

Vsheet

Volunteer Marine Rescue
SOUTHPORT - SURFERS PARADISE

DECEMBER 2024

FREE ISSUE

New Pontoon for VMR

New Spit Boat Ramp

Lookout for Lightning



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President's Report

PRESIDENT: Glenn Norris

2024 - 2025

Things are continuing to progress well at VMR Southport, although I must say it has been relatively quiet on the activation front, with a very noticeable decrease of vessels on the water.

My resident Statistician tells me that the annual workload figure this year could be as much as 25% down on the busy bursts over the COVID pandemic, which may not be a bad thing, as we really have been excessively under the pump over the past few years.

As we approach the Christmas / New Year period, undoubtedly there will be the masses taking to our waterways, and we expect things to be very busy again during this time.

We are prepared, our Rescue vessels are in good shape, we have undertaken regular maintenance on all of these, and I hope that all of our members have also done the same, or will do in due course, with their vessels.

At time of writing, I am very pleased to also be looking to the outside of our Rescue Base to see our second pontoon being installed.

This has been a huge effort to get this through, in seeking mountains of approvals from various Authorities, however, we are there now, and all the hard work has been worthwhile.

Hopefully we can look forward to our Rescue vessels sustaining less damage, as all four now have their own side to a pontoon, and furthermore, this will be a lot safer for our crew members, as the need to climb over vessels to get from one to the other will be diminished.

As President, this is a project I have desperately wanted to see completed in my time in office.

Along with this project, has been another of seeking registration for our Base Function Facility.

After 25 plus years of operation, a request to change our Liquor Licence trading hours resulted in the Gold Coast City Council questioning how and what we do regarding function events.

If you have ever attended a wedding, funeral, or birthday party at our location, you will know what the spectacular evening views are like, and what a great place it is to celebrate a special occasion. It is the Gold Coast's best kept secret, so maybe their concern is justified.

We don't have a huge number of functions, however it will always be VMR Southport's intention to abide by all rules and regulations, so we have been happy to comply.

After a lengthy approvals process, we have been advised that approval is imminent.

Several conditions have been attached to this, and we are able to accept these moving forward.

This is another project that we will be glad to see the tail end of.

VMR Southport is still no further advanced with a proposed transition to the new Marine Rescue Qld (MRQ).

We have recently had a meeting with our members, and the Executive Team from MRQ, and while this was informative, and productive, there are still a number of important questions that need answering.

I cannot stress enough to our stakeholders that until otherwise advised, we are still BAU at VMR Southport - Business as Usual, and we will continue, with our best endeavours, to maintain the first class service we have provided to the Gold Coast boating and marine community for the past 55 years.

Excitement is also building within the Squadron, as we are expecting to receive our new Rescue vessel, a Noosa Cat 3000 Series, within the next few weeks, ready for the summer peak boating season onslaught.

Water testing will commence in late November, as will applying the final touches, so fingers crossed, everything goes well.

This vessel will be supplied under the Queensland Government, and MRQ Vessel Replacement Program, and we are very thankful to be included as a Squadron who will receive one of these vessels.

If you are out on the water over Christmas, keep an eye out for the VMR Crews keeping the waterways safe in this new vessel.

Training continues to be strong amongst members, and the past quarter has again seen several new Skippers appointed, and many other members have worked hard to attain additional qualifications.

Congratulations to those who have progressed.

The importance of having well trained Crews, who can respond to any situation, at any time, is critical, and VMR Southport prides itself with knowing they can deliver this.

I was very saddened recently to have had to accept the retirement advice of two of our long standing members, in Senior Skipper, Merv Handley, and Senior Radio Operator, Tony Hillier.

Both of these members, who have contributed 26, and 22 years respectively, have been responsible for saving multiple lives in their time with VMR Southport, and their ability to respond to an incident, and calm a situation has always been something that all newer members should aspire to.

Their professionalism, and general efforts around the VMR Base, and the Seaway Tower will be sorely missed, however, no doubt they will both continue to stick their heads in from time to time to say G'day.

Thank you very much for your service Merv, and Tony, and may you enjoy good health in your retirement.

continued page 4 -

from page 3 -

VMR Southport has continued to maintain excellent working relationships with other local Emergency Services, and between the Queensland Police Service, the Gold Coast Water Police, the Queensland Ambulance Service, and the Queensland Fire Department, we have combined to participate in several activations, namely the Pacific Air Show, numerous medical activations, from boating accidents to general medical situations, and also to a multi agency response to a house fire on South Stradbroke Island.

Whatever the need for assistance, we are happy to respond to any requests, within reason, and it is the great collaboration these people have with VMR Southport that can make the community feel extremely safe when on the water.

As we approach the festive season we hope it will be a good time of get togethers for a lot of people, families, and friends etc.

Here at VMR Southport we will be manned 24 hours / 7 days a week, ready to respond, and we request you take care when on the water, check your safety equipment and battery, replace anything that is out of date, or damaged, and remember a tank of fuel doesn't last forever, so keep an eye on how much you use.

VMR Crew's attend far, far too many instances where a simple check could have prevented an issue, such as running out of fuel.

Remember also to be prepared for greater numbers of vessels on the water, so stay patient, keep a proper lookout at all times, when either underway, or at anchor, maintain a safe speed when travelling, and remember to stay sun protected, and hydrated in warm weather (preferably with water).

Most importantly, this time of the year is prone to serious weather events, thunderstorms, and checking the weather and tide times before you set off for your day on the water is paramount.

In saying that, please feel free to contact the VMR Radio Room at anytime, regardless of your issue. We will do our best to assist.

In an emergency, always contact 000.

Emergency Services will contact VMR if they are required.

Have a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Glenn Norris
President - VMR Southport
2024-2025

VMR Southport's Charter



To save and assist in saving life and property at sea.

To provide personnel and equipment in order to carry out search and rescue operations at sea and on the Gold Coast waterways.

To liaise and work with other marine rescue groups.

To undertake campaigns to educate members of the boating public in matters of marine safety.

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NEW PONTOON FOR VMR

As mentioned in many previous issues of the V-Sheet, VMR Southport has been awaiting approvals from the Gold Coast City Council, and the Queensland Government to install a second pontoon in front of the Rescue Base.

This would be on the northern side of the boat ramp.

In late October we received confirmation that all conditions had been met, and that approval was granted.

Given this had been 16 months in the making, we were ready to go as soon as the ink on the paperwork dried.

The new pontoon is now installed, the new footpaths have been laid, the electrical, and water is connected, and now the safe mooring of our Rescue vessels should be greatly improved.

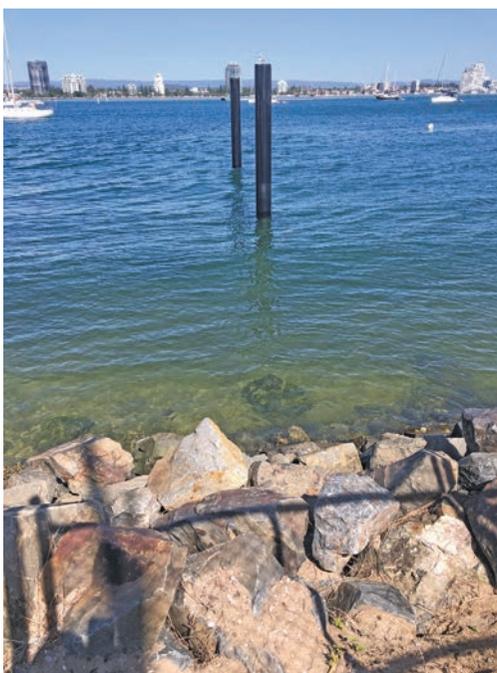
It's been a long wait, but a very worthwhile result has eventuated.



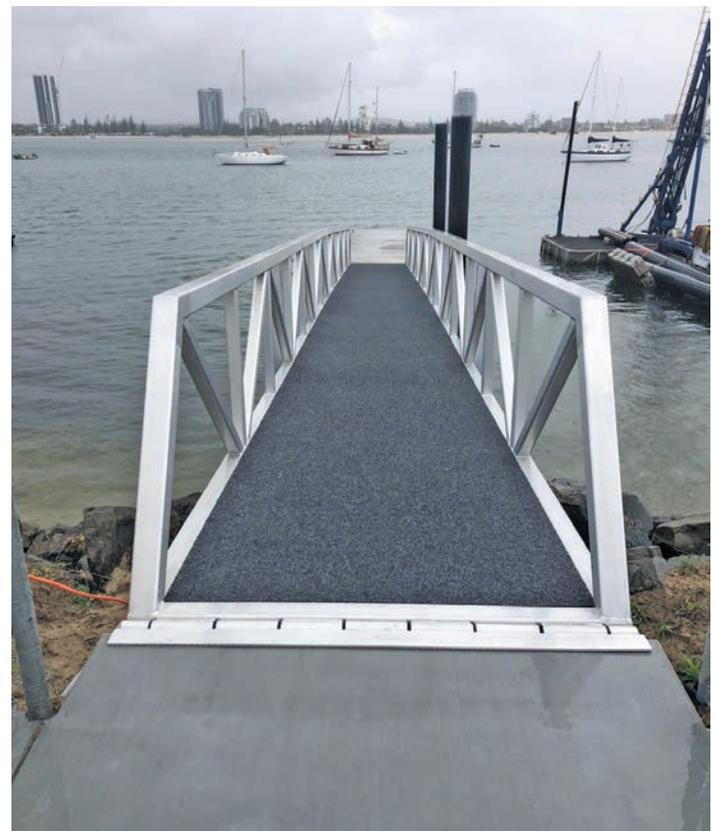
Up with nice green grass in preparation for the new footpath.



In with the new footpath, with very little of the green grass disturbed



The pontoon pylons are in, providing a short term resting area for the local sea birds



The final product - well worth the wait

ACTIVE MEMBER PROMOTIONS/AWARDS

Active Members who have achieved higher ranking

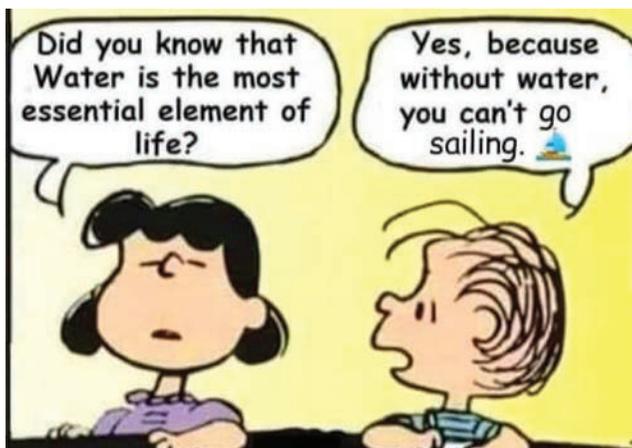
Congratulations to:

Inshore Skipper Endorsed
Peter Wright
Ben Brackin

Inshore Skipper
Helen Stanfield

Senior Crew
David Cam
Laurie Tsamuras

SOME STATS			
ACTIVATIONS	AUGUST 2024	SEPTEMBER 2024	OCTOBER 2024
Towed Vessels	46	35	36
Jump Starts	1	6	1
Pump Outs	1	1	3
Transporting			
Fire			1
Standby			
Medical	6	2	6
Searches			1
Dispersals	3	2	2
Public Relations	13	3	2
Crew Training	75	73	84
Groundings	11	4	11
Other	8	8	7
Investgate	8	10	12
TOTALS	172	144	166



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DOES YOUR BOAT NEED A STYLING UPGRADE?



NOTEABLE JOBS

by Glenn Norris

A man contacted VMR recently to advise that he needed his vessel towed to the Isle of Capri boat ramp, as it was taking on water, and it needed to be removed to its trailer, so it could be taken to a welder to be fixed.

A Crew obliged, and successfully towed the vessel the short distance, where a car and trailer were waiting.

The vessel was removed from the water by the customer, to the apron of the boat ramp, and the bungs were removed to allow the ingressed water to drain.

The customer and the VMR Crew happily then completed the necessary paperwork, and the activation was complete, so was thought.

As the VMR vessel drove off, so did the car and trailer, to an almighty BANG.

The vessel had slipped off the trailer, onto the boat ramp.

The VMR Crew could only watch the vessel slide down the boat ramp, into the water, minus the bungs.

Unfortunately, the vessel was again inundated with water, and the damage was substantial.

Eventually, the vessel was again able to be removed from the water, and second time around, was properly secured to its trailer.

Three teenagers almost had the worst kayak ride of their life recently, when they decided to take on a rapid outgoing tide, off the north eastern corner of Wavebreak Island.

Fortunately a VMR vessel was passing at the time, and saw the threesome in distress, heading uncontrollably towards the rocks of the north wall of the Seaway.

Once pulled into the VMR vessel, they explained that the rush of water was so strong, that their paddle snapped, and they were at the mercy of the tide and current.

Whilst there were no injuries, the old saying is true, 'up the creek without a paddle'.

The boys, and their kayak were returned to the beach, and they could not have been more thankful for VMR being in the right spot, at the right time.

A recent mid evening call was received from the Skipper of a vessel that had lost steering, north east of Jumpinpin Bar. The vessel, a Sailing Cat, was headed for Southport, and subsequently required a tow.

A VMR Crew was activated, on a dark, and uncomfortable night for being in offshore waters.

After seven hours, and 38 nautical miles, and daylight breaking, the disabled vessel, under tow, was returned to the Gold Coast Seaway, and anchored in the Broadwater, just south of the VMR Base.

The VMR Crew could only describe the conditions on the night as atrocious, and being back on dry land was described as being the best part of the job.

The stricken vessel's owner called VMR later in the day to advise that an arm on his steering mechanism had bent, causing his issues.

The Qld Ambulance Service recently requested the assistance of VMR, after a patient called, seeking treatment for shortness of breath, in a grounded vessel, on the western bank of Wavebreak Island.

Given the relatively low tide at the time, and the apparent inability of the patient to walk across the sand to the VMR vessel, a Paramedic, and a VMR First Responder trekked to the vessel, only to have the patient admit to having consumed a large amount of alcohol, and refusing assistance.

Given this, the man was left to his own devices, after the Paramedic advised him the best treatment he could afford himself, was to stop drinking, and have a sleep.

Sound advice one would think.

A lady called VMR recently, requesting assistance to be towed, after a fueling mishap at the Southport Marina.

A Crew responded, locating the customer, and her craft.

The lady was very sheepish in advising that she had filled her vessel, hanging up the fuel hose to realise it was diesel she had used.

The vessel was towed to the Budd's Beach boat ramp, where the lady was left to ponder her problem.

If anything good was to come from this episode, the lady realised her error, and didn't attempt to start the jetski.

Another jetski rider also recently found themselves in a spot of bother when they managed to suck part of a beach towel into the intake of the vessel.

Operating off the beach opposite the Spit, the rider claimed the towel must have been in the water, as it wasn't his.

The jetski was towed by VMR back to the Grand boat ramp.

Remember, jetski's make great vacuum cleaners, so be careful of anything in the water that can be sucked up.

A young tinny rat recently flagged down a VMR vessel near Seaworld, stating he had flipped his vessel.

He needed assistance with a tow to Paradise Waters, as the engine failed to start once the vessel was righted.

Being full of bravado, the young kid was pretty coy that he could convince his Dad that the engine had just broken down, and no-one, except him, would know that the boat had also capsized.

Apparently not all Dads are smart!!!!

Frustrated boat owner called VMR recently, late in the evening, advising that he needed assistance to put his vessel into a berth at the Sanctuary Cove Marina, after it had suffered a hydraulic failure, less than 100 metres from its home.

Given the 18 metre size of the vessel, a very dark night, and an unfavourable wind and current, due to an outgoing tide, a decision was made on VMR arrival, to wait until the next morning, when all of the examined factors should be better.

The owner of the vessel was happy with this, and agreed to stay onboard his vessel overnight.

A VMR Crew returned the next morning, and completed the task without incident, much to the appreciation of the owner, who contributed a very substantial donation for the service provided. A great risk assessment!!

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THE SPIT BOAT RAMP READY FOR BUSY HOLIDAY SEASON

Muriel Henchman Park has reopened to the public, boasting enhanced access to the Broadwater and the Gold Coast Seaway for recreational and commercial vessels, and community organisations.

Completion of the \$19M improvement works marks a significant milestone for the Gold Coast and waterways users and visitors. Located off Seaworld Drive at Main Beach, Muriel Henchman Park has long been a popular hub for boating, marine tourism, recreation, and family outings and this enhancement provides more capacity for our growing population.

The works have been led by the Gold Cost Waterways Authority (GCWA) as part of The Spit Master Plan implementation. The project is proudly funded with the support of the Queensland Government's Spit Works Program in association with City of Gold Coast and GCWA.

The improvements deliver a total of 6 boat ramp lanes, an upgraded pontoon, a new floating walkway on the northern boat ramp, 160 trailer

spots, 144 car parks, 6 accessible car parks, pathways, landscaping, public toilets, a shade shelter, and beach access stairs.

GCWA CEO Chris Derksema expressed his excitement for the park's upgrades, noting that the stunning waterways continue to be the heart of what makes our city unique. "This project ensures we are meeting the increasing demands of residents and visitors alike, making our waterways easier to access and more enjoyable for everyone".

With the Christmas holidays just around the corner, the full reopening of Muriel Henchman Park comes at the perfect time, ensuring that the anticipated holiday crowds will have a beautiful, well-equipped space to enjoy everything the Gold Coast has to offer.

For more information about Muriel Henchman Park or The Spit Master Plan Implementation, please visit

<https://gcwa.qld.gov.au/spit-master-plan-implementation/>



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WELCOME THANKS

In your article in the September issue of the V-Sheet, regarding assistance given to a Sailor with a broken back, you humbly understated the level of service provided to us.

The assistance afforded was second to none. You transported Paramedics to our yacht, then back to shore with the patient, my wife, and then you followed up with a return trip to our yacht, where volunteer Mary Jane jumped aboard and took me to a much better, and safer anchorage at the front of VMR headquarters in Southport.

I was then taken into VMR where I was fed and given moral support as well as time to relax.

Glenn then drove me in his car to the hospital to be with my wife Lyn.

When Lyn was discharged from hospital at 2030 that evening with a broken back, and no painkillers, we had nowhere to go.

VMR again came to the rescue, and it was so kind of you to put us up for the night.

The Hospital could do with a system as good as VMR. Lyn was not allowed back on the yacht for ten weeks so with her relocation to a land base at Mt Archer it left me on the yacht solo.

Over the next week, experiencing strong winds and me not being a King's Cup rower, the VMR team assisted by transporting me back and forth to my boat.

Glenn then put me in touch with Barry, another volunteer member, to assist in relocating our yacht to Horizon Shores Marina. (Barry and wife Caroline have now become close friends).

Your service was way above, and beyond excellent. The volunteers were exceptionally supportive, and hopefully the upcoming changes will not reduce this level of professionalism.

One thing I am absolutely sure of is that whatever the change, it has no chance of surpassing the help we received.

Lyn is now well on the way to recovery, much in part to VMR Southport's quick response to our plight.

We intend to resume our travels north in April 2025, knowing you will have our backs.

To all your crew Thankyou, Thankyou, Thankyou.
Regards and all the best for the future.

Craig Skipper SV Scorpio 2 - VMR Member No.21347

To the Management Committee of Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport

Dear VMR,

Just a short note of appreciation from the Paradise Radio Yacht Club for allowing access to the Squadron's Training Room for our recent Race Officers Course. This course was very successful, well attended, and the follow up material will set a new standard for workshopping the training of Race Officers, Australia wide. The support provided by yourself and the other team members present on the day was meritorious. We sincerely appreciate your support of our Not for Profit Organization. Thank you again.

Kind Regards,
Rex Scott
PRYC Commodore

Hi VMR,

We had a busy but very successful and relatively uneventful weekend at our Pan Pacific Masters Games event last weekend.

Great feedback from all involved was received, they had a blast.

Huge thanks must go to all the team at VMR Southport, your support and presence out on the water was very much appreciated, and added another level of reassurance for our paddlers.

Thanks again.

Gold Coast Outrigger Canoe Club



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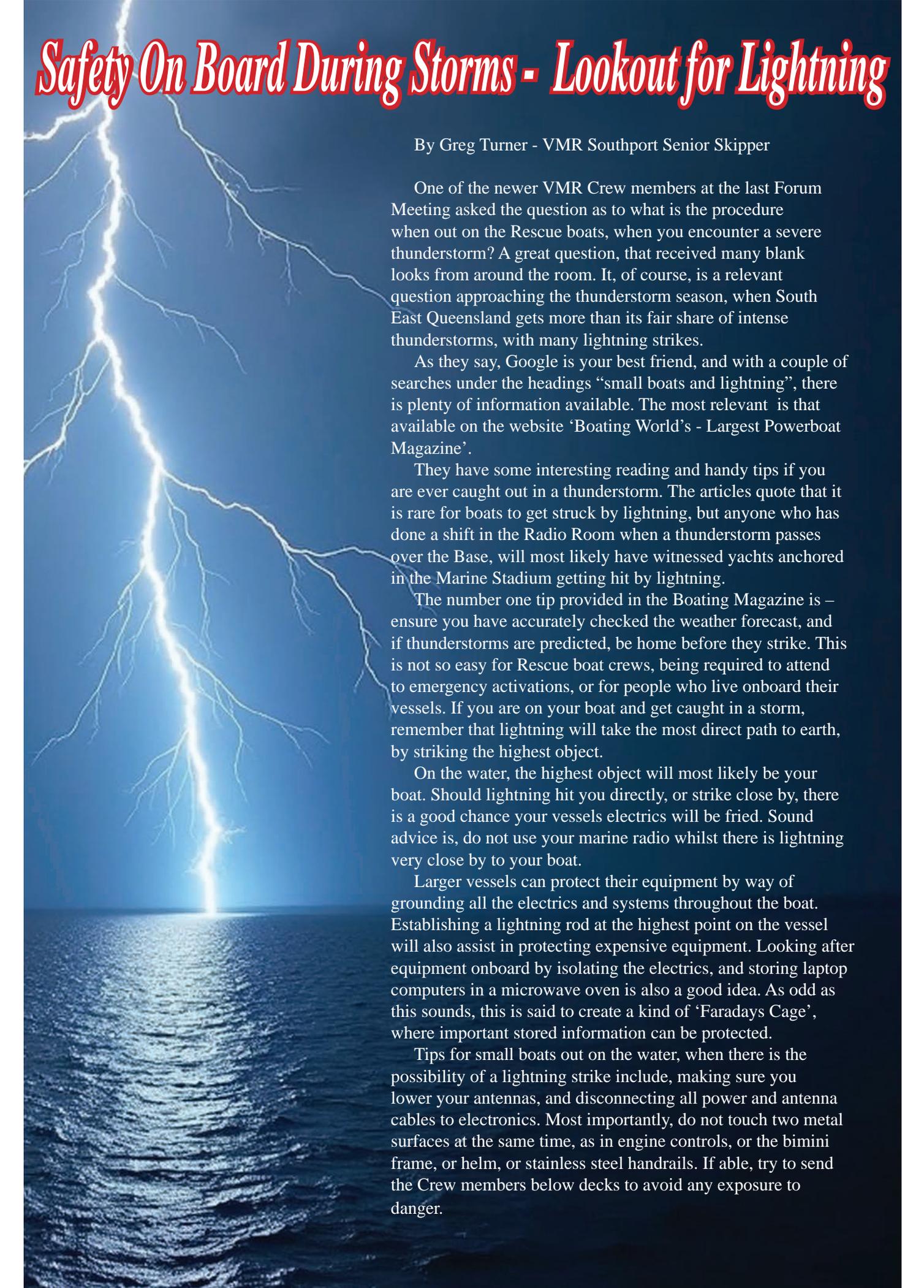
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Safety On Board During Storms - Lookout for Lightning

By Greg Turner - VMR Southport Senior Skipper

One of the newer VMR Crew members at the last Forum Meeting asked the question as to what is the procedure when out on the Rescue boats, when you encounter a severe thunderstorm? A great question, that received many blank looks from around the room. It, of course, is a relevant question approaching the thunderstorm season, when South East Queensland gets more than its fair share of intense thunderstorms, with many lightning strikes.

As they say, Google is your best friend, and with a couple of searches under the headings “small boats and lightning”, there is plenty of information available. The most relevant is that available on the website ‘Boating World’s - Largest Powerboat Magazine’.

They have some interesting reading and handy tips if you are ever caught out in a thunderstorm. The articles quote that it is rare for boats to get struck by lightning, but anyone who has done a shift in the Radio Room when a thunderstorm passes over the Base, will most likely have witnessed yachts anchored in the Marine Stadium getting hit by lightning.

The number one tip provided in the Boating Magazine is – ensure you have accurately checked the weather forecast, and if thunderstorms are predicted, be home before they strike. This is not so easy for Rescue boat crews, being required to attend to emergency activations, or for people who live onboard their vessels. If you are on your boat and get caught in a storm, remember that lightning will take the most direct path to earth, by striking the highest object.

On the water, the highest object will most likely be your boat. Should lightning hit you directly, or strike close by, there is a good chance your vessels electrics will be fried. Sound advice is, do not use your marine radio whilst there is lightning very close by to your boat.

Larger vessels can protect their equipment by way of grounding all the electrics and systems throughout the boat. Establishing a lightning rod at the highest point on the vessel will also assist in protecting expensive equipment. Looking after equipment onboard by isolating the electrics, and storing laptop computers in a microwave oven is also a good idea. As odd as this sounds, this is said to create a kind of ‘Faradays Cage’, where important stored information can be protected.

Tips for small boats out on the water, when there is the possibility of a lightning strike include, making sure you lower your antennas, and disconnecting all power and antenna cables to electronics. Most importantly, do not touch two metal surfaces at the same time, as in engine controls, or the bimini frame, or helm, or stainless steel handrails. If able, try to send the Crew members below decks to avoid any exposure to danger.

KNOW THE WEATHER

- Always monitor the weather before you head out as well as during the day.
- If the weather looks likely to change or the water looks rough, postpone your trip or pick a more sheltered site
- If you see a change in the sky, don't hang around – weather systems can be deceptive and can appear to move slowly in the distance but then can suddenly hit
- Weather can change quickly. Visit bom.gov.au for regular weather updates



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and talk to the Radio Operator on duty.

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Understand your local weather risks.



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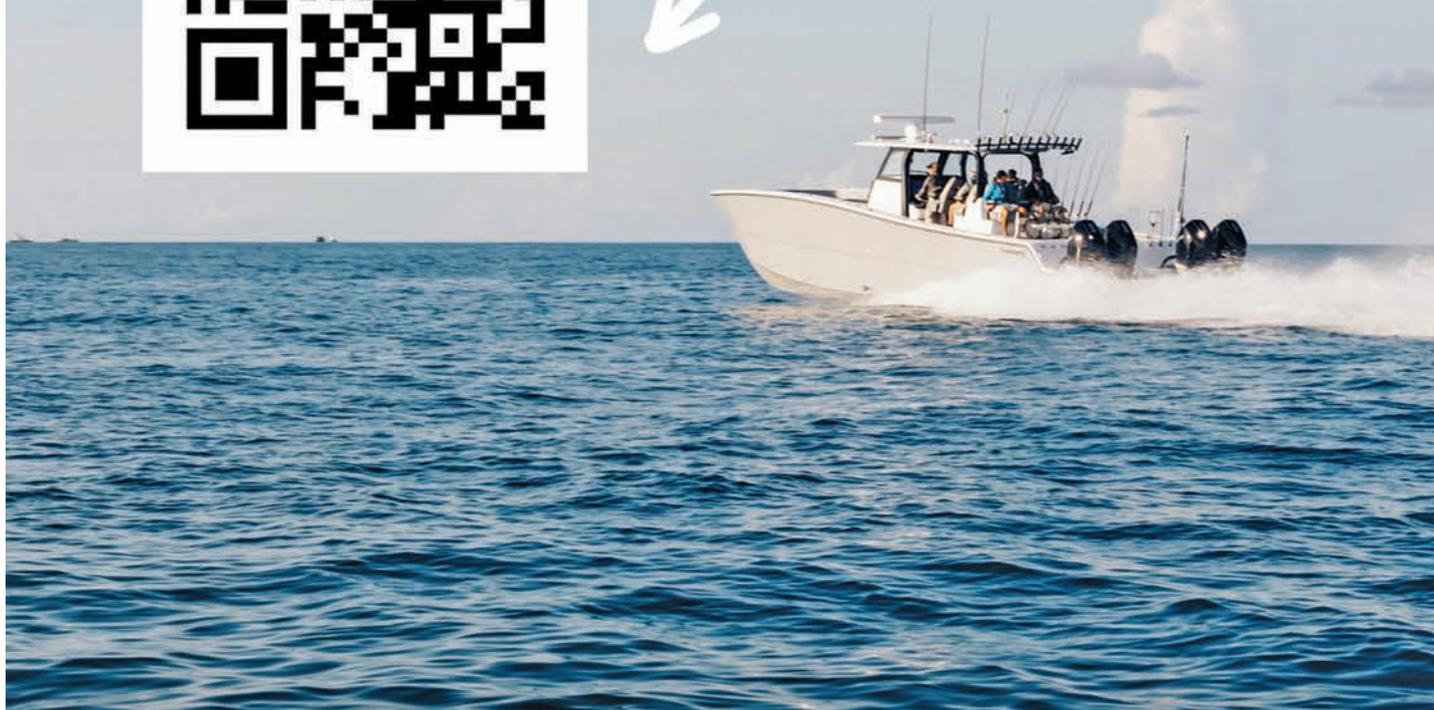
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Portrait of a VMR Volunteer

PETER BUCKLER

RADIO OPERATOR

JOINED VMR SOUTHPORT

May 2023



Tell us about yourself?

Leaving school at the end of Year 10, I joined the Regular Army the following year.

On completion of my Recruit and Infantry Training, I applied for a position with the Parachute Training School, as a member of Airborne Platoon RAR.

I had four years with the Airborne Platoon, and from there I applied for a posting to 6RAR, an Infantry Battalion, which was based at Enoggera, Qld.

Leaving the Army on completion of 6 years, I returned to Melbourne, and joined the Port of Melbourne Authority, as an Emergency Serviceman.

Part of the Service the Port offered to visiting ships was for on call support.

This service was trained to respond to any situation within the Port area, including port waters, or if requested by Police, outside the Port area.

These services could involve removing an injured crew member from a vessel at sea, at anchor or along side, attending to spillages, fires, any sort of industrial incident, and vehicle accidents.

For a short while I was also employed as an Observer, and later drop master with Aero Rescue, based in Darwin.

Aero Rescue was supported by the Australia Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), and working on these aircraft, we were able to be in the air within 20 minutes of a call for assistance, with most calls being for the activation of EPIRB's.

In between jobs I could always fall back on bus driving.

I drove buses in Melbourne, and leading up to my retirement, I drove for the Brisbane City Council.

Why did you join VMR?

I have generally always belonged to a volunteer service over the years.

In Victoria, I was with the CFA - Country Fire Authority, and in Qld, with the Rural Fire Brigade.

I was particularly drawn to VMR, as a big part of my working life has been in, and around water.

A former Army mate of mine was a member of VMR, and he encouraged me to apply.

As a Radio Operator I could still volunteer and not have the physical demands to contend with out on the water.

What do you enjoy most about being a member of VMR?

It is nice to work with like minded people, in support of mariners, within the Broadwater, or those heading out of or returning to the Gold Coast Seaway.

The views over the water from the VMR Base and the Seaway Tower are fantastic.

I never get tired of looking at them, all of different types of vessels, and the variety of activities seen on the water.

What is the most memorable activation you have been involved in?

For me it is still a learning experience.

I did listen to a Mayday, after a yacht hit a whale, and was effectively sinking.

The call was not handled by our station, however it was a good experience to hear how quickly the VMR Operator responded, and handled the job.

I was also rostered on in the Seaway Tower during the Pacific Air Show, as this is a very busy time, and I had the bonus of seeing many of the participating aircraft.

What do you do in your spare time?

Spending time with my wife Bec, family, and friends are a big part of my spare time.

I am also very interested in world events especially along military lines.

This includes books - I am currently reading a book called 'An Impression that will never Fade', by Neville Kidd.

I am also working on improving my general fitness.

I can be seen in the VMR Base gardens from time to time.

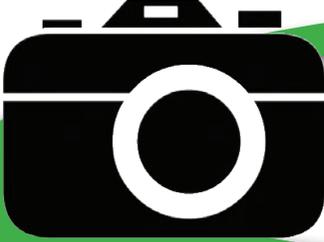
I like pottering around there, especially as I can generally enjoy the sea breeze, and be close to the water.

The resident Magpies have also befriended me.

Your future Intentions with VMR

To continue as a Radio Operator.

I very much enjoy this.



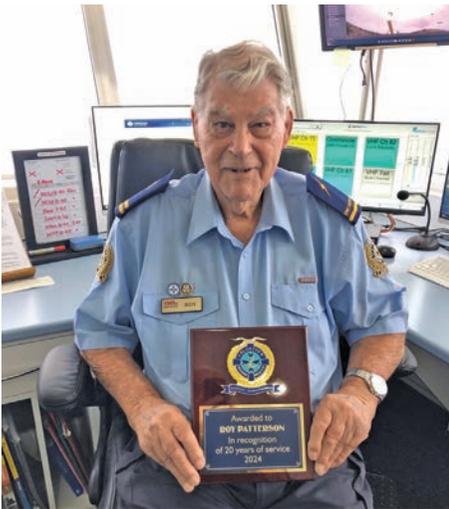
SUPER SNAPS



Amazing scenes at a recent ashes dispersal for beloved member Leigh French, when an RAAF aircraft passed overhead with perfect timing.



After an amazing 26 year career with VMR Southport, Senior Skipper Merv Handley has sadly decided to retire.



A very proud Radio Operator in Roy Patterson - 20 years of outstanding service to VMR Southport.



Very hard working Senior Skipper John Wise keeping the VMR boat ramp clean and safe to use.



Master fibreglasser, and crew member Mario Magro getting down and dirty to undertake repairs to *Marine Rescue 1*.



A very enthusiastic VMR crowd listening in on a recent presentation from Marine Rescue Qld staff members.

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