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## **Coastguard Auckland celebrates arrival of new vessel, a true legacy of the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of the America's Cup**

At the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, “Home of the America’s Cup”, Coastguard Auckland volunteers and supporters will this Thursday welcome its new Lotto-funded Coastguard Rescue Vessel (CRV) named ‘Alpha’ - made possible through a unique America’s Cup partnership between Coastguard, Lotto NZ and Emirates Team NZ.

Through this partnership, and a \$9.8 million lottery grant made possible by the millions of Kiwis who play Lotto NZ games each year, 22 AC36 chase vessels have been reskinned and refitted for Coastguard units across the country. ‘Alpha’ is the second to last vessel from the partnership to hit the water, which comes at the perfect time for Coastguard Auckland, the busiest Coastguard unit in Aotearoa.

Coastguard Auckland President Charlotte Robertson said the AC36 9m Rayglass Protector, powered by twin 225hp Mercury 4-stroke outboards, was much needed, considering the significant amount of time and effort volunteers put into rescue operations and training. “This new vessel couldn’t have come at a better time after our old inshore rescue vessel had to be phased out and replaced,” she said.

Last year alone, Coastguard Auckland volunteers tallied close to 13,000 hours on the water of which 3,000 hours were assisting more than 1,200 people. This is excluding another 738 practical training hours that volunteers committed to ensuring their skills were up to scratch when attending incidents.

Charlotte Robertson: “While this year it hasn’t been the summer we had hoped for, Coastguard Auckland volunteers have been kept busy on the water including on New Year’s Eve with a rescue on Waiheke Island that resulted in a patient being taken to Auckland hospital in the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. But the most notable mission was the search for a stranded vessel that drifted from Great Barrier Island during Cyclone Gabrielle,” she said.

“Together with Police, the Navy and emergency services, our volunteers battled winds exceeding 80 knots and extremely high seas as they proceeded north towards Tiritiri Matangi Island, before they were forced by worsening conditions to shelter in Gulf Harbour. One of our most experienced skippers said this rescue mission was launched in the “most extreme weather conditions” they’d ever faced in their 16 years of service which highlights the ultimate bravery and commitment of our volunteers.”

Coastguard New Zealand CEO Callum Gillespie said Coastguard Auckland has always been a high-performing unit which goes beyond the call of duty to save lives at sea. New Alpha’s timely arrival means they can continue their life-saving work for many years to come.



Volunteers spent a whopping 37,820 hours on the previous Alpha vessel since its launch in 2007. Remarkably, volunteers aboard Alpha responded to 112 calls and assisted more than 300 people in the last year alone.

Despite its name, Coastguard Auckland volunteers operate a vast region much greater than the Hauraki Gulf: going from Cape Rodney to Cape Colville (Including Great Barrier Island) and as far as the East Cape and North Cape when required— completing hundreds of successful missions every year.

During the launch of this new vessel, guests will also have the opportunity to hear about the partnership between Coastguard and Live Ocean – the ocean conservation charity founded by America’s Cup champions Peter Burling and Blair Tuke. With climate change having a direct impact on our marine environments, Live Ocean’s work has never been more critical.