to the mainland from Fingal Island. Fortunately,



tasked to assist by the Water Police. This was a difficult task in the conditions but one our Comms Centre and Boat Crews managed well. (Both Comms Centre and Boat crews received counselling following this situation).

Another incident involved a call for help from a sailing

they realised the danger they were in and returned to a safe area. Arrangements were made with the young fishermen to pick them up in safe waters and return them to Nelson Bay. We

wonder what may have been the outcome if our rescue vessels were not at the right place and the right time. Many people have drowned in Fingal Spit area over the years.

*(Continued on page 19)*



## OPERATIONS

(Continued from page 18)

### Search and Rescue

During August, a vessel travelling from Lake Macquarie to Forster was reported by relatives as not having arrived at Forster. The report was late in the day. During the night, the Marine Area Command of the NSW Water Police organised a search at first light for this vessel (they had now been out two nights). Marine Rescue along with NSW Water Police vessels were tasked to search the waters between Forster and Swansea.



PS31 was tasked to search the outer islands, Broughton island and the waters between Seal Rocks and Port Stephens. After leaving Broughton island the crew noticed on radar a vessel N.E. of Broughton. Upon investigation, the missing vessel was found. They had experienced drive problems along with communications issues. They were towed back to the safe waters of Port Stephens when the Water Police called off the search.

A footnote to this story is that the rescued vessel sank at the wharf a few days later. Thinking that through it was fortunate that the relatives reported them missing and that the vessel was located. Highlights the importance of logging-on with Marine Rescue every time you go out on the water. That way somebody is monitoring your journey and we can react quicker in the event of problems.

### Major Project

Our boat dock is at the end of its useful life and will be replaced. The cost of the project is expected to be \$180,000 of which we have secured funding of \$100,000. The project will be completed before Christmas with the new dock supporting our work well into the future.

### RFS

We manage the communications for Lower Hunter and the Hunter Valley Rural Fire Service during the night hours. We don't fight fires - we are the communications centre for this essential work.

With severe drought conditions and a hot summer forecast we wish our friends at RFS good fortune in summer and that you all remain safe.

That is a snapshot of the work we do – certainly not the full story. Thanks to all our volunteers who give up their time to ensure we are on duty 24/7/365 – serving the boating community and saving lives on the water. We also thank those who are

in support positions (e.g. fund raising) – our work depends on you very much.

**Tony O'Donnell**



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*Mike (vendor)*

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*Peter & Jayne (vendor)*

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## BOATS OFFICER

While winter is a relatively quiet time on the water, our rescue missions that do take place tend to involve longer range and more complex operations. An occasional 'heavy weather operation' puts strains on our lifeboats that would not normally be experienced by recreational vessels. While the hulls and propulsion systems on both our vessels are well up to the task we need to be constantly on the lookout for problems like minor leaks in windows, doors and through deck fittings as well as minor electrical problems that result from higher stresses and a corrosive salt environment.

Boat crew are well trained in the formal fault reporting process. That and our preventative maintenance program in the hands of the 'Wednesday Team' have kept on top of things and ensured maximum availability of both vessels



now have 'marine cards' which allow them to work in the boatyard so we took the opportunity to replace the speed through the water impeller. This task can be completed while the vessel is on the water but is much less dramatic while she is 'on the blocks'.

We still have some minor issues with the Raymarine software upgrade. Temporary but effective workarounds are in place and we continue to work with **Barranjoey Marine Electronics** and **Raymarine** themselves to get some permanent resolution.



### PS30 Codi K II

PS30 spent two days out of the water this month undergoing a 100 hourly engine service and some sponson repairs.

The service on the two 200hp outboard engines was carried out by our local Suzuki agents **Bay Boat Sales**.

PS30 is a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) which means she has a fibreglass hull and deckhouse surrounded by an inflatable collar. This results in a stable and efficient high speed vessel. The inflatable collar made of Hypalon is divided into seven separate chambers for safety and redundancy.

Our operating environment presents particular challenges for this type of vessel (most of them oysters). So the odd slow leak in one or more of the chambers and deterioration in the protective rubbing strips is inevitable over time.

Mitch from **Stern First Marine** did a great job over two days tracking down small leaks and tidying up some of the worst of the rubbing strip deterioration.

### PS31 JOHN THOMPSON

PS31 has done the bulk of the work over winter and has done so with great reliability. She was lifted out of the water at the D'Albora Boatyard for a clean and reapplication of antifouling in July. Several key members



### Dock Facilities

Winter has shown the need for monitoring of our 'off the grid' shore power system. A series of dull days can shut down the system for want of solar input, resulting in the need for extended running of the standby generator.

A DCN radio has been installed in the 'Shed' and work has commenced on the IT project which will take the form of a network link to the base providing internet access at the dock. This will be used for software maintenance and cartography updates on both vessels and will facilitate video surveillance of the dock facility and both rescue vessels.

**Barney Pinney**

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## THE HISTORY OF DANIAL THAIN

### FROM DUNDEE TO PORT STEPHENS.

Before its stalwart career at Marine Rescue Port Stephens, *Danial Thain* served 20 years as a lifeboat operated by the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) in the UK. It was an Arun-class vessel named *Spirit of Tayside* and between 1978 and 1998 was stationed at the RNLI Lifeboat Station Brought Ferry, on the River Tay, near Dundee in Scotland.

The Arun-class lifeboat was developed in 1971 by RNLI with the objective of providing a larger, faster, all-weather lifeboat that could cover up to 50 miles off-shore within three hours of launching. Maritime architect Mr. A. McLachlan of Messrs. G. L. Watson, Glasgow, designed the class. It was the world's first purpose designed all-weather lifeboat constructed in glass reinforced plastic, although early prototypes had a wooden laminated hull.

The hull and deck were moulded by Halmatic Ltd. at Havant and the aluminum alloy superstructure was constructed by William Osborne Ltd. at Littlehampton, where the boat was fitted out. The class takes its name from the River Arun at Littlehampton. The vessel won a UK Design Council award in 1982.

The specifications of the vessel were; displacement 32 tonnes, length 15.85m (52ft), beam 5.2m (17ft), draft 1.5m (5ft), propulsion 2 x 362 kW Caterpillar D343 six-cylinder diesel engines, twin propellers, fuel 2,730L, speed 18 knots, range 230 nautical miles at full speed with 6 crew.

The Arun-class was designed with a hard chine hull incorporating deep tunnels to protect the propellers, a transom stern and two rudders. The flared bow protected the deck and wheelhouse from spray and gave ample working space on the foredeck. A forward flying bridge and forward raked wheelhouse windows provided excellent all-round visibility. The reverse sheer of the wheelhouse gave a clear view over the stern when the bow was raised at speed. The superstructure housed all controls, instruments, seating for all crew, and below deck space with accommodation and facilities for survivors. The steering position on the flying bridge was fitted with instrument repeaters so that in fair weather, close maneuvering could be undertaken with better all-round vision. An inshore lifeboat and inflatable life raft were carried on deck.

Arun-class vessels were virtually unsinkable. The hull was divided into 26 watertight compartments, some filled with expanded polyurethane foam and the remainder packed with 50 mm polypropylene spheres giving reverse buoyancy if the boat was holed. The watertight superstructure provided the self-righting buoyancy. If capsized, the roll-back to a stable position was designed to take only five seconds and the twin Caterpillar diesel

engines automatically cut back to idle.

A total of 46 Arun-class vessels were built between 1971 and 1990 and were in service with RNLI from 1971 to 1990. *Spirit of Tayside* was the ninth in the series (52-09). It was on station at Broughty Ferry on 6 May 1978 and on 17 July that year, HRH Prince Michael, Duke of Kent and President of RNLI, named the vessel in front of a crowd of 1,500 people gathered on the quay. He commented that his late mother, Princess Marina, had named the boat's predecessor, *The Robert*, 17 years previously. The Prince congratulated the Dundee community who had raised £226,000, almost the entire cost of the new vessel.

Few details of *Spirit of Tayside's* operational history have been located, although she was involved in hundreds of call-outs, and her crew saved dozens of people from



*Spirit of Tayside* (52-09) on River Tay, Dundee, Scotland

almost certain death. Three incidents are briefly described below.

At 2212 on 24 December 1978, the lifeboat responded to a coastal vessel requesting assistance in St. Andrews Bay. Proceeding to sea in a Force 8 to 9 gale (34-47 kt winds, 5.5-10 m waves) the *Spirit of Tayside* was capsized. Three crew were injured and the assist was abandoned. The vessel was able to reach port safely under its own power. A detailed account of this incident will be published in a subsequent edition of Port Chatter.

At 0740 on 13 May 1988, *Spirit of Tayside* was called out to assist the tug *Defiant* which had run aground on the Gaa Sands, about 5 miles offshore from the lifeboat station. When she arrived at 0810 the crew found one of the tug's crew in a very distressed state, and as they could not approach the tug, helicopter assistance was requested. The master and mechanic also asked to be taken off when the helicopter arrived, and after putting them aboard the lifeboat the helicopter took the distressed sailor ashore for treatment. The *Spirit of Tayside* stood by *Defiant* until she refloated. By 1025 the two crew had been put back aboard the tug, and *Spirit of Tayside* was back on station by 1040.

(Continued on page 24)

## THE HISTORY OF DANIAL THAIN ....

(Continued from page 23)

On a number of occasions *Spirit of Tayside* was involved in searches for crashed aircraft and crew from the nearby Royal Air Force station at Leuchars. This included an incident on 9 July 1992 when a Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer of 208 Squadron was hit during a simulated attack on a ship 38 miles from Leuchars station and two crew were killed.

*Spirit of Tayside* was replaced by a Severn-class lifeboat in 1998. The following account of the decommissioning appeared in the Spring 1999 edition of the RNLI journal, *The Lifeboat*. "It can sometimes be forgotten that the excitement of having a new lifeboat on station is often tinged with real sadness at losing an old friend - a lifeboat which has seen the crew through thick and thin and

possible. We were at sea for a period of five days stopping off at various harbours along the English coastline overnight. The vessel performed magnificently."

"The following weekend was a long weekend in England so John and myself drove up to Broughty Ferry just north of Edinburgh where we further tested our skills on the Broughty Ferry Lifeboat and discussed any problems that they had experienced with the vessel, then known as *Spirit of Tayside*, and the possibility of any known expenses that we might incur if we purchased the vessel." Rod and John advised the Broughty Ferry crew the lifeboat was to be renamed *Danial Thain*."

"We decided to buy the vessel and so had the hull repainted white before it left England. The vessel was shipped to Australia by P&O Nedlloyd as deck cargo.

Upon its arrival at Botany Bay, a crew left Port Stephens by a hired bus early one morning to receive the vessel. The vessel was still on the rear of the container ship when we arrived. The wharfies had gone on strike that morning, but because they knew that we had come a long way to collect the vessel, and the importance of the lifeboat they decided to help us out by offloading our new vessel for us. Unfortunately, the wind had increased to a strength where it wasn't safe to unload at that time. After waiting for a while though, the wind decreased and they were able to safely offload our new vessel. The vessel had left England with full fuel tanks, so we immediately left



whose every nut, bolt and foible is well known to them. When the crew from Broughty Ferry brought their Arun *Spirit of Tayside* into the Poole Depot for decommissioning they felt that they had to respect her 20 years of service at their station by doing so in style - and full traditional dress (kilts). Once safely alongside they allowed themselves a private farewell involving traditional Scottish 'tea'."

In March 1999, a very generous supporter of the Port Stephens Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (RVCP) Division offered to fund a trip to the UK for Divisional Commander, Rod Reeson and Training Officer John Thompson to inspect a 52-foot Arun Class lifeboat and consider if it met the Divisions requirements for a replacement for *Girralong*, and to undertake necessary handling and maintenance training. The donor provided \$200,000 towards the purchase of the vessel.

Rod Reeson described the events. "John Thompson and I travelled to Poole in southern England to view the vessel which was on the hard standing at that time. The crews at Poole then put the vessel into the water and John and myself travelled with them to Alderney Island (in sight of the French coastline) in the vessel to test it in all ways



Botany Bay for Port Stephens. We arrived back at our berth in the early hours after a good trip."

The crew for this first voyage were Rod Reeson (skipper), John Thompson (engineer), Kevin Lanyon, Peter Fisher and Col Wynn. For the three crew who had never previously set foot on the vessel, the voyage to Port Stephens became a rapid learning, hands-on training exercise. John Thompson concentrated mainly on the vessel's engineering, while Rod Reeson concentrated mainly on boat handling and navigation.

(Continued on page 25)



## THE HISTORY OF DANIAL THAIN....

(Continued from page 24)

Peter Shevlin described the commissioning ceremony conducted at the fishing co-op wharf at Nelson Bay. "The following morning, 18 September, our new vessel was formally renamed by Mrs. Shirley Sinclair, wife of Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, AC, AO, and then blessed by our Chaplain, Fr. Bob Searle. In respect to the Scottish origins of both our new vessel and of the Sinclair's, the naming lady and her husband were met by a kilted piper

Chile, China, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Iceland and Madeira.

In June 2015, the Dundee Evening Telegraph published an article headlined "Strewth! Broughty lifeboat ended up 9,000 miles away in Australia." The article reported "The Arun-class *Spirit of Tayside*, now known as *Danial Thain*, originally came to Dundee in 1978 and spent more than 20 years serving the people of the north-east. She is now in Port Stephens, a small town 150 miles north of Sydney,

where hot, sunny days are more frequent than cold, rainy ones and rescuing a stranded surfer will be more likely than saving stricken fisherman." In contrast with this statement, *Danial Thain* had a stellar career and was involved in the rescue of hundreds of vessels while stationed in Port Stephens. Four rescues saw her crews recognised with National Search and Rescue Awards including a Medal of Valour presented to Coxswain Laurie Nolan. No surfers have been rescued to date!



who played them down to the wharf. Following the naming and blessing, the Patrol Officer Commanding, CDRE John Nicholas, read our new vessel's Commissioning Warrant and patrol members and their guests then partook of a celebratory lunch in the adjacent Wharf restaurant. There was only a week for crew training before the new P.V. *Danial Thain* was called out to proceed to the rescue of a disabled long-liner some 54 nm from base; a mission accomplished successfully."

Between 1998 and 2002, the RVCP acquired eight lifeboats from RNLI. This included two Arun-class vessels, *Spirit of Tayside* (52-09) stationed at Marine Rescue Port Stephens and *Elizabeth Ann* (52-11) stationed at Marine Rescue Ulladulla, and six smaller Waveney-class vessels. Other Arun-class lifeboats were acquired by maritime rescue organisations in Canada,



*Danial Thain* was retired after 16 years' service with Marine Rescue Port Stephens in 2017 and commenced a third maritime career when it was acquired by ECA Maritime College in Brisbane as a maritime training vessel.

**Neil Fraser**

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## KNOCKDOWN IN THE NORTH SEA

### KNOCKDOWN IN THE NORTH SEA - CONTINUING THE EARLY HISTORY OF *DANIAL THAIN*

At the height of the east coast low that developed over the Hunter region on 6-7 January 2016, the Marine Rescue Port Stephens rescue vessel *Danial Thain* was tasked to respond to Mayday calls from four stricken yachts offshore from Port Stephens. During the attempt to rescue the yacht *M3 Mulberry Racing*, *Danial Thain* was knocked down three times in quick succession in the mountainous seas, injuring three of the crew. Fortunately, the self-righting design and strong construction of the vessel, combined with the skilled seamanship of skipper Ron Lighton and his crew, ensured their survival and the damaged *Danial Thain* was brought safely back to dock. The account of this incident has been described by Richard Pizzuto in the February 2016 edition of the Marine Rescue Port Stephens newsletter, '[Port Chatter](#).'



However, this was not the first time the vessel had suffered a knockdown. Prior to being acquired by Marine Rescue Port Stephens, the vessel, known at *Spirit of Tayside* was stationed at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) Broughty Ferry lifeboat station on the River Tay, near Dundee, Scotland. On Christmas eve 1979, shortly after entering service, *Spirit of Tayside* experienced a knockdown whilst going to the assistance of a vessel in St. Andrews Bay. The following account is taken from the Summer 1979 edition of the RNLI journal, 'The Lifeboat.'

"Knockdown. A coaster, *Fendyke*, in trouble off Carnoustie a few miles north of the entrance to the River Tay was reported to the honorary secretary (operations) of Broughty Ferry lifeboat station, who is also the harbour master, by HM Coastguard at 2212 on Sunday December 24, 1978. The average readings of the gauge on Abertay Light Vessel, which are transmitted to a recorder in the harbour office, gave a wave/swell height

of 20 to 25 feet with an occasional height of about 30 feet. The honorary secretary considered these bar conditions well within the ability of Broughty Ferry's 52ft Arun *Spirit of Tayside* and alerted Coxswain John Jack.

"The lifeboat slipped her moorings at about 2225 and headed down river on service. Off the moorings there was an easterly fresh to strong breeze blowing, force 5 to 6, with a moderate sea. The tide was just after high water and starting to ebb. Conditions worsened as the lifeboat approached the bar with the wind increasing to easterly gale to strong gale, force 8 to 9. Coxswain Jack checked the weather with *Fendyke* which was nearer the bar than the light vessel and decided to continue. Speed was reduced to half and a course of about 070° was set. With the light vessel on reduced power, the channel buoys out of position, the radar only intermittently picking up the coastline and conditions making it impractical to plot, Coxswain Jack had to rely on local knowledge.

"The wheelhouse windows had badly steamed up. Deciding that pilotage would be better from the upper conning position, he and Second Coxswain Hugh Scott went up to the flying bridge. The seas were now coming in from different directions over some 30 degrees on the starboard bow. To ride these the coxswain was on the wheel and the second coxswain using the throttles as necessary. Seas were about 20 to 25 feet high and breaking, with some 70 feet between the crests (period five to six seconds). As the lifeboat neared the middle buoys she was struck on the starboard shoulder by a



heavy sea and pushed well over to port. A few minutes later, at about 2315, a heavier sea, estimated at between 30 to 35 feet high and appearing as a solid wall of water, was seen coming in on the starboard bow. As the coxswain tried to head the sea, the second coxswain opened up the throttles to meet the sea and then throttled back as it hit the starboard shoulder engulfing the lifeboat. The lifeboat then dropped some 20 feet into the trough and was knocked right over to port causing

(Continued on page 28)

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF *DANIAL THAIN*.....

(Continued from page 27)

the capsizes switches to reduce the engines to idling.

"This sea carried away the top mast together with the blue flashing light and masthead navigation light, and also the searchlight which had been mounted on the port side. Motor Mechanic William Pike immediately re-engaged the engines and Coxswain Jack headed out



towards Bell Rock. A few minutes later, when clear of the bar, the coxswain handed over to the second coxswain, who had injured his ankle and, as he was unable to get an answer on the intercom, went below to check on his crew. At the first count it was thought that one man was missing but he had knocked his head and was found unconscious in the wc; the rest, who had been belted in, seemed only to be bruised. Damage inside was found to be mainly superficial with small items of gear strewn around.

"Coxswain John Jack, who had torn a ligament to his right leg, then went back up to the upper conning position together with Crew Member Alistair Piggot. Second Coxswain Hugh Scott, who had in fact broken his ankle, managed to get down the ladder to the wheelhouse and was lifted into the seventh seat and strapped in. In view of the second coxswain's and his own injuries and information received from the Coastguard that the rescue was now being carried out by helicopter, Coxswain Jack decided to make for Leith. He continued working from the upper conning position for about another half hour until he was well clear of the bar, and then came down to the wheelhouse for the rest of the passage.

"Having heard that *Fendyke* was in distress, that two of Broughty Ferry's crew were injured and thinking that one man was missing overboard, Arbroath crew mustered at the boathouse. Shortly afterwards the honorary secretary authorised launch and the 42ft Watson lifeboat *The Duke of Montrose* was released down the slipway at 0045

under the command of Second Coxswain Brian Bruce. Acting Coxswain Bruce held the boat inside the breakwater until masts and radar scanner were erected and then, with the crew in position and lookouts posted either side of the wheelhouse, the lifeboat headed out between the piers to cross the bar.

"With the easterly wind blowing heavy spray across the port bow of the boat, and in very high seas, the bar was safely negotiated. While crossing the bar a message was received from Forth Coastguard saying that the Broughty Ferry crew member had been found and that there was no casualty for the Arbroath lifeboat. Informing Forth Coastguard that due to the sea conditions she would not return to Arbroath, *The Duke of Montrose* also made her way to Leith. In beam seas heavy spray made lookout difficult and restricted the coxswain's view



but the boat was handling very well and riding waves so that very little water was coming aboard. After rounding Fifeness, course was altered to south west to pass north of the Isle of May. The seas were now fine on the lifeboat's port quarter and the drogue was streamed, making the lifeboat noticeably easier to handle.

"On arrival at Leith at about 0430, Broughty Ferry lifeboat was met by an ambulance and the coxswain and second coxswain were taken to hospital. Coxswain John Jack was released after a few hours and Second Coxswain Hugh Scott was kept in for a few days for an operation to his ankle. Arbroath lifeboat arrived at Leith at 0810. After changing into dry clothing and having breakfast the crew were taken home by road. With blizzard conditions in Scotland over the New Year, both lifeboats returned to station as soon as it was possible, on 2 January."

**Neil Fraser**



## RFS LIAISON HUNTER VALLEY AND LOWER HUNTER

### RFS LIASON HUNTER VALLEY

Even though it is Spring, following a very dry Winter the fire season has been brought forward by a month to begin on 1 September. It means that from this date, a permit is required to light a fire unless it's a small cooking fire. On a day of a Total Fire Ban no fires may be lit (fire permit or not). To check on the notification requirements for burns, follow this link to the relevant Fact Sheet. [https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/4671/Lighting-A-Fire-Quick-Facts-A3.pdf](https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/4671/Lighting-A-Fire-Quick-Facts-A3.pdf)

With several Very High fire ratings in the district in August, the months ahead look like being exceptionally dangerous for bush fires. During that month of winter, there were up to 60 fires burning in the State.

Also in August, a large fire had been burning in the Putty Valley with Hunter Valley crews

assisted by those from Central Coast, Hawkesbury and Lower Hunter in containing it behind fire lines and under control.

Car fires are a constant callout by MRPS when acting as



Firecom. They are dangerous to combat because of the risks with fuel and the toxic smoke given off by burning plastics, etc. Note the use of CABA (Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus) by this RFS volunteer (photo below). They can set off bush and grass fires to further



escalate the incident.

Edinglassie and Kayuga recently attended this car fire of what could probably be a stolen car. As Firecom we are often asked to inform the Police about the details after the fire is extinguished if, for example, the number plate if it can still be recognised. The Police will also visit the site after being alerted. Sure to be a very disappointed owner somewhere.

Colin Couper

**Prepare Act Survive**

### Incidents handled by MRPS for LHRFS and HVRFS over the last two months

Month		Bush	Grass	Structure	CFR	MVA	Car	AFA	Other	Total
Jun-19	HVRFS	2	3	2	1	5	3	0	7	23
Jul-19	HVRFS	4	3	0	2	4	1	1	4	19
Jun-19	LHRFS	8	8	6	11	8	12	4	7	64
Jul-19	LHRFS	16	16	7	10	8	14	1	12	84
Total	Jun/Jul	30	30	15	24	25	30	6	30	190
TOTAL for 2019		101	79	30	61	93	114	29	112	619

### RFS LIAISON LOWER HUNTER



With what looks to be a very bad fire season on the horizon, it is best that we do some of our own house keeping at home.

Firstly you should check the batteries in your smoke alarm. Secondly I believe it is prudent to have a fire blanket near any cooking facilities in you home or business.



With the onset of the high fire season there may be a time when Lower Hunter calls upon us to relieve their hard working comms operators. You

will find helping out Lower Hunter in a major fire an interesting experience to say the least. Going on the number of bush fires raging in the last month, and the forecast it looks like being a busy season.

Ross Debenham

## BIRDS AROUND THE BASE

### BIRDS AROUND THE BASE

#### **Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*)**

All visitors to the base will have heard the Spotted Pardalote but very few actually see this bird. It is a tiny bird with a short tail, strong legs, and a stubby blunt bill. It is most often present high in the eucalypt canopy where it is more often heard than seen. It has a monotonous contact call of “weep-weep” which is repeated throughout the day. It is also known as the diamond bird or the peep-wren. The name “Pardalote” comes from a Greek word



meaning “spotted”.

The Spotted Pardalote is one of Australia's smallest and most colourful birds, 8-10 cm in length and wingspan of around 18 cm. The wings, tail and head of the male are black and covered with small, distinct white spots. Males have a pale eyebrow, a yellow throat and under tail, pale yellow underparts and a red rump. Females are similar to the males but have less distinct markings, a buff white throat and yellow under tail.

Pardalotes are our forest gleaners and have an intimate relationship with eucalypts, feeding on the nymphs of eucalypt leaf-eating insects, and their sugary exudates or lerp. Lerp are a sugary waxy secretion on the leaves of eucalypts, produced as a protective coating by tiny sap sucking insects, psyllids. Pardalotes have morphological and behavioural adaptations for foliage gleaning including a stubby bill adapted for removing the lerp coating and the psyllid, and other insects from the surface of leaves. They have a positive role in maintaining the health of our forests. (See note below on the Bell Miner, another forest gleaner).

The Spotted Pardalote's nest is an enlarged, lined chamber at the end of narrow tunnel, excavated in an earth bank. Sometimes they nest in tree hollows and occasionally in artificial structures such as carpet rolls and garage roll-a-doors. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch. Spotted Pardalotes are present throughout

eastern Australia and Victoria, and southwest Western Australia. They are largely sedentary, but may undergo local seasonal movements away from higher elevations in autumn and winter.

A close relative of the Spotted Pardalote is the similar sized **Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus striatus*)**. It has a striped head rather than spotted, lacks the spotting on the



wings and has a plainer back and under parts. It occupies a similar habitat as the Spotted Pardalote and is a lerp specialist, but it also forages for insects on bark and flowers. It

exhibits similar nesting behaviour. The Striated Pardalote occurs throughout most of Australia and has several subspecies.

The **Bell Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*)** is also a forest gleaner. It is an olive-green honeyeater with a short, down-curved, bright yellow bill, a red-orange bare eye patch and orange-yellow feet and legs. With a sweet bell-like ringing or tinkling call, it is also known as the Bellbird. The Bell Miner lives in complex colonies and is the most aggressive of all



honeyeaters, defending its territory against all intruders. They feed mainly on insects, especially psyllids and their lerp from the foliage of eucalypts. Bell Miners however maintain psyllid populations at high levels by protecting them from other birds and by maintaining sufficiently large territories so that they don't over-feed on the psyllids themselves. This results in uncontrolled populations of sap sucking insects that ultimately kill their tree hosts. Anyone visiting the eucalypt forests of Mount Allyn, Chichester Dam or Barrington Tops areas will have seen the extensive stands of dead eucalypts along the gullies and ridges. Bell Miner Associated Dieback is a significant problem for our forestry organisations and control of Bell Miner populations is frequently mooted. An article on Bell Miner Associated Dieback is present on the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage web site at:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/bellminerdiebackstrategy.htm>.

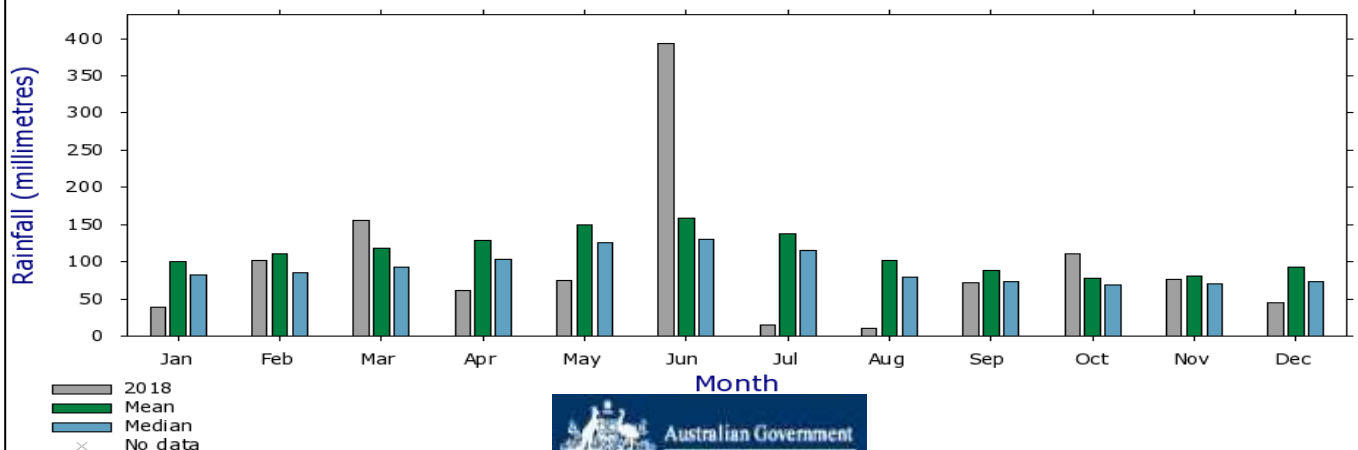
**Neil Fraser**  
**Twitcheer**



# PORT STEPHENS WEATHER

Nelson Bay, NSW - July 2019					Nelson Bay, NSW - August 2019				
Date	Day	Temps		Rain	Date	Day	Temps		Rain
		Min	Max				Min	Max	
		°C	°C	mm			°C	°C	mm
1	Mo	9.6	17.3	0	1	Th	10.8	18.5	13.8
2	Tu	9.7	21.1	0	2	Fr	11	18	0.9
3	We	10.6	20.2	0.2	3	Sa	9	20.4	0.3
4	Th	12	19.5	1.1	4	Su	10.1	19.2	0
5	Fr	15.4	20	0.8	5	Mo	10.7	19.7	0
6	Sa	13.8		2.6	6	Tu	10.5	21.2	0
7	Su	8	20.5	3.5	7	We	10	22	0
8	Mo	11.8	17	0	8	Th	10.9	23.5	0
9	Tu	10.5	17.4	0.6	9	Fr	14.1	18.7	0
10	We	9.3	17	0	10	Sa	9.9	15.6	0
11	Th	9.5	20.4	0	11	Su	9.5	15.5	0
12	Fr	13.6	20.5	0	12	Mo	8.1	16.5	0.1
13	Sa	14.6		0	13	Tu	7.7	17.1	0
14	Su	9.8	16.2	0	14	We	8	18.5	0
15	Mo	10	16.8	0	15	Th	8.4	21.1	0
16	Tu	10.2	17.8	0	16	Fr	9.7	22.8	0
17	We	10.6	18	0	17	Sa	11.6	18.7	0
18	Th	9.4		0	18	Su	10.5	20.3	0
19	Fr	9.1	17.3	0	19	Mo	12.5	17.8	0
20	Sa	9.4	19.7	0	20	Tu	8.9	19.9	0
21	Su	9.5	21	0	21	We	8	20.1	0
22	Mo	12.1	19.1	0	22	Th	11.6	20	0
23	Tu	11.9	24.6	0.1	23	Fr	10.9	17.1	0
24	We	12	20	0	24	Sa	9.7	21.6	0
25	Th	11.4	19.4	0.2	25	Su	12.4	23.5	0
26	Fr	10.7	18.8	0	26	Mo	14.3	21.2	0.5
27	Sa	11.3	19.1	0	27	Tu	12.2	19	0
28	Su	11.3	18.7	0.4	28	We	11.8	20	0
29	Mo	11	20	0	29	Th	11.6	17.1	0
30	Tu		15	5.9	30	Fr	10.8	14.5	31
31	We		15.7	29.8	31	Sa	11.5		36
Statistics for July 2019					Statistics for August 2019				
Mean		11.0	18.9		Mean		10.5	19.3	
Lowest		8.00	15.00	0.00	Lowest		7.7	14.5	0
Highest		15.40	24.60	29.8	Highest		14.3	23.5	36
Total				45.2	Total				82.6

Nelson Bay (Nelson Head) (061054) 2018 Rainfall (millimetres)



Note: Data may not have completed quality control

Climate Data Online, Bureau of Meteorology  
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## MARINE RESCUE PORT STEPHENS

*"Volunteers doing our jobs professionally"*



### **Our service to Port Stephens 2005-2018**

People saved/ assisted	5,404
Rescues and assists	2,419
Value of vessels saved	\$245M+
Rescue Crew volunteer hours	56,000+
Radio Base volunteer hours	284,700+
Radio calls made/received	292,168
Telephone calls made/received	268,145

**Every day, Marine Rescue Port Stephens Members give more than 60 volunteer hours to serve our community**

**Volunteers saving lives on the water**



## IN APPRECIATION....

### **Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:**

Iain Blackadder, Colin Couper, Ross Debenham, Colin Foote, Neil Fraser, Harold Gibson, Kevin Griffey, Tony O'Donnell, Barney Pinney and Maureen Wheatley. Other photos by Ross Debenham, Penelope Highland, Tony O'Donnell and Milja Phillipson. You too can become a contributor and you will be most welcome. See inside front cover.

**Distributors of the *Port Chatter*:** This Monthly newsletter does not arrive in your letter-box via the tooth fairy. The following people give of their time (and petrol) in making deliveries. Distribution Co-Ordinator: Ross Debenham, Maureen Wheatley, Peter Merlino, Elizabeth Francis, Marian Chappell, and Deb Nolan.

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		Soldiers Point Marina
	Boating Sales and Repairs	Nelson Bay Outboard Services
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		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head
<b>Radio Station</b>		Port Stephens FM 100.9



## MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSELS CURRENTLY IN SERVICE

The unit currently has two purpose built, specialised rescue vessels, crewed by motivated and trained volunteers who can be called upon at anytime, day or night, to head to the assistance of those who call.

A response time of 20 mins or less is estimated from alert to heading to sea. Our vessels boast a comprehensive inventory of the latest navigation, communication, safety and rescue technologies on board.

### PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 31*

#### *JOHN THOMPSON*



#### Specifications

Make / Model:	Steber International 38' - Category 3 SAR Vessel
Length:	11.46m (38ft)
Beam:	3.84m (12.6ft)
Displacement:	11.6 tonne
Draft:	1m
Fuel:	1350L
Engines:	Twin 420hp Yanmar diesel
Top Speed:	30kn
Crew:	Operational - normally 4
VHF:	Sailor 6222
Radar:	Raymarine RD418HD 4 KW
MFD's (Multifunction Display):	ES125-12" x 3, ES9-9" x 1
AIS:	Raymarine AIS950
RDF:	Taiyo
27Mhz:	GME GX400B
DCN:	Tait TM9300

**Rescue Vessel Port Stephens 31 John Thompson** was built by Steber International, Taree, NSW and completed in May 2016. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic.

**Port Stephens 31** is fitted with state-of-the-art radar, direction finding and navigation equipment as well as forward looking infra red search equipment.

**John Thompson** has been prepared to Marine Rescue NSW specifications with minor customisation at the request of Port Stephens Unit and is capable of covering Port Stephens and anywhere along the coast for example Broughton Island, Seal Rocks and 30nm out to sea or further if tasked by MACSAR.



**PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 30*  
*CODI-K II***



**Specifications:**

Make / Model:	Gemini WR-850
Type:	Rigid-Hull Inflatable (RHIB)
Length:	8.5m
Beam:	2.8m
Engines: -	2 x Suzuki four-stroke Outboards 200hp each (150kW)
Fuel Capacity:	2 x 200 litre tanks
Fuel Consumption:	Cruising speed - 50 litres / hour
Displacement:	3.2 tonnes
Survey:	2C
Crew:	4 operational
Speed:	Top speed around 40 knots. Cruising speed 25 to 30 knots.

**Rescue Vessel Port Stephens 30 Codi-K II** was manufactured in South Africa, prepared by Britton Marine of Taren Point NSW, and completed in February 2012. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic with alloy longitudinal keel reinforcement and her cabin is glass-reinforced plastic.

She boasts among her electronic equipment a Raymarine Radar/Plotter, Furuno AIS Class-A and FLIR Thermal Night Vision System.

**Codi-K II** has been prepared to Port Stephens Unit specifications in consultation with Marine Rescue NSW, and is capable of covering all of the areas of Port Stephens; ie, the Myall River system, Karuah River, and the other shallow areas of our waterways, as well as outside waters as required.



Teramby Road, Nelson Bay  
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*“Have you visited d’Albora Marinas Nelson Bay recently?*

*IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN A PLACE TO MOOR”*

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Cafe & Convenience on the Bay	02 4981 0921	Pacific Water Colours	02 4984 1922
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Hogs Breath Cafe	02 4984 2842	Sandbar Seafood	02 4984 3777
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