



Frontline



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**COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH IS COMING
AIR SEARCH OBSERVING • SCHOOLS GET SES BOAT
NO HEROES ON THE MOUNTAIN**



SASES Volunteers' Association Inc.
PO Box 72
O'Halloran Hill SA 5158

CONTENT FOR FRONTLINE

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Countrywide Media

Level 2, 673 Bourke St,
Melbourne 3001
Postal: GPO Box 2466,
Melbourne 3001
PH: 03 9937 0200
FAX: 03 9937 0201
EMAIL: admin@cwmedia.com.au

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Kristy Bird, Jason Jeffery,
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executive committee

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Derren Halleday
Sturt Unit
PO Box 72, O'Halloran Hill 5158
P (08) 8340997
M 0417 834 801
E halleday@bigpond.net.au

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Gordon Hartley
Eyre Headquarters Unit
PO Box 2057, Port Lincoln 5606
P (08) 8683 0504
M 0429 900 840
E GwenGordon@austamet.com.au

SECRETARY

Louise Reynolds
Sturt Unit
PO Box 72, O'Halloran Hill 5158
P (08) 8381 4264
M 0438 828 529
E reynolds@adelaide.on.net

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

WELFARE & SAFETY
Warren Couzens
Berri Unit - Riverland
PO Box 2094, Berri 5343
Ph H 8582 2327 Fax 8582 4246
M 0438 289 517
Wk Ph 8582 1922 Fax 8582 3029
SE 8582 2223
E warrencouzens@bigpond.com

CHAIRPERSON

Warren Hicks
Pt. Augusta SES Unit
PO Box 212, Pt. Augusta 5700
M 0419 867 712
H (08) 8641 0108
E hicksw@pass.sa.edu.au

TREASURER

David Ward
Loxton SES Unit
PO Box 818, Loxton 5333
P (08) 8584 7540
Wk 8584 6641
M 0414 833 947
E wardavidw@yahoo.com

FRONTLINE/P.R.

Allan Calleja
Tea Tree Gully Unit
PO Box 243, St Agnes 5097
P 8265 3660
M 0415 446 031
E allancalleja@netspace.net.au

AMENITIES FUND

Louise Reynolds
Sturt SES Unit
PO Box 72, O'Halloran Hill 5158
Ph (08) 8381 4264
M 0438 828 529
E reynolds@adelaide.on.net

representatives

EYRE PENINSULA

Jim Darling ESM
Tumby Bay Unit
41 West Tce. Tumby Bay 5605
M 0428 882 213
Ph 8688221
E jimwd@ozemail.com.au

METRO NORTH

Trevor Bond
Tea Tree Gully Unit
PO Box 243, St Agnes 5097
Hm. (08) 8263 5759
M 0417 859 196
Fax 8265 5405
E boncbool@arcom.com.au

METRO EAST

Mark Samuel
Enfield Unit
PO Box 1007, Clearview 5085
M 0407 723 704
E marksamuel@dodo.com.au

MID NORTH

Michael Rigby
Burra Unit
PO Box 7, Burra 5417
M 0428 890 646
E burrases1@bigpond.com

SOUTH EAST

William Job (Bill)
Wattle Range Unit
PO Box 841, Millicent 5280
M 0417 819 817
E wattle@seol.net.au
Deputy - Lucas Seebohn
Mt Gambier Unit
E lseebohn@hotmail.com

RIVERLAND

David Ward
Loxton Unit
PO Box 818, Loxton 5333
Ph 8584 7540
Wk 8584 6641
M 0414 833 947
E wardavidw@yahoo.com

MURRAY REGION

Dean Overton ESM
Kangaroo Island Unit
PO Box 460, Kingscote KI 5223
Ph/Fax (08) 8553 2374
M 0428 300 353
E kises@internode.on.net
Deputy - Kathy Gambling
Strathalbyn SES
E gamblingk@bigpond.com

FLINDERS

Warren Hicks
Pt. Augusta Unit
PO Box 212, Pt. Augusta 5700
M 0419 867 712
Hm.(08) 8641 0108
E hicksw@pass.as.edu.au

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Chairman's report



“The State Emergency Service has received its fair share of praise and thanks from the State Government and the local communities that were affected by these events.”

Since the last time I sat down to write this report a lot has happened. Recent events such as the flooding at Murray Bridge and the fires on the Eyre Peninsula have once again highlighted the professionalism of volunteers and their dedication to helping the community. The State Emergency Service has received its fair share of praise and thanks from the State Government and the local communities that were affected by these events.

Yet, these events seem small when compared to the tsunami that affected parts of Asia. The amount of damage and the loss of so many lives are hard to imagine. Even with watching the news footage and looking at all the photographs, I cannot put it in perspective.

All these communities are now looking for answers to why it happened and what steps can be put into place to ensure that next time people are better prepared. While all the answers may never be known, things can still be learnt. Reviews and investigations can highlight both the good and bad things that happened, then take steps to ensure that what worked well is kept and steps are taken to ensure what did not go well are not repeated.

Many Units are now working their way through such reviews, just as State Headquarters is to ensure mistakes are not repeated. The Association has and will play a part in these reviews to ensure that the best interests of the volunteers and the communities they serve are considered in future plans.

At the same time, Derren and the Association have been busy with other matters affecting SES volunteers, such as the Safecom legislation, uniforms, recognition for volunteers and discussions on a shared call centre with the MFS and CFS to name a few. Derren will have more to say on these matters in his report. The committee also took time to take its last meeting to the Strathalbyn Unit, enjoying the opportunity to talk to local volunteers at a barbecue on the Saturday night before the meeting on the Sunday. While a Regional Unit Managers' meeting meant that I could not personally be at the meeting, reports I have received spoke of the success and the positive nature of the weekend, along with all the work the Association needs to do in order to continue to look after the interests of SES Volunteers.

This will include more social visits to Units from either the committee or from Derren and a review of the Association's Constitution to ensure that it reflects your needs. If you would like to put forward some possible models or take a more active part in the process, please contact any of the association regional representatives, Derren or myself and share your views. The same can be said for any other issues you are facing or would like to raise. You never know, we may be able to help, after all that's what the Volunteers' Association is all about.

Warren Hicks
Chairman, SASEVA

from the
CEO's
desk



I am currently most of the way through a second round of meeting Unit management and I am quite encouraged by the feedback so far. We have made a lot of progress on the strategies listed in the “Case for Change” document and the profiles of some of our new people and the initiatives will be in this issue of Frontline.

The Organisation is starting to become an organisation! Inter Unit relationships are blossoming and there is a realisation that we are in fact one team – not a group of separate Units and Regions. We have seen State wide strike teams support Eyre Peninsula, Units discussing with each other how they can better serve their communities by supporting each other and the renewed focus of our paid workforce on supporting volunteers.

This is all positive. 2005 will be a year where there is significant visible change within the SES. Some of the initiatives include:

- Total review of our OHS&W approach to doing our dangerous role safely
- Improving our public image and therefore increasing our recruiting potential
- Introducing our development plan for our people. This will help to increase our retention of our existing volunteers
- Development of our Operation Procedures with more emphasis on prevention and preparedness and recovery
- Streamlining of our business systems

- Increased collaboration with other community groups and stakeholders
- Review of our financial systems to ensure Units are funded to meet their communities’ needs
- And there are others

Behind the scenes there are several projects going on that you may not see quite so obviously. We are:

- Reviewing all our policies/procedures and working toward a quality framework (David Ward)
- Reviewing the State Headquarters incident control procedures and equipment (Colin Goodrich)
- Developing new TRK’s (David Campbell)
- Activity based costing project (Gavin Graetz, David Ward, Craig Brassington)

As you can see, Volunteers are involved in every key project.

In short, there is a lot going on. However, it doesn’t stop there. We need to commence the planning for the next 5 – 10 years and the Association will play a key role in its formation. Watch this space!

David Place
Chief Executive Officer
State Emergency Service
South Australia

“Inter Unit relationships are blossoming and there is a realisation that we are in fact one team – not a group of separate Units and Regions.”

Executive Officer's report



“I travelled with David Place to the Eyre Peninsula to personally thank our members for the outstanding contribution that they made to their communities during the fires and the way that they represented our service in a time of incredible pressure and exposure.”

As we look back on the last quarter, all members of the service should feel a sense of pride and achievement. Our rescuers have battled floods at Murray Bridge and at the other end of the spectrum worked in the frontline of support roles in the Eyre Peninsula fires.

Many of us sat on the edge of our seats wanting to know how we could use our skills to assist in the tsunami tragedy. Unfortunately, the federal governing bodies didn't require our services due to the short response/rescue phase; they were more focused on medical and engineering support. This did not stop State HQ and the SASESVA trying to get our rescuers involved in a support role through soliciting State and Federal bodies. Again, unfortunately, to no avail. We will keep trying to educate the bureaucrats on the specialist skills that our rescuers have in the field.

I travelled with David Place to the Eyre Peninsula to personally thank our members for the outstanding contribution that they made to their communities during the fires and the way that they represented our service in a time of incredible pressure and exposure. In short, we had crews responding and supporting in countless areas including:

Rescuing people from the sea who had taken to the water after the fire engulfed North Shields.

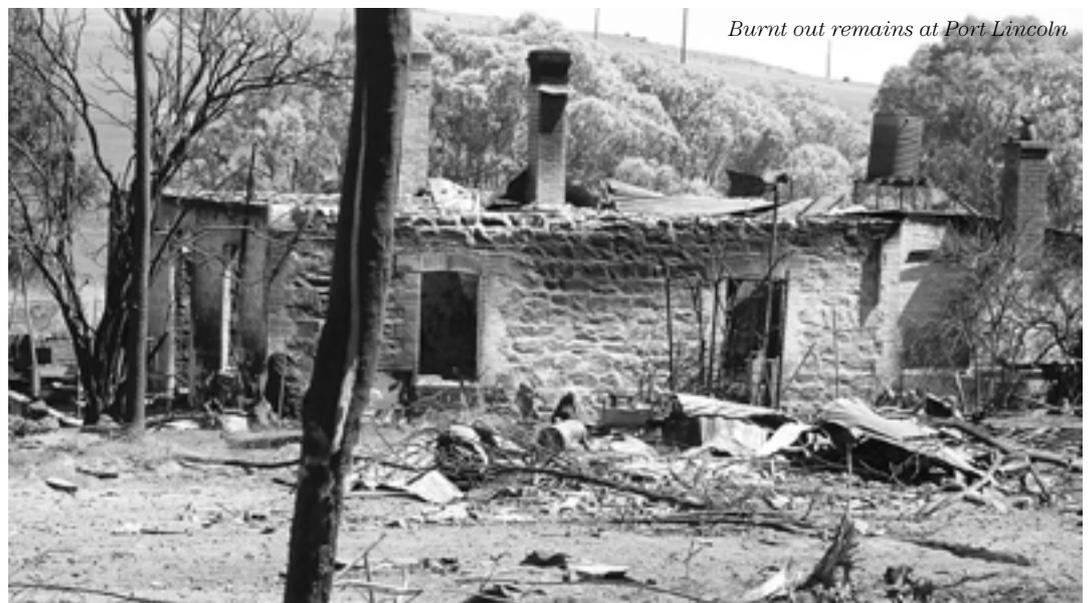
Taking care of road closures under the direction of police to mitigate the number of people heading into the fire zone, averting more tragic losses.

Cutting down fallen trees across roads to allow fire appliances to attend the fire front.

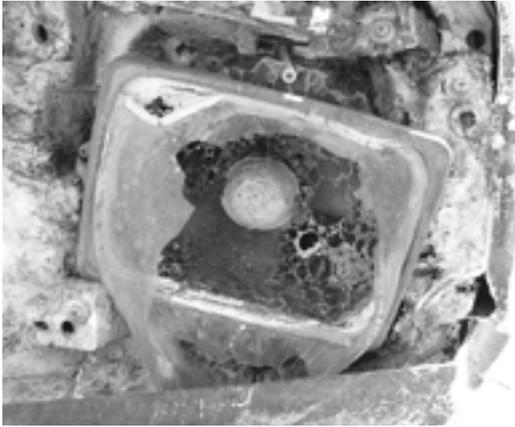
After the fire had passed, under the direction of a SES Volunteer Field Search Controller (Trevor Arnold), conducting searches with police of all property affected by the fire, looking for missing people and reporting back on human loss, property loss, stock loss, access routes and providing vital information to government on the scale of the emergency out in the field.

We also had crews bring equipment over from Adelaide, including firefighting foam and the provisions for crews to set up a tent city for the rotating CFS members.

It needs to be noted that the SES response to the fires was from many areas of the state with all crews working exceptionally well together during the incident and any differences of opinion or attitude being brought up in debriefing sessions post event. As an observer to many of the debriefing sessions, we need to recognise and appreciate the differences that we have between units, regions and individuals and embrace these differences as we move into the future, continuing to raise our skill levels across the board and utilise the specialist skills that all



Burnt out remains at Port Lincoln



Headlight on scorched ute



Ruined tyre

Units have in their own way. These skills could be logistic, rescue based or, equally importantly, local knowledge. A fantastic job was done by all but never fully appreciated by our peers.

David or his representative did presentations to all units that contributed to the SES response and I am sure that the members appreciated the acknowledgement.

On other news, I sat in Parliament House last week to see the SAFECOM legislation get through the third reading and progress through the Lower House. The fun now starts as it progresses through the Upper House where the government needs the support of the Independents and the Democrats. The VFBA and the SASESVA will continue to encourage support from these individuals so as the needs for volunteers into the future are made apparent and not watered down in the legislation as it moves forward.

As discussed in the article by Glen Cameron, we are moving slowly towards the collocation of call receipt and dispatch services for the SES, CFS and MFS. This project will be a litmus test for SAFECOM and how it manages the tribal and cultural differences into the future. At the time of writing the article, the three Chief Officers had signed off on the project moving forward but some had not received the full support of all their staff. SES is moving cautiously towards

the project ensuring that the end user (in our case, the volunteers in the field) end up with a dispatch product that meets our needs and does not give other services any response advantage into the future. As we always are striving to do against our larger cousins, we are making sure a level playing field is established.

Our last meeting was held at the Strathalbyn Unit and was a great success. Again thanks to Kathy and Colin Gambling for their hospitality and organisation of the event. Your Volunteer Association will continue to spread its meetings across the country and metro areas so as we can get as many views on the topics that concern our Volunteers across the state. If there is anything that we can help with, please let your local rep know so as it can be discussed at our next meeting or put forward to state as needed.

Derren Halleday

Executive Officer
SASESVA



Inspection at Port Lincoln



Port Augusta receives thanks

JUDITH BLEECHMORE

Judith heads the SES marketing team.

Having been appointed as the new Corporate Communications Manager for SES, it seemed logical that I should write an article for Frontline introducing myself... Judith Bleechmore, member of the Public Relations Institute, former PR for the Hyatt, Stamford Hotels, WaterCare, Child and Youth Health, Youth Media Awards and State Tourism Awards. Joining the SES is a very exciting challenge for me - a new role, setting up the position from a new foundation. And it seems that most people in the organisation already have jobs lined up for me.

I have already visited Noarlunga (and am wearing one of their smart black caps) where I watched a crew doing a shoring exercise, and a basic training group.

I have visited Mt Gambier to meet with "marketing" volunteers from units at Kingston, Bordertown, Keith, Millicent and Mt Gambier, planning out their year of promotional activities including local Shows and the Lucindale Field Days, local promotions and participation in SES Week.

The Patawalonga Community Day was aimed to boost local community confidence in the stormwater management system. We had units from Sturt, Western Adelaide and Metro South - a mass of orange uniforms, lots of vehicles, equipment and displays. Environment Minister John Hill was very impressed and told us that SES had rescued his home when a carport blew away in a storm some years ago. He seemed very well aware of SES skills

and very supportive of the organisation. So too was the local Mayor, Ken Rolland, and Pat and Torrens Catchment Board's Alan Ockenden, and our Shadow for the Emergency Services portfolio in Parliament - Duncan McFetridge. Holdfast Mayoress Anne Rolland asked if our units could participate in this year's annual Glenelg Pageant.

At present I am supporting Al Cormack in preparing for the Ministerial opening/launch functions at Cowell and Tumby Bay, and preparing promotional material and media information for the Road Crash Rescue Challenge coming up on 2-3 April.

In coming weeks, I will be asking units to send in the best of their photographs so that we can establish a photo library, both for historical purposes and to make good photos available for promotional purposes.

At present, I am busy setting up ways to communicate with the media, meeting with media and telling them about our volunteers and services, preparing written information, planning brochures and generally getting ready to raise the profile of the SES.

Thanks to everyone for making me feel welcome at SES. I look forward to working with you.

Regards

Judith Bleechmore

COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH IS COMING

During 2001/04 The Justice Portfolio Project Team, having identified the communications needs of SA Ambulance (Greenhill Road), SA Metropolitan Fire (Wakefield Street) and SA Police (Carrington Street), successfully completed project work to commission the Audio Management System (AMS) in each of the service's Adelaide communication centres (Comcens), providing self healing optical fibre links between the Comcens and with the SA Government Radio Network (SAGRN).

The telephony arrangements were upgraded and fully integrated, and each of the Comcens now operates with full service operator positions with a single console at each position which is ergonomically adjustable and provides all the required telephony and radio capabilities specified by the agencies for the project. Additional call taker only and supervisory positions are provided to meet agency specifications. Fully equipped training areas double as overflow facilities and as redundancy sites for the other agencies in the unlikely event one of the Comcens must be abandoned.

Among the many benefits arising from the AMS Project, all Comcen calls are logged, recorded and retrievable, automated delivery of first presentation calls to operators and queue management occurs, and the options for redundant operations and management of contingencies are many and very robust. As mentioned above, they include total relocation from a severely damaged Comcen to one of the other Comcen locations if required.

The SACAD project work has commenced: Justice Portfolio has now been tasked with delivering the SA Computer Aided Dispatch Project to these three locations, and SAFECOM has been successful in seeking a budget for co-location of Call Receipt and Dispatch (CRD) for the SAFECOM agencies at the Wakefield Street Comcen. This transition to a shared site will enable SACFS, and through them as at present, SASES, to operate their CRD

and related functions through the new Comcen, and in due course share in the benefits of the SACAD systems.

The benefits: The SACAD deliverables include geo-spatial and mapping capability which, based on the local knowledge of volunteers and regional staff, will provide up to date, accurate, and continuously reviewed location, weather, and other information at the

as it appears/is received within the Comcen.

The project scope provides for provision of Comcen based infrastructure to support future agency decisions regarding Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL). Trials with MDT/GPS/AVL equipment are also provided for within the SACAD scope. Supply of that

giving operators access to the geo-spatial and mapping/location data referred to above. The escalation to SCC status which is sometimes required will be implemented in a very similar manner to that currently used. SASES will transfer call taking from the Comcen to the SCC location as is done now, and will manage events from that location. Again, the additional accurate and timely information available at the Comcen as a result of SACAD will be simultaneously accessible to the SCC.

One of the differences from the present arrangement will be that there will be fewer occasions when the Comcen will request that this transfer to SCC occur due to lack of capacity at the Comcen. There will be more operators and more efficient call taking systems at the new Comcen. SASES will remain able to switch CRD/call taking whenever this is appropriate, based on advanced weather information or for any other reason.

How do I get further information?: Visits to operational areas are being planned, and SASES management will be accompanied by the SAFECOM Projects Director, Glen Cameron, who was project manager for the AMS project at Justice prior to his SAFECOM appointment. Glen will receive and respond to any requests for information about any aspect of the co-location or the SACAD project, by email, cameron.glen@safecom.sa.gov.au telephone (08) 8463 4112 or internal mail Level 7, 60 Waymouth Street.



Glen Cameron

Comcen. The operational dialogue between the Comcen and the public, and with the SASES State Control Centre (SCC) when that escalation occurs, will be considerably improved. Whether the SCC remains at Waymouth Street or relocates at some time in the future, the SACAD project provides for fibre link connectivity and provision of visual, data and voice information from the Comcen

equipment in the future is an agency matter. What Co-location & SACAD means for SASES people in the field: Because SASES has for a long time now outsourced CRD to SACFS, day to day response activity for SASES will initially be little changed by the advent of the new systems and location. CRD will however be more accurately and speedily handled once the full benefits of SACAD become available,

PETER NYGAARD

Firstly, I would like to thank all the members of the SASES for their warm welcome and acceptance of my role within the organisation.

So far I have visited Units at Kangaroo Island, Andamooka, Roxby Downs, Metro South and Noarlunga. The commitment I have witnessed at these Units is a credit to the SES and I will strive to match that commitment with my approach to the OHSW issues the SES is encountering now and may meet in the future. I have also attended the SES Cadet

“The commitment I have witnessed at these units is a credit to the SES and I will strive to match that commitment with my approach to the OHSW issues the SES is encountering now and may meet in the future.”

Focus Group Meeting and it is good to see our next generation of rescuers are progressing well.

I come from a background that was primarily construction orientated. Through private enterprise, and more recently Local Government, I spent many years learning about and then operating a broad range of equipment and heavy plant. A lot of this equipment and plant is utilised by the SES and I intend to work with all levels of the organisation to ensure a safer work environment where reasonably practicable.

I have spent over a decade with the Australian Army Reserve and also eight years instructing cadets in a voluntary youth organisation. The SES has given me the opportunity to bring all the past parts of my working life into one “stream” and I am looking forward to utilising skills and knowledge that I have acquired for the benefit of all.

The very nature of the SES places response units into one of the most dangerous risk environments anyone would normally encounter. You go where “normal” people fear to tread. Most organisations conduct their routine work and *may* have to respond to a dangerous occurrence from time to time. When the SES “starts” their role/response they are usually past the normal “no go line”. This is also evident in the very nature of some of their training.

Having said this, I will add that the level of safety awareness throughout the SES appears to be good. I cannot recall reading about deaths of personnel every time the SES goes into an operational environment. However, the potential for death or serious injury is very evident in some of the procedures, application of equipment and in some cases, training. Broad statement. I cannot change the organisation in a day. I will endeavour to move the standards of safety to an ever-increasing level. I ask each member of the SES to assist me with this. Every person is firstly responsible for his/her safety. The chain of command will have varying degrees of responsibility and this will become clearer as the restructure continues.

It is my plan to initially do the following:

- Develop and implement an action plan for OHSW with clear, attainable targets.
- Promote a safe workplace and strive for continuous improvement.



Peter Nygaard at work

- Assist with the formulation and direction of the OHSW committees.
- Assist the OHSW Representatives with issues and training.
- Conduct risk assessments, incident investigations, near miss investigations when required.
- Offer assistance/advice to any member of the SES who requires it.

As time progresses, the list will increase or shorten as demand dictates. Some may deem all this as an added, tedious “chore”. Yes, there is a paperwork trail lurking in the background. I will try to streamline this process, but the fact is, we are required to meet Legislative standards and this will include documentation.

“The SES has given me the opportunity to bring all the past parts of my working life into one “stream” and I am looking forward to utilising skills and knowledge that I have acquired for the benefit of all.”

In conclusion, I embrace the challenge. To date, I am humbled by your commitment and I have no intention of using the “big stick” approach to achieve a result. I am committed to OHSW and I wish to use that commitment to move the organisation forward, safely. I cannot visit every Unit at once but I look forward to meeting as many volunteers at the “sharp end” as I can. Without you, there is no need for me so please accept my offer of developing a learning partnership.

Peter Nygaard
OHSW Officer
State Emergency Service
South Australia

AIR SEARCH OBSERVING

The last year has seen many changes in SES with the role of the Air Search Observer.

A MSA have been instrumental in bringing about these changes with further conditions placed on their provision of training dollars than in the past.

The additional conditions include but are not limited to participants' ability to:

- Be drug & alcohol free for 8 hours prior to flying.
- Respond to Adelaide, Port Lincoln or Mt Gambier airports within 30 minutes.
- Maintain a current flight logbook.
- Participate in skills maintenance flights on a regular basis.

In addition to this, SES has required members to have a current Senior First Aid Certificate and a current Basic Rescue Certificate.

Recent training situations have highlighted our (SES) duty of care to members acting in an Air Search Team. SES needs to ensure our members are better prepared for an aircraft emergency should it occur. As a result, a new Air Observing policy and procedure has been implemented, effective 1 January, 2005. The main points include:

- Members complete an Air Crew Medical with their local GP.

(Time will be given to existing members to obtain the medical.)

- Members will now participate in theory and practical access/egress and water survival training.



This will include but not be limited to members being able to demonstrate within 10 minutes the ability to:

- Exit the aircraft quickly through the smallest emergency exit.
- "Tread water" in open water for 2 minutes in flight attire (overalls or two piece) and footwear then orally inflate their PFD.
- Swim 50 metres in open water, in flight attire and footwear while wearing a PFD.

Many thanks to the Noarlunga crew for piloting this assessment/drill recently in very poor but realistic search weather conditions.

By Jennifer Vincent
State Coordinator of the Air Search Observing course.



MURRAY REGION SENIOR OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

Saturday 29th January 2005, Kingscote.

Seventeen Senior Officers of the Murray Region were hosted at Kingscote by the Kangaroo Island Unit for discussion about the region and changes in SASES. David Place, our Chief Officer, spoke on the current state of changes, either implemented or in the process of being implemented within SES, and he received feedback from the Officers on some issues. He also presented a Ministerial Commendation to Beverley Overton, Kangaroo Island SES Business Manager, during the day.

Ty Lloyd, our Regional Manager, provided feedback on matters from the previous conference and received further matters from the floor to be investigated.

Peter Nygaard from SAFECOM was introduced as our new OH&S representative for SES. He gave an insight to where SES is going with OH&S and answered many questions from the Senior Officers.

Terri Purvis, Training Officer for the region, addressed us and answered queries on training including the recently released TRK (Training Resource Kit) for Road Crash Rescue.

During the day there was discussion on many topics that affect the region or volunteers.

After a full day of discussion and information, we relaxed and networked while enjoying a dinner in the Motel Restaurant with some of the local SES members.

On the Sunday, a barbecue lunch was provided at a local SES member's residence prior to the mainland members returning on the ferry.

By Dean Overton ESM

Unit Manager Kangaroo Island State Emergency Service



SCHOOLS GET SES BOAT

During the Regional Conference at Kangaroo Island, the SES donated a boat to the Kingscote Campus of the Kangaroo Island Schools.

As the boat was originally purchased with money raised and donated by the community when the unit identified that it was no longer required, the members thought it would be appropriate to give the boat to the Kingscote Campus of the Kangaroo Island Schools as they have used the boat on many occasions for their Marine & Environmental Studies Program. On investigation, we found that it was possible.

The official handover took place on Saturday 29th January, 2005, during the Regional Conference on Kangaroo Island.

By Dean Overton ESM

Unit Manager Kangaroo Island State Emergency Service



David Place, CEO SASES, congratulating Tony Bartram Co-ordinator Marine and Environmental Studies, Ty Lloyd Regional Manager, Dean Overton Unit Manager, & Judith Wingate Marine Biologist Kingscote Campus.

VEHICLE ACCIDENT ON BLACKS ROAD FLAGSTAFF HILL

As many were just heading out for the night, crews from Sturt SES were paged to assist CFS and SAPOL at a vehicle accident on Blacks Road at Flagstaff Hill.

The accident involving two cars occurred around 10:30 on Saturday night, 26th February, when a car making a U-turn was hit by an oncoming utility.

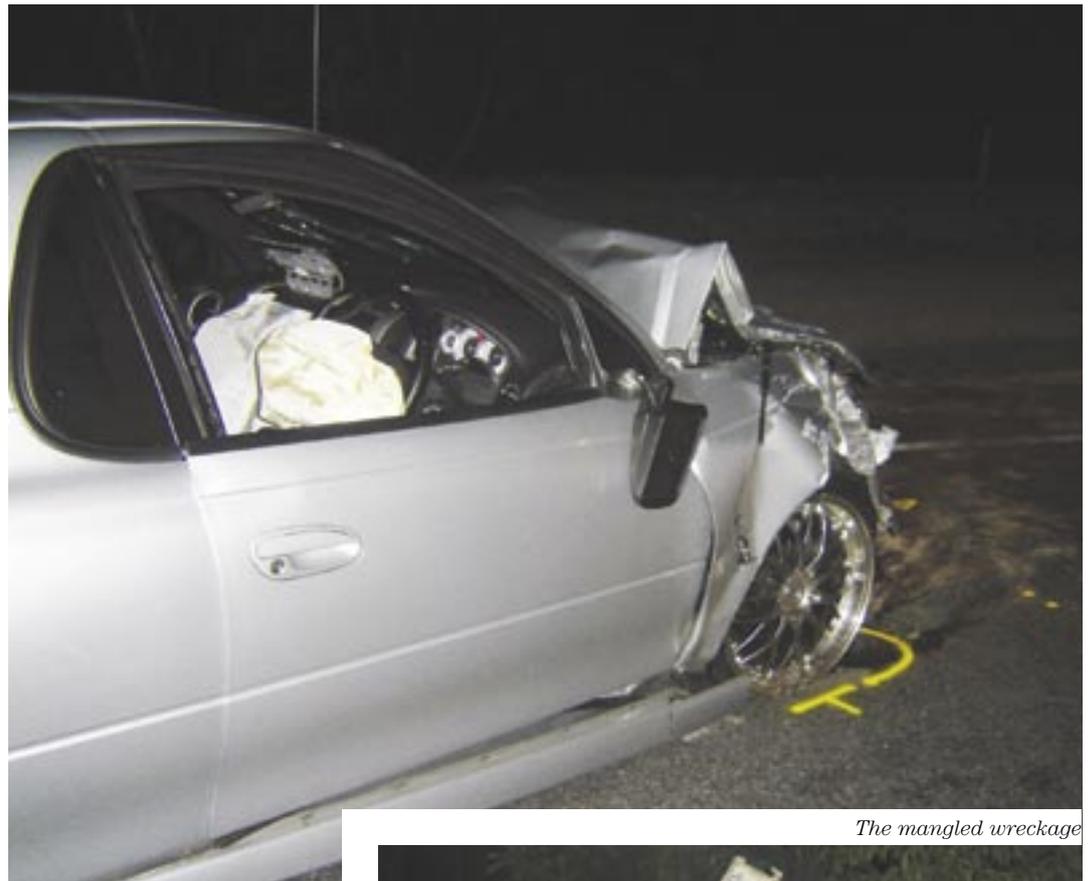
When crews arrived, they were shocked at the sheer magnitude of the accident. The utility suffered major front end damage and had skidded for over 100 metres after impact. The car which was attempting the U-turn had its entire rear end ripped off and thrown over

“When crews arrived, they were shocked at the sheer magnitude of the accident.”

25 metres away into a tree and fence. Debris from both cars was scattered all along the roadway.

Major Crash Investigators were already on scene establishing just what had happened. Sturt was asked to supply lighting so that investigators could continue into the night.

Sturt had recently purchased two sets of balloon lighting. The balloon lighting is much more effective than normal lighting, and on this particular night the two lights lit up the entire scene without glare. The lighting is an elliptic air filled balloon, fixed to an adjustable stand, which gives even lighting across an emergency scene. They are easy to operate, easy to transport and take up minimal ground space. Noarlunga SES has also



The mangled wreckage

owned this form of lighting for some time.

Members also assisted with traffic control on road blocks,

“Sturt was asked to supply lighting so that investigators could continue into the night.”

and the removal of part of a vehicle from a ditch.

Amazingly, only minor injuries were suffered from both parties.



NEW BOAT IN TUMBY BAY FLEET

A recent addition to the Tumby Bay SES is a new custom built rescue boat. Jim Darling, Unit Manager of the Tumby Bay SES, gives us a brief rundown of some of the new craft's main features.



Above: The first custom built S.E.S Rescue boat built to the new standard in South Australia

- First custom built S.E.S Rescue boat built to the new standard in South Australia.
- Built at Pro Marine Melbourne.
- Aluminium mono hull.
- Built to Survey 2C for six (Three crew & three passengers) to 30 Nautical miles off shore.
- Length: 8.00 metres.
- Beam: 2.9 metres.
- Weight: 3.3 tonnes, 4.5 tonnes on trailer.
- Engine: Volvo Penta Diesel 260 H.P. Turbo & Supercharged.
- Top speed: 34 knots.
- Fuel: 400 litres diesel in two tanks. (Enough for 200 nautical miles).
- Six man liferaft.
- Sixty five nautical mile radar.
- Furuno Navnet electronics with Ethernet hub.
- Wolf drum anchor winch.
- V.H.F Marine radio.
- 27 meg marine radio.
- U.H.F.
- G.R.N. radio network.
- Minimum crew of three.
- Delivered to Tumby Bay two weeks before Christmas 2004.
- Four rescues so far.

Prior to this Tumby Bay relied on volunteer boats for rescues. These volunteer boats will be kept in the fleet.

Since its arrival there has been a lot of interest shown and we have gained a few new members and this is always welcome.

The minister for Emergency Services Pat Conlon is coming to Tumby Bay to conduct the launching on March 15th at 1900 hrs.

By Jim Darling
Unit Manager
Tumby Bay

SERVICE AWARDS

In November of 2004, Shane Leedham and Lyn Little were awarded with thier 10 year service award medal from the Enfield Unit.

Both Shane and Lyn were with another Unit - Shane some 9 years, Lyn 2 and a half, then took some time off and returned to Enfield some 10 years ago. Shane also has applied for his 25 year service as a volly. He has combined service of 14 and a half years as a CFS

(EFS) member and 9 years as a SES (Civil Defence) combined member.

Lyn was a EFS member in her teens then quite a few years later a SES member. They are both still curenly with Enfiled, Lyn being the Rescue Officer and Shane the Deputy Rescue Officer.



Three teams abseiling at Warrens Grove

NO HEROES ON THE MOUNTAIN

The opportunity to be part of the Phase 1 Vertical Rescue Course being conducted at Warren's Gorge in the Flinders Ranges, October 29 – 30, was too great a temptation to ignore.

I had been deemed competent at Phase 2 Vertical Rescue level in December 2003 and grasp any chance to maintain the skills working in the type of environment that is likely to be an incident site.

Pieter Scott (Flinders Regional Manager) was course manager, Warren (mountain goat) Hicks, Peter Willmott and Roger Murdock the instructors with the assistance of Tony (orange blooded) Fahlbusch. Stuart McLeod observed the activities Friday night and Saturday but was lured away to other more demanding matters.

Friday evening saw SES members from State Headquarters, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Quorn meet at Quorn's SES unit to begin the course.

This is where the importance of having good basic rescue skills is driven home. Basic

rescue instructors try to convey the importance of learning correct techniques at basic level to all SES members. This is the foundation that is used to build on other skills, and vertical rescue is one area that it is crucial that basic skills become second

nature, and all candidates "must be competent but never complacent".

After revising basic skills and demonstrating competence in basic knots, the participants were given permission to retire for the night and encouraged to rest up, read up and prepare for a long day on Saturday. All were warned that the day would not only be mentally

challenging but also physically tiring. With those words taken on board, all retired to their prospective beds at the Criterion Hotel in Quorn or returned to their homes.

Saturday morning started early for all, though some began the day quite a bit earlier than

“Basic rescue instructors try to convey the importance of learning correct techniques at basic level to all SES members.”

others! After a hot cooked breakfast for those at the hotel, all met once again at Quorn's Unit, ready and eager for the day ahead. There was much to do and so little time.

The morning consisted of revising anchor systems, belay systems and familiarisation of equipment that is used in vertical rescue. Once again, the importance of sound basic

skills was highlighted. The afternoon was spent at Olive Grove, demonstrating anchor skills, learning abseiling and rope work skills. The scenery was as usual spectacular, and the climb from the bottom of the waterfall after each abseil back to the top proved to be a good indicator to each as to their current level of fitness. When all had taken the opportunity to demonstrate their agility on the ropes and the majority of the participants physically tired, Pieter decided to call a stop for the afternoon and all to return to the Unit to check gear and prepare for the evening's session.

After a delicious meal at the hotel and a glass of refreshment (soft drink for most), we returned for the evening entertainment of "doing the mill".

These three words are enough to incite fear in most vertical



Crew practicing abseiling under the watchful eyes of Stuart McLeod at Olive Grove

rescue participants. This is where the opportunity to display individual skills and competence on the rope is timed, and has a set limit, while performing “the mill routine”.

Most participants survived “the mill” and those that missed out were given the opportunity to display their ability at a later date. The night was called to a halt about 2230 hours and given that it was the beginning of daylight savings and we lost an hour, we headed to the comfort of beds to rest muscles that we had forgotten about or hadn’t realised even existed.

Sunday Morning once again started with a cooked breakfast and discussion

about who was the sorest and anticipation as to what the day may bring.

Ensuring all the equipment was aboard and plenty of water, our group headed to Warren’s Gorge. The drive from Quorn only helped to remind us of the beauty of our surroundings.

On arrival to the gorge, our group was divided into three teams and each given their prospective orders. Pieter and crew headed in one direction, Roger and company another and those who were lucky to have Warren (mountain goat) yet another.

After selecting appropriate anchors, abseiling and showing

new found competence and skills on the rope, our group shifted sites and went through the process again and again.

The orange of our SES uniform did not detract from the beauty of the surroundings but enhanced the colours around us. A short visit from a curious Yellow Tailed Rock Wallaby, a skink and being observed under the watchful eye of a kookaburra, who declined to laugh at us, we shared in the knowledge of why tourists, hikers and such come to visit and soak up the atmosphere.

We were in “Mother Nature’s Playground” and unless the appropriate care was taken, this playground had the potential to

become a death trap.

This is why we were here.

We were learning to be part of a rescue team that may be called to a rescue incident in this enchanting but dangerous country. There is no room for heroics here. All must be trained and disciplined, ready to perform the duty required for the optimum outcome. We are SES volunteers training and trained to assist in times of need. We are part of the rescue organisation.

With our new found or revised skills, and totally exhausted, we called it a day about 1530 hours and headed back to Quorn for the last time for the weekend.

After sorting and checking the equipment and ensuring assessments were signed off, the members loaded their gear and headed off in the directions of their homes, each of us satisfied they had given 100% over the weekend.

All who attended know this was the first step to becoming a part of a vertical rescue team and now it is up to us to maintain these skills and use them whenever the opportunity may arise.

Not heroes, but part of a team, and if you take a close look in each team you will find someone you can really rely on, a mate.



Warren Hicks pops up and says “where have you been?”

FLOODS – THE STORY FROM BOTH SIDES

A story of the floods at Cockburn, February 1997, as told by Bob Hughes – Controller of SES and Captain of CFS.

In my area recently we experienced flooding – probably the worst since the coming of European settlement. These flood waters caused immense damage to fences, dams, yards, etc. There were also huge stock losses. Fortunately, only two homesteads were badly effected. In both of these houses, water flowed through them about waist deep, it also flowed through the surrounding sheds, shearers' quarters and electrical power generators. Our house was

surrounds were not a pretty sight. There was thick mud and debris everywhere! This was made worse by the mangled wreckage of a helicopter located a few metres from the house. The helicopter had crashed into the water at the height of the flood while the pilot was trying to rescue some of the occupants from the roof of the homestead. After quickly summing up the situation, I decided to lay down woolen blankets through the passage of the house and across the verandah as

the rafters. This let the air circulate through them to dry out the mud and water. After all we were there to help – not to destroy.

It's quite amazing how heavy furniture and mattresses can get when full of mud and water. We pushed the mattresses and pillows out of the windows where we could. You see, one can never train for any of this and I would say very few rescue groups ever have to encounter these situations. There were several factors that made it hard for us. Firstly, it was late afternoon and that made light a problem inside the house, as there was no power generator available. We could not use our own unit as it was too far from the scene. The temperature was in the mid 40°c and combined with the moisture the humidity was almost unbearable.

There was a foul rotting smell everywhere. All up it was very tiring. When it came to shoveling the mud into wheelbarrows, it was near impossible to push through the remaining mud. This was especially so on the outside of the building where we emptied the barrows out – no concrete or bitumen paths in the bush! There was one reasonably small glass shelved cupboard that was tipped upside down by

households have. Obviously all of these objects meant a lot to the owners, otherwise they would not have had them on display. Amazingly, none appeared to have broken. When I thought about it, I realised that the water acted as a cushion and as it receded it would have laid the contents down carefully. I overcame the problem of moving these by putting a member in charge of removing these articles one by one. These were then handed along the group who were standing in an Indian file along the passage into another room handing them to the owner who stacked the articles onto shelves. Not a single item was broken!

After several hours we were all very tired and as we realized we could not finish the job we retired for the day – my members to Cockburn, myself to Broken Hill. Bill Vickers and his crew from Broken Hill SES joined our members to finish the job the next day. After the mud and floor coverings were removed and the site cleaned up we were all relieved. I got two smart young members to go back on the third day to spray off the remaining mud from the floors and walls using a fine spray under pressure from our fire truck. The

“The helicopter had crashed into the water at the height of the flood while the pilot was trying to rescue some of the occupants from the roof of the homestead.”

one of them, the other being some 30 km away.

On the 3rd day after the water subsided, I was in my house where the mud was six inches deep. I was trying to connect up gas pipes so as to get the fridges, stove and hot water system going. I received a call over the UHF radio from my neighbour (the other flooded one) who was in need of assistance. In no time at all, my crew of about six and I were on our way. We arrived at my neighbour's place at about 1530 hours. We had to leave our vehicles about 3/4 km from his house, as it was located on the other side of a very fast running creek. Someone had laid a log and an old aeroplane wing across the creek for a bridge. A rope had been tied between the trees for a handrail. It was no “Bailey” bridge but it could be crossed with care. The house and

walking on the mud was like walking on grease. It was a very dangerous job indeed, when removing furniture. We started by removing the furniture room by room and stacking it in a large mud effected garage, some way from the house. When water gets into cupboards, the clothes get wet and swell the wood so that these cupboards cannot be opened. I asked the owner, in each case, if she wanted to save the clothes or the cupboard they were in. To force open the cupboards to save the contents causes a lot of damage. I thought it pointless to just stack wet clothes from the house in a pile in the garage as they would rot and go smelly very quickly. I decided that the best way was to put a member of the team up a ladder – we then handed him all of the clothes that he then hung from

“On returning home just after the flood and seeing the damage for the first time, I felt overwhelmed with despair.”

the water and was leaning against the wall. Inside were several dozen little ornaments of mostly glass – everything looked so fragile. The sort of collectibles most

same method was used on my own house and shearers' quarters sometime later. I can thoroughly recommend this method to anyone doing similar work.

About half way through the first day and after my crew was organised I wandered over to my neighbour who had reason to be stressed and we had quite a yarn about his problem. I thought what better person than me to talk about it – after all I was in the same boat just up the road. I am sure he felt better for it – I know I certainly did.

A few days later it was my turn to be cleaned out. To me, the circumstances were a lot different now as I was on the receiving end this time. This gave me a different perspective from when we were doing my neighbour's job.

On returning home just after the flood and seeing the damage for the first time, I felt overwhelmed with despair. What one takes a lifetime to put together can be removed or damaged in one great sweep. From a well-organised household to one with no dry and clean clothes, beds, mattresses or bedding. No fridges, HWS,

electricity, stove and as I was to find out later – no toilet. The septic pits had filled with silt. Being without a washing machine was another problem.

I felt deeply for my wife. As she surveyed the damage – after all it is her domain – her special place that she kept so nicely and it is the place where she cared for and

“Incidentally, after the original despair I realised one gains nothing by grizzling and jumping up and down.”

reared her family. It's a very personal thing, especially for the woman of the house. To have outsiders come into the house piling her and her family's possessions into bags and boxes and taking them outside where they are thrown into heaps. When helpers were shoveling the mud and contents from our house and shed, I could not help noticing how they

seemed to be so rough when handling everything. After all, what was precious to me was junk to them. They did not come miles to help me sift slowly through the debris. They gave their precious time to come and clean up as best and quickly as they could. Their priority was to return to their homes and loved ones and get back to doing their

own work. After all, they are volunteers, not paid workers. Thousands owe a lot to these folk who so kindly give their time to help others. In my house we cut up the carpets with Stanley Knives and laid them down through the house. This was so we could walk and barrow the mud out safely. They are very effective for doing this and it is hard to slip on them.

Incidentally, after the original despair I realised one gains nothing by grizzling and jumping up and down. I have concentrated and will build on what we have saved and not what we have lost. I do not know, fellow CFS/SES members, if you have ever realised that the three elements that cause us the most problems – wind, water and fire – have one thing in common. That is they cause immense damage that we can see everywhere about us for a long time, yet after the damage is done the perpetrator just disappears. As if it is a murder scene – the murder has been committed, evidence is everywhere; the murderer (wind, fire or water) is known but can never be caught or seen again.

By Bob Hughes
Wompinie Station
Cockburn SES



letters



Hon. Mike Rann MP
The Premier of South Australia
State Administration Centre
200 Victoria Square
Adelaide 5000

21 January, 2005

Mr David Place
Director
State Emergency Service
Level 7, 60 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Mr Place,

I write to let you know how proud I am of the work of the SES and its volunteers over the past few weeks - particularly in relation to the Eyre Peninsula bushfires - and to offer my heartfelt thanks for their magnificent efforts.

As you know, I have been visiting the Eyre Peninsula repeatedly since the devastating and tragic fires of Tuesday, 11 January.

On each visit, I have heard about the difficult but terrific work of our SES volunteers and indeed, all of our emergency services people. I have heard nothing but the very highest praise about the contribution of volunteers - many of whom have travelled long distances to help those facing loss and devastation.

The dedication of the SES volunteers deserves to be both acknowledged and honoured.

I know that I speak for all caring South Australians when I say thank you to all SES volunteers for serving our community, and thank you for the willingness to ignore personal cost in order to save lives. I would be most grateful if you could pass on this message to all SES volunteers. Our State is proud of them.

Your Sincerely

Mike Rann
Premier

letters

Murray Region
Emergency Service Headquarters
10 Second St.,
Murray Bridge SA 5253

14 February 2005

Mr Derren Halleday,
Executive Officer
SA SES Volunteers Association
PO Box 72
O'Halloran Hill SA 5158

Dear Derren,

On Behalf of the Murray SES Region, please find enclosed a donation in memory of Mr. Graham Hardy who died in the Deep Creek Conservation Park on 18th December, 2004.

The volunteer members of the Murray Region have requested that this money be forwarded to the Association to be used for the Keith Lane Memorial Fund.

Letters of thanks have been sent to the individual donors.

I have enclosed a copy of a letter from Mrs. Elaine Hardy, a list of the donors and a copy of the letter of thanks sent to Mrs. Hardy.

Yours faithfully

Ty Lloyd
Regional Manager
Murray Region

15 George Street
Unley Park
SA 5061

5 January, 2005

Dear Sirs,

These donations for the SES were received at the funeral of Graham Hardy, who died in Deep Creek Conservation Park on 18th December, 2004, in spite of the best efforts of the local SES. Could you please ensure that the money is passed to the relevant section of SES with my thanks for a job well done in spite of the tragic outcome.

Yours with thanks

Mrs Elaine Hardy

20 January, 2005
C/O Ty Lloyd
PO Box 1371
Murray Bridge
SA 5253

Re: Donations to State Emergency Services

Dear Sir,

In appreciation of all the effort made to find Graham Hardy, who unfortunately died in the bush on December 18th, Elaine Hardy asked for this funeral donation to go to the SES Deep Creek Region.

Yours Sincerely

John Beresford