

Blue Water Review

February- March 2020

2020 has got off to a great start with a significant amount of activity underway. Whilst a decision remains with Government, the BW team continue to work with key stakeholders during this critical time. Planning continues with an ongoing focus on engagement of the expertise found within the volunteer base. In February and early March, the team met with operational members and with other government agencies to support volunteers in improving safety and assure ongoing services to the boating community.

Into March, alongside the rest of the global community, we grapple to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With an inability to continue the planned stakeholder engagement schedule, we will endeavour to find alternative means to contact frontline volunteers and as always, welcome you reaching out to us with your suggestions and concerns.

Blue Water Team on the road

The BW team hit the road with multiple locations visited by QFES personnel in February and March. From Southport to Hervey Bay, a lot of kilometres have been covered. The engagements, primarily with Flotilla and Squadron executives have been informal and centred on providing an update on the current BW activities and the status of the review.



Image: AVCGA Southport on the water
(Credit: Ryan Jansen (Instagram @ryanhandsomejansen))

Forward planning is the most critical component of any service delivery, so a principal part of our activity has been to engage with and listen to the points and concerns raised by operational members. So far, we have been hearing amongst other feedback that:

- Flotillas and Squadrons are facing increasing challenges with respect to fundraising as economic circumstances tighten and the community faces uncertainty about the future of the sector.
- A strong emphasis has been placed recognising and using local expertise to inform potential forward planning and reform.
- There is a broad support for a "Resources to Risk" style assessment for the whole of Queensland *if* local input is sought to provide both quantitative and qualitative data.
- There is a strong interest in a future which still provides local "place based" solutions sensitive to local community needs.
- All members consulted expressed a strong desire to continue to deliver services in line with their core values.

The BWR team has thoroughly enjoyed the warm welcome and constructive approach of all stakeholders at these sessions and looks forward to continuing across Queensland. If you would like to talk to the team, please don't hesitate to reach out via the BWR email address.



Grants

For a comprehensive list of grants available in Queensland, search www.grantguru.com.au or contact the QFES grants unit via QFES.Grants@qfes.qld.gov.au if you have any queries about specific grant opportunities.

There are multiple on-going and one-off local and national grants available to units which can be used to assist with facility construction and improvements, local initiatives and the purchase of equipment and vehicles.

There are also groups that exist which can provide 'letters of support' for your applications, such as local Regional Development Australia (RDA) networks and your local council, state and federal representatives.



Image: BWR Team meet with VMR Victoria Point in March

Emergency Service Volunteer Pins

As with all partner agencies, QFES values, supports and promotes the recognition of outstanding service across emergency services and the tireless efforts of sector volunteers. Whilst recommendations are made as to where commemorative pins and ribbons should be worn, it is ultimately a decision for the organisation's receiving the recognition. QFES recommends that *pins or ribbons should be worn on the left side either on a lapel, collar or a suitable position above all other types of awards*. However, if an Organisation wishes to advise members to wear these pins at an alternate location, they are free to do so.

More information regarding QFES Honours and Awards can be [found here](#) (refer page 36).

COVID-19

The unprecedented challenge that is the management of the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) continues to regularly change as Governments and Health Agencies grapple to implement effective controls. In the first instance, we encourage you to turn to internal advice and guidelines issued by both AVCGA and VMRAQ Executives.

For the latest information on Novel Coronavirus please visit the [Queensland Health COVID-19 Health Alert page](#).

Protect yourself and those around you by staying at home if you are unwell, practicing social distancing and maintaining your personal hygiene. Out on the water, please ensure you are regularly assessing the risk of exposure to yourself and your colleagues during self-activation and SAR activities. Together, we can all flatten the curve.

What next?

The BW team is continuing to engage with volunteers of the sector and plan for all possible outcomes of the BWR deliberations. Consistent with previous Communiques, we encourage sector volunteers who have ideas, concerns and feedback to contact the team using the email address below.

As always, thank you all for your ongoing contribution to the sector and your communities, and stay safe on the water!

Questions or comments? Email the Blue Water Review via BlueWaterReview@qfes.qld.gov.au

