



**COASTGUARD**  
THE CHARITY SAVING LIVES AT SEA



**Coastguard Supporter Newsletter** | Winter 2020

# From your 'bubble' you saved lives at sea - thank you!



**Without hesitation, brave Coastguard volunteers left their own 'bubbles' to respond to 14 emergencies during the COVID-19 lockdown. They are used to risking their own lives to save others at sea and COVID-19 was no exception. But you kept them safe by helping to provide rescue crews with PPE to wear while they were on the water saving lives. Thank you.**

During alert level four, Coastguard volunteers were called out nine times to evacuate suspected COVID-19 patients from Waiheke Island to Auckland.

Coastguard Auckland Skipper, Bennett Medary, was one of the brave volunteers on board Lion Foundation Rescue

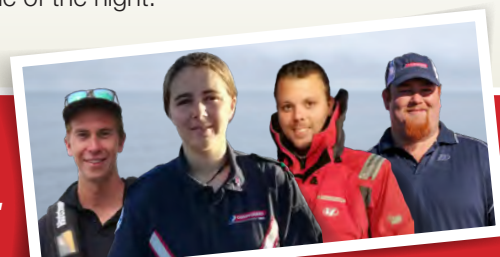
transporting suspected COVID-19 patients to Auckland for hospital care.

Bennett remembers one of the rescues where he was called out in the middle of the night.

*Continued over.*

**Young volunteers are the future of Coastguard.**  
*Who was awarded Coastguard Supporter Young Volunteer of the Year?*

**SEE  
INSIDE...**





## From your 'bubble' you saved lives at sea – thank you! *(Continued)*

"In lockdown there was a new element we had to consider. Coastguard has lots of procedures around staying safe, but in the COVID world we had extra safety precautions in place."

Coastguard volunteers are trained to be all hands on deck, but in this case it had to be 'hands off.' Our volunteers could have no contact with the patient or paramedics whilst on board to reduce any risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Bennett and the crew recalled what happened one cold, pitch black night. Before the crew of four (including two St John paramedics) could set off a safety briefing took place. Everyone knew the risks but it was vital all were aware of the precautions in place to keep them safe.

As the crew arrived at Matiatia and pulled up to the dock they were met by paramedics and the very unwell patient. The patient, slumped in a wheelchair in full PPE (white overalls, face shield, gloves and gown) looked very weak.

"It was a confronting moment," recalled Bennett. "For the people who potentially had COVID it was very frightening, we could see how weak they were. For us it really highlighted how important our role was. We were their

lifeline to getting the help they desperately needed. It was our job to get them across the water safely."

The journey back to Auckland was quiet. Paramedics and the patient were isolated in the ambulance bay on board. For Coastguard volunteers it was strange not having direct physical contact with the patient to comfort and reassure them.

The team were met by an awaiting ambulance ready to take the patient to Auckland Hospital.

When Bennett got home that night reality sunk in. His family were extremely worried about his encounter with someone who might have COVID-19. Being in the thick of alert level four, they took no chances with their bubble.

"When I arrived home my wife was standing at the door and wouldn't let me come inside immediately. All the clothes I was wearing were washed straight away and I wasn't allowed near my family until I'd showered."

**"It was risky leaving our bubbles, but as Coastguard volunteers we are there for Kiwis in their time of need, no matter what."**

**Thank you for supporting Bennett and his volunteer crew.**

“  
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to getting the help  
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”

Bennett Medary,  
Coastguard Volunteer



**Your support meant Coastguard volunteers were on the frontline helping others during a national crisis.**

Volunteering involves commitment, energy and time away from the family, and in this case even extra risk. But like you, Coastguard volunteers want to help others - they are Kiwis risking their own lives to save the lives of others.



# Everyday Wellingtonians, saving lives at sea because of heroes like you!

Thanks to you, Coastguard Wellington have two rescue boats and seven crews of highly skilled volunteers ready to respond to the 50 to 70 call outs they receive each year.

For the volunteers at Wellington, the unit is like a second family made up of humble heroes like Nurses Amy and Louisa, Software Developers Liz and Warwick, Builder Nick, Doctor Alice and Audiologist Hilary – their bonds strengthened through teamwork on the water and quality time spent together on land.

“

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Coastguard Wellington sits in the heart of the capital. Crewed by 75 dedicated volunteers, the close-knit unit is on call 24/7 to assist boaties in distress around Wellington Harbour and the Cook Strait.

When its volunteers aren't assisting boaties they are often training with other lifesaving organisations (like the Wellington Police Maritime Unit and the Life Flight Helicopter), supporting community events on the water, fundraising or ensuring vessels and the unit base are in tip-top shape.

**Like all our 63 units, Coastguard Wellington can only save lives at sea because of everyday heroes like you. Thank you for providing our units and volunteers with lifesaving equipment. Thank you for being a lifesaver.**



The Wellington crew saving lives at sea thanks to you!

## 21 year old Kate Stewart awarded Young Volunteer of the Year - thanks to you!

**Coastguard supporters voted and this year's Coastguard Supporter Young Volunteer of the Year Award goes to 21 year old Kate Stewart from Coastguard Mana!**

Kate's Coastguard journey started when she was just 16 years old. Five years on she's now a senior crew member, Coastguard Instructor, and has blossomed into a confident leader.

Described by her crew as a 'Coastguard volunteer of the future,' Kate has an eagerness to learn, the confidence to teach others and dedication to help people when they need it most. Thank you for supporting young volunteers like Kate - you're helping shape Coastguard's future!

We'd also like to recognise and thank our amazing runners up, Conor Carr, Jamie Breeze and Todd O'Connell – all extraordinary young

people who will save lives at sea long into the future!

**Young volunteers are the future of Coastguard but they can't save lives at sea without you. Thank you for donating to our Coastguard heroes. As you help provide the specialised training and lifesaving equipment they need, you too are saving lives at sea.**

Young Kiwis saving lives at sea:  
Conor, Kate, Jamie and Todd (left to right).



In some parts of the country we're short of new recruits. To find out more about volunteering head to [www.coastguard.nz/volunteer](http://www.coastguard.nz/volunteer)



# Volunteer Q&A

## Meet Ross Wagener

Coastguard Whangaroa

**Thanks to you, volunteers like Ross are trained to save lives at sea and take great pleasure in helping others.**

### What inspired you to volunteer for Coastguard?

I retired early and had time to invest into the community. Boating was a lifelong interest. As a young boy my father had a love for the water and this was obviously inherited. The rest is history!

### How would you describe the qualities of a Coastguard volunteer?

No two Coastguard volunteers are the same. I find they are people who, like myself, have a love for the sea and want to spend time on it. They demand little but are prepared to give lots. And they are team players with a desire to learn who have a willingness to help others in need.

### Who was in your 'bubble' during lockdown and who were you most excited to see afterwards?

My 'bubble' included myself, my wife Joanne as well as my brother-in-law and his partner who live in a self-contained sleep out on our property. After lockdown I was so excited to see my sister who lives 2kms away.

### What part of training does your crew most enjoy?

We really enjoy the practical stuff, the doing it. Training through real time rescue exercises prepares the crew for the next disaster. It's always only a matter of time, not if, but when. Training has to be enjoyable but useful.

### What has been your most rewarding experience at Coastguard?

Teaching others and watching the crew grow within Coastguard is really rewarding. But in terms of rescues, the most memorable was a recent tractor accident where we had three seriously injured and one sadly deceased. We used our years of search and rescue training to be able to save lives. I felt privileged to have experienced the ability to help those so desperately in



Your donations support volunteers like Ross.

need. The personal fulfilment of giving a family the chance to survive is extremely rewarding.

### What do you do when you are not volunteering for Coastguard?

My wife Joanne and I both volunteer for Coastguard, so we spend a lot of time together on the water.

We also renovate houses and currently are waiting to start a new build in Whangaroa. During the summer we also enjoy living on our boat called *Attitude*.

“Coastguard volunteers are people that **demand little** but are prepared to **give lots**.”



**Callum Gillespie**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Coastguard New Zealand

## Thank you so much for helping our heroes save lives at sea!

**Royal New Zealand Coastguard Inc is the charity saving lives at sea**  
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