

PORT CHATTER



MARINE RESCUE NSW
PORT STEPHENS UNIT

DECEMBER 2016

"Volunteers doing our jobs professionally"



Kate Washington visit with Laurie Nolan, Sue Freeman, Lee Uebergang, Neil Hansford and Robert Johnson.



MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT

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VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

UNIT APPOINTMENTS

Patrons: Kate Washington MP State Member Port Stephens
Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson
Stephen Bromhead LLM MP, State Member Myall Lakes
Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne
The Hon Bob Baldwin

Unit Commander Lee Uebergang
Deputy Unit Commander Neil Hansford

Operations

Operations Officer

Duty Callout Officers

Communications Centre Manager

Ashes Scattering Coordinator

Rescue Vessels Manager

Chief Engineer

R.F.S. Liaison

Master Coxswain

Coxswains

Mike Smith

Ken Johnson

Robert Johnson

Tony O'Donnell

Penelope Highland (Lead)

Neil Fraser

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Asst Editor Port Chatter

Marine Radio Service Database

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Penelope Highland

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Graeme Abberton

Laurie & Deb Nolan

Frank & Deb van Druten

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Unit Training Officer

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Rescue Vessels Training Officer

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Richard Pizzuto

David Rogers

Brian Bibbing

Graeme Abberton

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- Assistant

Harold Gibson

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Stephen Harris

Loris Webster

Peter Baldwin

David Bacon

Paul Sullivan

John P Smith

John Vassallo

Erica Smith

Maureen Wheatley

Iain Blackadder

Lee Ryman

Brian Richardson

Peter Baldwin

Robert Johnson

Dieter Greiter

Paul Farnill

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Awards and Recognition

Technical Services

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Trust Management Sub-Committee

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Port Stephens Historical Society

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Wedding Events Co-ordinator

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Kevin Griffey

Peter Merlino

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Dennis Corr

Harold Gibson

Lynne Jensen

Jenny Fitzsimons

John Cook

The *Port Chatter* is the bi-monthly newsletter of Marine Rescue NSW, Port Stephens unit. It is available free to all members of the unit, its advertisers, sponsors, and other interested members of the community.

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. Contributions are subject to review by the Executive Committee prior to publishing.

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Cover Photographs - Geoff Clark and 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 base offers:

- Emergency support to vessels in trouble
- Emergency and routine after hours communications for Rural Fire Service operating in the Lower Hunter district
- A Marine Radio Safety (MRS) service – Boat Register
- Assistance and advice regarding entry to, and navigation in, the Port
- A checkpoint and radio coverage for recreational vessels transiting up and down the coastline, in our area
- Weather readings and local conditions observations and
- Current Bureau of Meteorology weather forecasts, sea observations and tidal information. (These can be obtained by contacting the base by phone or radio and are also offered in regular radio skeds).

Accredited Rescue Craft 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 & 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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FROM THE BRIDGE

UNIT COMMANDER

The Unit and your Executive Committee have been busy since my last Chatter report. We've been hosting visits, initiating projects, fighting fires, installing CCTV cameras in addition to the "business-as-usual" Communications Centre, DCO, rescue vessel, Gift Shop and Trust activities.

Visits: Neil and/or I have been involved in several visits in the last few months:

- **The Port Stephens Women in Business** held their October meeting in the Command Centre on the 28th. I welcomed the ladies before Iain Blackadder and Harold Gibson took them on a tour of the precinct. Sue Freeman was their guest speaker for the meeting.
- **Ms Kate Washington MP**, State Member for Port Stephens visited the base and rescue vessels on 4 November. With Robert Johnson at the helm of PS31, Kate was given a personal tour of the new Yellowtail Kingfish farm located between Cabbage Tree and Broughton islands which she was very keen to observe up close. She was very impressed with the breadth of activities undertaken by the Unit and promised to support us whenever the opportunity



Steve Raymond and Dean Storey

arose.

- **Dean Storey (Deputy Commissioner) and Steve Raymond (Regional Operations Manager for Hunter Central Coast region)** visited on 15 November. After a demonstration on PS31 which included a "run through the washing machine" then a trip around the Islands, Dean met with Neil and me for a very positive session. Dean also addressed the Mess Meeting where he congratulated the Unit on its excellence in what we do - describing MRPS as "a class act!!". High praise indeed and recognition from Head Office that our desire for excellence through continuous improvement is being noticed.
- **Mandy Ellis from News of the Area** visited on 16

November and was hosted around the precinct and rescue vessels. I expect she will have written an article on the Unit by the time you receive this.

- **Two members of the Board and two senior managers of Soldiers Point Bowling Club** were briefed on the Unit's activities and need for greater community sponsorship on 22nd November. The Board were impressed with PS31 and is considering a request for funding that had been previously sent to them.

Projects. Several projects have been initiated to deliver key outcomes for the Unit.



Soldiers Point Bowling Club Visitors.

- **Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).** As a result of the announcement by Chief Inspector Brian Tracey of the Police's intention to utilise our Command Centre as an EOC, I asked Col Cahill to lead a project team to develop the procedures and upgrade whatever infrastructure was required to ensure we complied with the Police's requirements. Col, assisted by Mike Grover and Graham Pretty, has completed the self-assessment audit of the Command Centre against criteria issued by NSW Police and believe there is a high-level of compliance. The next step is to meet with Chief Inspector Tracey to review the results of the self-assessment audit.
- **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Upgrade Project.** The DUC is working methodically on this project to address the ICT issues we have at the Base. This will look at redundancy, reliability, capacity and functionality of our phone, internet, VHF, 27Mhz, voice recording and RDFs in the Comms Centre as well the ICT requirements identified by the EOC Project. As the use of HF has been discontinued, it is out of scope for this project.
- **Dock Facilities Project.** The OPSO and I have asked Tim Boyle to form a project team to finalise the crew requirements for an office, storage and briefing area on our dock. A shed mounted on a floating

(Continued on page 7)



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with a smile.



FROM THE BRIDGE..... AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

(Continued from page 5)

pontoon is the most likely option to meet these needs. Tim's team will then finalise quotes and make recommendations to the Executive Committee. Once a facility is approved, Tim's team will manage the construction and commissioning of the facility.

- **Fire Protection & Prevention.** As a result of the fire that threatened the Nelson Head precinct on 5th November (see *separate article*) causing all but the Radio Base to be evacuated, John Reid will manage a team to review our fire protection and prevention measures and procedures. I've seen the "smoke signals" that we need to do more following the good work done by the Trust to reduce vegetation around the Bunker.

Over the period 8 to 11 November, seven Watchkeepers did shifts in the communications room of the Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre at East Maitland. This is another timely reminder that MRPS is an Emergency Services organisation.

Whilst our primary focus is "*Saving lives on open and closed waters in and around Port Stephens*", it's obvious we can do more than just that!!

I am pleased to announce that Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member for Lyne has accepted an invitation to be a Patron of MRPS. I look forward to hosting him on a visit to the Unit in early 2017.

As we approach the December / January period, I ask for your continued efforts to get us through our peak activity period in the Radio Base, Gift Shop, Cottage and rescue vessels. You do a great job which is well recognised by the community we strive to support. I'd like to wish you, your families and friends a healthy, happy and festive Christmas and New Year. Be safe and see you at the Christmas party and around the Base.

Lee Uebergang

"Volunteers doing our jobs professionally"



DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

In my role as DUC, this has very much been supporting the UC in preparation for key visits in November and Unit administration.

The visit of the Deputy Commissioner and the new Regional Operations Manager was critical. See Lee's report in this issue.

Never thought you could spend three hours a day on MR business without doing a shift.

To those I don't see before Christmas, Sue and I wish you and yours a very happy, safe and healthy Christmas.

Neil Hansford



COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

Public Relations

We now have the quiet times behind us and you can expect to see far more content in the papers and on Facebook as Matt promotes our Summer activities. A major emphasis will be on membership promotion with half page advertisements promoting all our activities. It is to be hoped our base and rescue vessels are busy but we only have minimal life-threatening rescues to talk about in the press. We have had a briefing visit from the Examiner competitor "News of the Area" which you can pick up all around the Bay. It gets to our key audiences.

Port Chatter

Words can't describe how Penelope pulls together such a newsworthy and interesting Unit magazine. We all owe Penelope a deed of gratitude. Getting the busy contributors to submit on time is no mean feat. Then it is up to Frank to distribute electronically and the delivery team to have it at your door if you don't download the colour edition from the web.

Grants

Grants are essential lifeblood for the Unit to add more state of the art equipment to the vessels and the base.

With the assistance of "grandpa" Tony Dawson we have lodged Grant Applications for over \$40,000 and it is fingers crossed we are rewarded for the quality of our

submissions. There is a real science in filling out the online forms in order that they can be scored. Should have results to talk about in the New Year.

MRS

This is another vital area for giving service to the boating public and raising funds for the Unit. Graham still needs some assistance in the maintenance of the database which you can all access on Mario. We propose that we will do some ramp promotions over the busy period now we have sourced some promotional material. That should increase our MRS members.

Social

See Laurie Nolan's Report for details of the Xmas Party and the trips to Broughton - which fills a long requested activity for members.

Political/ Community Relations

The Unit Commander has reported on the visit of Kate Washington MP, Member for Port Stephens in his report.

Visits by the following have also been agreed between now and February:

- Meryl Swanson MP Member for Patterson
- Hon Scot McDonald Parliamentary Secretary for Hunter and Central Coast
- Steve Broomhead MP Member for Myall Lakes

(Continued on page 9)



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COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND DSC INFORMATION

(Continued from page 7)

- Dr David Gillespie MP Member for Lyne and Assistant Minister for Rural Health

In addition, we have visits by decision makers from **West's Diggers** and **Soldiers Point Bowling Club** who support us - and not just by way of Clubs NSW Community Grants. No other licenced club gives us grant support for our vital projects. What does your Club do?

We should support those clubs who support us so generously. You shouldn't forget that we get NO other financial support from business houses in the Bay - save some advertising in this Port Chatter.

We are working to change that!

GIFT SHOP

What a success story for Sandra and the ladies who put in so much time and heavy lifting. I know all the team are very proud of the funds they raise. This culminated in team member, Shirley Clark presenting the Unit with a cheque for \$7,000 at the last Mess Meeting. The ladies have embraced all the new technology related to stock control and the credit card terminal. Denise Olsen went



Back row: Carol Bastick, Lyndall Day, Nola Ross-Sampson, Denise Taylor, Marian Chappel, Julie Chauncy, Mary Gutry, Chris Rynne.
Front row: Sandra Scheuber, Betty Trickett, Neil Hansford, Di Baille

to Sydney to do a course on the accounting system so the Shop results will flow seamlessly into the Unit accounts - overseen by Peter Merlino as Treasurer.

I think the holiday period will see the Shop break all records for turnover and profit.

Neil Hansford

DSC (DIGITAL SELECTIVE CALLING)

Some Basics to Help You with the Sailor Radio

DSC is just another way of establishing contact with all OR individual stations.

DSC does this by sending a burst of digital data called a DSC ALERT.

DSC ALERTS TAKE THE PLACE OF THE RADIO TELEPHONY INITIAL CALL.

A RADIOTELEPHONY MESSAGE WILL NORMALLY FOLLOW A DSC ALERT.

DSC ALERTS use the same priorities as radiotelephony marine radio calls; the basic ones are:-

DISTRESS	(MAYDAY)
URGENCY	(PAN PAN)
SAFETY	(SECURITE)
ROUTINE	(MMSI/NAME OF STATION BEING CALLED)

to ALL STATIONS always
to ALL or INDIVIDUAL stations
to ALL or INDIVIDUAL stations
to INDIVIDUAL station only



EVERY DSC alert will automatically come through on VHF Ch 70 with an audible signal and will ALWAYS contains the 9 digit MMSI number of the transmitting station.

If the DSC set is interfaced with the vessel's GPS the ALERT will also contain the co-ordinates.

REMEMBER! DSC ALERTS must be logged. Record the MMSI (and co-ordinates if available)

After a DSC ALERT wait for the radiotelephony message that will follow to complete the log.

DISTRESS calls following a DSC ALERT will follow on Ch 16. Sometimes the sending station will nominate another channel for lower priority messages, particularly ROUTINE messages.

The MMSI number is allocated by AMSA after application by the DSC equipped set owner.

The MMSI number must be programmed into the set for it to work.

Within the DSC set you can build up a contact list of MMSIs with the associated station names .

If you receive a DSC ALERT from a station in your contact list the sending station name will show on the screen.

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WELFARE / LIAISON OFFICER

WELFARE / LIAISON OFFICER

Hello to all our Members and Friends on the "Sea Sick List" also to many members who are well on the way to recovery and back on deck just in time for Christmas.

LLOYD CROPPER - with Lloyd's latest medical update. He has been cleared of any nasties and received a good report recently from his medical team.

Not to be out done by anyone, Lloyd did his full driver "Senior Test" and came through with flying colours. The examiner actually congratulated Lloyd on his driving ability. Well done Lloyd, we all know that you are not just the units best "*Knots and Splices*" man.

ERICA SMITH had to miss out on meeting Marine Rescue Deputy Commissioner Dean Storey at our recent mess meeting. Erica along with other members was to be presented with her 5 year membership clasp. Unfortunately, Erica was in hospital in preparation for surgery. Hope all is well Erica and that we will see you back on duty soon.

SUE REESON has also been in hospital recently for surgery and now reports she is well on the way to recovery. She really is enjoying Rod's cooking and his housework duties.

Well done Sue and don't relieve Rod of those important duties too soon.

MIKE SMITH one of our popular senior skippers, has also been reported to have not been well recently. However, knowing Mike I am sure that he will be fit and back on duty for the upcoming very busy boating season. All the best Mike and sincerely hope that all is now well with your health.

DIANE BAILLIE - what a wonder lady this member is. Diane recently had some sun spots removed and the stitches required looked like the zipper on our wet weather gear.

J P SMITH On a recent trip to Queensland JP was assisting his son with some yard work when he was bitten on the knee by a suspected *White Tail Spider*. John sought medical attention in Brisbane, and on his return home he was admitted to the John Hunter for a week of observation. A good outcome for Smithy. He is now back on deck but is still concerned why the spider dropped dead after biting him!

COLIN CAHILL has reported to me that he has now recovered from a couple of recent setbacks and is now full steam ahead with his base duties and other commitments.

Well done Colin. You are a great asset to our unit and the boating public.

ROSS DEBENHAM - another great member and one of many talents. Photos of the countryside and

such that he takes on his bush walking excursions are excellent. However he seems to always be cracking his shins or knees when falling over obstacles in his path. This does not stop our Roscoe from pursuing his passion for bushwalks.

SHIRLEY CLARK if you all wondered why Shirley was not quite herself at the last mess meeting, she has also been in hospital for a holiday to have eye surgery. Shirley can now see whales on the horizon before we pick up our binoculars.

STEVE PICTON - another dedicated member. Steve has had two eye operations recently but would never allow this to stand in his way for reporting for duty. Even after a long drive from his home at Beresfield, Steve would answer the call to duty. And what an excellent maintenance job he is doing. Well done Steve. This is dedication.

BRIAN CARROLL - another of our dedicated members. Brian has not been his normal self in recent times. However you would never know that to speak with him. Brian never complains and is always there to support any member in any way he can. Good to report, Brian informs me that he is on top of his little problem and is now looking forward to a nice Christmas with Sandra and family.

You are both quiet achievers and very much appreciated by all fellow members.

I respect the privacy of members who do not want to be mentioned in my column.

To all, take care and please let me or Jenny Fitzsimons know if there is any way that we, or the unit, can support or help you.

From me, and the power of support team Jenny, keep well and may you and all your family have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Harold Gibson
The Padre

COUNSELLING SERVICE

Marine Rescue has access to the RFS Counselling Service for Critical Incidents. If after a critical incident (rescue vessel, radio, elsewhere) you feel you need help contact the UC, DUC or Welfare Officer. Use of the service is **fully confidential between the member and the Counsellor. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for support – it is a sign of strength.**



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LIAISON

NOVEMBER 2, NELSON BAY JUNIOR SEA SCOUTS VISIT MARINE RESCUE BASE

Marine Rescue Port Stephens hosted 15 Junior Sea Scouts and three of their senior leaders.

This visit was organised by DUC Neil Hansford as a goodwill public relations exercise, in order to share with other local organisations and to show the work that Marine Rescue does here at Port Stephens.

Jenny Fitzsimons and I were called upon to be hosts for this very important occasion.

A very well uniformed presentation of 15 members met Jenny and me at the base at 1800hrs. Three senior instructors under the command of Ms Sandra, had all of these junior troops very well disciplined and organised.



Where does one start to do a presentation of Marine Rescue Duties to such junior scouts? Jenny had the quick and correct answer to my question. Jenny's response was to start off with food. Knowing Jenny as we all do, out came the party pies, sausage rolls, pizza, drinks - and the list goes on. The Command Centre reminded me of the catering after our mess



meetings.

After the spread our guests were ready for my presentation, "What we do here at Marine Rescue Port Stephens base."

To my amazement, these young people were a delight to speak to and to provide them with an insight as to what we do here at Port Stephens and the different areas of responsibility that we have. I was astounded at their genuine interest.

After the presentation, the Scouts were divided into two groups to tour the Comms Centre and the Cottage. Jenny instructed them all on correct protocol when visiting the Comms Centre, should the duty operator receive a call. I believe that they all behaved well and they also had lots of questions for the duty operators.

At the conclusion of the presentation I asked the scouts if they had any questions and again I was astounded at the amount of knowledge they had absorbed. The questions that were put to us were about operations, rescues, membership etc.

At the conclusion of the visit I asked the group what had been the best or most interesting part of your evening? Yes, I thought so, - Ms Jenny's excellent catering.



"It was great" was their reply.

To show their appreciation, Ms Jenny was called before the troops for them all in unison, and standing to attention, to thank her for an excellent supper.

Take a bow our Ms Jenny!

We never know, in years to come we may have some new recruits in our ranks from this wonderful sea scout group.

Harold Gibson

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Kunara also provides trips for beach fishing, inside harbour and estuary fishing, dolphin watching, whale watching, diving or sightseeing trips, as well as a Ferry service to Broughton Island, recently voted "Number One" offshore Australian Island by "Getaway".



- **Deep Sea Fishing**
- **Game Fishing**
- **Dive Trips**
- **Off Shore Cruises**
- **Twilight Cruises off Port Stephens**

RMS SUMMER PROGRAM & RFS LIAISON

EXPIRED FLARE COLLECTION

Roads and Maritime Services

has launched a program to help boaters dispose of expired flares, with mobile collections set up along the NSW coastline until the end of the boating season in April. Port Stephens collections are:

Soldiers Point Boat Ramp and Hawks Nest Boat Ramp

Saturday 14 Jan 2017 - 0800-1100

Little Beach Boat Ramp

Sunday 15 January 2017 - 0800-1100

Carrington Boat Ramp

Monday 16 January 2017 - 0800-1100

Stockton North Boat Ramp

Monday 16 January 2017 - 1400-1700



OLD4NEW Life Jacket replacement program is all about making more boaters aware of the range of modern lifejackets.

SOLDIERS POINT BOAT RAMP

Thursday 26 January, 2017, 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Little Beach Boat Ramp Nelson Bay

Friday 27 January, 2017, 7:00am - 11:00am

STOCKTON NORTH BOAT RAMP

Friday 27 January, 2017, 2:00pm - 5:00pm

CARRINGTON BOAT RAMP

Saturday 28 January, 2017, 7:00am - 11:00am

RAYMOND TERRACE BOAT RAMP

Sunday 29 January, 2017, 7:00am - 11:00am



RFS LIAISON

Incidents for September, Car fires 17, Grass fires 19, Tree over lines 1, motor vehicle accidents 9, automatic fire alarms 10, pile burns 3, rubbish fires 3, bush fires 19, house fires 3, bonfire 1, cat up a tree 1, ambo assists 1, smoke alarm 1, community first responder 2, tree across road 1, tree fire 2, garage fire 1, bin fires 2, yard fire 1

Total 97.

Incidents for October, Boat fire 1, tree fires 2, rubbish fire 2, grass fires 18, ambo assist 1, smoke reports 2, bush fires 14, motor vehicle accidents 10, quarry on fire 1, car fires 13 (kids with nothing better to do), house fire 1, bin fires 3, fuel spill 2, electrical fire 1, camp fire 1, burst water main, yard fires 3, tip fire 1, Brewery Fire 1, bonfire 1, unknown fire 1, community first responder 5, pile burn 1, hay shed fire 1, report of explosion 1, Total 88.

As you can see we were rather busy for the period of September and October. Despite the workload all seems to have gone well but I cannot overstate the point that we must get the units mobile as soon as possible. Don't ring the D.O. before paging the relevant brigade. Just go to the call out book and get the designated unit and page them.

In the last couple of weeks there have been two major fires, one known as the Lone Pine Fire in the Karuah/ Medowie area, and the other the Racecourse Fire in the Cessnock area.

How fortunate are we



to have the RFS and the other such volunteer fire fighting organisations around Australia. A few weeks ago I was listening to ABC Local when they interviewed Kate Carragher from Newcastle who had spent four months in the Chilko Valley, British Columbia in Canada. She said that despite the cold weather nobody lights wood fires in their cabins because there was no RFS within a 100 miles and it was too dangerous. Then a month or so ago I went down to St Albans on the McDonald River near



Wisemans Ferry. Every little hamlet along the way had an RFS shed.

The day before the large fire at Lone Pine, RFS were doing hazard reduction on Gan Gan Hill which was a spectacular photo opportunity.

Ross Debenham



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OPERATIONS OFFICER

OPERATION

For our readers who are not directly involved with Marine Rescue Port Stephens (and there are many such readers), our Operations are divided into three functions namely:

- * Comms Centre
- * Duty Callout
- * Rescue Vessels

The Marine operations are focused on saving lives on the water and we work directly for the Water Police.

The Comms Centre is the primary contact point for the boating community both on inside and outside waters. The Comms Centre operates 24/7 run by volunteer members. Up to the end of November (YTD) they had conducted 13,600 Radio Calls and 15,400 Telephone calls. The crew there managed 206 incidents which involved 350 people in trouble on the water. An incident can range from a Flare sighting to a boat sinking.

Most of the work we do is never seen by the general public. Our Comms Center Staff work away tirelessly - generally unseen. Visitors to the base are surprised at the technology and the functions our people perform.

At night the Watchkeeper not only keeps watch on water based radio traffic but also controls the communications for the Lower Hunter RFS operations. Very few people are aware of this vital work. It was a tribute to our people that they were able to help at the HQ of RFS at East Maitland during the recent large fires (more about this in this magazine).

During November our Comms Centre staff undertook refresher training of our procedures to ensure we are ready for the busy summer season we are about to enter.

Working behind the scenes are a small group of Duty Callout Officers who swing into action once an incident on the water takes place. They are the link between the Comms Centre, the Water Police and our Rescue Vessel Crews. These well trained people are on call 24/7.

Then there are the dedicated Rescue Vessel crews who again are on call 24/7 and go out to sea at all times of the day and night, in all types of weather conditions.

In September this year the Comms Centre controlled 15 incidents (all types) which resulted in our rescue vessels being tasked by the Water Police five times.

In October there were 23 reported incidents from which our Rescue Vessels were tasked seven times. One of those incidents involved four people being thrown into the water from a capsized boat. The Water Police and Rescue Vessels from Marine Rescue Port Stephens and Lemon Tree passage responded.

In November as an example, our Rescue Vessel Crews were called out at 2am to rescue a distressed vessel off the coast. Definitely nobody sees this type of rescue.

PS31 (John Thompson) -our newest rescue vessel - continues to perform well. Recently Sgt. Tony Hogg from the Water Police took the rescue vessel out to understand its capabilities and his comment was, "You guys must be very pleased with this boat. She performs so well".

In November PS31 towed a Ketch 20+ tonnes - her heaviest tow so far.

Our rescue vessel crews train weekly making sure they are capable of doing the tasks asked of us by the Water Police and expected by the boating public who find themselves in distress.

The RAAF Firefighters visited our operations (Comms Centre and Rescue Vessels) to better understand our capabilities in the event of a need to call on us. They invited our rescue vessel crew members to visit the RAAF base to in turn inspect their facilities. Our crew members visited in November and were amazed at the equipment, capabilities and training regime of the RAAF Firefighting Crews. They brought back a few ideas for our operations.



*Towing the 24 tonne ketch
Silhouette*

During October we assisted the RAAF Rescue helicopter train their crews. PS31 was out on the water with the Helicopter overhead lowering personnel onto the deck.

We hosted Kate Washington, our local State Member at both the Comms Centre and out on PS31. Similarly some of the Board Members of Soldiers Point Bowling Club also were



RAAF fire crew visit with boat crew

(Continued on page 18)

OPERATIONS AND BOOK LAUNCH

(Continued from page 17)

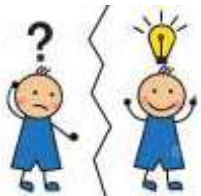
briefed on our facilities and rescue vessels.

Finally the Rescue Vessel Crews took a number of our Comms Centre Watchkeepers out on the Bay for familiarisation of the various areas, moorings, channels etc. that they often speak to visiting Skippers about over the radio.

Summer is coming and we are ready to serve the boating community and support the NSW Water Police. We will tell you in the next issue of Port Chatter how it all went.

Merry Christmas from the Operations of Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Keep safe on the water.

Tony O'Donnell



Photos: Clockwise from top: Helicopter Exercise; Watch Keepers and MROs familiarisation of the Port; and Kate Washington with Skipper Sue Freeman.

JOHN "STINKER" CLARKE BOOK LAUNCH

A great friend of Marine Rescue Port Stephens and one of the area's most colourful characters, "Stinker" invited 4 members of our Unit to the launch of his new book, **'Unwanted, The Adventures of Stinker and Stinkpot'**

All of us will be aware of Stinker's previous books on the local history of fishing, oysters and characters in our region but this is his first book written specifically for children.

To complement the wonderful stories, a local artist Ileana Clarke, has contributed some amazing illustrations.

'Unwanted' is available in our Gift Shop and is definitely a book worth buying for your children or grandchildren for Christmas.

Stinker's next book will be a history of the Outer

Lighthouse on Fingal Island. If anyone has any old photos or information on the Outer Lighthouse, Stinker would love to hear from you.

Thanks for the invite Stinker.

Colin Foote



Penelope Highland, Ileana Clarke, John "Stinker" Clarke, Colin Foote, David Bacon and Judy Jones

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

UNIT TRAINING OFFICER

As the end of the calendar year and summer festive season rapidly approaches so too does the demand on our volunteer Marine Rescue resources. With an influx of people into the area the number of Operational Callouts and general radio traffic also increases significantly. With this in mind our Unit Training team slows down and we leave December and January free, and therefore make additional time



available both on the water and in the Comms Centre - This also gives members more time to participate in the festive season.

However, come February - and the following months next year - we will again have on offer a full range of training activities. This includes First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation, LROCP, SARCC Ops, Working in an Emergency Operations Centre, Elementary Navigation, and Fire and Sea Survival. The details of these courses - including dates and times etc - will be placed in the Comms Centre mid December.



All being well, in the New Year we will also reinvigorate our RFS training materials for those aspiring Watch Officers out there!

The photos show some of our members, from Port Stephens, Lemon Tree Passage and Newcastle who joined together in a recent Sea Survival Training course at Tomaree pool.

If you could see yourself in these photos and want to learn more about active MR boat activities then please contact us. (Marine Rescue NSW Port Stephens Unit 4918 3585

portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au)

We cannot say it too many times but a very big thank you to those members who take the time, in addition to their normal Comms Centre or boat crewing activities, to actually organise and deliver all of the above training courses for our fellow members. Not forgetting our office support members who process the paperwork and organise the assessments, certificates and Mario

and Otter updates. Without you it would not happen....so thank you one and all. Great job, well done.

If any member would like to contribute with an idea or suggestion or constructive feedback your Unit Training Team would love to hear from you.

Wishing all of our volunteers a safe and enjoyable festive season and new year.

Brian Bibbing

COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE MANAGER

Comms Centre Update

Preparations have begun for the start of our busy holiday season.

During the last Christmas and January period we received at least one call for assistance each day. These were responded to by either Nelson Bay Water Police or our Rescue Crew. Most issues emanated from either poor maintenance or poor planning by boat owners. There is no reason to believe that this Summer will be any different.

To ensure that we are ready for another busy season we have been continually training new members with both formal classroom training and hands on experience in the Comms centre. This has increased the number of Radio Operators and Watchkeepers available for shifts, particularly in the busy early morning period of 5-00am to 9 -30am.

In addition to the training of new members we have also conducted a second Refresher Course for our existing Comms centre members, focussing on Standard Operating Procedures for the range of Incidents that we may need to handle. These include May Days,

Pan Pans, Flare Sightings, Overdue Vessels, and of course standard requests for assistance.

To further support the efficient operation of the Comms Centre we have commissioned a new voice recorder covering both our radios and phone lines. We have also increased the number of incoming phone lines.

We are confident that we are in a strong position and are ready for the influx of visitors to Port Stephens. Our prime concern is the safety of all vessels and for this we remind everyone to **log on with Marine Rescue** and **wear your life jacket** every time you go on the water.

Happy Christmas and safe boating.

Colin Foote



TRUST MANAGEMENT AND FIRE ON OUR DOORSTEP

NELSON HEAD LIGHTHOUSE TRUST REPORT



The Nelson Head Lighthouse Trust Sub-Committee and its group have been very active over the past months. Peter Merlino has agreed to be Deputy Chairperson as well as being the Trust's long serving Treasurer.

The Trust buildings, fences and structures are in constant need of repair and to assist us the Trust has invited David Bacon to coordinate the maintenance program.

We are still seeking two people to take over the Wedding Coordinators role as Lynne and Garry Jenson who have coordinated the activity for three years, feel it is time for someone else to take over the roles.

As most of you are aware, we had a bush fire emergency

when two teenagers set fire to bush below the Bunker. The strong winds pushed the fire up the hill swiftly. Thankfully Harold Gibson and Peter Fitzsimons were on duty in the Museum and implemented the emergency procedures which included the complete evacuation of the Reserve except for the Marine Rescue Comms Centre. Thankfully a few months earlier, the Trust arranged with an arborist to establish an Asset Protection Zone and Tree Management Program around the Bunker and Kevin Clark Room. NSW Fire and Rescue and Rural Fire Service commented that this had assisted them with access to the fire ground and had reduced the impact of the fire significantly.

Due to the seriousness of this emergency, the Trust is reviewing its emergency procedures and equipment.

The Trust Maintenance Team is an important group that turn up every week and do all the hard manual work around the Reserve. The Team comprises Peter Fitzsimons, Peter Merlino, Bob Harris and Steve Chauncy. Each week they maintain the lawns and do all the maintenance. They do a wonderful job and every time I am around visitors and tourists I hear the comment about how well the grounds are maintained.

On behalf of the Nelson Head Lighthouse Trust we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2017.

Kevin Griffey
Chairperson

FIRE ON OUR DOORSTEP

On a day when the RFS was overtaxed with bush fires in the Karuah, Cessnock and Medowie areas Nelson Head was also the scene of a deliberately lit bushfire which spread quickly from near the water's edge right up to the Bunker.

This necessitated the full evacuation of the site which included the Radio Base, with the exception of me and Radio Operator, David Bacon. The Gift Shop, Tea Rooms, Museum and the preparations for a wedding were all evacuated

At the heart of the highly efficient evacuation were

Harold Gibson, Peter Fitzsimmons and John Cook. They all were very appreciative of the cooperative spirit displayed by all.

First appliances on scene were the NSW Fire and Rescue 402 from Salamander Bay followed by Soldiers Point 7 and Fingal 7 and then units from Anna Bay and Raymond



Terrace, plus the Group Captain.

It was a very efficient operation that saved the bunker and all our other facilities.

We may have had a different outcome if Kevin Griffey and the Trust had not had pre-emptive asset protection clearing done in the weeks before the fire!

A working group is already in place to assess extension of the asset. In addition all evacuation procedures are being reassessed and a firefighting equipment audit is also being undertaken. I expect that we will increase our firefighting familiarity at Induction and beyond as the urgent reviews are completed.

As is often said - all in a day's work for the Watchkeeper and Base team.

Thank you, NSW Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service and Nelson Bay General Duties Police with Maritime One keeping a watching brief from the water.

Neil Hansford

CORPORATE SERVICES GROUP

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Responsibility for rosters has passed from Elizabeth Francis to Peter Baldwin with Peter now processing all rosters. A big job but Peter is handling it very efficiently. A big thankyou to Elizabeth for looking after rosters for a number of years; her work over this period has been very much appreciated.

The membership process has been streamlined with a number of new initiatives put in place to limit the number of membership withdrawals in the first six months. One of these initiatives has been to appoint John P. Smith to act as a mentor for new members for induction through to the start of their training courses.

The new voice recorder has been installed in the Comms centre and is up and running flawlessly. CCTV cameras have been installed in a number of locations around the base and final installation and commissioning should occur within the next week.

David Bacon has been appointed as the Building/Facilities Officer with responsibility for the condition and maintenance of all buildings on the site. Kevin Griffey will retain responsibility for the grounds and areas surrounding the base. David and Kevin are already working on checking all areas of fire protection



on the base including fire extinguishers, hose reels and hydrants. The RFS has been asked to advise on the requirements for scrub clearance around the base and on the access road.

A working group has been formed to look at all areas of fire protection including identification of potential hazards so that a proposal can be put to the Executive on procedures for evacuation of all areas on our site including Comms centre, Gift Shop, Command Centre and Tea



Rooms. In light of the recent fire in scrub on the northern side of the hill and the subsequent evacuation of the site, it is of the utmost importance to have procedures in place for an orderly evacuation and to ensure that all staff and visitors are aware of these procedures.

John Reid



Two luxurious vessels seen in the bay recently



PORT STEPHENS MEDICAL CENTRE

2 Keel Street, Salamander Bay 2317

Ph: 4981 1733 Fax: 4981 1766

Email: portstephensmcepsmc.net.au

Our surgery features General Practitioners, a Registered Nurse, visiting Specialists and onsite pathology.

Dr Stan Kuchta MBBS (Sydney). Dr Kuchta practices full-time within our surgery and deals with all aspects of primary care in family medicine. His special interests include all types of Skin Cancers, Sports Medicine, Cardiology and Pain Management.

Dr Steve Illiadis BSc MBBS (FUSA). Dr Illiadis also practices full-time in our surgery. His special interests are surgical problems, Skin Cancer, Sports Medicine and Children's Health (Pediatrics).

Dr Michael O'Donoghue BSc (NSW), MBBS Dip Av Med, DAME. Dr O'Donoghue performs part-time sessions in our surgery. His special interests include Aviation Medicine and Occupational Medicine.

Dr Douglas Routley BMed (Hons), FRACGP. Dr Routley is a gastroenterologist and visits our surgery fortnightly. His specialties include diseases of the digestive system and the liver.

Australian Hearing Services provides hearing assessments and the fitting and repairing of hearing aids. They have sessions at our surgery weekly.

RESCUE VESSELS MANAGER AND GIFT SHOP

RESCUE VESSELS MANAGER

Routine maintenance for PS30 and PS31 has been running smoothly with Tony and Robert developing weekly and monthly worksheets for each of the boats.

Ian Peacock and Tim Boyle have been assigned the task of planning for a covered work/storage area on our dock, extending the dock if necessary. More on this in future issues. During the Dedication of the MR Crowdy-Harrington shore facility on Saturday, the OPSO and I met the MRNSW Property Officer and he visited our complex to see what assistance he could offer including useful contacts and advice.



Boat Maintenance each Wednesday.

We have a couple of other problems with the dock. One is that the support for the metal sheeting on the old pontoons is giving way and either needs replacing or bolstering. This will be done by the maintenance crew in the near future. We are awaiting a much needed 'spill container' for our drum fuel and chemicals held on the jetty.

In relation to PS40, Bill and Eryl have been fine tuning the motors which are now running smoothly and a



replacement of a couple of old components will have their final tick of approval. Once this has been done my able assistant, Robert Johnson, will be taking a team through the boat to offload all gear that is not included in the sale and to generally tidy up the old girl.

During a tow of a tinnie from the heads to Soldiers Point for a hand over to LT30, PS31 developed a strange noise whenever we went more than 6 Kts. The speed was kept at below 6 Kts and the handover completed - thanks Lemon Tree Passage. On return to the marina the noise

was quite evident at higher speeds so the port engine was shut down. On inspection of the port engine bay a nut and bolt were found loose in the bilge and it was discovered that these came from the flexible coupling that attaches the engine to the prop shaft. After obtaining advice from Mark at Fleetguard Marine I replaced the nut and bolt, tightened another three that were loose and checked the security of the bolts on the starboard motor. I eventually crawled out of the engine bay some one hour later. See photo of the working area above.

Ken Johnson



Can you believe it's the last Port Chatter for 2016. Where did the months go!

Denise Olson and I went to the Trade Fair in September. We had money in our pockets and were ready to go shopping. The first day we spent the time just looking at what was on offer and on the second day we ordered our stock. My goodness who said shopping was fun!

The gift shop had its monthly meeting on the 13 October with guest speaker Neil Hansford. Neil presented us with two plaques, the first from Colin Cahill in appreciation of the Ladies Auxiliary, thanking the ladies for their valued

contribution and the vital importance it is to Marine Rescue. The second plaque was from Lee Uebergang to the Gift Shops' management and staff also recognising us for our support. The ladies and I would like to thank both Colin and Lee for their recognition of all the hard work that goes into running the Gift Shop. Thank you again, it means a lot to us.

The plaques will be hung in the Shop with pride.

I would also like to thank Peter Merlino for all the work he has put into the Gift Shop since March - it has been endless. Even when I ask silly questions he always has an answer.

In the past three months, the Gift Shop has passed all expectations. As fast as stock is put on the shelves the ladies are wrapping it for sale. They say we need a bigger shop. I say no we don't!

The ladies of the gift shop wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Sandra Scheuber

Lighthouse Weddings



There is no more beautiful setting in Port Stephens to hold your wedding ceremony than the Nelson Head Lighthouse Reserve.

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To discuss availability, fees, your options and to make a booking please contact:

Wedding Co-ordinator

Mobile: 0491 135 102

E mail: lighthouse.weddings@yahoo.com.au

LIGHTHOUSE WEDDING AND MARINE RESCUE SOCIAL EVENTS



Saturday 15 October 2016

The John Thomson Garden was the ideal location for Sydney couple **Beverley Laurent and David Perry's** wedding on a perfect Saturday afternoon. Ruth Prince was the Celebrant and the 18 guests enjoyed both the wedding and a light lunch served by the Café afterwards. (Photo left.)



Saturday 22 October 2016

What a difference a week makes! This date was booked by a local Fingal couple and their 100 guests but due to wet weather the wedding ceremony was moved to Broughtons, where the reception was booked.

Saturday 5 November 2016

This was a wedding ceremony at the Lighthouse that was never meant to be. Booked in February 2015 I had not heard from the bride since that date, despite numerous attempts at contact by me. You can imagine my surprise when she contacted me at 9 am on the very Saturday morning that she had booked, and after some discussion it was agreed that we would go ahead with their wedding booking, only to have a bushfire close all access to the Lighthouse for both the wedding team and guests. This "surprise wedding" was moved to Broughtons as well.

Saturday 12 November 2016

Another wet lead-up to this wedding, with the skies clearing on the day for the wedding of Nelson Bay couple **Michelle Holland and John Wairwright**. Celebrant and family friend Jane Jones married Michelle and John in front of 120 guests. (Photos above and below.)

There are another five weddings booked before I finish up as Wedding Co-Ordinator on 21 December. We have been a fabulous team, Garry, Peter and Jenny and I say thank you for all your efforts. During my time as Wedding Co-Ordinator I have attended approximately 70 weddings and met some wonderful people. Jenny and Peter plan on remaining as part of the team but we do need someone to take on the Co-Ordinating role. If you like meeting people, are organised, computer literate and not afraid of a bit of manual labour, then get in touch with one of the Trust Committee Members. Have we got a job for you!

Lynne Jensen



HELPING THE RFS

BLUE UNIFORMS IN A SEA OF YELLOW

Marine Rescue (MR) Port Stephens has provided a vast array of assistance over the year, sometimes in unusual circumstances, but perhaps the most unusual was the assistance provided to the Lower Hunter Rural Fire Service (RFS) during the November 2016 fires in the Port



Stephens area.

To provide some background, MR Port Stephens is a 24/7 Base. In addition to its usual marine rescue responsibilities,

MR Port Stephens becomes the RFS Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre from 1700 to 0900, seven days a week when there is not a large active fire. This involves handling calls from the NSW Fire & Rescue Triple Zero operators, use of the paging software to call out the relevant brigades and then the handling of the radio communications following all RFS protocols. Lower Hunter covers the council areas of Cessnock, Maitland, Dungog and Port Stephens. Apart from structure, bush and grass fires, brigades can be called out to motor vehicle accidents, automatic fire alarms and an assortment of other tasks. Liaison with Police, Councils, Ausgrid and several other utilities is also part of the responsibilities.

Anyone who has lived in NSW regional and rural areas is no stranger to bushfires. On Saturday 5 November, the RFS's Lower Hunter Fire Control was faced with two emergency (Section 44) fire situations; the first at Racecourse Road Cessnock and the second, the Lone Pine fire around Limeburners Creek, Karuah and Medowie. Several smaller fires were also burning in the area. High temperatures and constant wind changes fuelled the fires and saw the closure of the Pacific Highway for several days. With over 1000 RFS volunteer fire fighters on the ground, including appliances from Sydney, the Illawarra and from areas to the north, the

fires were finally brought under control limiting the fire affected area to 892 hectares around Racecourse Road and 9036 hectares around Lone Pine.

Keen to provide additional support to our emergency service brothers, I contacted the RFS on the afternoon of Monday 7 November to offer communications' room assistance. The RFS Communications Manager welcomed the offer of additional resources and at 0800 the next day the first "blue uniform" waded into the sea of yellow uniforms at the Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre in East Maitland to assist in the radio despatch area. After a quick briefing from the RFS supervisors, radio operations continued seamlessly.

After the shift Watch Officer Ross Debenham said, "At first there were a few curious and bewildered looks from the yellow uniforms who were from out of town. These looks quickly turned to amazement as realisation set in that these interlopers in blue uniforms knew the radio protocols, the call signs, the forms and paperwork."

Over the next few days, seven MR Watch Officers completed 10 eight hour shifts in the communications room under the supervision of an experienced RFS officer. Inspector Ken Hepplewhite, Lower Hunter RFS said, "During major fire incidents such



as we experienced in November, the prompt flow of information is vital. Our despatch people play an important role in getting messages to and from our fire fighting units on the ground. Radio activity is constant and relentless so after some very long shifts, our people were getting tired and we were pulling in resources from other areas to assist. The offer from our Marine Rescue friends was timely and most welcome. As a Duty Officer working closely with the Port Stephens Radio Base after hours, I was always confident that the Marine Rescue volunteers were equipped to handle the work and I had no hesitation in recommending the offer of assistance to our Communications Manager."

MR Watch Officer Colin Couper commented after his shift, "Thoroughly enjoyed helping them out and we were

HELPING THE RFS AND THE FISH FARM

(Continued from page 26)

made most welcome. I also think it did not go unnoticed by others further up and down the command chain that we are capable of handling their comms after they saw us doing it first hand and their feedback allowed me to pick up quite a few new tips."

Inspector Hepplewhite and I plan to conduct a debriefing session with the MR Watch Officers to capture the important lessons learned for future reference in providing an even better service for the RFS when the need next arises.

At the Unit's monthly November meeting, I extended my

personal thanks to each volunteer for the work they did with the RFS in East Maitland saying, "Our Watch Officers were able to use the training and expertise they had built up to assist the RFS and their community when it was most needed. Well done to you all". The Watch Officers who unselfishly gave up their time were Ross Debenham, Iain Blackadder, Jenny Fitzsimons, Colin Couper, Mike Grover, Elizabeth Francis (2 shifts) and Barney Pinney (3 shifts).

Lee Uebergang

(with contributions from Iain Blackadder & Colin Couper)

FISH FARM



The Research Lease was surveyed and has an area of 59.36ha delineated by four Cardinal Markers. RMS will use this information to update charts and issue a Notice to Mariners highlighting a change in navigable conditions in Providence Bay.

The installation of the mooring system in Providence Bay and deployment of the first two sea pens on the Marine Aquaculture Research Lease was completed on Saturday 16 October 2016. Yellowtail Kingfish fingerlings from Port Stephens Fisheries Institute of 30g weight and 110mm length were stocked via tanker and barge on October 17 and by helicopter bucket lift on October 18. Netting to prevent bird access to the fish was in place October 18. This netting rests upon a floating ring structure located within the sea pen.



Approximately 25,000 fingerlings are now settled in to their new home and are feeding well. Screening of fingerlings for weight gain and health is underway. Details of the pre-stocking water and benthic monitoring results undertaken by the University of Newcastle will be available at:

www.huonaqua.com.au/about/portstephens/



MESS MEETING



Clockwise from top left: Awards presented by Dean Storey Deputy Commissioner; Radio Operator: Brian Bibbing, and Ian Peacock; 5 Year Medal: John Vassallo and John P Smith; National Medal: 15 Years, Maureen Wheatley and Brian Wheatley; 25 years: Shirley Clark; Presentations from Neil Hansford, Colin Cahill, Harold Gibson, Tony O'Donnell and Laurie Nolan; Steve Raymond the new Regional Operations Manager (Hunter/Central Coast.) Good roll up from the members and Shirley Clark presenting UC with Gift Shop cheque.



BIRDS AROUND THE BASE

Birds at the Base – Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*)

The Rainbow Lorikeet is one of the most common birds throughout Port Stephens, and because of its spectacular plumage, is one of the most readily identifiable.



It is a medium-sized parrot, ranging in length from 25-30 cm including the tail. The head is deep blue with a greenish-yellow collar, and the rest of the upper parts (wings, back and tail) are deep green. The chest is red with blue-black barring. The belly is deep green, and the thighs and rump are yellow with deep green barring. The bill and eye are bright red. In flight a yellow wing-bar contrasts clearly with the red underwing coverts. They are often seen in loud and fast-moving flocks, or in communal roosts at dusk, as visitors to the Nelson Bay marina or the Shoal Bay foreshore will have observed.



The Rainbow Lorikeet is common along the eastern seaboard, from north Queensland to South Australia and Tasmania and is present in rainforest, coastal bush and woodland areas. They have become well adapted to suburban life and are a common sight in parks and gardens with flowering trees and shrubs. Rainbow Lorikeet mostly forage on the flowers of shrubs or trees to harvest nectar and pollen, but also eat fruits, seeds and some insects. They possess an especially adapted tongue, the end of which is equipped with a papillate appendage used to gather pollen and nectar.

Breeding usually occurs during spring but can vary with

changes in food availability and climate. Around Port Stephens the lorikeets breed for most of the year. Nesting sites are variable and can include hollows of tall trees, palm trunks, or overhanging rock crevices. The eggs are laid on chewed or decayed wood and the clutch size is 1-3 eggs. Incubation is around 25 days. Both sexes prepare the nest cavity and feed the young, but only the female incubates the eggs.



The young chicks are altricial and are totally dependent on the parents. The fledglings leave the nesting hollow after 7-8 weeks and remain with the parents for several months before moving into the communal roost. The insistent begging call of the young birds sounds like a high pitched wheeze. Birds reach sexual maturity after two years.



Rainbow Lorikeets belong to the Passerine group of birds and consequently have a variety of vocalizations. In flight they give frequent, softly rasping or vibrating musical screeches, softer mellowed chattering and subdued screeches while feeding and quiet twittering while resting.

The Rainbow Lorikeet population around residential areas has benefited from artificial feeding stations and the planting of prolific-fruiting and flowering trees and shrubs. In many places, including campsites and suburban gardens, wild lorikeets are so used to humans that they can be hand-fed. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in Queensland is noted for the thousands of lorikeets that arrive each morning and afternoon to be fed. Visitors can feed them a specially prepared nectar, and the birds will happily settle on people's arms and heads to consume it. There is much debate about the merits or otherwise of feeding wild birds, and having a garden that provides natural food may be a better way of encouraging birds into your backyard.

See <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/Feed-or-Not-Feed>

Neil Fraser
Twitter

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SOCIAL COMMITTEE

SOCIAL EVENTS

Thursday 1 and Tuesday 6 December Broughton Island ECO Walk

This exciting outing came as the result of a casual enquiry by one of our members... "whether we had ever considered a trip to Broughton Island for our *non-boat crew members*". Well, after a few enquiries to the local cruise groups, it's a happening thing! At time of writing (16/11) we have 42 members and partners booked in for the trips on the **Imagine Cruises boat ENVISION**. At this time we have only six spaces left – get in quick! However by the time you read this newsletter, the event will be almost "done and dusted" (as dusted as it can be on the open seas!).

The trip to Broughton will be very exciting for those who have not been on the waters outside Port Stephens – the surrounding seascapes and landscapes are breathtaking, with Tomaree, Yacaaba, Boondelbah, Cabbage Tree, and Broughton the highlights. You will also get to see up close and personal the new *Fish Farms* installed in our beautiful waterways half-way to Broughton.

Tuesday 13 - Christmas Dinner

Instead of the regular Monthly Mess Meeting in

December, we will be heading off to **Broughton's on the Bay** for Christmas dinner. Catering this year is again by Will and Tanya's **Bluewater Grill**, from Nelson Bay Golf Club. We have selected a delicious menu, alternate drops, mains and desserts (anyone with dietary issues please contact Laurie on 0406-747-847).

Full details have been emailed to all members, and the attendance list is on the noticeboard in the upstairs kitchen. Cost at \$30/person is subsidised by the unit, and needs to be paid in advance (bank account details on the attendance sheet in the kitchen). Broughton's is NOT BYO, but reasonably priced bar service is available.

As always... it promises to be a fun-filled night, with prizes to be awarded for various fun activities AND best-dressed in Christmas theme. Please let's try to outdo Eryl Thomas again this year – I know it's hard but you gotta try!

See y'all there

**Laurie Nolan &
Frank van Druten**

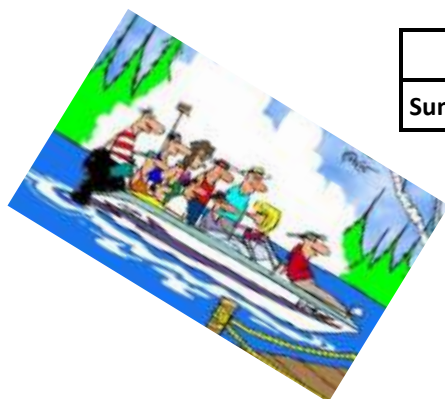


MRPS Social Committee

Month	Date	Event	Comments
DECEMBER	Thursday 1	Broughton Island ECO Cruise	Arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled departure time. Bring a warm and windproof jacket, spare dry pants/shorts, swimwear (if you wish), towel, aqua shoes (optional), walking shoes, sunblock, hat, snacks, camera.
	Tuesday 6	Broughton Island ECO Cruise	
	Tuesday 13	Christmas Dinner	- Ever Popular Xmas Festivities
			- Broughton's at the Bay \$30/person

Year 2016 Public School Holidays

Summer Holidays	21-Dec-15	29-Jan-17
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PORT STEPHENS WEATHER

Nelson Bay, NSW - October 2016					Nelson Bay, NSW - November 2016				
Date	Day	Temps		Rain	Date	Day	Temps		Rain
		Min	Max				Min	Max	
		°C	°C	mm			°C	°C	mm
12	We	12.5	21.5	0	1	Tu	14.7	21.4	0
13	Th	13	18	5.6	2	We	14.9		0.2
14	Fr	11.9	19.1	7.2	3	Th	14.6	25.2	0
15	Sa	12	22.7	2.6	4	Fr	17	27.6	0
16	Su	14	25	0	5	Sa	16.7	28.1	0
17	Mo	17	20.6	0	6	Su	16.5	24.2	0
18	Tu	12.2	24	9.8	7	Mo	15.2	25.8	0
19	We	15.5	22.8	0	8	Tu	18.5	30.5	0
20	Th	16.4	21.8	0	9	We	18.4	23.2	2.2
21	Fr	16.5	25.2	0	10	Th	18.3	24.7	18.9
22	Sa	19	19.2	0.6	11	Fr	18.6	25.5	0.2
23	Su	11.2	18	5.6	12	Sa	19.8	31	15.5
24	Mo	11.7	19.5	3.9	13	Su	20	30.6	1.8
25	Tu	13.4	22.7	0	14	Mo	17.2	22.7	0
26	We	15.2	27.1	0	15	Tu	15.4	22	1.6
27	Th	17.8	24	0	16	We	15.4	24.3	0
28	Fr	17.5	22.4	0.2	17	Th	17.5	24	0
29	Sa	16.4	24	1.7	18	Fr	16.5	27.2	0
30	Su	18.7	24.6	0	19	Sa	19.2	23.9	0
31	Mo	18.6	21	13.8	20	Su	19	26.8	0
Statistics for the last 20 days of October 2016					Statistics for the first 20 days of November 2016				
Mean		15.025	22.16	2.55	Mean		17.17	25.72	2.02
Lowest		11.2	18	0	Lowest		14.6	21.4	0
Highest		19	27.1	13.8	Highest		20	31	18.9
Total				51	Total				40.4

Anniversaries of Service

Congratulations and thanks to all the above members who have given their time and service as volunteers so willingly. Our existence depends on it.

DECEMBER		Netta ANDERSON	4	Ken ROSS-SAMPSON	18	Geoff CLARK	1
Helen PETERSON	15	Brian BIBBING	1	Pat JOHNSON	18	Bob CROSS	1
Paul FARNILL	10	John REID	1	Barney PINNEY	4	Debbie BUCKLEY	1
Roy DORWARD	8			Bob CASE	2	Paul BUCKLEY	1
Sandra SCHEUBER	5	JANUARY		Ian PEACOCK	2	Eddy VAN DYKEN	1
Esme HULL	5	Kev LANYON	23	Peter EDWARDS	2	Laurie NEWTON	1
Patricia CATES	5	John ALMGREN	19	Judith JONES	1		
		Yvonne ALMGREN	19	Yvonne NEWBY	1		

Happy Birthday

Congratulations to the following members of the
PORT STEPHENS UNIT
with birthdays in December and January

December	Keith DYKES	Shirley CLARK	Sandra SCHEUBER
Barry HAYES	Rob MASON	John COOK	Peter HOLMAN
Brian CARROLL	Angus MACKENZIE	Eryl THOMAS	Monica O'DOWD
Pat JOHNSON	Laurie NEWTON	Graham PRETTY	Michael DUGGAN
Helen PETERSON	Sue FREEMAN	Ian DRUMMOND	Maree BUGGY
Lorraine SHAW	Heather PERRY-COMLEY	Rena GARDINER	Matt DARBY
Mike SMITH	Mick MILTON	Andrew MACLACHLAN	Tom MILLER
Peter BALDWIN	Pete HARTLEY	Judith JONES	
Patricia CATES	January	Garry MCKITTRICK	
Bob CASE	Yvonne ALMGREN	Joy DAWSON	

IN APPRECIATION....

Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:

Brian Bibbing, Ross Debenham, Colin Foote, Neil Fraser, Harold Gibson, Kevin Griffey, Neil Hansford, Ken Johnson, Laurie Nolan, Tony O'Donnell, John Reid, David Rogers, Sandra Scheuber, Lee Uebergang and Maureen Wheatley. Other photos by Iain Blackadder, Ross Debenham, Neil Fraser, Neil Hansford, Roy Jeffrey, Tony O'Donnell and Penelope Highland. 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, Trevor Dowsett, Marian Chappell, and Deb Nolan.

Advertisers in *Port Chatter*: The following advertisers with paid advertisements in the *Port Chatter* help to meet most of the costs of production.

Please show your appreciation by giving them your custom.

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	Decorating/Painting	Abode Decorating
	Printer Cartridges	The Cartridge Family
	Outdoor Furniture	Outdoor Obsessions
Medical	Chemists	Salamander Centre Pharmacy
		Shoal Bay Pharmacy
		Chemmart Pharmacy, Nelson Bay
	Doctors	Port Stephens Medical Centre, Keel St
Maritime	Marina	D'Albora Marina and businesses
		Soldiers Point Marina
	Boating Sales & Repairs	Nelson Bay Outboard Services
	Charters	Kunara Charters
	Fishing Supplies	Salamander Bait & Tackle (at BP)
Motor Vehicles	Service Stations/Tyres	Fingal Bay Service Station and Tyres
Windscreen Repairs		Novus Autoglass Shop
Real Estate		Robinsons Property
		Century 21 Paradise Waters, Nelson Bay
Restaurants & Cafes		Rock Lobster Seafood – D'Albora Marinas
		Inner Light Tea Rooms, Nelson Head



NEXT MESS MEETINGS

**TUESDAY
21st February 2017**

*All Members
Welcome*

All members are welcome to come and meet fellow members of

Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

Important information on operational matters will be discussed.

Food and refreshments will be provided.

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.



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R Marine Port Stephens	02 4984 2355	Sandbar Seafood	02 4984 3777
Lets Go Adventures	02 4981 4331	Subway	02 4984 4277
Marina Ice Creamery	02 4984 1788	The Wood Oven Pizza	02 4984 4800
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