COASTGUARD
TAUTIAKI MOANA

PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025

Our Purpose

WE ARE THE CHARITY SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

Whether it's sharing all we know through our education programmes, giving a tow back home or coming to someone's rescue, we're here to help boaties so they can fully enjoy the beautiful oceans, lakes, and rivers of Aotearoa - whatever their waka. And we have been since 1976.

Powered by our volunteers and dedicated support staff, we save lives by:

Having the right people, in the right place, to respond to a call for help.

Giving our people the support they need, to enable them to focus on the mission.

Having the right tools and equipment, to complete the mission safely and effectively.

We're built on strong foundations. This means:

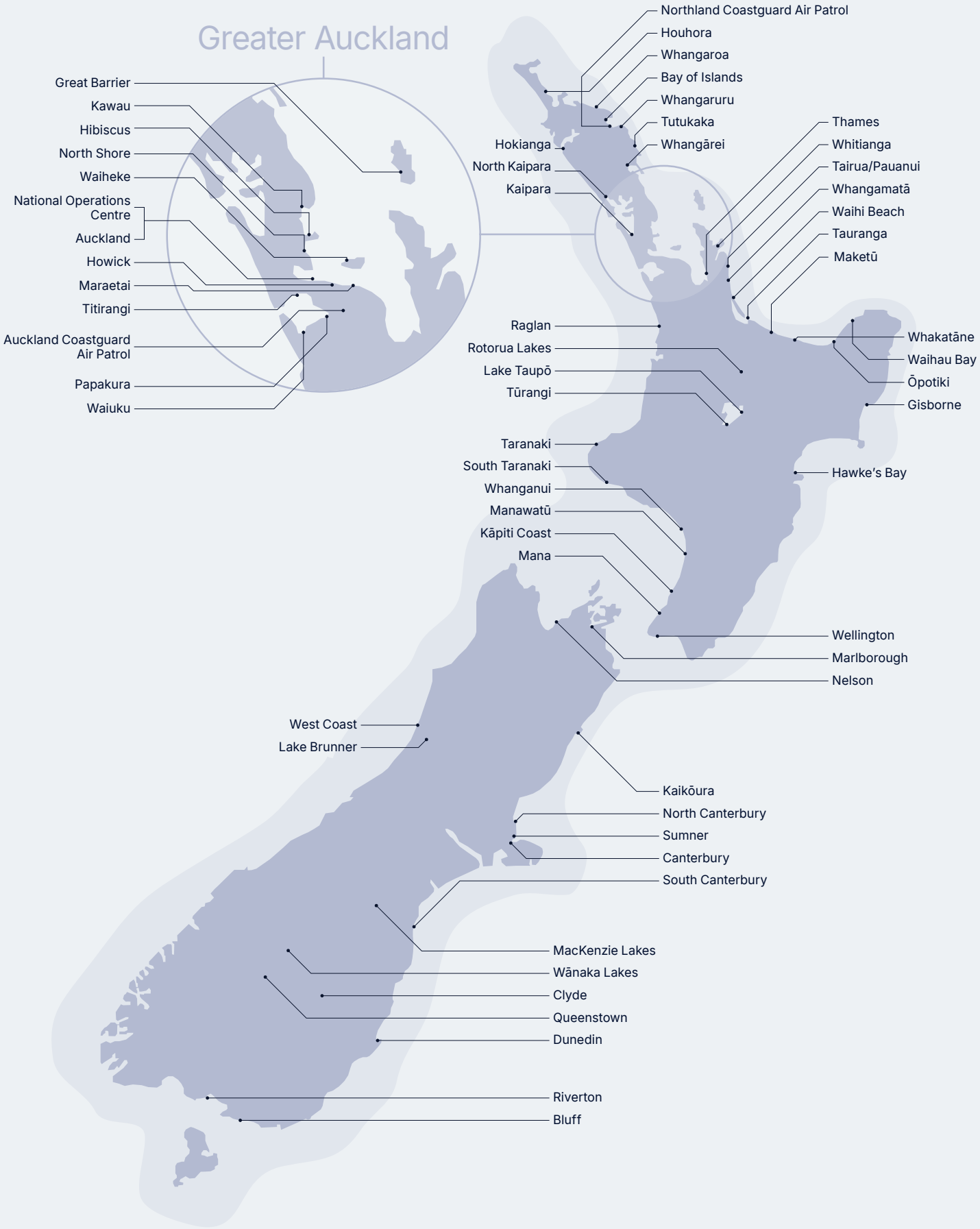
We're sustainably funded.

We have effective governance in place.

We have the skills we need to shape our business.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO WAI ORA AOTEAROA THE NEW ZEALAND WATER SAFETY SECTOR NAVIGATING TO A SAFER FUTURE.

WHERE WE ARE


Greater Auckland
Great Barrier
Kawau
Hibiscus
North Shore
Waiheke
National Operations Centre
Auckland
Howick
Maraetai
Titirangi
Auckland Coastguard Air Patrol
Papakura
Waiuku
Northland Coastguard Air Patrol
Houhora
Whangaroa
Bay of Islands
Whangaruru
Tutukaka
Whangārei
Hokianga
North Kaipara
Kaipara
Thames
Whitianga
Tairua/Pauanui
Whangamatā
Waihi Beach
Tauranga
Maketū
Raglan
Rotorua Lakes
Lake Taupō
Tūrangi
Whakatāne
Waihau Bay
Ōpotiki
Gisborne
Taranaki
South Taranaki
Whanganui
Manawatū
Kāpiti Coast
Mana
Hawke's Bay
Wellington
Marlborough
Nelson
West Coast
Lake Brunner
Kaikōura
North Canterbury
Sumner
Canterbury
South Canterbury
MacKenzie Lakes
Wānaka Lakes
Clyde
Queenstown
Dunedin
Riverton
Bluff

CONTENTS

6 Haere mai

9 The difference we've made

11 Financial highlights

14 Supporting our people

22 Supporting our communities

34 One organisation, many friends

HAERE MAI

Tenā koutou katoa,

Coastguard exists to save lives on the water. Every day, our volunteers, staff, and supporters work together to ensure New Zealanders can enjoy our oceans, lakes, and rivers. Whether it's responding to emergencies, educating communities, or advocating for safe boating practices, our purpose is simple but powerful: saving lives, prevention, and supporting those in need.

The 2024/25 financial year has been a one of meaningful impact and continued evolution. Across Aotearoa, our people have once again demonstrated extraordinary commitment to keeping communities safe on the water.

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, Coastguard responded to 2,785 incidents - both on the water and through our National Operations Centre - bringing 6,792 people home safely. Most importantly, 61 lives were saved thanks to the skill, speed, and dedication of our volunteers and staff. These are not just statistics - they represent families reunited, tragedies averted, and communities supported.

We are deeply grateful to our 2,051 volunteers, who contributed 265,602 hours of their time this year. From search and rescue operations to training, administration, and radio watch, their commitment is the lifeblood of Coastguard. Their generosity and skills continue to inspire us and make a lasting difference across the motu.

Prevention remains a core part of who we are and what we do. Over the past year, we've continued to evolve our education offerings to meet the needs of modern learners, including expanding access to online courses. Our outreach programmes - such as bar awareness seminars, the Old4New lifejacket initiative, and community events - have helped thousands of New Zealanders become safer and more confident on the water. We're proud to work alongside our partners in the water safety sector to deliver initiatives that improve outcomes for all.

Operationally, we've taken steps to better serve growing and remote boating communities. For the second summer running, we deployed a satellite unit in Pelorus Sound, and a permanent base will now be

" OUR PURPOSE IS SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL: SAVING LIVES, PREVENTION, AND SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED"

established there. In Mangawhai, a rising boating population and the need for faster response times have prompted plans for a summer trial in 2025/26 - an exciting development that will bring support closer to a busy coastal area.

We also welcomed new appointments to our senior leadership team at the end of the financial year, including a new CEO. These changes reflect our ongoing commitment to building a future-ready organisation - one that continues to evolve in response to the needs of our people and communities.

We're grateful for the continued support from government, including targeted funding to strengthen our response following severe weather events and upgrade the VHF maritime radio network. We also received confirmation of ongoing general funding for the next three years, ensuring 40% of our operational costs remain covered and allowing us to focus on delivering lifesaving services where they're needed most.

To our volunteers, staff, partners, and supporters - thank you. Your passion and dedication remain the driving force behind Coastguard. Together, we're building a safer, more responsive, and future-focused organisation for all New Zealanders.

Ngā mihi nui.

Bennett Medary
President

Philip Harkness
Chief Executive Officer (Acting)

OUR NEW CEO

I'm incredibly excited to join Coastguard Tautiaki Moana and to be part of an organisation with such a proud legacy of service. Every day, our people - volunteers and staff alike - go above and beyond to support our mission of saving lives on the water. Their commitment, skill, and community spirit are truly inspiring, and I'm honoured to help lead and support their work into the future.

Carl McOnie
Chief Executive Officer
(from June 2025)

COASTGUARD NEW ZEALAND BOARD

Bennett Medary	President
Jerry Bardon	Elected Board Member
Andrew Murray	Elected Board Member
Carolyn Tapley	Elected Board Member
Jacqui Paterson	Elected Board Member
Susan Doughty	Appointed Board Member
Pengbo Jiang	Appointed Board Member
Liz Urquhart	Appointed Board Member

62
Units

2
Search Aircraft

101
Rescue Vessels
84 boats and 17 jet skis

13
locations providing
24/7 radio watch

THE DIFFERENCE WE'VE MADE

	2024/25	2023/24
Incidents **Category 1:** Locally coordinated operations usually involving resources & people familiar with the area	388	347
Category 2: Operations usually involving national or international resources	16	19
CGOPS: Events reported which are not CAT 1 or 2 E.g. assistance or towing	2,381	2,501
Total incidents	2,785	2,867
Lives assisted Where SAR agencies aid a person or people at low risk, but who, if left, would be at risk	6,792	7,196
Lives saved Where, if SAR agencies had not intervened, life could have been lost.	61*	48**
Radio calls received	201,585	218,169
App trip reports	57,156	55,914

**Includes one incident involving 14 people*
*** New measures reported within the current year*

THE DIFFERENCE WE'VE MADE IN EDUCATION

	2024/25	2023/24
Learners enrolled	5,587	6,332
Programmes delivered	19	27*
Māori, Pasifika, and Chinese learners reached through drowning prevention programmes	465	727
Online and distance learners	4,784	3,389*
Students enrolled on the Certificate in Domestic Maritime Operations (CIDMO) programme	45	41*
Children learners enrolled on our Safe Boating courses across pools and aquatic centres nationally	100,355	85,876

**New measures reported within the current year*

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Turning numbers into impact.

At Coastguard, success isn't measured in dollars - it's measured in lives saved, families reunited, and communities made safer. Every dollar we receive and spend is a step toward a safer and stronger connection between people and the water.

In the year ending 30 June 2025, Coastguard New Zealand's total revenue was **$33.630 million**, with expenses of **$33.475 million**, resulting in a reported net surplus of **$168,680** - a testament to careful stewardship in a challenging financial climate.

But the real story lies in what these numbers made possible:

- **Search and Rescue operations,** which accounted for **85.2% of our expenses ($25.528 million**), meant that thousands of boaties in distress received help when they needed it most. These operations are the heartbeat of Coastguard - powered by volunteers, backed by funding, and driven by purpose.
- **Education programmes,** representing **10.6% of our expenses ($3.559 million)**, helped people across Aotearoa gain the skills and confidence to stay safe on the water. From school sessions to boating safety courses, this investment is about prevention, empowerment, and long-term change.
- **Communications costs** of **$1.396 million (4.2%)** supported the critical radio and communications systems that kept or teams connected, responsive, and coordinated - because in emergencies, every second counts.

On the revenue side:

- **Membership grew by 9.6%,** showing that more New Zealanders are making smart decisions to invest in peace of mind.
- **Government funding of $14.00 million (41.6% of income)** provided a vital foundation for our operations, allowing us to plan, respond, and grow sustainably.

AT COASTGUARD, SUCCESS ISN'T MEASURED IN DOLLARS - IT'S MEASURED IN LIVES SAVED, FAMILIES REUNITED, AND COMMUNITIES MADE SAFER

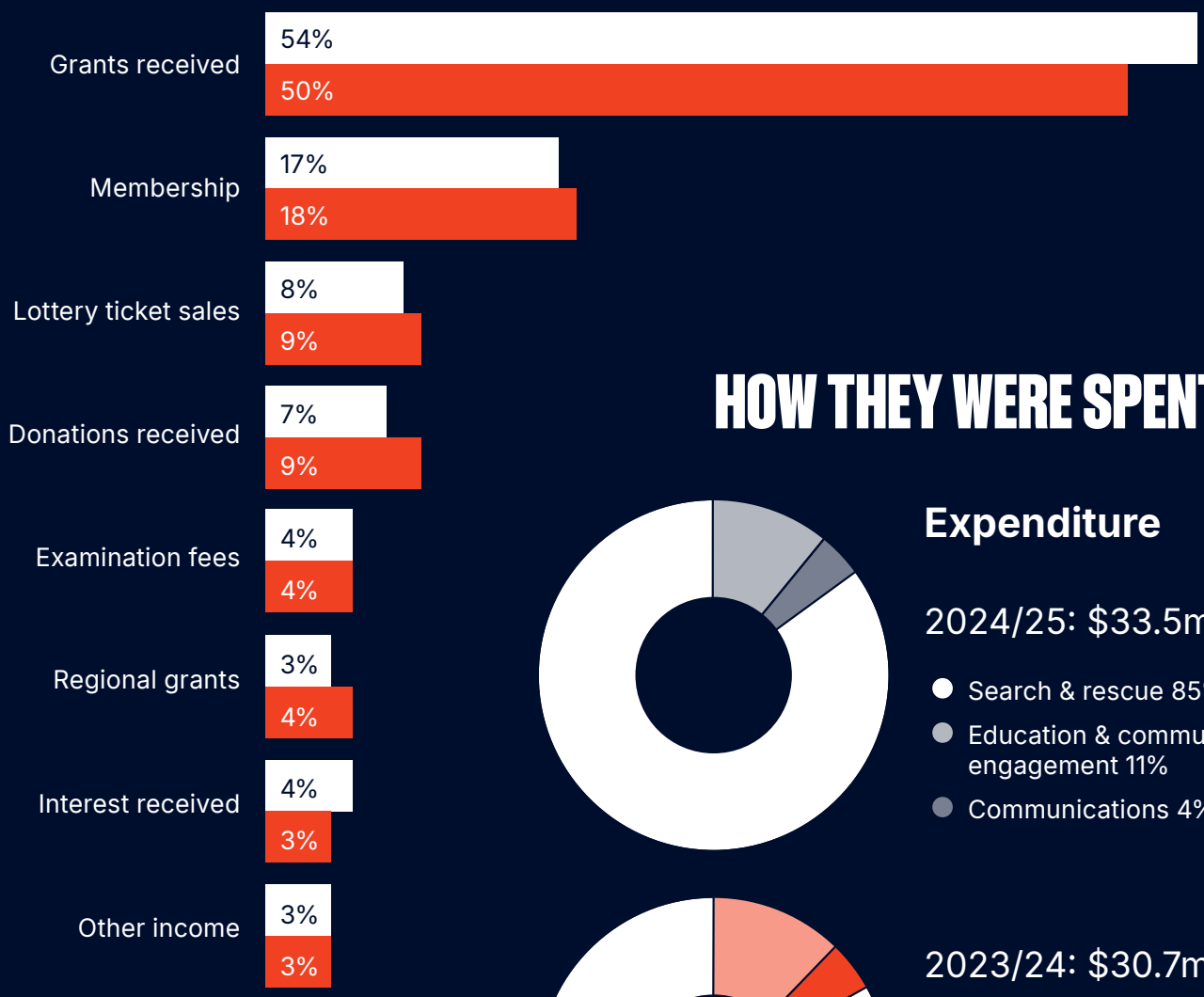
SUPPORTING OUR UNITS THE HIGHLIGHTS

	2024/25	2023/24
Additional PPE Getting volunteers the right equipment	$663,038	$418,233
Operational support Covering some of the day-to-day costs	$795,855	$840,950
Training project Building a future-proof training programme	$200,056	$369,236
Lottery & membership commission The benefit of new members and lottery ticket sales	$1,498,249	$1,222,852
Repairs & maintenance Ensuring we're ready to deliver the mission	$699,541	$654,780
Training support Allowing more time on the water	$935,287	$688,267
Insurance centralisation In case of something going wrong our units are covered	$707,801	$641,663
Asset support Capex provided by WSNZ and the Lottery Grants Board to units	$2,140,809	$2,444,187

OUR OPERATING FUNDS

WHERE THEY CAME FROM

Income ● 2024/25: $33.6m ● 2023/24: $30m

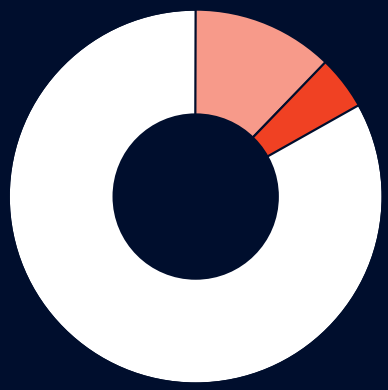


HOW THEY WERE SPENT

Expenditure

2024/25: $33.5m

- Search & rescue 85%
- Education & community engagement 11%
- Communications 4%



2023/24: $30.7m

- Search & rescue 83%
- Education & community engagement 12%
- Communications 5%

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The heart of Coastguard Tautiaki Moana.

Volunteers are at the centre of everything we do - making up all of our search and rescue crews and providing their time and skills across Coastguard units throughout Aotearoa. Every rescue, every training session, every call for help answered starts with their dedication.

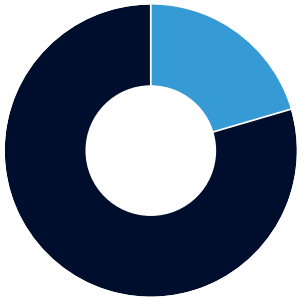
We're deeply grateful not only to our volunteers, but also to their whānau, employers, and communities who stand behind them and make their service possible.

2,051
Number of volunteers

265,602
Total volunteer hours

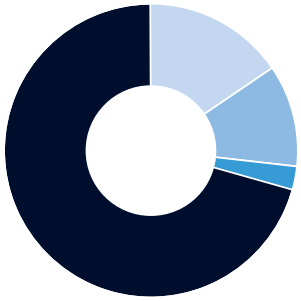
149
Number of new recruits

GENDER



- Male 79%
- Female 21%

ROLES

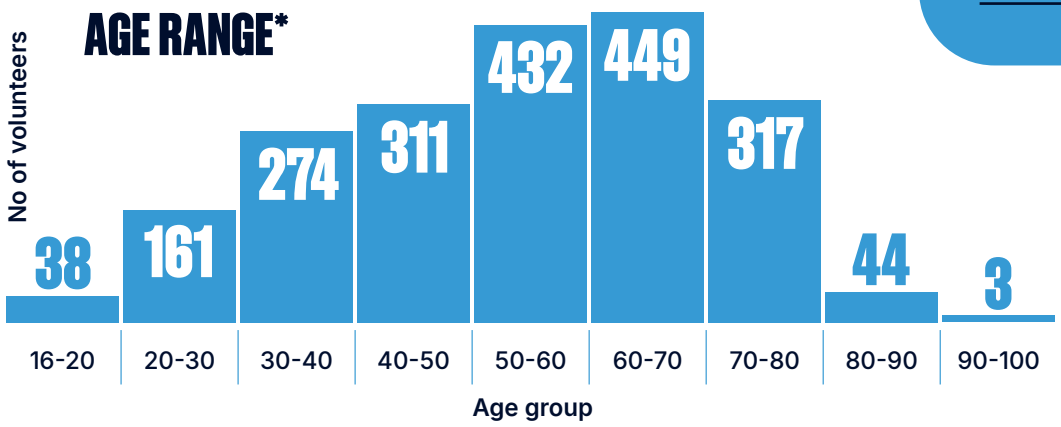


- Rescue Vessel Crew 73.3%
- Support Crew 13.1%
- Radio Operators 11.2%
- Air Patrol Crew 2.4%

YEARS OF SERVICE

Years of service	Number of volunteers in service
0	761
3	236
5	473
10	236
15	152
20	92
25	58
30	28
40	5
50	10
Total	**2,051**

AGE RANGE*



*Some data may be incomplete or missing

HONOURING OUR LEGENDS

From local heroes to national honours, these awards highlight the extraordinary commitment of our Coastguard whānau.

Every year, we proudly celebrate the outstanding efforts of our people through the Volunteer Awards of Excellence. These awards recognise the exceptional dedication, teamwork, and spirit shown by our volunteers across Aotearoa – the heart of everything we do.

Supreme Award Volunteer of the Year
Jeff Cramp, Coastguard Hokianga

Jeff started Coastguard Hokianga nearly 30 years ago and has led countless rescues. He also shares his knowledge with trainee doctors and nurses, helping prepare the next generation for real-life emergencies.

Air Patrol Volunteer of the Year
John McDowell, Auckland Coastguard Air Patrol

John has strengthened Auckland's Air Patrol as Unit Training Coordinator, driving initiatives that keep the team and new volunteers ready for critical operations.

Community Engagement Unit of the Year
Coastguard Marlborough

By expanding into Pelorus Sound and deepening local connections, Coastguard Marlborough made assistance more accessible and showcased the impact of community-focused initiatives.

Communications & Incident Management Volunteer of the Year
Ian Gabites, Coastguard Taranaki

Ian contributes over 500 hours annually as a radio operator, Duty Officer, and trainer, ensuring new volunteers are prepared and the region maintains high standards.

Emerging Young Volunteer of the Year
Jessica Cameron, Coastguard Marlborough

Joining at 17, Jessica brings calm, teamwork, and a "let's get stuff done" attitude that strengthens her unit and sets a standard for others.

Rescue of the Year
Coastguard South Taranaki

Volunteers spent five days searching for a missing diver near Pātea Bar, logging 900 hours in challenging conditions and demonstrating unwavering dedication.

Rescue Vessel Volunteer of the Year
Graham Weakley, Coastguard Wellington

Graham has spent decades improving training, processes, and equipment, ensuring volunteers are ready to step up when it matters most.

Unit of the Year
Coastguard Queenstown

Queenstown boosted recruitment, training, funding, and equipment, enhancing response times and operational capability across the unit.

Unit Support Volunteer of the Year
Lisa Delaveau, Coastguard Marlborough

As Unit Secretary, Lisa keeps operations running smoothly and maintains connection across the team through her management and monthly newsletter Crew News.

The 2024 Awards of Excellence remind us that Coastguard is not just an organisation - it's a community built on compassion, skill, and generosity. Whether it's saving people from danger, training the next generation, or ensuring the admin gets done, every volunteer plays a part in keeping people safe on the water.

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NZSAR) AWARDS

At the 2025 New Zealand Search and Rescue Awards, Coastguard South Taranaki was awarded a NZSAR Certificate of Achievement for Operational Activity. This award recognised the volunteers extraordinary efforts in the search for a missing diver near the Pātea Bar in March 2024.

L to R: Coastguard South Taranaki volunteers Gary Darnell & Scott Williams with Associate Minister of Transport James Meager

EMPOWERING WOMEN, STRENGTHENING SAR

Across Aotearoa and beyond, our wāhine volunteers are building skills, confidence, and connections - showing that the diversity, talent, and dedication they bring makes our whole crew stronger in search and rescue.

Land of opportunity

We were proud to support two very passionate volunteers, Sarah Psaila and Kate Stewart, who travelled to Finland in August 2024 for the second International Marine Rescue Federation (IMRF) Women in SAR Training Exercise.

The event brought together 16 women from many different countries to build skills, confidence, and a sense of connection in the world of maritime search and rescue. It was a valuable opportunity to learn, collaborate, and champion equality in SAR.

Their involvement also helped spark the development of our very own Women in SAR programme, showing our continued commitment to creating inclusive opportunities for all volunteers.

Women in SAR TrainEx

In May 2025, 17 women from 11 Coastguard units across the motu came together in Picton for an All-Women TrainEx - a weekend designed to build confidence, strengthen SAR skills, and create a supportive space to grow.

Coordinated by Coastguard's national support office and hosted by Coastguard Marlborough, the event welcomed rescue vessel Qualified Crew, Skippers, Radio Operators, and Instructors. It also featured two all-women crews led by female Masters, a significant milestone in our long history.

This initiative is part of our ongoing mahi to empower women in rescue roles and help every volunteer feel supported, seen, and set up to succeed.

Women from 11 units attended this event: Auckland, Maraetai, Raglan, Maketū, Rotorua Lakes, Whanganui, Taranaki, South Taranaki, Wellington, Marlborough and Queenstown.

"Since attending the event, I've been honoured to take on a new role as a mentor with the International Maritime Rescue Federation. Through this programme, I'll be supporting and connecting with other women volunteers in search and rescue around the world, sharing what I've learned, encouraging confidence, and helping others thrive in this unique and vital space."

Kate Stewart, Senior Qualified Crew, Coastguard Sumner

TRAIN TO GAIN

Equipping our extraordinary people with extraordinary skills.

Our volunteers deserve the very best training possible, and as the demands on their roles change, so too must our approach to training. Our focus is on ensuring training programmes are volunteer-centric, responsive, and continually improving. Our volunteers benefited from initiatives designed to tackle real challenges and deliver meaningful results.

Deployment of new Air Patrol and Radio Communications Training Programmes

Volunteers in our search aircraft, our National Operations Centre, and unit radio rooms are often the unsung heroes of our on-water efforts. Yet their roles are crucial to achieving the best possible outcomes, despite the immense challenges they sometimes face.

For our search aircraft, adapting to weather and changing light, identifying targets, and communicating a precise location from a small, unstable platform at relatively high speeds are all common issues.

Likewise, a radio operator quickly obtaining vital information from someone facing a life-threatening situation, then providing reassurance that 'help is on the way' is no easy feat. These roles have increased reliance on technology, using nationwide systems which all adds to the training requirement.

Our solution was to totally revise the training programmes and integrate them into our online Learning Management System. Volunteers now have easy access to their training plans, records, and their progress via any device. Units can also monitor that progress and tailor in-person training to better meet volunteers' needs - boosting skill levels, confidence and, just as importantly, their engagement and retention.

Rescue Watercraft (RWC) Training

Our RWC fleet, commonly known as jet skis, continues to grow in number and the types of operations they're involved in. With this growth comes the need for standardised training and operating procedures to ensure consistency, safety, and effectiveness across the country.

RWCs are proving to be an incredibly versatile rescue tool to support Coastguard Rescue Vessels (CRVs), particularly in areas with challenging conditions like bar crossings. They're quick to crew, fast to deploy, and resilient in difficult environments. In some situations, they can even be safer and more effective than larger rescue vessels. Their speed, manoeuvrability and design gives them improved access to shallow areas and sandbanks where larger vessels cannot go.

To match the fleet's rapid expansion and growing importance, we now have more qualified RWC operators and a stronger, more connected RWC community than ever before. This year also saw the start of work on a revised training programme designed to better meet the evolving needs of our operators.

This investment in training ensures our crews have the confidence and capability to use these agile craft safely and effectively - giving us even greater options to reach people in trouble, wherever they may be.

"OUR VOLUNTEERS DESERVE THE VERY BEST TRAINING POSSIBLE, AND AS THE DEMANDS ON THEIR ROLES CHANGE, SO TOO MUST OUR APPROACH."

Rescue Vessel Crew Intensive Training Courses

The year 2026 will mark 10 years since we ran our first intensive training course for rescue vessel crew - a milestone that reflects the enduring value and impact of this programme.

These courses are designed to provide suitable volunteers with an accelerated pathway towards their training goals, offering a truly focused and immersive experience. Each course is a significant commitment from volunteers who spend up to a week away from home and work, and an equal obligation from us to deliver the highest-quality training possible.

Despite the demands on their time, volunteers continue to embrace this opportunity. 123 volunteers participated in intensive training courses across a range of progression levels:

- 38 completed Deckhand training.
- 34 completed Qualified Crew training.
- 37 developed their capabilities through Senior Leadership training.
- 14 participated in Master Development training.

Due to demand, we now have two dedicated training vessels, reducing the risk of operational needs interfering with scheduled courses and ensuring consistency in delivery.

Feedback continues to affirm the value of these courses:

"HUGE thank you to all the instructors and organisers for a wonderful experience, it was evident you all wanted us not only to succeed over the weekend and become deckhand crew but to enjoy ourselves along the way! I truly appreciate the opportunity to have taken part in this course and would recommend it to other Coastguard trainees."

"An awesome feeling of achievement. Thank you so much to you all. Great to meet people from other units and to have all that time spent on us with the goal of helping us further our Coastguard journey."

"Family, friends and workmates are probably getting sick of me raving about the course."

RESCUE VESSEL MASTERS

Becoming a Rescue Vessel Master is a major step up in responsibility. Masters not only lead the crew and ensure everyone's safety, they also make critical decisions in often trying conditions.

We identified several gaps in our existing training, as well as issues with assessment being a barrier to progression, so, we acted to remove those roadblocks and offered better support by:

- Delivering additional leadership and compliance refresher training.
- Introducing private, online knowledge checks to build confidence.
- Improving written assessments and shifting relevant topics into practical assessments.

These changes are helping more volunteers develop as leaders and stay involved in the mahi they love - keeping Kiwis safe on the water.

CAPABILITY BOOST

Coastguard Riverton: a small unit with big achievements.

Among Coastguard's 63 dedicated units across Aotearoa, Riverton has shown just what can be achieved when strategic investment meets deep community commitment. As one of the smallest and most remote units, Coastguard Riverton has delivered a transformational leap in capability, powered by determination, community spirit and the strategic use of Coastguard Capex funding.

At the heart of this transformation is the Russell John Chisholm, a state-of-the-art 10-metre Naiad powered by twin Yamaha 350hp engines. Built locally by Gough Brothers Engineering in Invercargill, this new rescue vessel is equipped with cutting-edge technology including FLIR thermal imaging, night vision cameras, and advanced navigation systems. These upgrades allow volunteers to respond faster, safer, and more effectively to the demanding conditions of Foveaux Strait.

WHAT IS CAPEX?

This is Coastguard's long-term investment in physical assets needed to run or improve a unit's ability to save lives. We receive generous funding for Capex from Government, Lottery Grants Board, and other funders across Aotearoa.

But the vessel is just one part of the story. Over the past 12 months the unit has also:

- Built a new boat shed to protect its assets.
- Acquired a tractor and trailer for beach launches at low tide.
- Upgraded IT systems.
- Installed a high-tech bar camera to enhance situational awareness.

Each initiative was carefully planned and executed using Capex investment and an extraordinary fundraising effort from the Riverton community, and major funders such as Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Community Trust South, the Chisholm family, not to mention one individual who contributed $200,000. As a result, the unit has completed over $1 million in upgrades.

In a town where everyone knows each other, Coastguard Riverton has shown us what a small unit with a big heart can do.

The vessel's name carries deep meaning. First bestowed on a Riverton rescue vessel in 1999, it honours the Chisholm family's generosity following the tragic 1998 plane crash in Foveaux Strait, in which young Russell John was lost.

"STRATEGIC CAPEX FUNDING COMBINED WITH EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER PLANNING SECURED RIVERTON'S CAPABILITY AND LEGACY"

STATE OF THE ART SEARCH & RESCUE CENTRE

A new home for Coastguard Canterbury.

After more than a decade of working from temporary facilities, Coastguard Canterbury moved into its new purpose-built Search & Rescue Centre at Lyttelton's Naval Point in March 2025.

This milestone was a long time coming. The unit's former base was badly damaged in the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. While volunteers managed to keep operations running with temporary repairs, the building was eventually demolished in 2020 as part of the Naval Point redevelopment. Since then, the team had been working out of portacoms - a challenging setup for volunteers tasked with responding to emergencies on the water.

This project was made possible thanks to funding from the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust, Christchurch City Council, local donors, and Coastguard, working together to ensure Canterbury volunteers have the permanent base they need.

The 657sqm facility includes training and meeting rooms, a radio operations centre with a harbour lookout, and secure storage for rescue vessels and equipment.

Designed with efficiency and rapid response in mind, it gives volunteers the tools and environment they need to respond when lives are on the line.

For Unit President Mark Leggett and his crew, the opening of the centre was a proud moment: "For more than a decade, our volunteers worked tirelessly from portacoms, waiting for a permanent base. Now, we finally have a home that matches the dedication of our crew."

The official opening was celebrated with volunteers, supporters, community leaders, and Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Dame Cindy Kiro, Governor-General of New Zealand.

More than just bricks and mortar, the centre stands as a testament to resilience and collaboration. It represents the determination of Canterbury's volunteers, the generosity of funders, and the commitment of the wider community to keeping people safe on the water.

"It's not just an investment in our volunteers - it's an investment in the safety of everyone on the water," Leggett says.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

A NEW WAY OF LEARNING

Online classroom a hit with boaties.

Coastguard's journey towards offering modern, accessible maritime training has taken a big step forward. The newly developed New Zealand Certificate in Domestic Maritime Operations (Level 4) was successfully launched, and for the first time learners are engaging with this qualification primarily through online learning, supported by fortnightly virtual classroom sessions.

This evolution reflects our commitment to building accessible and industry-relevant training, ensuring more New Zealanders can gain essential maritime skills, regardless of where they live or work.

These live, interactive sessions connect learners from across the country with experienced tutors and peers. It's the next evolution of our educational model: one that combines classroom learning with the accessibility of digital platforms to fit around our volunteers' real-world commitments.

This marks the beginning of a wider transformation in how we deliver maritime education. Supported by a new Learning Management System, and the successful rollout of our first virtual classroom in Westhaven, this model will be extended across other education programmes in the next financial year.

TRANSFORMING COASTGUARD ONLINE

A new digital era for Coastguard.

Our mission was clear, but our digital presence wasn't. With multiple public websites, confusing user journeys, and duplicated information, it was difficult for users to find the water safety information they needed.

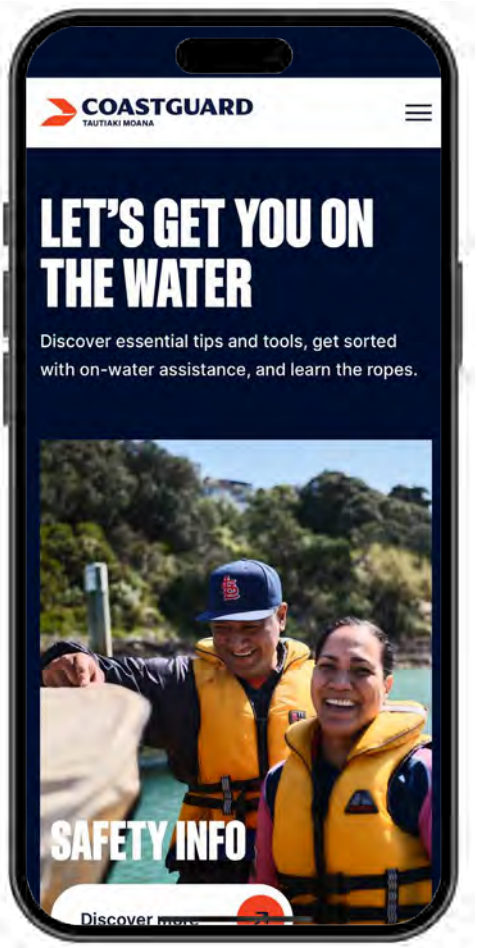
In November 2024, we launched a new Coastguard website that replaced our outdated and hard-to-navigate main site. The new platform makes it easier to navigate the website and find the right information quickly. For staff, it introduced a much-improved content management system that puts more control in the hands of internal users.

We're already seeing the benefits of this better user experience, with more consistent branding, clearer pathways to support and safety information, and a foundation for smarter, more connected digital services moving forward.

The website workstream is part of the broader Digital and Data Transformation Programme - a multi-year investment, supported by Government NZSAR funding, in building smarter systems that:

- Improve online self-service for our customers.
- Enhance the quality and accessibility of our customer data.
- Integrate all separate customer-facing websites into a single, user-friendly platform.
- Reduce manual processes through targeted digital solutions.

We're building a digital future that better serves the public, supports our team, and strengthens our organisation's long-term sustainability.



DEALING WITH DANGEROUS WATERS

Bar Awareness Roadshow, a collaborative success story.

Crossing bars is one of the most dangerous activities for boaties. Every year we receive over 20,000 bar crossing reports, yet 36 preventable drownings occurred between 2014-2024. Men aged 45-64 were most often the victims.

In an attempt to prevent these tragedies, Coastguard has run bar crossing seminars for over 20 years, evolving from grassroots initiatives to a national programme in 2023.

In 2024, we built on this success by launching the Bar Awareness Roadshow - a nationwide initiative designed to increase reach, improve accessibility, and provide a more consistent and engaging experience for boaties.

Partnering with local Coastguard units, the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC), and boating clubs around the motu, the 39 free seminars in various regions provided local insights into bar-specific hazards, weather conditions, tides, and emergency procedures.

Despite having no promotional budget, the initiative achieved significant reach and engagement through earned media, community partnerships, and digital outreach. Coverage across 78 media items reached 4.35 million Kiwis, including prime-time spots on TVNZ 1News, Seven Sharp, and ethnic media outlets. Social media posts reached over 10,500 people, and our Bar Crossing YouTube videos saw a surge in views, reaching 39,500 total views. These efforts helped drive traffic to safety resources and boost seminar attendance.

The framework developed through this volunteer-led initiative is now successfully being applied to other Coastguard safety programmes, including the new Southern Bluefin Tuna pre-season safety seminars. Delivered in partnership with the NZSFC, these seminars were initiated by our volunteers in response to the tragic 2024 Gisborne drownings, demonstrating Coastguard's proactive, community-driven approach to safety.

TO OUR COASTGUARD VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, AND SUPPORTERS, THANK YOU. YOUR TIRELESS EFFORTS AND LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATING COMMUNITIES DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTE TO SAFER BOATING AND THE PREVENTION OF TRAGEDIES

Click or scan to read more

Free seminar aims to boost safety for Whanganui's fishermen this summer.
NZ Herald

Tairua-Pāuanui Coastguard calls on boaties to get 'bar wise'.
NZ Herald

Coastguard Kaipara leads bar awareness and education trip.
Coastguard

PRINZ BRONZE AWARD

Coastguard is proud to have the mahi of our volunteers, staff, and community partners recognised for their work delivering the 2024 Bar Awareness Roadshow.

This important programme was recognised with Bronze in the Community Relations and Engagement category at the 2025 Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ) Awards.

L to R: Members of Coastguard's Community Engagement and Communications teams with a representative from the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council.

CONNECTING ON LAND

Community is everything.

Coastguard's community engagement approach exists to build strong relationships that connect people to water safety. Through local initiatives that collaborate with iwi and community groups, we support safe boating and water practices, especially in high-risk areas and underserved communities.

Old4New going strong

In summer 2024-25, the Old4New Lifejacket Upgrade initiative visited 78 locations across the country. With the support from 34 units across the motu the initiative removed more than 1,200 old or damaged lifejackets from circulation and ensured more than 2,000 people upgraded to new and safer lifejackets. This long-running programme continues to be a trusted way for us to directly connect with many communities.

A big thank you to our funders who helped make this happen:

- **Maritime NZ** for helping fund the initiative.
- **Hutchwilco** for supplying quality lifejackets.
- Participating **Boating and Outdoors** stores for providing an alternate option to visiting the van.
- **Half Moon Bay Marina** for funding the marketing that spread the word.
- **Hyundai NZ** for keeping our crew moving across the motu, and to **SeaLink NZ** and **Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferries** for helping us cross bodies of water.

Supporting the Filipino community

Fishing from rocks continues to be one of New Zealand's most dangerous pastimes. After a series of tragic drownings involving Filipino anglers at Papanui Point, Coastguard Raglan worked with the Waikato Filipino Association to support their local community. Through Ngā Hue o Hinemoa, the first Filipino lifejacket hub was established. During an emotional ceremony, Coastguard Raglan presented a set of lifejackets to the association.

"IT WAS GOOD TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL PREVENTION EQUIPMENT AFTER SO MUCH TRAGEDY IN A SMALL COMMUNITY"

Wally Hawken, President, Coastguard Raglan

Supporting community resilience

After Waimarama Marae was cut off during the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle, we facilitated a local cross-agency outreach. Led by our Kaihautū Māori (Cultural Advisor), it brought together Coastguard Hawke's Bay, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC), Water Safety New Zealand, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, local surf lifesavers, other marae representatives and of course anyone who loves to go fishing.

The outcome was a shared understanding of how to access communications, who is trained to use them, and what additional support and training is needed to strengthen local resilience in emergencies.

NORTHLAND PROJECT

In response to high drowning rates across Northland, especially for Māori, Coastguard partnered with Surf Lifesaving Northern and Water Safety New Zealand to deliver the Northland Project back in 2023. Since then, a "by Māori for Māori" approach has been embraced, with local community wānanga being held in Hokianga, Whangārei and Kaitaia to understand the community needs and support for safer water practices.

Those wānanga have been a catalyst for great leadership across the sector with Coastguard delivering:

- Four Tangata Moana Day Skippers courses
- A new Tangata Moana tutor
- Two Ngā Hue o Hinemoa lifejacket hubs
- The first Bar Awareness Seminar for the Hokianga

Ngā Hue o Hinemoa

Region	Number of lifejacket hubs
Auckland	1
Hawke's Bay	1
Northland	2
Samoa	1
Tonga	1
Waikato	8
Wellington	1
Total	**15**

FROM THE FRONT LINE

Very lucky fishermen rescued near Whale Bay.

Two 'very lucky fishermen' were rescued in a seven-hour, late-night mission on 8 May near Whale Bay, Raglan, after their small boat became submerged.

At 7:19pm, Police alerted Coastguard Operations Centre of two men overdue from a day fishing trip. The pair had set off at about 10:00am in a small inflatable dinghy, intending to set a long line off Whale Bay and Manu Bay. A text message from one of the men to his partner at 7:06pm prompted emergency services to act quickly.

Coastguard Raglan responded at 8:05pm, launching two jet skis crewed by four volunteers, supported by their rescue vessel with a further seven crew.

"On the return trip their vessel became submerged by the swells and eventually washed up on the rocks," Coastguard Raglan President Wally Hawken said.

Volunteers spotted a faint light onshore west of Whale Bay, a remote and hazardous section of coastline. The men were found stranded on rocks, cold and showing signs of hypothermia. One volunteer swam a short distance to the rocks to assist themn, while the crew aboard Gallagher Rescue prepared a dry bag of warm gear and supplies to throw ashore.

With strengthening winds and rising swell, the team requested support from Westpac Rescue Helicopter. By 12:04am, both men were safely airlifted back to Raglan and reunited with their family.

"The jet skis were invaluable in the rescue effort, allowing a volunteer to reach the men in conditions that would have been very challenging with just our vessel," said Hawken. "They were two very lucky fishermen."

All volunteers returned to shore by 1:05am. Hawken said this incident is an important reminder to always wear your lifejacket, take two forms of waterproof communication, and ensure you have a vessel fit for purpose.

This rescue is one of many examples over the past year of how Coastguard volunteers respond swiftly and courageously to emergencies, demonstrating the critical role they play in keeping our communities safe.

Click or scan to read more

'Very lucky' fishermen rescued near Whale Bay.
Coastguard

“THEY WERE ABLE TO GET CLOSE TO THE ROCKS FOR A VOLUNTEER TO SWIM AND ASSIST THE MEN”

A DAY IN THE DUTY OFFICER'S CHAIR

Inside our National Operations Centre.

The Coastguard National Operations Centre operates 24/7, coordinating marine rescues and supporting radio and phone communications nationwide. Each 12-hour shift is led by a Duty Officer, supported by a team of paid staff and volunteer radio operators. It is a role that requires clear thinking, quick decision making, and the ability to manage multiple situations simultaneously.

One of those Duty Officers is Mark Leevers. With more than 20 years of Coastguard experience, Mark brings a calm, measured approach to every shift. He also leads senior training for the Operations Centre team and volunteers as a pilot with Auckland Coastguard Air Patrol in his own time.

To give a sense of what the role involves, here's an example of one of Mark's shifts from the past year.

Mark's day began at 6:00am, taking over from the night Duty Officer. Not long into the morning, a mayday call came through: a vessel had overturned on a bar, with people in the water. Mark immediately activated nearby Coastguard units and requested Air Patrol support. The aircraft quickly located the people, providing vital situational awareness and accelerating the rescue.

Soon after, a Cantabrian reported concerns about a kite surfer off Sumner Beach. Mark worked with local Police to assess the situation and determine whether a response was required. A short time later, another call came in - this time a medical emergency involving a person experiencing chest pains on a vessel near Waiheke Island. Mark coordinated with two Coastguard units and other emergency services to ensure help was on its way.

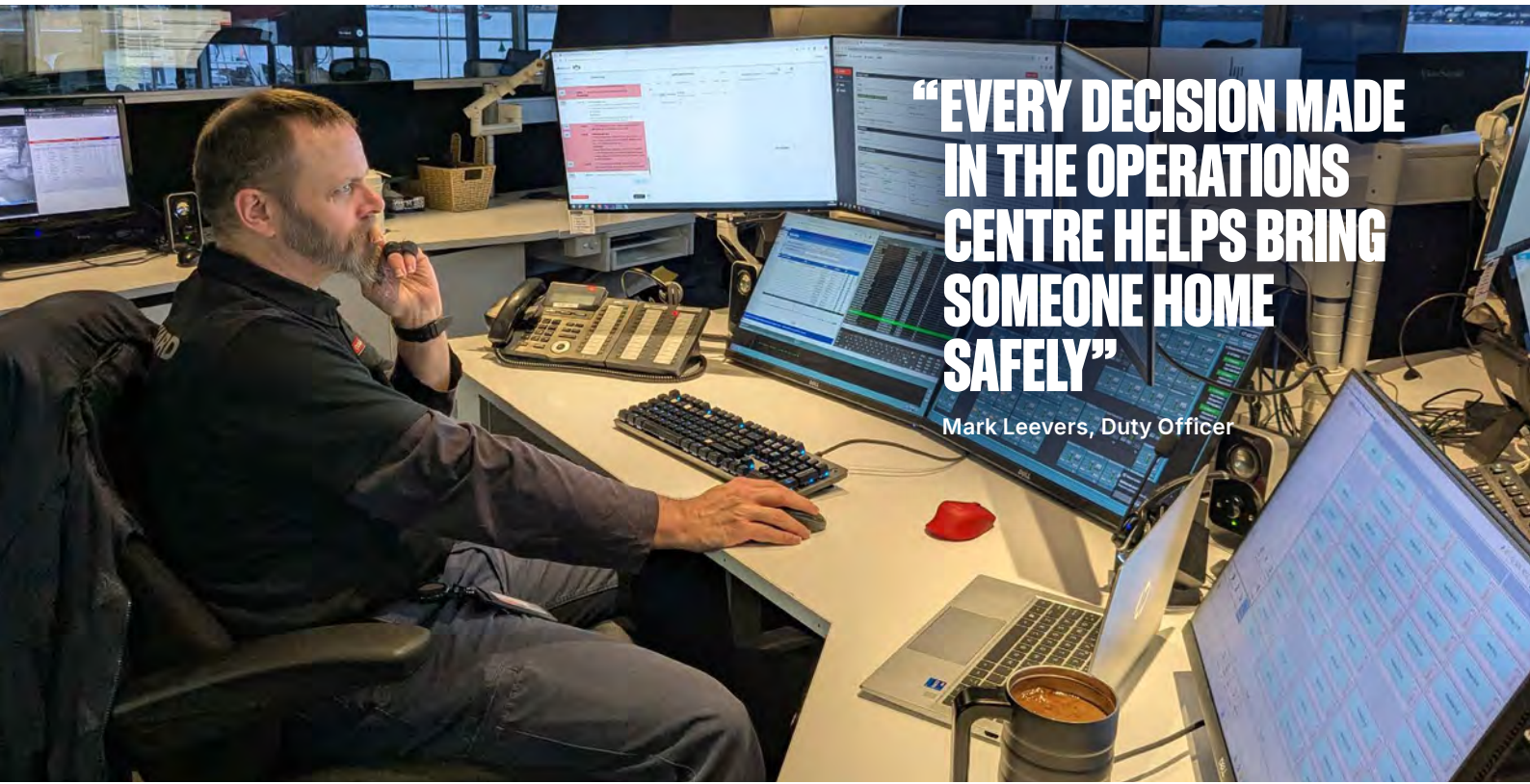
Meanwhile, a kayaker was reported overdue in the Bay of Islands. Mark worked closely with Police Search and Rescue and the local Coastguard unit to gather information and evaluate the level of concern. While the matter was resolved without a full response, it required focused coordination and sustained communication.

Later in the day, a vessel off Hawke's Bay reported being swamped and suffering mechanical failure. Mark oversaw the tasking of a Coastguard crew, confirmed the vessel's position, and ensured the response was carried out safely.

Alongside these incidents were the routine calls that form part of every shift - mechanical issues, situation and trip reports from Coastguard vessels, and operational queries from units and Operations Centre personnel. Mark kept the day running smoothly, helping the team prioritise, staying across developing situations, and ensuring critical information reached the right people.

By the end of his 12-hour shift, Mark had coordinated the response to 14 separate incidents. These ranged from serious emergencies to precautionary checks and standard Coastguard operations.

This example of a single shift shows the critical role of the National Operations Centre in helping people get home safely - and the extent to which every rescue depends on the judgement, coordination, and focus of the Duty Officer in the chair.



"EVERY DECISION MADE IN THE OPERATIONS CENTRE HELPS BRING SOMEONE HOME SAFELY"

Mark Leevers, Duty Officer

A SWIFTER RESPONSE

New rescue watercraft (jet skis) boost response capability.

Two rescue watercraft have not just enhanced Coastguard Titirangi's ability to respond swiftly to emergencies on the Manukau Harbour and Bar, they've changed the game.

Introduced as a response to an increase in incidents on the Harbour, the agile rescue watercraft can get to areas that larger rescue vessels simply can't reach, like shallow waters and sandbanks, making them a vital new addition to the Coastguard Titirangi toolkit.

Three Coastguard units operate on the Manukau Harbour - Titirangi, Papakura, and Waiuku.

Titirangi's new rescue watercraft are operating out of Cornwallis Beach in West Auckland, a location chosen to help shorten response times and improve access to key launch points near the bar.

These two new jet skis bring Coastguard's national rescue watercraft fleet to 17, strengthening our ability to respond swiftly across the country.

The initiative supports Water Safety New Zealand's (WSNZ) national strategy in reducing preventable drownings. The Manukau Harbour has been identified as New Zealand's highest fatality 'blackspot' having claimed 54 lives since 2000 - including 11 in the past decade.

Titirangi volunteers have spent the year in training mode and expect to be fully operational in late 2025.

ACROSS THE MOTU, 11 UNITS UTILISE JET SKIS IN THEIR FLEETS

"SOMETIMES THOSE EXTRA MINUTES CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH"

Scott Palmer, Coastguard Titirangi

TESTING THE WATERS

Mangawhai unit trial development.

As part of the national strategy to address critical gaps in New Zealand's maritime emergency network, work is progressing on the establishment of a trial unit in Mangawhai - bringing us one step closer to a permanent local presence and improved safety outcomes along Northland's east coast.

Mangawhai's coastal waters have seen a steady rise in recreational boating, naturally leading to a subsequent increase in search and rescue incidents with at least nine callouts in the past five years. Challenging local conditions, the hazardous Mangawhai Bar, limited shelter from swells - all these factors put boaties at risk.

A Mangawhai-based unit could potentially respond faster than one from Whangārei, highlighting the need for a localised search and rescue presence along this stretch of coast.

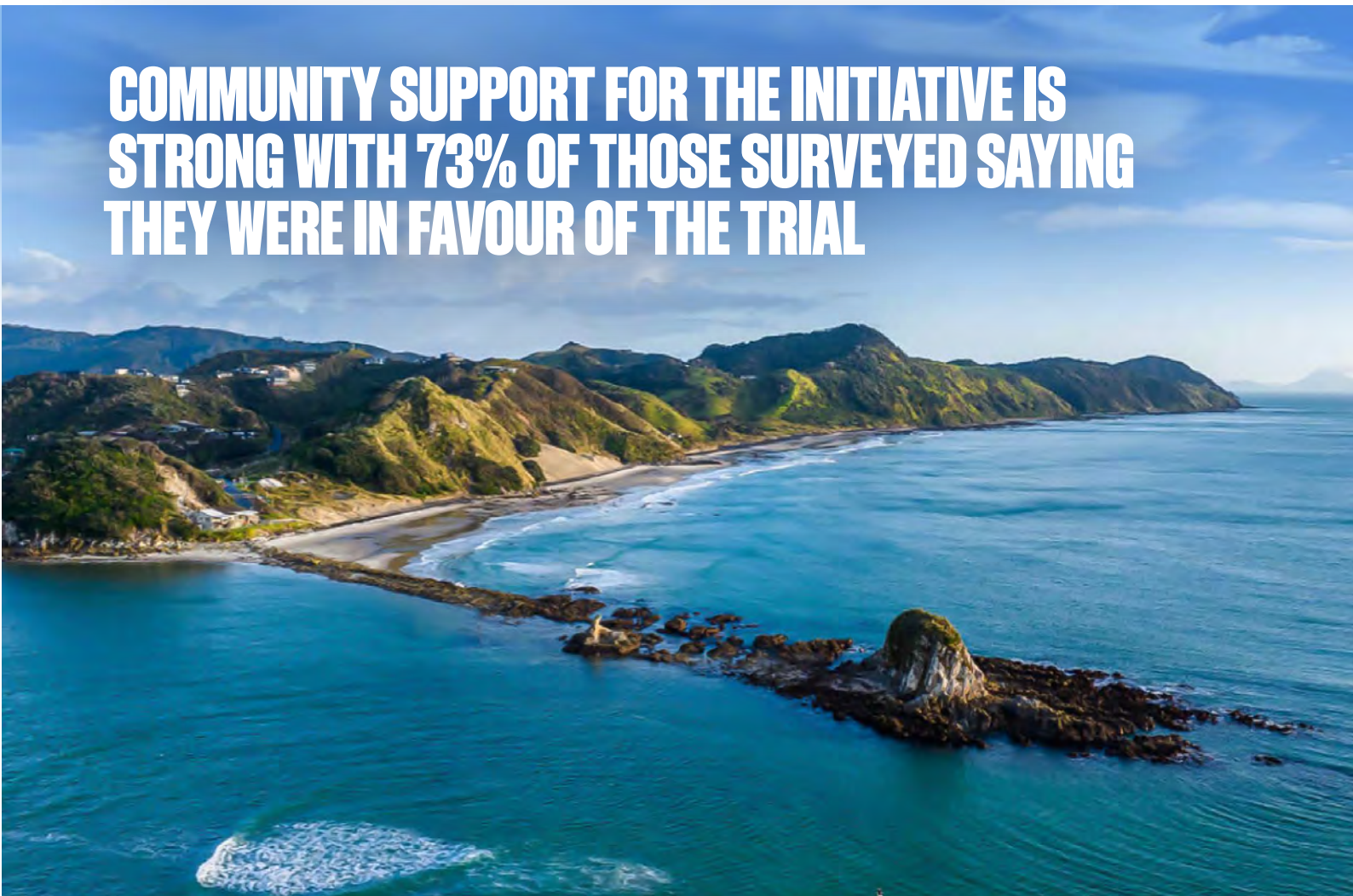
A temporary base will be established for a rescue vessel and equipment, plus volunteers, with the unit expected to be operational ahead of the 2025-26 summer season.

The trial will run until April 2026 and will assess the operational, environmental, and community feasibility of a permanent unit. During this period, the team will respond to live incidents, participate in joint-agency training, and engage with local emergency services to build capability and trust within the community.

Community support for the initiative is strong with 73% of those surveyed saying they were in favour of the trial. Kaipara District Council has also given the idea its formal backing too. This work is supported by the Government's $8 million investment, announced in June 2024, to strengthen coverage in high-need areas.

Click or scan to read more

Coastguard trial aims to improve search and rescue coverage
NZ Herald



GOING BEYOND LIMITS

We're seeing a growing number of boaties needing help well beyond Coastguard's operational boundary of 12 nautical miles (NM) from shore.

Although New Zealand's coastal waters stretch to 50-miles, we can normally only operate within the 12-mile territorial limit unless Maritime New Zealand grants a specific exemption.

Providing assistance to those beyond-limit comes with added challenges - longer response times, higher fuel use, increased wear on vessels, and greater risk for our volunteers - all of which we absorb at our own cost. While they account for only a small share of our total operations, the extra time, resources, and effort required make them disproportionately demanding on our people and equipment.

An example of operating beyond limits occurred on Anzac Day, when Coastguard South Canterbury was called upon to assist a 7.5m recreational fishing vessel Down Time, which had broken down approximately 21NM (38.89km) off Timaru. The skipper, Christchurch fisherman Nick Magill, and two friends had enjoyed a successful day on the water - landing blue cod, tarakihi, a few grey boy sharks, and even a slender tuna - before their engine suddenly failed as they headed for home.

With no other vessels nearby and repair attempts unsuccessful, the trio radioed for a tow at around 3:30pm. Maritime New Zealand granted an exemption for Coastguard South Canterbury to operate beyond their usual limit. A volunteer crew departed Timaru immediately, reaching the vessel after an hour and towing it back to shore, arriving just after dark.

This incident, along with others over the past year, highlights the increasing demand for Coastguard's support beyond our usual operational limits. Providing assistance in these situations requires significant additional time, resources, and dedication from our volunteers - commitments that currently come at a cost to Coastguard and our people. As we look ahead, exploring options such as increased funding or introducing a user-pays component for beyond-limit assistance will be important to ensure we can sustainably meet this growing need, while continuing to provide reliable and timely support to all Kiwis on the water.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE IN THESE SITUATIONS REQUIRES SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TIME, RESOURCES, AND DEDICATION FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

ONE ORGANISATION, MANY FRIENDS

OUR SECTOR PARTNERS

Hon James Meager

Associate Minister for Transport

New Zealanders' strong connection to the water is part our cultural DNA. Our coastlines, seas, lakes and rivers are all places we spend time with loved ones, enjoy recreational activities and put in a hard day's work. However, we know that sometimes things simply don't go to plan.

We're all reassured to know that in our moments of need, there's more than 2,000 dedicated Coastguard volunteers trained and equipped to help.

This vital contribution to our society is greatly appreciated by us all. Coastguard volunteers dedicate time from their busy lives so they are ready - often at a moment's notice, to assist people in situations where their presence can be the difference between life or death.

Earlier this year, the Government was pleased to confirm a funding boost for Coastguard, to ensure it can continue its lifesaving operations. A total of $56.6 million has been allocated over the next three years to better enable search and rescue activities, including funding for training, as well as vital support functions.

But no amount of money can offset the emotional toll faced by the responders when lives are lost. I want to acknowledge the impact this has on each of you, your families, communities, and others who support you. On behalf of all New Zealanders, thank you for everything that you do for everyone on, in and around the water.

"ON BEHALF OF ALL NEW ZEALANDERS, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO FOR EVERYONE ON, IN AND AROUND THE WATER"

Kirstie Hewlett

Director, Maritime New Zealand

For decades, Coastguard and Maritime NZ have shared a common goal: ensuring that New Zealand's recreational water users return home safely. As Maritime NZ's Director, I want to acknowledge and celebrate our partnership - and commend Coastguard for its dedication to keeping people safe.

Whether it's giving a hand to a boatie in need or responding to an emergency, Coastguard plays a vital role in our national search and rescue network. Coastguard's presence offers reassurance to the growing number of recreational craft users around the country, as well as to our Rescue Coordination Centre NZ, Police, and other organisations that work alongside its staff and volunteers.

Coastguard and Maritime NZ's partnership is both operational and strategic, and I'm proud of what we've accomplished together. One great example is Coastguard's Ko Tangata Moana Programme - funded through Safer Boating Community Grants - to provide education and skills to recreational craft users of Māori, Pasifika and Asian descent. Another is the collaborative work that both our organisations and others are involved in to encourage fishers to be safe during the Bluefin tuna season.

Coastguard also remains a crucial member of the Safer Boating Forum, making valuable contributions to developing and implementing the Recreational Craft Strategy 2023-2025, and helping the Forum achieve its vision of enabling people to connect with – and enjoy - our waters safely.

On behalf of Maritime NZ, thank you to Coastguard's dedicated staff and volunteers. Keep up the great work, and we look forward to continuing our important mahi together.

THE BIG SWIM

The Big Swim made a remarkable splash in June 2025, raising an outstanding $644,360 to support our lifesaving efforts across Aotearoa.

The nationwide swim challenge encouraged New Zealanders of all ages and abilities to set personal swimming goals while raising funds. Participants could swim in pools, lakes, rivers, or the ocean while asking friends, whānau and colleagues to support their efforts. Money raised from this event funds our volunteer training, keeps our rescue vessels fueled and maintained, supports our education community.

This year's event saw 2,581 swimmers dive in - more than double the turnout in 2024 - covering a collective 29,511km, the equivalent of driving the length of Aotearoa 14 times, close to twice the length of our coastline.

Among the many inspirational stories:

- **The Leigh Swims team** from Northland led the charge, swimming 623.2km and raising $25,100, making them the top team fundraiser.
- The **Sunas Team**, led by Nicky Harris, swam 132.3km and raised $15,349 in memory of her husband, who tragically drowned on a fishing trip in July 2024. Coastguard Whakatāne was able to bring him home to her.
- **Louise Orton**, who lost her partner in a snorkelling incident on New Year's Eve in 2024, swam 20.8km and raised $6,855 in his honour.

The campaign also gained strong media traction, with 588,475 people reached across 26 media articles, including a feature on Seven Sharp. Countless volunteers and staff joined the movement, and the event was proudly championed by Cook Island Olympic swimmer Kirsten Fisher-Marsters, who served as a 2025 ambassador.

A huge thank you to every swimmer and the 50 partner pools. Your passion and support helped make The Big Swim 2025 a lifesaving success. Every stroke, every dollar raised, fuels our mission to keep communities safe on the water. Ngā mihi nui for diving in with us.

78.6%
Female

41.5%
main motivation was to swim for a good cause

81.4%
raised more than expected

64.6%
keen to take part next year

Source: The Big Swim 2025 participant survey

SWIMMING IN MEMORY OF WILLY

For Rotorua's Nicky Harris, The Big Swim wasn't just about covering the distance - it was a way for her, her family and friends to give back to the charity that helped them find closure during one of their hardest times.

Last July, Nicky's partner, William Genefaas (Willy), drowned during a fishing trip off the coast of Whakatāne. It was Coastguard volunteers who helped bring him home - an act Nicky says gave their two young children, family and friends some closure.

Her team, Sunas Team, consisted of close friends and family, raised $15,449 (almost five times her target) and clocked up 132.3km.

"This is for Willy, and it's for our kids," she says. "They love fishing and boats just like their dad, and we want Coastguard to still be here for them and future generations."

Willy, 39, fell overboard near Whakaari/White Island in the early hours of 25 July, sparking a major search effort led by Maritime NZ's Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ). The search involved Coastguard Whakatāne and Coastguard Ōpōtiki, Police, Northern Rescue Helicopter, Search & Rescue Services Limited Helicopter, and other boaties on the water.

Willy's body was recovered and returned to shore by Coastguard Whakatāne in the afternoon of 25 July.

"Willy just had so much respect for the water, and for Coastguard," Nicky says. Her team's participation in The Big Swim was a way to honour Willy's legacy and show their appreciation of Coastguard.

"It certainly helped us as a family having him back with us, I think we would all be in a much worse state if not. Unfortunately, for the volunteers, it's not always just rescuing boats, sometimes, tragically it's about bringing loved ones home."

FUNDING THAT FUELS OUR MISSION

Support that keeps our volunteers rescue ready.

Coastguard is powered by people - our volunteers, our communities, and the generous New Zealanders who stand behind us. As a charity, our survival depends on the goodwill of others, and we're fortunate to be backed by a remarkable network of funders who believe in our mission and invest in saving lives.

To meet the challenge of sustaining and growing our services, we've built strong partnerships with government agencies, councils, trusts, foundations, community funders - and everyday Kiwis. Together, we're not just keeping Coastguard afloat - we're helping it thrive.

Government partnerships

The largest share of this funding - 40% - comes through Service Level Agreements with the New Zealand Government which supports every inch of our mission, from the systems that keep us ticking, to the personal protective equipment (PPE) our volunteers wear, to the specialist gear on our rescue vessels.

Beyond this core support, we were fortunate to receive two landmark government funding boosts:

- $3.1 million from the Severe Weather Response and Recovery Fund to relocate and rebuild Coastguard Titirangi's base after it was destroyed by a landslide in 2023.
- Significant funding to support a new 10-year Kordia contract, including critical upgrades to the nationwide VHF maritime radio network.

These contributions mark a significant step forward in our ability to modernise and future-proof our services.

Support from trusts, foundations and community funders

While government funding provides a crucial foundation, we must still raise 60% of our annual income to keep Coastguard running - and an impressive 15% of this comes from generous trusts, foundations, and community funders across Aotearoa.

Highlights this year included:

- $2.5 million from the Lottery Grants Board's Outdoor Safety Fund supporting both our search and rescue response capability and our preventative safety activities.
- $1.36 million in support from Auckland Council, Northland Regional Council, Waikato Regional Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council, marking the first year of our new multi-year funding agreements that give us long-term stability in these regions.

We are also incredibly grateful to Bay Trust, TECT, Grassroots Trust Limited, We Care Community Trust, and many others whose support ensures our crews can be there when it matters most - on the water, in the sky, or on the other end of the phone or radio.

Our community programmes continue to grow and reach more people thanks to funders such as Maritime New Zealand, Foundation North, Half Moon Bay Marina, NZCT, The Trusts Community Foundation, and the Ministry of Ethnic Communities.

We also want to pay tribute to the many local trusts, foundations and community funders who support Coastguard units across the country - you are the lifeblood of our local units.

Individual donors

Behind every rescue is a community of generous New Zealanders who choose to support Coastguard - not because they have to, but because they care. These are the people who give what they can, when they can, and whose contributions - big or small - make a life-saving difference.

Some are part of Team Rescue, our monthly giving programme, providing steady, reliable support that helps us plan ahead and respond with confidence. Others are bequestors, who have left a gift in their will to ensure Coastguard continues to serve future generations. And many simply donate when they're able, moved by a story, a rescue, or a personal connection to the water.

TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR FUNDERS, THANK YOU.

THE SUPPORT YOU PROVIDE IS MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ON A PAGE - IT'S SAVED LIVES, KEPT FAMILIES WHOLE, AND HELPED US SHOW UP WHERE WE'RE NEEDED MOST.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our Funders.

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coastguard.nz | info@coastguard.nz

COASTGUARD
TAUTIAKI MOANA