



Dale Last MP
Member for Burdekin

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Media Release – Volunteers call mayday on Blue Water Review

Hard working volunteers who were promised a new way forward for the future, have been left out in uncharted waters by the state government, according to Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Dale Last.

Mr Last said he had spoken with volunteers from both Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and Volunteer Marine Rescue who had raised serious concerns and fears about what their future looked like with the implementation of the Blue Water Review.

“It’s been more than three years since Campbell Darby’s report was released and volunteers have been left with their future shrouded in secrecy and mixed messaging,” Mr Last said.

“While there has always been the overarching recommendation from that report for one marine rescue entity to be created, it is becoming clear that this state government has now stopped listening to these volunteers who have busted their guts to raise funds for the assets they have.”

“These are volunteers who have been at grass roots community events for years, raising funds and support for resources and then boarding a vessel later that day to save a life at sea, they deserve to be shown respect.”

Mr Last said since the announcement of funding for the implementation and vessel replacement, mixed messaging as well as a lack of clarity about timelines and the future of asset ownership had left a foul taste in the mouths of many marine rescue volunteers.

“The Minister is sitting at the helm of this situation but has failed to provide any sort of clear direction forward for volunteers, let alone the communities that rely on their services,” Mr Last said.

“For more than 18 months we have been hearing about the risk to resources assessment and the impact that will have on the vessel replacement. Despite the understanding that the risk to resource assessment is incomplete, the state government has gone to tender for its first vessel. It’s another example of that goal post shift again.”

“These volunteers go out in the harshest conditions to save lives right up and down the coast, they deserve to know that going forward they have the resources to continue that vital work.”

“If having marine rescue volunteers as a part of QFES is so important to the Minister he would show those volunteers the respect of a clear timeline and a picture of what their future looks like, instead of pulling the wool over their eyes.”

Speaking from Mackay with Mr Last, Whitsunday MP Amanda Camm said with more marine incidents occurring in the Mackay and Whitsunday region than places like Townsville and Cairns in a recent year it



was more important now, than ever for marine rescue services to have surety when they go out on the water to save a life.

“Right here in Mackay, VMR have estimated their volunteers have put in a combined 6600 hours of service. That work and dedication is irreplaceable, especially when you are stranded out on the water with no other way of getting home,” Ms Camm said.

“We live in a great part of the world where boating is so easily accessible especially in places like Mackay and the Whitsundays, so to have a marine rescue organisation ready to go should disaster strike is just as important as being able to call an ambulance if a road accident occurs.”

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