

National Volunteer Week

20-26 MAY 2024

Something for Everyone

National Volunteer Week, May 20-26, invites the community to discover the power of volunteering with the theme Something for Everyone.

To find out more, visit volunteeringaustralia.org

"He's taught all of us search patterns and how the drift is with Moreton Bay," Jonathan says.

"His knowledge of the Bay and the drift and the currents is unreal. He knows every sandbank out there."

Roy quips: "I've hit every sandbank out there".

In an era before GPS, Roy says it was a process of 'dead reckoning' navigation.

"Even in searches ... we're looking in the wrong spot and Roy says, 'No, they're here' and we go to where Roy says and we find them," Jonathan adds.

Part of Roy's role, these days, is to teach volunteers how to operate without GPS.

"I miss it at times, being called out (on rescues), but then I think I'm warm and dry they're cold and wet," he says.

"I leave it for these fellows now."

Jonathan says his input at the base is as important as ever.

"If you're ever missing at sea, you want Roy here," he says.

Roy has seen plenty of changes during the past five decades, not

just with technology but also a surge in volunteers from 10 to 110, and the array of locations they've used as bases.

The Coast Guard started operating from a house on Oxley Ave in 1973 before using spaces underneath members' houses as radio rooms. The organisation was then given a shed by Redcliffe council at the end of Thurecht's Jetty.

"It had a wooden floor and when the tide came in, we got six inches of water through the bottom of it but we had our radios up high," Roy recalls.

It was their base for about six months before they moved into a donated caravan positioned at the end of the Scarborough boat ramp.

"We worked from there until such time as we could afford to get our first building here in 1980," he says.

"Most of our money has come from fundraising and charitable organisations and other donations and sponsors. Without them we couldn't survive."

Many people are surprised to learn Coast Guard Redcliffe is a volunteer-based organisation which relies on community support and its own fundraising to do its work.

"Most people think because you wear a uniform, you're a government department," Roy says.

In fact, volunteers have had to buy their own uniforms, pay membership fees, pay for training and first aid qualifications. From 1973-79, they used their own boats and

paid for fuel.

It was something they were willing to do in their bid to serve the community.

So, what has kept Roy involved in the organisation for 50 years?

"The camaraderie. You feel like you're doing something for somebody and you're not asking for a handout from them. You do it because you want to do it and that's it," he explains.

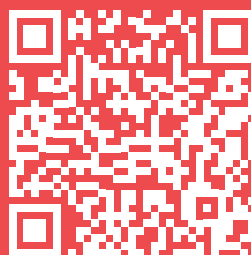
"It's a thing that's got to be inside you to do this sort of work. If you're not interested in that sort of work, you may as well get out of it because you'll get disappointed very quickly."

When asked how many more years he plans to volunteer, Roy does not hesitate in his answer.

"How long is a piece of string?" he says.

"My brother is 97 and he still plays golf, so I've still got a pretty good chance being here a few more years."

To find out more about Coast Guard Redcliffe, visit the Facebook page.



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