



New Year Greetings to all

How quickly Christmas comes around each year.

2011 certainly flew by. It has been an unsettling time for the Association with some significant changes in the management committee mid-stream.

The committee has now had a chance to regroup and set some goals to achieve before the next AGM as you will see outlined further in this newsletter.

Not only has the VMRWA been in a state of change, so too has the FESA

VMRS team. We'll dedicate a section for some farewells and welcomes in this issue as well.

Change is certainly the name of the game at the moment with the September announcement of a new FESA CEO and an organizational restructure.

2012 looks like being a busy and fruitful year. We will be working hard to achieve our objectives.

On behalf of the VMRWA Committee, I would like to take the opportunity to

wish all our members a very happy and safe New Year and 2012.

We hope you enjoyed the festive season with your family and friends.

Stay safe on the water and a huge Thank You for all your efforts during the year and for the busy period ahead.

Kind Regards & Best Wishes.

West Coast v VMRWA Court Case

Many of you will be aware that for a number of years the Association has been in disagreement with the West Coast VMR Association over the gifting of some money, made when a number of groups moved under the FESA banner and became part of VMRWA.

In March last year, after considerable effort by the Association to resolve the issue, the matter was taken

before the courts and the decision of the magistrate was handed down in November. The Magistrate found in favour of West Coast in that the monies were only to be held in trust until such time as the West Coast Association was dissolved. As this never occurred the money needed to be returned. As such VMRWA has been ordered to repay the principal

amount plus some interest and court costs.

While we are extremely disappointed in the result; there are no grounds for appeal and we are working to repay what is required as a matter of urgency so that the Association can move on.

Any concerns/issues/queries can be directed to the Commander of VMRWA.

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Farewells and Welcomes

VMRWA has some new faces on the committee. Wayne Dewar from Kalbarri SS&RG has joined the committee this year to take on the role of Communications officer responsible for our website, Diary and other membership communications. Take a look at the changes in the website he has already introduced.

Gary Hornhardt has recently stepped aside from his role as Public Relations Officer to concentrate solely on his Regional Commander Position. We welcome Peter Edwards to the PR position to fill the casual vacancy. Peter is from Rockingham VSRG and with a strong background in media he will bring a great skill set with him to work on the Associations PR strategy over the coming months. He is planning to get in touch with each of the groups to see how VMRWA can best help the groups with their public relations efforts.

Peter and Wayne will be working as a team to ensure information is available to you on what's happening in the world of VMR.

The Association is also working to fill the casual vacancy for the Kimberly/Pilbara Regional Commander position. We hope to have the position filled in the very near future.

On the **FESA VMRS** front we have a few farewells and welcomes. Early in 2011 we said goodbye to Jeff Howe who retired and promptly re-joined Two Rocks VMR. We welcome him back as a volunteer. We've also recently said goodbye to Jade Butson who has worked hard on establishing the framework for VMR training & development—Jade has headed up to the northern parts of our state.

Kevin Waddington, alias Roger the Cabin Boy, also took the retirement path last year. We thank them for their hard work for VMR and wish them well.

On the Welcome front, we have Dan Goodlad and Ivan Parker, both from Mandurah Water Rescue joining the FESA ranks in the new year to take on the two VMRS Coordinator positions.

Josie Fern has taken up the reins that Kevin carefully placed in her care. Also welcome to Linda Savage in an administrative support role.

And, Troy Easter has come across from the Department of Transport as part of the replacement strategy for Jade.

With manning levels on all fronts getting back to where they should be, 2012 is shaping up to be a good year.

The New CEO & the restructure of FESA

VMRWA committee members recently met with the new CEO of FESA, Mr Wayne Gregson, with a view to gaining an understanding of what progress was being made with the restructure of FESA and how it would impact on Volunteer Marine Rescue.

Wayne walked us through some proposed organisation charts to give us an idea of how things may be changing. He is very focused on streamlining the business processes and putting a structure in place that is more

appropriate from a fire management perspective. With respect to VMR, he sees no reason to change the structure that is in place, with the exception of possibly one additional person in the training side of the structure. Please bear in mind that these are only concepts at this stage.

There is a whole working group process being run by the Dept. Premier & Cabinet looking into the restructure and any required changes to the Emergency Services Legislation.

We have been lucky enough to have our Vice-Commander, Roger Martin on the Working group representing the interests of all the Volunteer organisations with regards to the restructure

We will keep you posted on what's happening with the FESA Restructure in the coming months.

2012 VMR Conference

In November we asked for feedback on the Combined Emergency Services Conference held this year. Given that we had also been told that there was to be no Combined Conference in 2012 we asked if members would like us to organise a VMR Conference.

Happy to say that those members who responded were pretty supportive of the concept of the combined conference but were also happy to have the option of a

VMR conference in 2012. With this feedback, we have put a sub-committee together to work on the content and logistics for a 2012 VMR Conference to be held in August together with the VMRWA AGM.

The FESA CEO has indicated that financial support will be given for the Association to host the conference, and we are currently working on a grant application to Lotterywest to assist with

further funding arrangements.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions for content for the conference, please don't hesitate to get in touch with either Roger Martin or Barb Walton from the Conference Planning sub-committee.



VMRWA Strategic Plan—Update

The VMRWA Management Committee is aiming to have a draft strategic plan out for comment by June 2012.

As part of the plan development process the committee is working on the following action plan and timelines.

February 2012 - small workshop to work on parts of the strategic plan.

March 2012 - send out questionnaire, seeking responses by mid-April.

April 2012 - Workshop to review all feedback and put a preliminary plan together.

May 2012—Draft of Strategic Plan put together

June 2012 - send out draft plan for the membership to review.

August 2012 - presentation of the Strategic Plan as part of the VMR Conference and VMRWA AGM.



New Standby Rescue Vessel

VMRWA was successful in obtaining both FESA Capital Grant and LotteryWest funding to allow for the construction of a second standby rescue vessel for the use of our member groups around the state.

The vessel is a 7.5m Air Rider and at the time of writing this newsletter the vessel was due out of the paint shop in the new year and should be ready for deployment early February.

The vessel will be fitted with all the

latest standards in electronics, plus the addition of vessel tracking and a Toughbook notebook to allow crew to download search patterns from Water Police, and also allow for Incident Control to track the path of the rescue vessel as it conducts search and rescue missions.

The vessel is just coming out of the paint shop and should be ready for service in a few weeks.

We'll keep you posted on its progress.

Special points of interest:

- *The 2012 Diaries have been posted out to groups.*
- *Visit the new look VMRWA Website at www.vmrwa.org.au*
- *Wayne Gregson's the New FESA CEO*
- *The new Minister for Emergency Services is Troy Buswell*

BCF Sponsorship still on the drawing board

In 2011 the association was approached with the potential for entering into a sponsorship arrangement with the Boating Camping Fishing (BCF) business operations.

We were pretty excited to be offered what looked like a great opportunity to have some alignment with a rapidly growing recreational marine and camping organisation.

Unfortunately things are never quite as simple as they seem and the

arrangement whilst attractive also held some potential problems for the Association and our member groups.

The arrangement if it goes ahead would be a 3-way agreement between the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard (AVCG), BCF and ourselves, with the AVCG providing management.

The original agreement proposed was not one that the Association could agree to as there was some potential for limiting other sponsorship arrangements.

AVCG have recently come back to the Association and given us the ability to draw up our own agreement document to suit our needs. We are currently pursuing this as an option.

In the meantime we are also looking at a few other sponsorship arrangements that are in the early stage of development.

All sponsorship arrangements will be used to invest in products and efforts to benefit all member groups.

Cocos Island VMR Visitors

In November three intrepid explorers from the Cocos Island VMR group ventured onto the mainland to visit a number of groups around the west and southern coast.

Siti, Alman & Azah set off on their fact finding mission. After stopping overnight in Perth, they made their way down to Walpole, where they had a tour of the Sea Rescue premises and talked with committee members about administrative processes for a small group. It was also an opportunity for them to meet with VMRWA representatives. On the Sunday the team headed over to Denmark Sea Rescue who were involved in a joint SAR exercise within the Shire. In the afternoon, the guys again spent some time on the Water on WSRG's Harlequin.

From there the team made their way to Busselton Sea Rescue Group where they spent time talking about training processes. Busselton organised for the group to have a trip across to Naturaliste on the Naiad and they did the return trip on Naturaliste's Air Rider. This meant the team had a chance to see both Rescue Vessel options in action, so that they can get an idea of the type of vessel that would be suitable for their island conditions.

The group then travelled to Two Rocks and met with the team up there, reinforcing the knowledge and process information that they had been building over their visit.

The last part of their visit was spent with the FESA VMRS team to go through FESA policy and processes.

In all the visit was very successful, one

of our remoter groups got to meet and make contacts with a variety of other groups around the state. Contacts that can assist them with any queries in the future.

To All the groups and individuals that participated and helped make the visit a success - Many Thanks.

Hopefully this will be the first of many such visits and networking for our groups around the state.



Restricted Use of Quad Bikes by VMR Groups

In November 2011, FESA commissioned an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Risk Assessment on the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's). The scope of the assessment was to determine whether ATV's should be used by FESA, identify any hazards and make recommendations to mitigate those hazards.

The research carried out was pretty much directed at the use of ATV's within SES. The recommendation that came out of the report indicated that there was an unacceptable (extreme)

risk in their usage and that FESA should consider withdrawing their use from service (eliminate the risk).

This unfortunately has had a flow on effect to VMR where we have a small number of Quad Bikes used to launch jet skis.

At this point in time until we receive any further direction, ATV's (Quad Bikes) within VMR Groups can only be used to launch craft where there is no other choice. Any personnel using an ATV needs to be trained, wear the

appropriate PPE and be supervised whilst operating the ATV.

The ATV's cannot be used for community activities. No training of personnel in their use can be currently conducted.

Contact your regional commander for further information.



Definition of a Charity

The federal government is introducing new reforms with regards to Not-for-Profit organisations. Included in this is a statutory definition of charity. A consultation paper was issued in October 2011 allowing for feedback and submissions on the definitions that were being recommended

Our groups are all registered as charitable organisations and as such it was incumbent upon us to ensure that

under the new definitions we would continue to be covered.

Under the current Act (2003) we fall under the 'other' classification by the provision of 'protection and safety of the general public'.

FESA have put forward a response to the consultation paper, on behalf of all the volunteer associations, suggesting that the role of Emergency Services Volunteers be further strengthened by

being listed separately in the definition. We are fully supportive of strengthening the definition. Either way, we are currently still covered within the definition of charitable organisations.

We will keep you up to date with any further information on these reforms, and any impact that they may have on the groups.

Volunteer Marine Rescue Training

With Troy Easter now on board filling the role of Training and Development Officer, some updates on the training front have been sent out.

An updated version of the Training development pathway has been developed and a new set of training nomination forms have been sent out.

FESA VMRS is in negotiation with other Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) like Challenger TAFE, to help deliver training modules to the volunteers.

Troy will be keeping everyone up to date with course schedules as they become available.

A fast response course (High speed vessel driver course - under the new model) will be conducted in the South Coast Region in February.

January 2012

Volunteer Marine Rescue Training & Development Pathway



Capital Grants Program for 2012

Recently Paul Kimber sent out an email regarding the Capital Grants program for 2012. Expressions of interest have been called for so that an initial gauge of the Capital requirements can be obtained.

Paul has indicated that the FESA VMRS capital grant budget is \$640K this year with a potential for LotteryWest to add \$400K to the mix.

Paul also indicated that the Capital program calls for a 75% FESA, 25% Group contribution ratio. Group contributions can be made up of fundraising activities and any other grants available whether through LotteryWest, Royalties for Regions, NEVSF and other funding models available at a State and National level.

If groups need any assistance in putting together their funding applications, the

association is more than happy to assist you in your efforts. Our Regional Commanders will be in touch over the next few weeks to see if there is anything we can be doing to help.

Council of Volunteer Emergency Services Associations

In November and January Presidents/Commanders and Vice Presidents/ Vice Commanders of all the Volunteer Emergency Service Associations met to discuss ways in which we could have some input into the decisions being made at a State Government level.

There is a general concern that decisions are and have been made about the restructure of FESA into a Government Department and some of the Keelty

report recommendations that have not been getting adequate input or feedback from the Volunteer sector.

At the meeting in January, the attendees agreed to form a Council of the Volunteer Emergency Services Associations aimed at providing cohesion, identifying common issues and strengthening the voice of volunteers across the board.

Being a member of the Council will not

prevent any Association taking any matter directly to FESA or the Minister and will not interfere with the objectives of the individual Associations that make up the council.

One of the first topics being discussed and agreed is the need to retain a consultative committee structure with FESA and, additionally at what levels should Volunteers have a voice in the Emergency Management decisions of this State.



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Link with Life

Check out our Website
www.vmrwa.org.au

The object of the Association is to assist its members and the appointed State and Federal Authorities in the provision of services dedicated to marine rescue throughout Western Australia.

The Association does this by:

- a. Promoting and raising the profile of Volunteer Marine Rescue in WA*
- b. Providing effective representation of its members at a State and Federal level.*
- c. Being a leader and driver of policy, best practice and professionalism*
- d. Supporting its members in matters financial, operational and administrative.*
- e. Providing opportunities for professional development and training of its members and the Association.*
- f. Developing and maintaining strategic partnerships and networks with other organisations to enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise.*
- g. The education of the public in the principles of safe boating and survival at sea.*

All the efforts of the Association are aimed at achieving these objectives for our members.

Your Committee

Please feel free to contact your committee on any matters, we are happy to hear from you at any time.

As the Kimberley Pilbara regional commander position is currently vacant, any queries from this region can be directed to either the commander or vice commander until the casual vacancy is filled.

Commander	Louise Pickett	(08) 9840 1310	commander@vmrwa.org.au
Vice Commander	Roger Martin	(08) 9535 3918	vicecommander@vmrwa.org.au
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Public Relations	Peter Edwards	0435 797 456	PublicRelations@vmrwa.org.au
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