

# Marine Rescue Implementation Update

## May 2021

QFES is continuing to work closely with sector stakeholders to establish a future pathway for the volunteer marine sector. It has been a busy month, with lots of positive initiatives to support frontline volunteers across the sector. We are pleased to be able to now provide you with an update on recent activities of the program and other key activities across the sector.

### Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group Meeting - 2 April 2021

The Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group (MRIWG) met for the second time on the 2 April 2021 in Brisbane. The group worked through a number of critical areas to inform the future integrated service. The group considered updates to the concept of operations which will assist in informing the priorities for and how the new single integrated service will operate.

Members were briefed on the next stage of the Risk to Resource Program implementation including the engagement approach that will be undertaken across the remaining flotillas and squadrons. The Risk to Resource program will inform the government investment for new fleet into the future.

The group considered options regarding the structure and legislative framework for the future single integrated volunteer marine rescue service in Queensland.

Acting QFES Commissioner Mike Wassing thanked the group for their continued support and contributions. Acting Deputy Commissioner Joanne Greenfield and Acting Assistant Commissioner Steve Smith also attended the meeting.

The group is planning to meet again in June.

### Fleet Sub Working Group Meeting - 15 April 2021

The Fleet Sub Working Group met for the first time on the 15 April 2021. The members bring a wealth of expertise to the group and includes:

- Keith Williams - Nominated Representative, Volunteer Marine Rescue Association of Queensland
- Richard Boulton - Nominated Representative, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association
- Senior Sergeant Gordon Thiry - Water Police Coordinator, Queensland Police Service
- David Hooper - Senior Advisor, Asset and Facilities Management, Maritime Safety Queensland
- Brett Wilson - A/Director, Fleet and Equipment, Queensland Ambulance Service
- Teresa Kuss - Manager, Operational Equipment and Warehousing, Public Safety Business Agency
- Barbara Zandona-Gehan - A/Director, Fleet, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Rodney Ashlin - QF6 Mooloolaba, AVCGA (selected through the MRIWG expression of interest process)
- Mal Friday - VMR Whitsunday, VMRAQ (selected through the MRIWG expression of interest process)

The role of the Fleet Sub Working Group is to provide advice to the MRIWG, to assist QFES in establishing future fleet requirements and the development of a fleet management plan to progress the transition to an integrated state-wide marine volunteer service.

The inaugural meeting of the Fleet Sub Working Group, chaired in the interim by MRI Director Matthew Thompson, examined current vessel fleet baselines, received presentations on existing fleet management processes and considered initial and future workplan priorities.

The Queensland Government has announced a \$35.38 million investment for the establishment of a single integrated marine rescue service, which includes \$17.383 million over the next four years for the replacement of volunteer marine rescue vessels. The aim is to begin commissioning new vessel builds next year.

The Fleet Sub Working Group will specifically plan and provide advice to the MRIWG to guide the allocation of the \$17 million investment using a risk-based approach informed by current fleet replacement priorities, the Risk to Resource program and government procurement requirements.



## Marine Rescue Services Funding Boost

On 29 April 2021, Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan MP announced an additional funding boost of \$470,000 via a grant program for Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadrons and Coast Guard Flotillas to support emergency response capability.

“To complement our \$35 million commitment to establish an integrated single marine rescue service following the recommendations of the Blue Water Review, this grant program will directly support frontline units and relieve the fundraising burden on volunteers,” Mr Ryan said.

“This program will provide funding to the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ) to administer grants of \$10,000 to each of Queensland’s Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadrons and Coast Guard Flotillas.”

The media release can be found at: <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/91988>

## Resource to Risk Assessment Implementation

In our recent March Communique, we provided an update on the successful completion of the Resource to Risk Assessment Pilot Project and the activities being undertaken to support the further implementation of the program across the state.

The remaining 41 Flotilla and Squadron executives were recently contacted on the next stages of the implementation including the provision of an Information Pack and Unit Risk Survey to complete. The surveys are a critical component of the data gathering exercise for the Resource to Risk program, which will ultimately assist us in developing a locally validated Unit Profile for Squadrons and Flotillas. These profiles will assist in informing local resourcing needs across vessels, crewing and training according to the risk, and for prioritising where and how to develop capability and target funding accordingly. The experience of all volunteers is extremely important in completing the surveys and we encourage broad consultation with all squadron and flotilla members as a part of the process.

Over the coming weeks, the Marine Rescue Implementation Team will be contacting individual flotillas and squadrons to arrange face to face meetings, to speak to flotilla and squadron volunteers and to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of unit’s operating environment and local risks.

If you have any questions regarding the process or completing the survey, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Marine Rescue Implementation Team via [marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au).

## Marine Rescue Implementation Program (MRIP) Team Expansion

QFES is currently in the process of recruiting a small team to support the implementation program. The roles will cover the areas of project management, capability and risk, fleet, finance and procurement, policy and legislation, and communications and engagement. There has been significant interest in the eight positions, including applications from the sector, which will be of great benefit to the program moving forward.

Director of Regional Operations (QFES Central Region) Chief Superintendent Steve Smith is currently relieving as Assistant Commissioner Emergency Management and Community Capability until late May 2021, while Assistant Commissioner Joanne Greenfield relieves in the position of Deputy Commissioner for Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience. Acting Assistant Commissioner Smith brings with him significant experience in regional service delivery, training and experience from interstate (including previous management of Country Fire Authority Marine Units in Victoria).

QFES MRIP Director, Matthew Thompson continues to lead the implementation of the single integrated service with the Assistant Commissioner, with the remainder of the team remaining in place whilst recruitment processes are finalised. The current recruitment process is anticipated to be finalised by the end of June 2021.



## Presentation to Charles Linsley VMR Mackay Squadron

During the recent Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group meeting in Brisbane, Charles Linsley was presented with his National Service medal by Acting Deputy Commissioner Joanne Greenfield and Graham Kingston, President, Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland. Charles is a member of the Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group.

Charles, who has been a member of the VMR Mackay Squadron since 2006, has completed 317 marine rescue operations including 181 as skipper. He is also a qualified VMR trainer and assessor and assists in mentoring crews through their training.

Charles is also a qualified mental health trainer and is actively involved in Black Dog support programs, including the annual Black Dog motorcycle ride.

Congratulations Charles.



Image above (from left to right): Charles Linsley - VMRAQ Mackay Squadron, Joanne Greenfield - QFES A/Deputy Commissioner, Graham Kingston - VMRAQ President

Image left (from left to right): VMR Bowen Member Ted Gatkowski, Julieanne Gilbert MP, VMRAQ President Graham Kingston, VMRAQ Vice-President Vince Papale, VMR Bowen Member Don Rose, and QFES A/Assistant Commissioner Steve Smith.



## VMR Bowen Launch New Vessel

Volunteer Marine Rescue Bowen launched its new vessel on 24 April 2021 in a ceremony at the North Queensland Cruising Yacht Club. The Member for Mackay Julieanne Gilbert

represented the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services at the event, which in keeping with the maritime tradition saw the blessing of the new Queensland built Woody Marine Rigid Hull. It will be a welcome addition to local and regional capability which covers Abbot Point to Dingo Beach within the Great Barrier Reef zone. During 2020, the Squadron attended to 16 breakdowns, 2 EPIRB activations and 2 tows as a result of insufficient fuel, and like many units is experiencing a further increase of activity into 2021. The new build would not have been possible without the enduring commitment of VMR Bowen members and the support of the local community and businesses and a financial contribution from QFES.

## VMR Burdekin celebrates 50 Years

On 26 March 2021, VMR Burdekin celebrated its half century at Home Hill along with a medal ceremony to recognise the exemplary service of its members. The event was attended by Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan who applauded the efforts of the unit and all Marine Rescue Volunteers around the State. "Our dedicated marine rescue volunteers provide a vital service keeping Queenslanders safe," Mr Ryan said. "Burdekin VMR has been looking after their local boating community for 50 years, which is an incredible achievement."

Our congratulations to VMR Burdekin and its current and previous members in reaching this significant milestone and we look forward to continuing to support these efforts into the future. The Ministerial media release about the event can be found at: <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/91820>





## Coastal Hazards Outlook Product Trial

Earlier this month, QFES with the support of the State Disaster Coordination Centre and the Bureau of Meteorology commenced issuing a trial product which provides a 'Coastal Hazards Outlook' five days ahead on Monday and Thursday each week. The product draws upon non-public data sources to provide emergency services and disaster management stakeholders a glance across the coastal hazard suite within Queensland's 15 coastal forecasting zones. Hazards in scope include Tropical Cyclone, Marine Wind Warnings, Hazardous Surf, Abnormal High Tides, Severe Thunderstorms and Significant Fog.

The product does not replace detailed forecasts but provides a snapshot for situational awareness and to prompt stakeholders to examine in more detail potential impacts on their operations and areas of responsibility (including the provision of warnings and preparedness activities). Stakeholders involved in the trial include (but are not limited to) AVCGA and VMRAQ executives, Surf Life Saving Queensland, Queensland Police Service and selected coastal Local Governments.

The trial has now been completed and feedback will be sought via survey from the user testing group. This product is aimed at providing weather intelligence to marine users across Queensland in order to assist with any operational decisions that need to be made in regard to planning and responding to marine rescue incidents.

The Coastal Hazards Weather Outlook is a supplementary service to assist emergency services only and should be used in combination with the forecasts and warnings that are provided by the Bureau of Meteorology at <http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/>.

State Disaster Coordination Centre

**Coastal Hazards Outlook – TRIAL PRODUCT**  
Issued at 1100hrs Tuesday, 27 April 2021

Coastal Forecast Zones	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Southeast Gulf of Carpentaria					
Northeast Gulf of Carpentaria					
Torres Strait					
Peninsula Coast					
Cooktown Coast					
Cairns Coast					
Townsville Coast					
Mackay Coast					
Great Barrier Reef Offshore Waters					
Capricornia Coast					
Fraser Island Coast					
Hervey Bay					
Sunshine Coast Waters					
Moreton Bay					
Gold Coast Waters					

Possible tropical cyclone (Category 1-2)  
 Possible severe tropical cyclone (Category 3-5)  
 Marine Wind Warning possible  
 Potential for abnormally high tides, leading to a total water level above (HAT)  
 Hazardous Surf Warning possible  
 Potential Severe Thunderstorms  
 Potential for widespread fog

Queensland Government

## Marine Rescue Volunteers provided access to QFES Influenza Vaccine Program

On 8 April 2021, A/Deputy Commissioner Joanne Greenfield announced details to enable Coast Guard and Volunteer Marine Rescue volunteers to access the 2021 QFES Influenza Vaccine program. All members are first encouraged to check their eligibility under the [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#), which already provides a free vaccination to those over the age of 65, or those with certain medical risk factors.

This opportunity has been made available through our partnership with the Pharmacy Guild and their network of affiliated pharmacies around the State. It represents another important step in increasing support to the volunteer marine rescue sector and recognising the important role that Marine Rescue Volunteers play in protecting the community.

The announcement including details about what to consider and how to book your appointment can be accessed online via:

[https://www.vision6.com.au/v/46875/7118594/email.html?k=YyvKNw\\_EBKw5zdeMSChZOqiJoZEa0nOuHI\\_62kO4oFg](https://www.vision6.com.au/v/46875/7118594/email.html?k=YyvKNw_EBKw5zdeMSChZOqiJoZEa0nOuHI_62kO4oFg)

QFES is continuing to work with Queensland Health, AVCGA and VMRAQ to have marine rescue volunteers considered for inclusion in Schedule 1B of the COVID-19 Immunisation rollout with other emergency services. For further information, please contact your relevant State Executives.

## VMR and Coast Guard Weekly Availability and Capability Dashboard

As some of you may already be aware, 12 months ago, QFES initiated a new dashboard on the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) Emergency Management System (EMS) to capture the weekly status and availability of all AVCGA Flotillas and VMRAQ Squadrons for the 7 days ahead every Monday. This is currently facilitated via the AVCGA and VMRAQ Executives and is a critical step in further integrating Bluewater capability into emergency management arrangements.

In addition to availability, data is also provided on the vessel fleet available at each location to assist with arising planning requirements and increasing the awareness of the capability which exists. We continue to encourage all Flotillas and Squadrons to ensure they continue to inform QFES of operational status via their State Executives so that the currency of the SDCC EMS dashboard can be maintained.

## VMR Bribie Island Host PCYC Cadets

Volunteer Marine Rescue Bribie Island recently hosted the PCYC Emergency Services Cadets (ESC) for one day as part of their ESCape Week. Twenty two cadets and three cadet coaches experienced life on the water with the squadron including participating in a water rescue scenario and a visit from the Queensland Water Police. QFES is a proud supporter of the PCYC ESC and provides funding and program support on behalf of the Queensland Government to invest in emergency service personnel of the future and pathways for youth.

A video of the cadets' visit can be found at using the following link - <https://fb.watch/58CfRssROH/>

**COVID-19** continues to challenge our communities and the sector. Per the previous Communique, we encourage you to continue to follow internal advice and guidelines issued by both AVCGA and VMRAQ Executives. You can still also refer to [Queensland Health COVID-19 Health Alert page](#) for the latest advice.

In the maritime context, you can also view and subscribe to Maritime Safety Queensland's (MSQ) regular COVID-19 updates at <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/About-us/News-and-stories/Coronavirus>, which includes the latest advice on recreational boating.

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 continue to keep the transmission of COVID-19 to a minimum.

*Thank you for your commitment to Queensland communities  
and stay safe on the water!*

If you have any questions, comments or would like to suggest content for future Communiques - Email the QFES Marine Rescue Implementation Team at: [marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au)

