

VMRWA UPDATES

FROM AROUND THE TRAPS

Kimberley and below (read that as the rest of the west) edition.

Vale Len and Rocky

We lost two long time marine rescue volunteers in December. VMRWA would like to again extend our condolences to the families of Len Hunt from Marine Rescue Carnarvon and Rocky Prouse from Marine Rescue Derby. Both had contributed literally many decades to the Marine Rescue services of the two communities and will be respectfully missed by all, especially family and marine rescue members alike. Stay safe and look after everyone.



As sad as this was, there was also significant "stuff" happening in Derby that was important and had to be formally recognised. What was this "stuff"?

Delivery of R.V. Pritchett to Marine Rescue Derby

Located on King Sound in the West Kimberley, Derby experiences the third largest tidal range in the world. Anything from a low tide of 0.36 metres, to 11.78 m at high tide—a difference of 11.42 m! This creates a unique problem for the Folks at Marine Rescue Derby. To allow their rescue vessel to operate at low tide it has to be moored way out in the Bay. The group needed a smaller shallower draught vessel safely transfer crew and stores to the RV Volunteer as well as navigating the many tidal creeks where sometimes people get into trouble. It was only a few years back now that the Group rescued two people who had been trapped by a rapidly rising tide after walking up a creek to go fishing. The Group still got them back with the big boat but only just.

The new vessel christened R.V. *Pritchett* in honour of Brett Pritchett who like many others has contributed to the Group in a significant way. The vessel is a 4.2 metre aluminium powered by a 70 HP outboard.



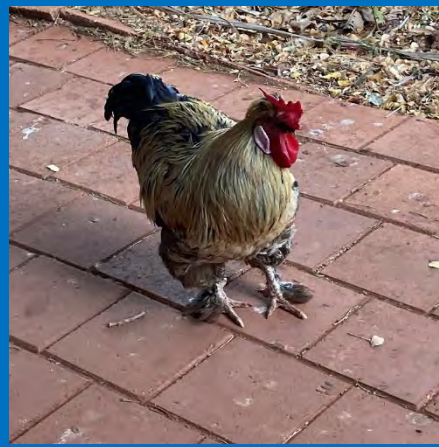
VMRWA welcomes Derby's new Commander Owen Rouse, seen here with Jeff Palmer (he's the guy in the pink cap)



Derby just received their small new RV specifically set up to safely transfer crew and stores to the RV Volunteer when it is moored in the gulf



The new boat was a mission to get through the regulatory process, it was completed just before Christmas 2023 and was transported to Derby by VMRWA's resident trucking duo Dan and Jeff



Chris Viney from Applied Graphics completing the branding on the vessel at the VMRWA shed in Henderson prior to trucking it up.

A late-night stopover at Sandfire Roadhouse was part of the trip and the local alarm was brutal, efficient but loud as.

Vessel got all of the electronics installed and a quick tidy up at Barneys shed before the official presentation.



And with the RV Pritchett all sorted it was off to the Derby shed before Brett arrived...

Brett and his good wife Judy arriving for the big reveal. The name of the new vessel was the best kept secret in Derby by miles.

Brett's family were there for the occasion.



Marine Rescue Derby Group stalwart, Jeff Palmer was presented with a special gift, an engraved plaque, in recognition of his many decades of dedicated service to both the Group and the community.

Jeff and Dan managed to avoid the Nor'west monsoon on this trip, but only just if this photo is any indication.



It was very hot and humid and before anyone thinks that Dan and Jeff were "wandering around enjoying the Kimberleys". Not quite, the vessel got there safely, the presentation went well, as always the volunteers were great company and we were able to assist with restoring some radio communications at the base, the accommodation great, top shelf meals even though it wasn't peak time but the temperature and humidity up there was at a very different level than what we had come from down south.

A few months later the weather would have been ideal.

The overnight stop at Billabong on the way home included their highly recommended and extremely well priced mixed grill.



INTERNATIONAL CANADIAN VISITOR



We were privileged to host Jean Demers who is a fellow volunteer with the Canadian Coastguard Auxiliary (marine rescue) in the Quebec City Area.

WA is a long way from Quebec, when he left it was a chilly -10° C and arrived here for a balmy 43°C. He did notice the change but to his credit stood up to it pretty well.

His group patrols the St Lawrence Seaway which is plainly in "stand down" mode due to ice covering the sea lanes with only ice breakers and large ships allowed to navigate the channel during this time.



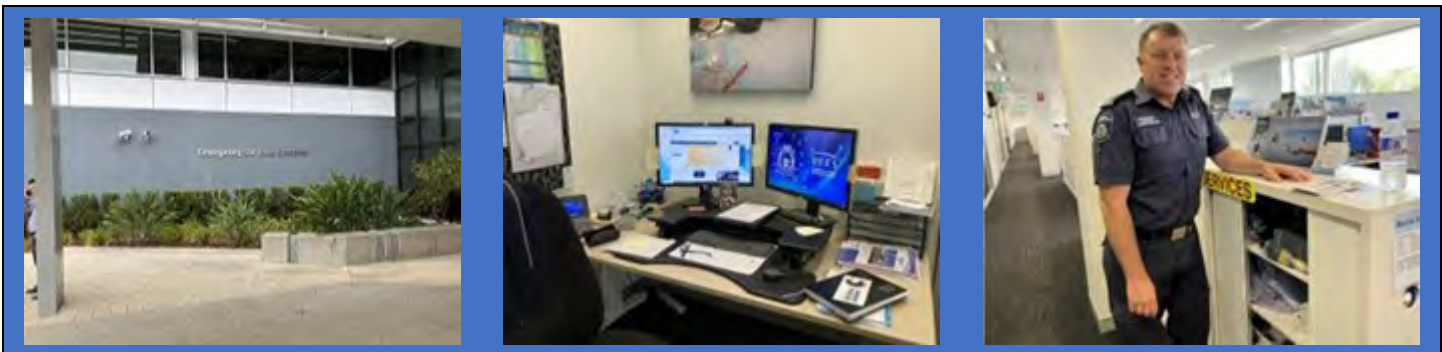
It was of great interest that we shared many commonalities (other than our vessels are sea going while theirs are river based), in the training sector, funding (albeit with a few differences), plus issues around volunteers including recruitment and retention.



We had a good look over the Cockburn Marine Rescue facility, including "RV Sardam" and the VMRWA truck. Jean showed almost a level of disbelief when we told him the distances travelled towing vessels around the State.



A quick visit to Kirby Marine Fabrication to look at a NAIAD getting refitted and a few refits and builds in progress invoked many questions and a flurry of pictures to take home and share with his fellow volunteers.



The day was rounded out with a visit to DFES in Cockburn where Marine Services Manager Mark Eatts showed him what our overall plan is and a quick tour of the operations area.

I think it went well and he was certainly impressed with what he saw and learned about marine rescue in WA.

WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN HAPPENING

Well, Dan has been out and about all over the State assisting with the delivery of training and that won't have slowed down any time soon.



Tom Reed has left Denmark and travelled westwards to Peaceful Bay for its refit.

RV Sardam is heading to Exmouth for a large scale multi agency exercise. Quick visit then returning home.

The SAREX conducted in Exmouth was well attended and we received good feedback from all that attended. DFES District Officer Bec Benson posted the following report:

PILBARA SAREX 2024

Could never have dreamt how good this year's event would turn out.

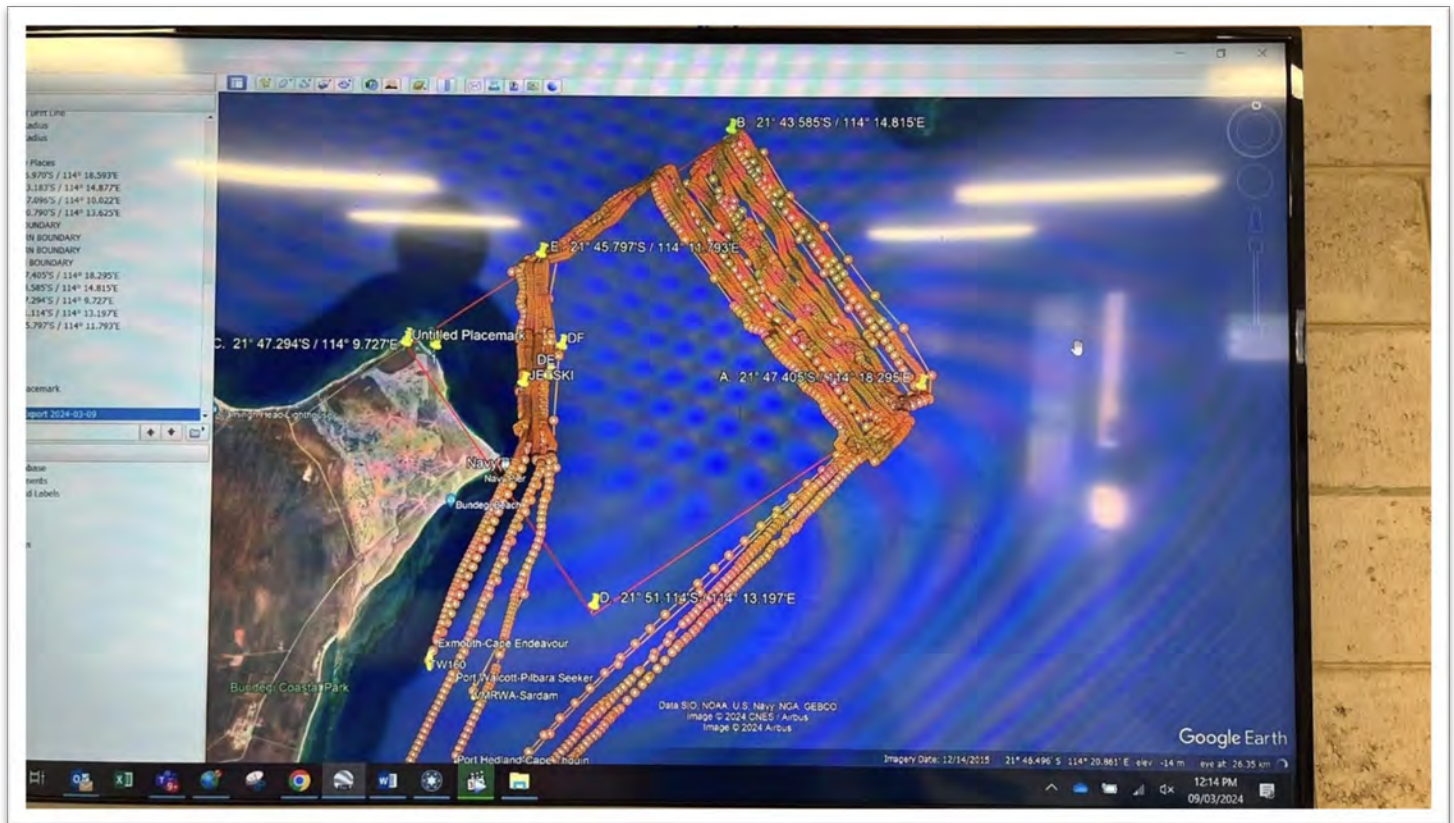
Over the weekend Marine Rescue Exmouth hosted the 2024 Regional Marine Search and Rescue Exercise led by WA Water Police Sergeant Craig Anderson. Not only did all 5 marine rescue groups from the entire length of the Pilbara coastline attend, but so did a whole crew of water police officers who sailed their magnificent vessel Cygnet all the way up from Fremantle to be part of the drill. Also in attendance was VMRWA with their vessel Sardam up from Perth, Marine Rescue Coral Bay, Exmouth SES land search team, local Police Officers, DFES Community Preparedness and Engagement from Perth, Shire of Exmouth and DoT.





The IMT and radio operators back at base didn't have an easy task either managing distressed family members and surprise news reporter April O'Neil.

Over multiple taskings of night and day searching, this collaborative team were not only able to successfully rescue "Pierre Dyver" who fell from the Navy Pier, but also spontaneous volunteers "Nick Toff" and "Amy Stake" after they located their beached tinny "MTV55L".



Thank you to frontline rescuers for giving your time to the exercise and also to all those behind the scenes in the preparation, planning and execution of this record breaking marine rescue event for WA's north west.



Marine Rescue Augusta

Well, Marine Rescue Augusta is powering along, with the builders doing what they do best, that is building. We cannot wait for the completion it should be something special. 😊

Check out their new Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553737995427>



WELCOME SAM

We need to welcome to the new South Coast Regional Commander Sam Karamfiles from the downtown Windy Harbour Group.



We are sure he will be a worthy replacement for Alex Williams who keeps sending pictures of bloody koala bears in the wild back to us in the west, apparently, he understands how much that it pi\$@es off some of us that remain in the western half of the country.

To test the executive's ability to adapt, we stress tested both Sam and the VMRWA Commander by using the train to catch up with VMRWA's Vice Commander Dan (a frequent flyer).

It was Sam's first crack at the train and Jeff's third trip, all passed, albeit they were at different coffee shops with the same name — oops.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can now get the Marine VHF operator's certificate without having to leave home.

The Australian Maritime College (AMC) have made exams and practical assessments able to be done online using the aXcelerate training management app. They have also made self-study material available on their website on the [HANDBOOKS & REVISION QUESTIONS page](#).

VMRWA have developed a FREE Online Self-Study Course to assist you to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to legally operate your marine VHF radio.

Applications for the [FREE ONLINE VHF MARINE RADIO COURSE](#) are available on the [VMRWA website](#):



Nominate Now!

Women in Volunteer Emergency Services Forum

Nominations are still open for female volunteers to join the Women in Volunteer Emergency Services Forum.

The Forum is promoting cultural change in relation to gender equality in emergency services volunteering. This is achieved through the provision of advice, advocacy and the creation of trusted relationships.

If you are passionate about issues affecting the participation of women in emergency services, we invite you to complete a nomination to be involved within making the volunteer journey more equitable for women.

The Forum will have two representatives from each service.

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Find more information and the link to the nomination form on the Volunteer Hub at:

<https://www.volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/home/news-circulars/news/news-details/2024/04/21/women-in-volunteer-emergency-services-forum#news-article>

Situations Vacant

Trainer/Assessor Course – we can never have enough trainer assessors to share the load and help fellow marine rescue volunteers. Talk to your regional DFES District Officer about course availability.

VMRWA Regional Commanders are always in need particularly the Great Southern region, think about it, call any VMRWA Committee person and give it a go. All contact details are in the 2024 VMRWA Diary or on the VMRWA website at: <https://www.vmrwa.org.au/our-committee>.

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