



FREEMASONS TO THE RESCUE

BY KEITH INGRAM

Coastguard Kapiti Coast was formed in February 2006 from the then coastguard units of the Kapiti Boating Club and the Waikanae Boating Club. The two units at that time were finding it difficult to continue serving their own clubs as well as the national Coastguard organisation. Also, the boating clubs were losing direct control over of the assets and operations of the coastguard sections.

The Kapiti section had its genesis in the early days of the Kapiti Boating Club (around 1957) when a primary reason for the club was the cooperative safety network provided by all members and their boats working together and looking after each other on this isolated (and often rough) bit of coast. This developed into dedicated rescue unit in the 1980s.

The Waikanae Boating Club was formed in the 1960s and its coastguard section developed in a similar way. The units came together in 2006.

With two aging dedicated rescue vessels, based at Paraparaumu and Waikanae – *Pharazyn Rescue* launched in 1991, and Kapiti's *K2 Rescue* launched in 2009 – the demands for a larger vessel able to range further and to handle larger seas was putting the pressure on the unit's operations.

As with any local Coastguard rescue unit, the task of fundraising for new or improved vessels is often daunting. Not only was a new, larger vessel required, but this would also require a larger special trailer, and a tractor to launch it off the beach.

This task took three years and was only achieved by the dogged determination of senior member Pete Woodward who left no stone unturned in his efforts to ensure the project would succeed. As the unit's fundraising officer, he oversaw the raising of more than \$300,000 towards the new rescue launch.

The new boat (including new tractor and trailer) would replace the 27-year-old *Pharazyn Rescue*, which had spent her whole life as a Coastguard rescue vessel. She has served Kapiti Coast very well over the years, taking part in several thousand rescue searches and even more hours of training exercises.

"As we go out in all types of weather, and we build a strong affection for our boats, it will be sad to see her go, but the time is right for a new replacement rescue vessel," said Pete Woodward.

Christened *Freemasons Rescue* in recognition of a \$100,000 donation from the Lodge, the new boat will be a huge leap forward in terms of layout, equipment and electronics as well as being faster, more economical and safer to operate.

"None of the funds of the \$100,000 cheque have come from the public, as nothing has been done through public fundraising. Everything has come from our own organisation within the Lodge," said Freemasons Divisional Grand Master Jim Watt.

The community-focused organisation had been keen to help after hearing about the project from Coastguard member Pete Woodward, who is also a Freemason. "The donation, raised over four years, was from all the Lodges in the Wellington region, and had been met dollar-for-dollar by the Freemasons Charity," said Jim Watt.

CHOOSING SENATOR

Based on a reputation of safety, great handling in rough seas and long term durability – Senator Boats was chosen to build the new



Freemason Rescue under construction at Senator Boats factory

rescue vessel for the Kapiti Coastguard Unit.

Coastguard member Jerry Bardon was given the job of overseeing the build, as the owner's representative to project manage the job, meaning for the boat builder and sub-contractors there was only one voice to deal with. As with any new build this was important for all concerned, even though it put a huge amount of pressure on an already willing volunteer, juggling his fulltime job, Coastguard call outs, and meeting the demands

from the committee. This is something the committee is now extremely grateful for.

Built by Senator Boats in Napier, the vessel is based on the Senator model RH860 with a LOA of 9.1m. She is highly modified, and is reportedly the first ever aluminium pontoon hulled boat to be commissioned for Coastguard rescue work.

The hull has many additional safety features, such as extra buoyancy chambers, higher top sides, additional strengthening ▶

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Beach launching and recovery remains an occupational hazard



The 'nav' and conning position



A bunch of Coastguard turkey's come home to roost

throughout the hull, a strengthened tow post and forward-facing windows (another first for Senator).

CONSTRUCTION

The hull, pontoons and cabin structure are constructed in 5083 marine alloy plate. The additional buoyancy and higher sides already mentioned mean she meets the Maritime NZ stability and swamp tests.

Also, underfloor ahead of the machinery bay, is a large resilient mounted 680 litres fuel tank.

With an enclosed deckhouse and cabin, the forward-facing reverse sheer windows provide for more space at the helm and command stations. They also, along with the eyebrow, offer extra visibility, minimal glare and reduced issues associated with spray. Remember this is a large, beach-launched vessel, where operating in the surf is an occupational hazard.

While the cockpit remains dominated by the engine cowling, there is ample room to walk down each side to the transom.

Port side is a small transom door allowing access to the large reinforced recovery platform across the stern. We also note the specially-designed tow post, engineered into the hull above the transom, slightly ahead of the water jet steering nozzle.

To meet the extensive Maritime NZ towing and stability

requirements, this vessel has undergone significant design development and naval architect assessment, resulting in a highly customised vessel to suit the Coastguard units requirements.

There is a large raised air intake at the forward end on the engine bay, with a similar raised hot air exhaust above the transom – ensuring plenty of dry air to the machinery space.

Up top we find the raydome – aerials and light standard aft, which may be folded down to fit in the shed. In keeping with modern trends, the exterior has been vinyl wrapped in Coastguard colours.

COCKPIT

Once inside the cabin, this has been tastefully finished in non-reflecting soft grey frontrunner cloth which adds warmth and softens background noises. There are bolster lumber stand-up support positions for six crew.

The main helm and conning position are to starboard, with the Nav' station to port. Two 19 inch EVO electronic screen displays enable the multi-function use of the 4G radar, plotter and depth sounder as well as the main engine display panel at both stations. The depth sounder is fitted with a tough-hull transducer which reads extremely well at speed and even when



A view of the proven Senator hull in action



Tight in the turns during sea trials

in the surf.

There are three VHF marine radios for communications, AIS as well as the Coastguard's own 'Trackplus' system. All lighting and control switches remain at ease of hand on the forward dash panels.

Moving forward into the small cuddy cabin we find a stowage rack for all the emergency kits carried on board, a small space to starboard offers a small rest area and there is a chemical loo, 'portapotti' tucked into the forepeak under a lift up panel. As with most Coastguard units the rules here are 'he or she who use it - cleans it'.

Overhead is an emergency escape hatch, which also can give access to the fenced cockpit where we find the spare man, and anchor, and a small capstan for working the anchor rode.

POWER

Freemasons Rescue is powered by a Volvo Penta D6-435 WJ 435hp marine diesel engine, coupled to a ZF280 marine gearbox which is linked by a short jack shaft to a Hamilton HJ274 water jet propulsion. When we questioned the added use of a gear box, member Rob Faulk advised; "When launching off the beach we incur a lot of floating weed and debris. This can have an immediate impact on power and thrust. In the past we have ►

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had to stop the engine and restart, which can be a bit ‘heart in mouth stuff’. This way we can now give a quick reverse thrust, to clear the debris and we are away safe and sound” he said.

It was interesting to note that this model of the 5.5 litre marine engine from Volvo Penta has been specifically designed for water jet applications, delivering 1047Nm @ 3500rpm.

Although the installation is tight, there is access for daily servicing once the lid is lifted and folded back.

During sea trials at 4,500kg deadweight on the water, *Freemasons Rescue* maxed out at 3,515rpm – delivering an impressive top speed of 35 knots, and giving an optimal cruise speed for the vessel between 19 to 24 knots depending on conditions.

In these conditions she delivered a fuel burn of 2 litres of fuel per nautical mile, thus giving a range of approximately 340nm.

This means Kapiti Coast Coastguard now has some pretty long legs, and can cover a wide search area if required.


TRAILER

Cradled on its purpose-built triple-axle trailer, the rig is towed by a John Deere 6330 100hp 4x4 tractor and able to be beach-launched in most conditions.

The trailer has a reversible ‘A’ frame where the substantial spigots can be slid in or out and pinned at either end of the trailer, enabling the vessel and trailer to be reversed for bow launching into the surf.

In summary, this is a very mobile large rig to enable launching on an open surf beach.

So when the balloon goes up and needs-must, these hard working volunteers need the best possible equipment they can get, to continue saving lives on this part of our sou-west coast.

Freemasons Rescue has been designed and built to do the job – and she will do it well. 

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	9.1m
Length of Hull	8.6m
Beam	2.6m
Draft	400mm
Deadrise	16 degrees
Weight	4,500 kgs
Builder	Senator Boats
Construction	Marine alloy
Power	Volvo Penta D6-435 WJ 435hp marine diesel engine
Propulsion	Hamilton HJ274 waterjet

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