

# Marine Rescue Implementation Update

## July 2021

Welcome to the July Communique, with updates on the Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group meeting, Resource to Risk Assessment process, Marine Rescue Implementation team and more. As always, QFES has continued to work in partnership with all key stakeholders in moving towards the establishment of an integrated volunteer marine rescue service in Queensland.

If you have any questions, comments, content suggestions or would like to be added to mailing list for future Communiques email the QFES Marine Rescue Implementation Team at: [marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au)

## Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group Meeting - 24 June 2021

The Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group (MRIWG), which is advising QFES on the future of the integrated service, held its third meeting on 24 June 2021 in Brisbane. During this meeting the working group worked through several key areas to inform how the new single integrated service will be implemented.

Working group members were briefed on the Resource to Risk Assessment progress with face-to-face engagement underway with Coastguard Flotillas and Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadrons. This process will help guide the government's investment for the future capability needs of the sector, including vessel replacement. The group was also updated about the draft Concept of Operations and the steps in the policy process to 'create' the new service.

Members were developed priorities for the sub-working groups which will help shape the future service. The Fleet Sub-Working group was discussed and how that will deliver vessel replacement over the next few years. This is in line with the government's commitment to the new service and to address the sectors ageing fleet profile.

There was also a discussion about how existing QFES structures will support the future marine rescue service including alignment of rank and positions and recognition of honours and awards.

QFES Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing reaffirmed the commitment of Government to deliver an integrated service outcome, which will best support volunteers and community safety and will gain pace with additional resourcing and enable the program team to engage more regularly with sector volunteers. The next MRIWG meeting is scheduled for 7 September 2021.

## Resource to Risk Assessment Update

The MRI team have continued the statewide rollout of the Resource to Risk Assessment with ongoing consultation with both AVCGA and VMRAQ executives. Queensland Police Service (QPS) and regional QFES staff have also attended these consultation sessions. The Resource to Risk Assessment process has provided the volunteers the opportunity to have their say on resourcing in their region and the state. The units who have participated so far have enjoyed the process with overwhelming positive support for the process. The MRI team have worked together with units to provide a greater understanding of the process and outcomes it will lead to. Our thanks go out to all volunteers and executives who have assisted us to date.

To date, the team has visited the following South East Queensland units:

- Brisbane VMRAQ – 10 May 2021
- Victoria Point VMRAQ – 14 May 2021
- Jacobs Well VMRAQ – 17 May 2021
- Currumbin VMRAQ – 21 May 2021
- Bribie Island VMRAQ - 24 May 2021
- Raby Bay VMRAQ – 28 May 2021
- Caloundra AVCGA QF4 – 4 June 2021
- Southport QF1 AVCGA – 7 June 2021
- Brisbane QF2 AVCGA – 7 June 2021
- Redland Bay AVCGA QF7 – 14 June 2021
- Stradbroke Island VMRAQ – 16 June 2021
- Mooloolaba AVCGA QF6 – 9 July 2021



Above right: VMR Victoria Point team after their review.  
Below right: QF6 Mooloolaba taking part in the Resource to Risk consultation.



Due to the lockdown and restrictions in South East Queensland and Townsville, regional face-to-face consultations needed to be rescheduled. The MRI team have contacted units about rescheduled upcoming visits.

#### Upcoming regional hub visits:

- Cairns Regional Hub – 21 and 22 July 2021
- Rockhampton Regional Hub – 29 July 2021
- Bundaberg Regional Hub 9 and 10 August (rescheduled due to lockdown)
- Townsville Regional Hub- 16 August

#### Regional hub visits are planned for:

- Weipa
- Whitsundays (rescheduled due to lockdown)

If you have any questions about the process, please reach out to the Marine Rescue Implementation Team via email at [marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au). Please note, all dates are subject to change pending volunteer availability and COVID-19.



Above: VMR Raby Bay giving a tour of the base after the Resource to Risk survey consultation.

## New Marine Rescue Implementation (MRI) Team Members

All MRI positions are fully funded from the QFES budget for 2021-22 and will not impact the \$35m Government Commitment to the sector. To best support the development of the new integrated service, QFES has grown the MRI team with four team members now onboarded for a two-year period and they have hit the ground running. Two additional team members will join the MRI team from mid to late July 2021. QFES Assistant Commissioner Joanne Greenfield and MRI Director, Matthew Thompson will continue to lead the MRI program. Meet some of the new team members below.



#### Samantha Morrison, Senior Program Officer, (Risk and Capability)

Sam is overseeing the Resource to Risk Program, working closely with the VMR and Coastguard groups across Queensland to develop a clear picture of the risks facing marine rescue across the state. This will help inform the future service delivery model and concept of operations. Sam's background is in disaster management, filling multiple roles across state and local government and most recently was the Senior Emergency Management Officer with Ipswich City Council. Sam is no stranger to QFES having previously worked with the Emergency Management Planning Unit in the State Disaster Coordination Centre through multiple disaster events and was also briefly Staff Officer to the QFES Commissioner.

#### Elizabeth (Libbie) Robinson, Senior Business Analyst

Libbie will be undertaking a current state analysis of the systems used by the marine rescue services in Queensland to determine the business requirements for future systems to support volunteer, asset and incident management functions. Part of Libbie's role will be engaging relevant sector stakeholders from within QFES and partner agencies as well as AVCGA and VMRAQ to ensure all needs can be met by the future solution.

Prior to starting in the MRI team Libbie worked at QPS Policelink undertaking business analysis activities for the public facing web forms and underlying systems used by QPS staff.







### Annette Curry, Senior Communications and Engagement Officer

Annette will be looking after communications and engagement and working directly with Coastguard and Volunteer Marine Rescue volunteers, along with QFES and other stakeholders. Previously Annette worked at the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority, Queensland Ambulance Service and not-for-profit organisations. Annette comes with broad experience across media, internal and external communications, stakeholder engagement and social media.

### John Schwarzrock, Senior Program Officer (Fleet)

John will be working with volunteer marine rescue teams across the state to support the fleet and overall marine rescue asset management into the future. John worked the last 29 years with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, and the last 21 years involved in the Marine Park Management along the Queensland Coast. John is a Commercial Skipper, Marine Engineer Grade 1, Diesel Mechanic with a love of all things on and in the water.



### VMR's oldest active skipper steps down

VMR Bundaberg recently celebrated Bill Ker stepping down from the active skippers list. After being a rescue vessel commander for 23 years Bill decided the 2am phone activations were getting harder to deal with. Bill joined VMR Bundaberg in 1998 after a career in the navy where he had several roles including as a clearance diver. When he arrived in Bundaberg, he joined the radio room before joining the duty skipper list and was involved in 555 activations and had 1,618 hours of sea time. Bill became a Life Member in 2010. At 83, Bill is believed to be the oldest active skipper across the Queensland VMR Squadrons. He retired from active skipper duties in February but still continues to participate in other duties including manning the radio and mentoring the squadron. VMR President Erwin Hoffman presented Bill with his Meritorious Service Award and his duty shingle. Congratulations Bill and thank you for your service!



Above: Bill Ker receives his Meritorious Service Award and Duty Shingle.

Left: Bill still mentoring the VMR Bundaberg crew.



### Marine Rescue Service name and branding

The new integrated service will represent a new era for marine rescue in Queensland and with new equipment, and fleet expansion.

Being a new era, the new service will need a new name and a new brand!

The name and branding including a new logo will place the new service in good stead.

Continue to watch this space for updates and how volunteers can have their say.

## AVCGA QF6 Mooloolaba rescue reunion

In April, QF6 Mooloolaba reunited with Maike and his 7-year-old son Julian Hohnen who were rescued in June 2019. The dramatic search began with an urgent boat sinking call at Caloundra 9 Mile with Maike, Julian and Maike's friend rescued after six hours in the water. Maike has stayed in touch with QF6 and wanted to meet the "Mooloolaba Rotary Rescue" crew who took part in the search and rescue. The crew showed Maike, Julian and puppy Daisy around the base and the boat. Maike told the QF6 crew that almost losing his life has changed his views on being prepared. He hopes his story serves as a cautionary tale for boaties to be prepared before they head out on the water having the right the equipment needed in case of emergency situations.



Above right: Joe Keily, Duncan Slaven, Maike Hohnen, Julian Hohnen, Daisy, Ian Hunt and Ray Rahn.  
Bottom left: Maike shows his new boat to the QF6 crew.  
Bottom right: Duncan Slaven, Julian Hohnen and Daisy on the boat.

## AVCGA QF11 Yeppoon Joint training operation

On 9 July, QF11 Yeppoon participated in a joint training operation with the RACQ Capricorn Rescue Helicopter Service at Wreck Point. The operation assisted the Capricorn Rescue helicopter crew maintain skills currency for marine high rope and winching exercises. Yeppoon Rescue 1 was the target vessel for the helicopter. The training operation attracted plenty of local onlookers and enthusiasts. Joint collaborative exercises with other agencies and partners help marine rescue services prepare and improve responses to any response or emergency situations.

Right: Yeppoon Rescue 1 taking part in joint training operation with RACQ Capricorn Rescue.  
Source: Facebook.





## Marine Rescue Implementation web and communications update

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services website has been updated and the [Marine Rescue Implementation webpage](#) has a new home and a new look. Communiques will continue to be placed on the webpage. The full webpage link is <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate-services/review-VMR>. Communications will be increasing, and plans are underway to provide a social media presence. In the meantime, follow QFES on social media on:

- [Facebook](#) ([www.facebook.com/QldFireandEmergencyServices](http://www.facebook.com/QldFireandEmergencyServices))
- [Instagram](#) ([www.instagram.com/qld\\_fes/](http://www.instagram.com/qld_fes/))
- [LinkedIn](#) ([au.linkedin.com/company/queensland-fire-and-emergency-services](http://au.linkedin.com/company/queensland-fire-and-emergency-services))
- [Youtube](#) ([www.youtube.com/user/FireRescueQld/channels](http://www.youtube.com/user/FireRescueQld/channels))
- [Twitter](#) ([twitter.com/QldFES](http://twitter.com/QldFES))

Communiques will continue as the main source of truth to all stakeholders during the implementation phase. To stay up-to-date and receive communiques email [marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:marinerescue@qfes.qld.gov.au).

## Service Agreements Update

Renewing the Service Agreements for both AVCGA and VMRAQ is a high priority for QFES with new Service Agreements remaining under negotiation with both organisations. As flagged in the previous Communique, included in the Service Agreements will be the additional \$10,000 to be made available to each Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadron and Coast Guard Flotilla announced by the Minister on 29 April 2021.

### COVID-19 update

COVID-19 continues to challenge our communities and the sector particularly with recent outbreaks and health directions.

Please 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.

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, ensure you are regularly assessing exposure risks 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.

### COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Queensland Health has set up vaccination locations across the state including hospitals, community centres and showgrounds. Other vaccination locations will be mobile and will travel to communities in more rural areas.

Read more about these locations and [how to register and book](#).

QFES continues 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.

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