

REX SCOTT

INSHORE SKIPPER

JOINED VMR NOVEMBER 2011

WHY DID I JOIN VMR?

I was born and raised on Macleay Island in Moreton Bay. I went by boat to school on Russell Island, and then by boat and bus to Cleveland High School via Redland Bay. When I left school I completed an apprenticeship with Peters Slip P/L (Ship outfitters & Repairer's) at Kangaroo Point. This was back when we had a ship building industry. You could say there's a bit of salt in my vein's.

When I retired fully in 2009, after a career in the furniture and building industries (with a couple of stints in seismic survey and sand mining), I still needed purpose in life. I have never been any good at sitting around watching the grass grow, so I guess VMR was a natural fit for me. My first crew was with Green Crew on the 8th November 2011. Conflicting commitments meant I had to move to Yellow Crew and almost 7 years later I'm still there, and they still put up with me!!!!

I now hold a current marine industry commercial qualification in the form of " Coxswain Grade 1 Near Coastal ", as well as a Skipper ranking with VMR.

Looking back, I thought I knew a bit about boats, but now I realise that VMR is the Organisation you come to, to find out " How much you don't know about boating".

WHAT DO I ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING A MEMBER OF VMR?

In a word, the "people". The people who make up the volunteer work force in Administration, Radio and Crew come from all walks of life, are of different ages, and all are there for different reasons.

What is common amongst us all is the need to be socially engaged and contributing to society. The safety of the general boating public is our contribution.

Then there's the people we assist, whether they be members or not. When they get into trouble for whatever reason, they are invariably very happy to see VMR .

It can be as serious as saving their lives, returning a lost soul to their loved ones, or as simple as retrieving their drifting ' tinnie '. Each job has it's own challenges and to me, the satisfaction of a successful outcome, money can't buy!!!!

WHAT IS THE MOST MEMORABLE ACTIVATION YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN?

There have been many, but the one that stands out above the rest was late on a Sunday afternoon, almost dark, and the crew were finalising the jobs for the day, refuelling and cleaning the boats as usual. We received a phone report from the Water Police that someone was tangled up in the mangroves in the South Arm of the Coomera River in a 16 foot Sailing Cat. The location of the vessel was also relatively unknown as the caller to Police was quite unsure of their position.

Given we were still operational, and *Marine Rescue 2* was still in the water, we dispatched hastily to try and catch the last of the daylight. The tide was almost high at the Seaway. This gave us a small window of lag in the Coomera River and the search commenced on the Coomera Island side between Rat Island and Hope Harbour. The boatie had a mobile phone, however his battery was almost flat, and the GPS coordinates he had given to the Police were somewhat incorrect, placing him in a distant area on the mainland. We soon twigged to the fact that his coordinates were written in a different format to marine, but when re-plotted, this placed him in a location that was still not possible, or so we thought !!

There is a drain / inlet opposite the Salacia Waters apartment building at Paradise Point that runs west then north west into Coomera Island. Normally it would be a struggle to get in there in any vessel, but on this particular weekend the Gold Coast had experienced a significant sea surge on top of a spring tide.

As we slowly progressed, at very slow speed into this channel, we were continually amazed that we never had less than a metre of water to contend with. The tide was at its very top and the exposed mangroves



were closing in on us. Radio transmission was ineffective that far into the mangroves so with only phone communication, one eye on the depth, and the other eye following the spot light beam we inched forward. Eventually we could go no further because our boat wasn't going to fit because of over hanging branches.

The current had gone slack. We had to get out of our position immediately, or we would need rescuing!!!

Our final effort was to go silent, use the spot lights and our voices. Soon we heard a faint voice in a foreign language return our call. Around the last bend visible in our spotlight beam came a man hauling a painter (that's a bow line used for handling a vessel) attached to a Sailing Cat. Only his head and shoulders were above water and the cat's mast and rigging was banging into the overhead vegetation.

We yelled to the man to tie his vessel to a tree and swim to us immediately. We were about to dive in to assist him but he complied, and eventually he was alongside us and we lifted him onto our vessel. Communication difficulties aside, it was very apparent he was suffering from hypothermia. He was incoherent and wanting to close his eyes. We kept him sitting upright, removed his wet clothes, dried and wrapped him in blanket's, and kept him talking. Returning him to the boat ramp, I walked him to his car and stayed with him till he got dressed and using my phone he spoke to his wife.

The thought crossed our minds many times that night that had he not got out of there, he might not still be around to tell his story.

WHAT DO I DO IN MY SPARE TIME?

My wife of 46 years lets me go fishing occasionally. We also have a 2 1/2 year old grandson who I adore, and look after 2 days a week (every fisherman needs a mate).

A few years ago I built a wooden Sabre class sailing dinghy. Together we won the State titles in her class 4 years in a row.

These days I also tinker about designing, building and racing IOM radio control yachts.

Currently however, all my remaining efforts have been directed to creating the new training hub at VMR Southport.

I am also assisting in the process of replacing one of the vessels in our Rescue fleet.

MY FUTURE INTENTIONS WITH VMR

To continue to enjoy what I do, and hopefully contribute to the great work the Organisation does.