

# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & INDUCTION KIT





## **About Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Qld Inc. (VMRAQ)**

VMRAQ is an affiliation of 24 Squadrons, represented by five Zones, located throughout the State of Queensland, and these Squadrons provide marine search and rescue services in the marine environment to the boating public on a volunteer basis.

Operating in tropical & sub-tropical waters, our Squadrons extend from Pt. Danger on the southern Queensland border, to the remote Gulf of Carpentaria, Thursday Island and Torres Strait region, over 2700 klms to the north.

The Association represents its Squadrons too and operates under a Service Agreement with the State Government through the Department of Emergency Services for which it receives a level of funding which it has the responsibility for managing and is also responsible for development and implementation of policies governing VMR Operational Services in Queensland.

As the governing body, VMRAQ provides insurance to all its affiliated Squadrons associated events, training and operational activities. All activities must be run in accordance with VMRAQ OH&S best practice and risk management policies.

VMRAQ is a Registered Training Organisation in its own right and is responsible for the development of training programs which provide Certificate I & II in Competent Crew and Coxswain respectively.

## **About Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadrons.**

VMR Squadrons are the front line service providers and operate generally within designated areas.

They are not only involved in Search & Rescue and Safety Radio Services, but also in community activities, promotions, fund raising and provide general boating safety advice and assistance to the boating public as well as providing a safety service at aquatic events.

They work in very close relationships with the Authorities; Qld Ambulance Service, Qld Fire & Rescue Service, State Emergency Service, Marine Safety Queensland and Qld Police Service.

All training is provided locally, including Induction, Local Knowledge and Standard Operating Procedures.

## **Important Role of a VMR Volunteer.**

With over 250000 registered boats in Queensland, the VMR Volunteer plays an important role in the provision of maritime safety and rescue services in this State.

The fundamental voluntary role of our members in urban and remote areas is that of saving of life at sea including that of first aid and medivac where required prior to the arrival of advanced medical care.

Volunteer members enjoy contributing to their community through their rewarding and satisfying work, whilst obtaining a vast degree of training and qualifications in the maritime industry and safe boating practices generally.

In critical situations, the duties performed by VMR Volunteers can mean the difference between life and death.

### **Code Of Conduct.**

All Members, Officers and Staff shall comply with the following Code of Conduct:-

Individual Members shall:-

- (i) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others;
- (ii) Be fair, equitable, considerate and honest in all dealings with others;
- (iii) Be aware of, and maintain an uncompromising adherence to, VMRAQ standards, rules, regulations and policies;
- (iv) Be professional in, and accept responsibility for their actions;
- (v) Make a commitment to providing quality service;
- (vi) Use facilities and equipment for their proper purposes, and care for and maintain such facilities and equipment correctly;
- (vii) Refrain from anything which may abuse, intimidate or harass others;
- (viii) Preserve and protect the standing and reputation of the Association;
- (ix) Understand the consequences of any breach of VMRAQ's Member Protection Policy or Codes of Conduct.

### **Work Conditions.**

#### **Remuneration.**

All work performed for and on behalf of VMR Squadrons is strictly on a Volunteer basis.

#### **Hours of Work.**

The hours of work for VMR Members are variable and subject to negotiation, taking into account the Members availability and the needs of the Squadron and the level of boating in the community.

**Training.**

It is through quality training that a VMR Member develops the confidence, skills, knowledge and ability to manage increasingly complex emergency situations as well as carry out the general and management duties of VMR Squadrons.

Training for VMR Members is delivered on an as required basis, depending on availability of members, trainers and assessors and work load.

The training includes:

- An orientation and induction program;
- Standard Operational Procedures;
- Local Knowledge;
- First aid;
- Marine Radio Operators Certificate;
- National Standards AMSA Coxswain N1.
- Search and Rescue
- Certificate IV Trainer and Assessor;
- Workplace Health & Safety.

All Members must complete the orientation and induction program and be deemed appropriately competent before undertaking any operational duty.

VMR Members are required to undertake activities such as training scenarios on an ongoing basis to ensure their skills and competencies remain at an optimum level.

**Uniforms & Insignia.**

Unfortunately budgets do not permit the free provision of Uniforms and Insignia, but in most cases a Squadron does either heavily subsidize these costs or in fact provide some of these requirements.

The design of the uniform is aimed at promoting a safe, functional and comfortable uniform to meet the varying needs of service delivery and Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

The wearing of the uniform ensures a common dress standard throughout VMRAQ. It also reflects, in the public image, the high individual standards of VMR personnel and the critical and essential community service they provide.

**Equipment.**

All equipment required by a VMR Member to carry out his or her duties is supplied by the Squadron, where appropriate, and in accordance with regional and local needs.

**Workcover & Insurance.**

All active members are required to be registered with the State Emergency Service for Workcover purposes and the Squadron Secretary or Membership Officer normally takes care of that responsibility.

The Association provides insurance cover for all active members of VMRAQ and VMR Squadrons. Information on these policies can be obtained from the Squadron Secretary.

## **Volunteer Support Services.**

VMR active members are provided with Support Services through the DES Counseling Service and counselors are restricted to VMR personnel in case related matters only.

## **The Recruitment Process.**

1. Applicants familiarise themselves with all the details contained in the Information Kit and fill out and sign the declaration as set out on the last page to ensure they meet the requirements for application.
2. Applicants complete and submit their Application Form with supporting documentation.
3. The Selection/Management Committee appraises all applications.
4. Short listed applicants are invited to attend an informal interview and possibly undertake a Medical Assessment.
5. The Selection Committee selects the most suitable applicants.
6. If final checks are satisfactory a letter of approval for membership is sent to the successful applicants.
7. Applicants are inducted and commence training in their local areas.

## **Medical Assessments.**

Applicants who are short listed for an interview may be required to undertake a Medical Assessment should they decide to proceed with membership.

In the Medical Assessment, applicants are assessed against the VMRAQ and MSQ Medical Standards, which reflect the requirements for VMR Operational Personnel for specific areas of operation.

The Medical Assessment Form is to be completed by the applicants and their Medical Officer in a pre-employment medical examination.

The completed Medical Practitioner Declaration Section 2 only to be returned to the Squadron for assessment and approval.

The costs of the Medical Assessments are the applicant's responsibility unless otherwise advised by the Squadron.

## **Role Descriptions.**

## **You're Opportunity.**

To contribute to the goals of VMRAQ to minimise loss of life and property in the marine environment, to reduce pain and suffering and provide assistance and advice to members of the community.

With Queensland being Australia's most decentralised State, significant rural, remote and isolated communities' impact on VMR Squadrons ability to respond to incidents in these areas.

The primary objective of VMRAQ is to have community volunteers appropriately qualified and trained who can promptly attend the scene of an incident or medical emergency until the arrival of advanced medical care and or provide assistance to persons in distress in the marine environment.

## **VMRAQ is Seeking Applicants.**

VMRAQ is seeking applicants who:-

- Have a genuine willingness to contribute to their community in a voluntary capacity;
- Are caring and tolerant;
- Have the ability to manage extreme situations with calmness and leadership;
- Are committed to developing their skills;
- Enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds.

## **Basis for Assessment.**

You will be assessed on the basis of experience and capability in the following:

1. Possess well developed interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to operate effectively in a team environment.
2. Understanding of, and commitment to, the community, particularly demonstrating empathy and compassion towards the needs of persons in distress.
3. Proven ability to undertake and maintain training requirements.

## **Duties and Responsibilities.**

The roles of VMR Active Members require a certain level of physical fitness.  
Critical job demands include:

### **Boat Crew:-**

- ◆ Go to sea for extended periods in heavy to rough conditions and inclement weather.
- ◆ Throw light to heavy lines to vessels of various lengths.
- ◆ Holding and pulling of ropes to attach and secure the vessel again in heavy seas.
- ◆ Retrieve persons from the water (conscious or unconscious).
- ◆ Refuelling the vessel both at sea and in port.
- ◆ Launching and retrieving the vessel.
- ◆ Washing down the vessel.
- ◆ Mooring and anchoring the vessel, climbing along the sides and deck in wet and windy conditions.
- ◆ Climbing on and off the vessel.
- ◆ Able to ascend and descend up to 20 stairs several times per shift.
- ◆ Transfer of injured persons, vessel to vessel and vessel to shore.
- ◆ Manual handling of equipment - <20kg lifting and carrying bilateral/unilateral
- ◆ Swimming, riding in and bailing capsized vessels.
- ◆ Able to assist in the administration of resuscitation techniques for lengthy periods in extreme conditions including sustained squatting and kneeling to access patients at ground level.
- ◆ Able to remain effective in high stress situations (death or serious injury)

### **Base Radio Operators:-**

- ◆ Able to ascend and descend up to 20 stairs several times per shift.
- ◆ Be alone at the base to monitor marine radios usually for most of the shift.
- ◆ Raising and lowering flags.
- ◆ Monitoring of several marine radios including distress frequencies for up several hours.
- ◆ Logging of all marine radio calls.
- ◆ Organising call outs in times of emergency.
- ◆ Dealing with authorities and media as may be required.
- ◆ Monitoring and answering phone calls.
- ◆ Providing up to date weather reports.
- ◆ Relaying search and rescue information to rescue personnel.

### **General Membership:-**

- ◆ Assist with administration such as Secretary, Treasurer and Fund Raising etc.
- ◆ General base maintenance and cleaning.
- ◆ OH & S Officer.
- ◆ Operational and Training Coordination.

The VMRAQ Medical Standards reflect the inherent requirements of the role of the VMR Member. Applicants are assessed against the Medical Standards to determine their capacity to perform their duties.

**NOTE:**

- A. Not all conditions either above or following would exclude membership; however, it is important to be informed of limitations to ensure the Health & Safety of the individual and others and to comply with VMRAQ obligations under the WH&S Act, which may have been avoided with appropriate disclosure.**

**1. Vision**

- (a) Individuals are required to have normal corrected vision to be able to operate a vessel and perform their duties.
- (b) Should an individual have visual acuity worse than 6/9 in the better eye, or worse than 6/18; then a report from an ophthalmologist or optometrist should be obtained taking into account the critical job demands.
- (c) Individuals who experience any diplopia (other than physiological diplopia) when fixing objects within 20 degrees of the primary direction of the gaze may be ineligible.
- (d) Individuals must not have any indication of night blindness.
- (e) Individuals with visual field defect will require a report of suitability from an ophthalmologist or optometrist taking into account the critical job demands.

**2. Hearing**

- (a) A loss of more than 40 decibels on the ISO 389 scale (at 500, 1000 and 2000 CPD on a pure tone audiometer) in either ear is considered significant, however may not exclude an individual from appointment. Hearing should be evaluated without the use of artificial aids.
- (b) If any doubt exists as to the individual's auditory acuity then a report from an audiologist may need to be obtained taking into account the critical job demands.

**3. Cardiovascular conditions, fainting or blackouts**

- (a) Individuals are required to undertake significant physically and psychologically demanding duties such as lifting and carrying heavy objects as well as patients.
- (b) Individuals suffering from any of the following conditions are required to obtain a clearance report from a cardiologist taking into account the critical job demands:
  - ◆ Angina Pectoris;
  - ◆ Suspected Angina Pectoris;
  - ◆ Confirmed myocardial infarction;
  - ◆ Coronary artery bypass, grafting or coronary angioplasty;
  - ◆ Vascular disorders;
  - ◆ Uncontrolled hypertension;
  - ◆ Valvular heart disease;
  - ◆ Arrhythmia;
  - ◆ Cardiomyopathy;
  - ◆ Congenital heart disorder;
  - ◆ Reoccurring fainting or blackouts.

**4. Neurological and neuromuscular conditions (excluding epilepsy)**



Individuals with any neurological or neuromuscular disorder may require a report from a neurologist taking into account the Assessing of Fitness to Drive for Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers Standards criteria and the critical job demands.

## **5. Epilepsy/seizures**

- (a) Individuals with a diagnosis of epilepsy/seizures will be measured against the Assessing Fitness to Drive for Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers Standards criteria.
- (b) Individuals with a history of febrile convulsions limited to early childhood may ignore this history.

## **6. Respiratory diseases**

Individuals who suffer from any obstructive lung disease such as severe chronic asthma, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, should be referred to a specialist for a report, taking into account the critical job demands.

## **7. Metabolic diseases**

Individuals suffering diabetes mellitus may be considered for active membership.

## **8. Psychiatric illnesses, depression or anxiety**

- (a) Where there is a risk that an individual may be compromised by a psychiatric condition or psychological instability, a specialist report, taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.
- (b) A history of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may exclude a person from active membership. A written report from a treating Medical Officer may be required.

## **9. Orthopedic conditions**

- (a) Individuals reporting a back injury that resulted in more than one week off work or full time study, spinal surgery or suffer from chronic back pain should be referred to a specialist for a report taking into account the critical job demands.
- (b) Individuals reporting multiple dislocations or reconstructive surgery involving the shoulder, hip, knee or ankle, should be referred to a specialist for a report taking into account the critical job demands.

## **10. Medications**

There are no issues with an individual's medication as long as there is no increased likelihood of loss of consciousness or impaired judgement, or ability to undertake hard physical work.

## **11. Substance Abuse**

A definite history of abuse of any substance (alcohol or drug – either prescription or non-prescription) may exclude a person from active membership. Further testing may be requested at the Management's discretion.

## **12. Immunisation**

Active Members are required to undertake direct patient management and therefore individuals must undertake a process for protection against Hepatitis B.

## **13. Body Mass Index (BMI)**

VMR Active Members acting as Boat Crew ideally should have a BMI of 33 or less.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{mass (in kilograms)}}{\text{Height (in metres)}^2}$$

If an individual believes that their BMI is the result of ethnicity, an abnormal body build or high muscle mass, then they will be required to submit evidence based on flotation or body plethysmography tanks, or a skin fold test from a health professional.

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**NOTE:** You are required to fill out the following Induction Questionnaire and provide it to the VMR Officer.

Should you answer yes to any of the questions you may be required to undergo a medical assessment by a General Practitioner.

### **Induction Questionnaire**

**Do you currently or have or do you have a history of any medical, health, physical or psychiatric issues with respect to the following:-**

***Cross either YES or No.***

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>1. Vision (Colour Blindness)</b>                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>2. Hearing</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>3. Cardiovascular conditions, fainting or blackouts</b>               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>4. Neurological and neuromuscular conditions (excluding epilepsy)</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>5. Epilepsy/seizures</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>6. Respiratory diseases</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>7. Metabolic diseases</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>8. Psychiatric illnesses, depression or anxiety</b>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>9. Orthopedic conditions</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>10. Medications</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>11. Substance Abuse</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>12. Immunisation including Insulin</b>                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>13. Body Mass Index (BMI)</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

### **Applicants Declaration:**

I declare that I have read and understand the conditions contained in this document and that all the responses in this Induction Questionnaire, to be to the best of my knowledge and belief, are true and correct, and I will fully reveal to a Medical Officer all the circumstances known to me concerning my health and fitness that are relevant for active membership of VMRAQ.

I understand that if I fail to provide correct or relevant information relating to my health and fitness then my application for membership may be cancelled or that I may be dismissed from membership of VMR and may result in unfavourable consideration of any claim that I may make in the future.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature of VMR Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_