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Girl overboard: Point Danger Marine Rescue's new chief

Emma Galliot | 14th Jul 2013 6:00 AM

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Glenda Ashby on board one of the Marine Rescue Vessels in Tweed Heads.

Blainey Woodham

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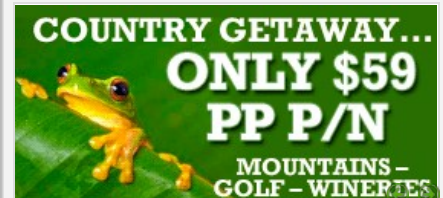
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POINT Danger Marine Rescue's newest head honcho is ready to put her heart and soul into her role.

Glenda Ashby is the first female unit commander the half-century old marine rescue has seen, but the thought of being the first chick in charge had not even crossed her mind.

"I never really looked at that," the dedicated volunteer said.

"All I thought about was guiding the unit, making sure everyone had access to top training to make our people the top people and keeping the Marine Rescue financially stable to keep this service going."

The position, which became available after long term serving Unit Commander Bernie Gabriel retired last month, isn't a gig for the light hearted.

"I know what was involved and I thought, well I know that I am more than capable of doing the job, so I decided I'd like to take up the position."

"Bernie's been involved since it began, he spent 50 years with the unit," she said.

"I don't think I'll make it that long."

But with 14 years of volunteering already under her belt, she's well on her way.

"I know it was going to be a lot more responsibility," she said.

"I know what was involved and I thought, well I know that I am more than capable of doing the job, so I decided I'd like to take up the position."

One of her aims is working toward getting younger members of the community involved with volunteering.

"We're a vital and free service and we're doing something for the community," she said.

"I'd dearly love to get more of the younger generation involved."

Mrs Ashby said it was a very rewarding volunteer organisation and the best part of being involved

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was the people you meet and the skills you learn.

"I work with and meet all different people from all walks of life," she said.

"Everyone brings a lot of different skills that we can tap into, which is excellent.

"But it is a big ask and there is a lot involved when you're a volunteer here."

The position became hers after an election on June 16th, but she officially commenced her two year stint last Sunday.

"It's all done very properly," she said.

In two years another election will be held.

"I like to do at least a couple of years," Mrs Ashby said.

As part of the job, Mrs Ashby said she would be over seeing everything.

"I am involved in a lot of areas," she said.

"We've got people in positions, specialised positions, to oversee all of the areas and make decisions.

"But I am notified of everything."

It's been quite a transition into her new role.

She's gone from 2-3 days a week to practically a seven day a week job, but the increased workload and responsibility doesn't bother her at all.

Before stepping up to the unit commander position, Mrs Ashby was the treasurer and before that she worked in the Point Danger Marine Rescue shop and she was also a radio operator.

"Life goes so quickly," she said.

"I won't know where all the time has gone, life's just so busy."

Mrs Ashby discovered the Marine Rescue 14 years ago after her and husband Gary, who is also a dedicated volunteer, made the move from Brisbane.

She recalled walking past the lookout with her sister when she spotted the Marine Rescue; she eventually applied and became a radio operator.

Although Point Danger Marine Rescue takes up a lot of Mrs Ashby's time it isn't always her number one focus.

"I love all the latest music and going to concerts," she said.

"I am a big Pink fan and I've been to Pink's concerts and Coldplay, I've seen them live too.

"I also love movies and reading when I have the time."

Her and hubby Ashby live in the heart of Coolangatta and enjoy dining out.

"The life style here is fantastic," she said.

When she's not relaxing at home, partying at concerts or dining on delicious dinners you can find her looking after grandsons Kye and Brodie.

"They think I'm a bit of a groovy granny," she said.

"I am young at heart."

She said her family were very proud of her for dedicating time to such a worth cause.

"They recognise what I do, and that makes me happy," she said.

"It gives my grandsons something to look up to and I've bought them up here and they're always excited."

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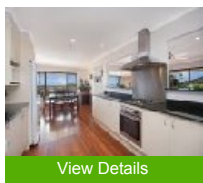


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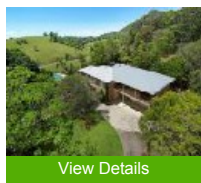
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