



Vice President's 2009 Annual Report

The year has been a little frustrating to say the least. Primarily because our access issues still remain which have plagued us since about July last year. This has meant that volunteer numbers have been drastically reduced. This has had the added consequence of some members becoming disheartened about our situation. I can well understand these sentiments. However, a lot of work has taken place. The most visual work has involved an immense undertaking of the final Rustmastering of the Mooring Deck, painting most of the area and also the painting of a large section of hull on the starboard quarter of the ship. All involved should be congratulated (I have mentioned this prior). Personally, I have not been onboard during working weekends mainly due to my undertaking the Coxswain course (command a vessel up to 12m operating within the limits of sheltered and onshore waters) at Brookvale TAFE. It still will be sometime before I am able to attend NSW Maritime for an oral exam as required sea time and documentation needs to be completed. If you would like to know more about this and other maritime courses please talk to me.

The committee has been working tirelessly with the primary issue mentioned above in a dedicated and well thought out fashion. Brian Hart and Warwick Whalley really need to be highlighted in this regard. A different approach has recently been taken with NSW Maritime and we hope this will be resolved in the near future.

In July, I spent two weeks with Marine Reach in Fiji on an ophthalmic outreach. Marine Reach is part of Youth With A Mission, a non-denominational Christian organisation which provides both physical and spiritual care to the poorer more isolated island and coastal communities around the world. My main role was assisting in the operating theatre with instrument sterilisation. We also built eight 2000L water tanks and carried out approximately 90 eye operations. We visited two communities which were to the far east of the main islands of Fiji. How and why did I go to serve with Marine Reach on the Pacific Link? Last year, when the Douglas was in port, her captain, Ashley McDonald recommended that I should contact the captain of the Pacific Link, Jeremy Schierer. Pacific Link is only 37 metres and we had 42 onboard. Sometimes she has up to 50 crew. Much smaller than the Cape

Don but with a similar number of crew. Only about two months prior to the outreach did I finally decide to go to serve the people of Fiji.

Interestingly, Marine Reach was an interested party when the *Cape Dar* was up for tender by NSW Waterways. All those who volunteer with Marine Reach are responsible for finding the funding to do so. More information can be found at marinereach.com and marinereach.com.au. A few pictures of my adventure can be found at the conclusion of this report. Next year I hope to be part of a team serving the people of Papua New Guinea and/or East Timor.

I look forward to 2010. The year is shaping up to be a very exciting year for the Society. Brian Hart has already provided you with our schedule for the restoration of the ship in a recent issue of *The Beacon*. We do have a lot to look forward to in the year to come. Most importantly, remember this. AGL's new advertising campaign says that "the world is changed by doers". I believe this wholeheartedly. Each of us playing our part makes a big difference - whatever it is. Each of us doing our part means that the whole task gets done so much quicker.

During the past year I have attended various events and gatherings on behalf of the Society. These have included:

- Sydney Heritage Fleet AGM;
- Navy League of Australia (NSW Division) AGM;
- HMAS Vampire 50th anniversary naval dinner (I was the official driver for the Sea Heritage Foundation's patron, RADM Andrew Robertson);
- HMAS Vampire - Symposium - the story of a ship and the people who served on her;
- Steve Irwin visit (Sea Shepherd Society).

I have been privileged to have been on the committee so long and having been your Vice President for two terms has been an absolute delight. Thank you to my fellow committee members and members. I look forward to working alongside you all over the next year. If you would like me back I would very much like to continue in this role.

Best wishes for a joyous Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

George Bate



With James on galley duty



MV Pacific Link in Vanua Balavu



One of 8 water tanks built



Patient prior to tumour removal



Immediately after the operation



Operating Room team