

VMRWA UPDATES

From around the traps

Well, it's Summertime and Perth got a quick taste of the heat on the first day of summer, nothing like the heat that's experienced up North, so look after yourself and your teams,

staying hydrated out on the water ☀️ 🌊 🌴 🍹

PILBARA SAREX 2025

There is always a briefing...

The weekend of 25th October saw in Onslow the gathering of multiple Pilbara marine rescue groups, one from the Midwest, Border Force, Water Police and a stray "helo" for good measure in what was a significant search and rescue training event.



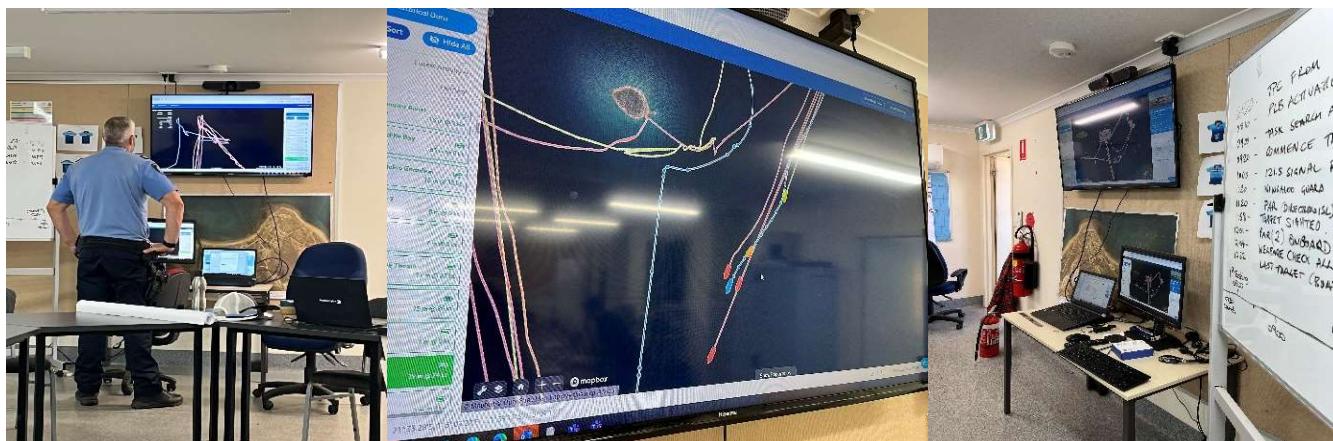


Exmouth's Naiad is seen hiding behind Cygnet as these two travelled up by sea while the trailered mob were parked up at the accommodation area.

With the briefing out of the way on Friday evening, food and camaraderie was the plan for the remainder of the night.

The morning of the event..

Targets were set out with DFES's Bec Benson and Simon Miller coordinating, alongside WAPOL's Paul Crawshaw and Onslow's Commander Mike Chapman.



..... *And out they go!*



Locations to be searched, targets (dummies) to be found and lessons to be learnt.

Interestingly a weak 121.5 EPIRB signal was identified by two vessels and was not part of the exercise. While it wasn't an EPIRB, it was believed to be a spurious signal from a device that will require a more detailed investigation.

Soon enough it was over and back they came...

We can verify that our people were much more efficient in the recovery of their vessels and demonstrated this to a couple of recreational 'boaters' on how to do it, one of which was observed trailering their vessel away not all that squarely on the trailer, still not my circus - not my monkey, as they say.



In the end a successful exercise that was beneficial to all that participated. At the debrief the opinion of those on the water was the same as those in the operations room, it was a successful day with much learnt.

HALCO and their kind donation to VMRWA

At the conclusion of all the official “stuff”, VMRWA was able to, and here a big thanks must go to HALCO lures for a significant package of lures and other products that they donated to VMRWA.

Leaving it up to us to find the best way to benefit marine rescue volunteers, we decided to split the donation into two parcels and arranged a random draw ensuring all volunteers that participated in the SAREX over the weekend had a chance of winning a significant prize pack.

Again, VMRWA wishes to thank HALCO for their generous donation and we can assure you that the two lucky winners were impressed.



Thanks again to the organisers of the event, the marine rescue volunteers who attended, the DFES Marine Services team, WAPOL and HALCO.

WAFES AWARDS NIGHT *and other stuff*

We all know the weekend was somewhat different due to AFAC being in town, that however, didn't stop Marine Rescue volunteers having a good time, respectfully of course.

So, a few pic's from the night won't go astray and a few more marine rescue/VMRWA from AFAC.

Congratulations must go out to all of the Marine Rescue Award winners.

There were definitely some surprises amongst the winners and there surprise was discussed later that evening with a cheeky beverage, or two even.

It is fair to say that the Kimberley crew know how to celebrate, with taking out an individual honor amongst what was a stellar field of nominations.

Thanks to Kelly for "corralling" the crew. And again, well done to all of the Emergency Services with their respective awards and nominees.



We shouldn't dismiss the fact that AFAC is one hell of a show but lacking a wee bit of marine "stuff".

One outcome was that we didn't understand with the popularity of the VMRWA merchandise, in particular was the absolute obsession the punters had with our turtles. Once we sold out, we helped the other Associations flog their merch... why you might ask, because it was acknowledged by the other Associations that we were bloody good at it 😊



Never underestimate how valuable free advertising is, there was a young lady touring the exhibition with a pink turtle poking out of her backpack, truly a walking billboard for VMRWA.

Financially speaking, VMRWA owes this young lady heaps.



We all want a TATRA truck. Please Minister Papalia, they aren't all that expensive.

IT'S OFFICIALLY AGM SEASON

Both for the Groups and even VMRWA as we are all incorporated entities, and we all need to comply. Yes, we do and let us just move on.

A few from Two Rocks AGM which ran almost concurrently with the Lancelin AGM, and both were well attended with various acknowledgements to lengths of service and a Life Membership were presented.

DFES had a representative at each.... VMRWA not so lucky. It tested me personally being at both, as the speed cameras haven't been all that kind to me on this road, this time all ok.

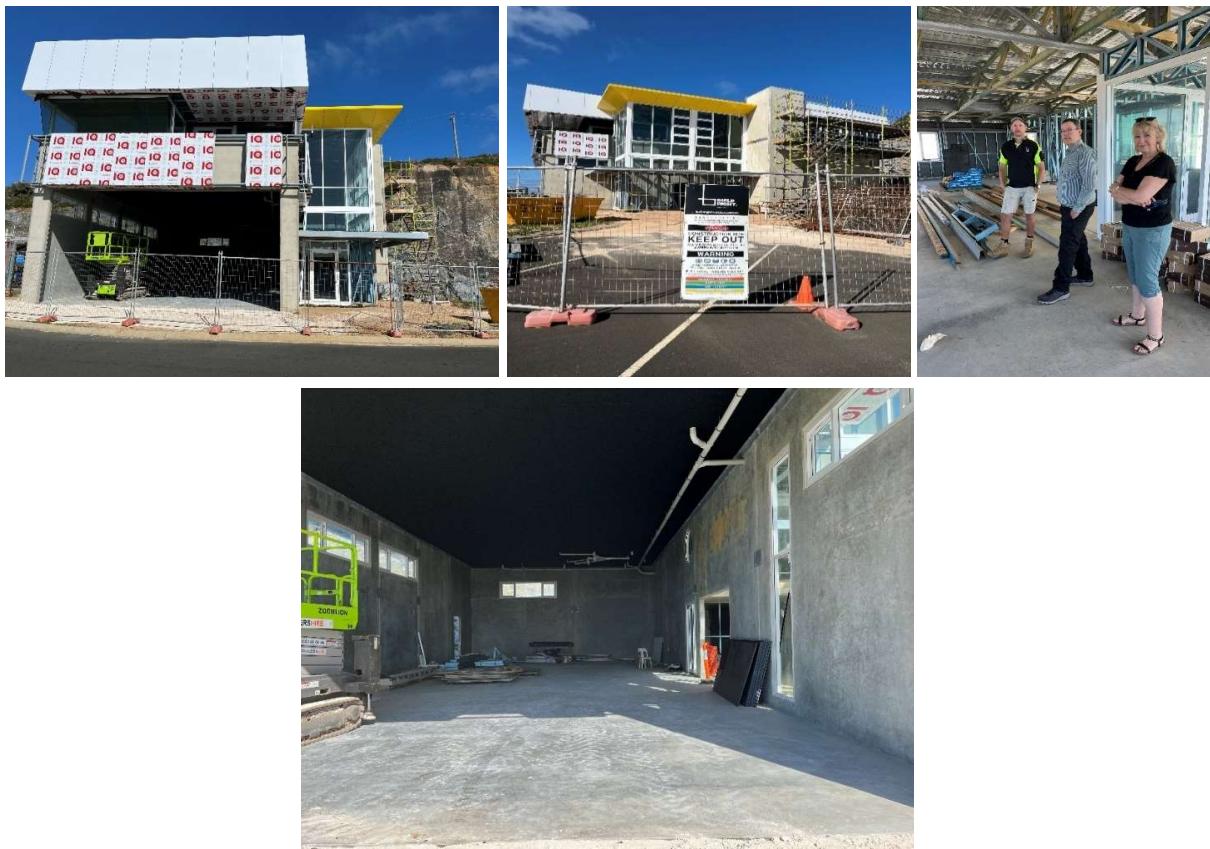
VMRWA's Vice Commander of Operations and Tony Grasso were invited to attend the Margaret River AGM and while there were a few changes it was pleasing to see Augusta's Commander, Adam Mathews there and offering to assist their neighbor's if needed.

As all too often we get consumed with our own Group's issues and forget we have neighbors.

Well done to all the guys and girls.



Taking advantage of being in the south, the opportunity to catch up with Augusta and check out their new building's progress. They have had a few setbacks in the build, but not completing what will be a sensational community asset, was never on the cards.



Importantly the proud Commander and the builder were on site to show us around.

It will, as mentioned earlier, be a sensational community asset that will not only house the Group and their vessels but be accessible for some community events. Well done too, not only to this committee but to all the previous committees too, in getting to where they are today. You should all be very proud of this achievement.

On the subject of buildings...

Marine Rescue Port Hedland has obtained the last piece of the funding puzzle with significant contributions from DFES, the mining industry, local government, local businesses and Lotterywest.

A recent FB article showing the practical completion of the facility. (Quoted from FB, follows)

'AUSPAN is pleased to announce the Practical Completion of the new Marine Rescue Port Hedland Operations Centre - a purpose built operational base designed to strengthen marine safety and volunteer capability across the Pilbara region.'

'The new facility provides a modern, fit-for-purpose home for Marine Rescue Port Hedland, delivering upgraded communications infrastructure, climate-controlled operational areas, secure equipment storage, and flexible spaces for training, meetings, and community engagement.'

Commander Zac Slaughter highlighted the transformational impact the new facility will have on emergency service volunteers and the wider community:

'This facility will completely transform our operations. Our volunteers finally have a purpose-built home after years working from a 119-year-old building and, more recently, under a shade sail between three sea containers. AUSPAN has delivered a facility that is vastly superior to anything we've ever had - a huge step forward for Marine Rescue Port Hedland.'

AUSPAN Project Manager John Williams also expressed pride in the project, stating:

'AUSPAN is proud to deliver this new facility for the Port Hedland community. It provides Marine Rescue with the capability, space, and resources they need to carry out their vital work more effectively than ever.'

'The completion of this project underscores AUSPAN's commitment to delivering essential infrastructure that enhances safety, supports volunteer organisations, and benefits regional communities across Western Australia.'



Meanwhile Carnarvon is still in the mix needing to get the admin/training/operations area next yet to be funded and built but we are all working on that.

Two Rocks is still on the urgent list with Whitfords now sorted and moving into their new multi-agency Ocean Reef Marina complex.

Geraldton joins the ever-increasing urgent list of marine rescue groups without a suitable permanent home due to coastal erosion and with the sea god taking theirs back to his home.

Bunbury will be in the mix what with the port redevelopment planning underway.

Again, VMRWA will be supporting all of these groups (and others) at varying levels with their endeavors to get located in a suitable permanent home.

Back to the AGM's we welcome Geraldton's new Commander Julianne Sproule and Vice Commander Ian Astill to the fold. Ian's well known around the traps conducting Pathways training. And while Julianne will need Ian's assistance, VMRWA isn't against borrowing good people and Ian Astill has been appointed to the role of Regional Commander Midwest.

A very big welcome aboard from Dan, Barb, Roger, Jeff, Sam, Ian, Allan, Adam, Tony, Greg & John.

Farewell...

Marine Rescue Port Walcott bid a final farewell to Pilbara Seeker III (PS3), as she sets off for new adventures after many years of service to the Pilbara communities, she makes way for the groups new vessel.

'Fair winds & following seas PS3'



Pathways Training at Mandurah

Assembled in Mandurah were vollies from Derby, East Kimberley (Wyndham), Cockburn and Mandurah for 5 days and nights of training.

They are undertaking the recently revised Restricted Master and Master courses with John Stewart and our own Dan Goodlad who steadfastly remains out of pictures other than at the WAFES Awards.

Gotcha with the WAFES Awards pic!



Rumor has it that there had been some frivolity mixed into what is a serious business.

Now it's the serious end, the blessed exam.....

Thanks for taking the time to read through these ramblings...

This edition of VMRWA Updates is a combined one and covered off on a variety of events leading up to Christmas 2025.

The Media Officer has taken a few excerpts (liberties) from FB to get some messages across to the groups as to what's been happening 'around the traps', importantly we welcome all contributions from the groups to acknowledge the work you do, the people you recognize, training and of course, any items of harmony you would like to communicate with us all.

In this newsletter VMRWA would like to acknowledge the things that sometimes we forget to do, as without marine rescue volunteers we would be in a less than perfect world so thanks to all of you, the same goes out to all our committee and their partners.

We are proud to be supported by DFES financially to operate as an Association so we can be of benefit to the Groups in ways the Groups don't often see and wonder why they are members and yes, we fail to sell ourselves well, however without the DFES support we couldn't achieve much at all and we have actually achieved a lot throughout the years.

Finally, from VMRWA and all the marine rescue groups together with their volunteers a huge thank you must go to DFES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM and his ongoing assistance.

And we don't say this all that often either, but to DFES Marine Services, Mark, Bec, Em, Renee, Kelly, Alisha, Simon, Dan and Ivan, thanks for your assistance throughout the year, it is greatly appreciated.

Finally, a quick shout out again must go to HALCO lures as their generous donation it made a couple of the volunteers that attended the recent Pilbara SAREX very happy indeed.

A sad update...

VALE

Every year we lose volunteers who have given their all and late in November we lost a stalwart in Keith Dunlop and our sympathies go out to his wife Anne, his family and friends.

Keith was heavily involved with Hopetoun Marine Rescue, the VMRWA Association and FESA (Became DFES), in the early days of marine rescue coming into the Emergency Services fold.

A true gentleman, he will be missed.

Look after your loved ones and friends, please.

REMEMBER that should you or someone you know in the volunteer family need some assistance, there is the WA Emergency Services Volunteers Hardship Assistance Scheme (WAESVHAS)

Please do not hesitate to contact Roger Martin on 0418 612 082 or via email at projects@vmrwa.org.wa for direction and assistance.

And finally, what would it be without a Christmas card Please have a happy Christmas, stay safe and we'll see you, 'around the traps' next year...

From Dan, Jeff, Barb, Roger, Sam, Ian A, Ian B, Allan, Adam, Tony, Greg & John



Again, Merry Christmas and remember to hug those closest to you.

Follow us



@vmr.wa



@vmrwa



www.vmrwa.org.au