

A Kirby Naiad 8.5m sea rescue boat

By Mike Brown

'Irwin'



Peaceful Bay Sea Rescue Group has taken delivery of an 8.5-metre Naiad RIB, making for Kirby Marine almost a clean sweep of all recent deliveries to Western Australian groups.

In particular, the south coast groups have taken to these soft riding hulls in the (sometimes) terrible local sea conditions.

Although the most recent 8.5-metre vessels have been essentially similar, there has been a steady process of lifting of specifications often without a corresponding rise in price. Kirby Marine MD Rob Kirby explained that streamlined techniques had reduced build times, and made possible what he believed were necessary improvements to the equipment levels.

This vessel features the world famous Ullman Dynamics Biscaya jockey seats, initially a pair were supplied as standard in place of conventional seats. The Peaceful Bay boat has four seats primarily because of the age dynamic of the group and the rough sea conditions of the southern ocean. South coast rescues can be long and arduous, a recent rescue by the Albany group taking over 10 hours. With only two shock-absorbing seats available, other crew members usually stand in rougher conditions and fatigue naturally takes its toll.

The electronics fit-out has also been upgraded. Previous fit-outs have all used competent equipment, but this boat is now unquestionably outfitted to high-grade commercial standards with a Furuno package. The communications suite now includes a multi-frequency radio operating on 27MHz, VHF and UHF.

Ergonomics, and relief of the coxswain's workload were the reasons for a rearrangement of controls and displays. Britain's Royal National Lifeboat Institution found that coxswains were being overwhelmed by the amount of information available to them to the extent of causing fatigue, and in recent vessels all monitors

and equipment not necessary to the driving role have been relocated behind them. In the Naiad, they have been moved to face the navigator. Also, a major detail redesign has ensured that everything the coxswain does need is easily seen and easily reached.

The driving position is within the protection of a wrap-around windscreen with aluminium structure beneath at the sides. Overhead is a fabric awning, chosen over aluminium to save weight. Total weight matters for towing and launching reasons, and no reduction in structural mass could be tolerated. Clear plastic in-fills bridge the gap between windscreen and awning, forward raked to inhibit water penetration.

Ahead of the position is a cuddy cabin that mainly provides storage for the mass of special equipment carried; there is no well deck ahead of the cuddy as some earlier vessels had. This had been provided to allow for picking up tows within the view of the coxswain, but in practice it was little used. A further reason for the deletion was the experience of a Naiad among breakers in extreme conditions. The forward cockpit filled with water and, although stability was not endangered, manoeuvrability was, and at a time when it was most wanted.

The hull is constructed in aluminium to considerably beyond USL Code requirements, with all voids foam-filled with the highest-grade foam available. Bottoms have the exceptional deadrise of 21-degrees, and feature a pair of shallow steps that reduce wetted surface at speeds in the high 20s and beyond.

The vessel will normally operate in that speed range. The twin 168kW Yamaha four-stroke outboards deliver a maximum speed of 49-50 knots, and cruising revs of 3,000-3,500rpm return 27-30 knots. At that speed, range is 200nm from the 570-litre fuel capacity. The motors have a protective cage around them, defending them from

impact and from towropes. Towing, as much as actual rescue work, is a big part of the vessel's future, and a massively built tow post and towline stowage are important parts of the fit-out.

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'Irwin'

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel: Rescue

In survey to: 2C USL

Home port: Peaceful Bay,
Western Australia

Owner: FESA, Western Australia

Operator: Volunteer Marine Rescue,
Western Australia

Designer: Naiad Design, New Zealand

Builder: Kirby Marine Fabrication,
Western Australia

Construction material: Aluminium

Length overall: 8.5 metres

Length waterline: 7.6 metres

Beam: 3 metres

Draught: 0.75 metres

Displacement: 2.3 tonnes (full load)

Main engines: 2 x Yamaha outboards,
each 186kW

Maximum speed: 51 knots

Cruising speed: 30 knots

Range: 200 nautical miles

Radars: Furuno

Depth sounder: Furuno

Radios: ICOM VHF / UHF

Compass: Plastimo

GPS: Furuno

Paints/coatings: International Paints

Windows: Beta

Seating: Ullman Dynamics

Fuel capacity: 580 litres

Crew: 2 + 2

Passengers: 4