



# Frontline



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**CLIMATE CHANGE  
PORT LINCOLN HOSTS A WEEKEND OF CELEBRATIONS  
AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

## CONTENT FOR FRONTLINE

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Cover: The Minister is greeted on his arrival at the Port Lincoln Marina Complex for the commissioning of Yakata.

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# Chairperson's report



**A** lot has happened since the last edition of *Frontline*. Apart from Christmas and New Year celebrations, the state has lived through a heat wave and narrowly missed suffering the same fate as our Victorian neighbours with firestorms, the like of which Australia has never seen before.

Our hearts can only go out to all those who have suffered and to our fellow volunteers, doing all that they can to help and protect their communities.

The one thing that we have not been immune from is the effects of the current financial situation. The treasurer has already announced that government departments will need to cut back on spending and the Emergency Services Sector are expected to also cut back.

As far as the SES is concerned, I do not believe spending can be cut back any further without impacting on the level of service to volunteers. The Association has been pushing for more funding for the service over the last 12 months, so as to employ more support staff, such as operational planners and trainers to take some of the pressure off our volunteers, as well as the need for updating buildings and equipment.

Luckily, unit budgets have remained relatively untouched. I know they have not increased for the last couple of years, but they could have been cut a lot more than they have been. You can be assured the Association will be working with State Headquarters to ensure any cuts are kept to a minimum and that services to volunteers remain unchanged. One has to remember that the Emergency Services Levy doesn't fully cover the cost of providing this State with Emergency Services, so any cuts from the State Government will have to be managed.

One also has to remember that as the money dries up, businesses are going to be less likely, or even willing, to release their employees for volunteer work, which could then impact on some units' ability to provide crews during

working hours. Ways to overcome this include looking after our current volunteers and their employers, and recognising their efforts.

Last year, a number of community functions were held that did just that and seemed to be successful. Recruitment of more volunteers is another way, but it is no good running recruitment campaigns unless the support network is in place to train and equip these new recruits. Again, more staff, more money at a time when there is not a lot around.

In order for the Association's voice to be heard, it is important that we have a strong membership base; the Association speaks for all SES volunteers in this State but one only has to look at the number of SES volunteers and compare it to the number of volunteers on the Association's membership list to see many volunteers are willing to let them fight and speak for them but not become members of the Association. It costs nothing except time to fill in the form, so I am asking those that have not yet joined up to take that five minutes and fill in the form. Give the Association the proof it needs to truly say it represents the interests of all SES volunteers when dealing with politicians and business leaders.

On a more positive note, the first of the South Australian State Emergency Services service medals have been presented with more award ceremonies planned throughout the State. I would ask that you support these award ceremonies and invite the press and the local community to them, if they can't attend, write letters to the local paper acknowledging the recipients of these medals. Don't sit back and hope that State Headquarters will do it all for you. Recognition begins at home; promote what we do and those that have been awarded for their efforts. Who knows, it might just catch on.

Till next time, stay safe.

**Warren Hicks**  
Chairperson, SASESVA

# from the Chief Officer's Desk

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUMMER

Everyone is quite used to the SASES taking the lead role in storms and floods as they impact South Australia, and in providing our normal response to rescues of all types. Equally, people are used to our key support role to CFS operations, but in recent days, the SES has been at the forefront of all activities relating to the heat wave. Normally SES volunteers are out there providing direct services to the public with the support of paid staff, but this time the main effort came from our small team of paid staff.

As the Hazard Leader and Control Agency for Extreme Weather, SES proactively requested a State Emergency Centre (SEC) briefing on Wednesday, January 28; just ahead of the heat wave arriving to ensure that agencies required to manage this event were working on the same 'sheet of music', despite the absence of a detailed heat wave plan. This strategy was supported by SAPOL and all of the other agencies, and significantly we lifted the effort on public information, community advices and warnings. By Sunday, February 1, everyone was on board with the strategies developed by a multi-agency planning team led by SES staff, and the full weight of Government and emergency services was very effective in getting strong and clear messages to the community by a broad range of media. Certainly for many South Australians, the heat wave was simply a normal summer, but for those at risk and vulnerable to such an event across Adelaide and the settled areas, the communication strategy was an important project. Right now SES is leading a huge effort to rapidly develop and refine effective heat wave management arrangements and communication strategies as part of the Extreme Weather Plan. This would not be possible without the invaluable support of the other agencies such as Health, Community Services, SAFECOM and Police, with the assistance of many other players.

And what were our vollies doing during the heatwave? Well apart from the routine of searches and road crashes, they were out lifting trees off cars and houses and making the community safe. During the past couple of months, SES has responded to well over 600 tasks of tree or major limb failure. Many old large trees have simply turned up their roots as the result of years of drought. This has been a huge effort by our crews, and one that we have been able to recognise in the media in amongst the heat wave messages. Certainly the Premier has expressed his thanks to me for the work you have done. That our Eyre Peninsula Units were very active in the Port Lincoln Proper Bay fire was also something noted by Government with thanks.

So a heat wave, a fire and lots of trees, what else could go wrong? The Victorian tragedy was the answer no one wanted, and as CFS CO Euan Ferguson has clearly said, it could just as easily

have been in South Australia. The death toll and the damage bill from the Victorian fires almost defies belief, and yet our brothers and sisters in Victoria have to come to grips with that reality.

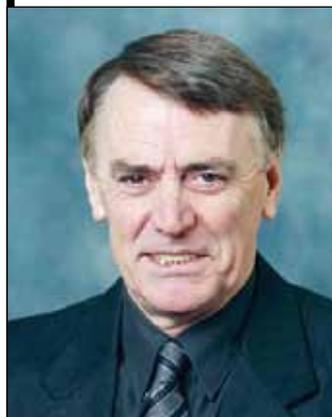
Right from the start, our volunteers raised their hands to go and help. The reaction was just what we expected, but still it filled us with pride that SASES was ready to respond. As we had done for the Queensland floods, we offered help to our neighbours in Victoria SES. The offer (as it was by Queensland) was very warmly received, but in their resource rich environment, Victoria SES very gracefully declined our offers of a Task Force. Instead, over the past ten days we have sent two and threes of senior staff and senior volunteers to work in the Melbourne Integrated Emergency Coordination Centre and to manage base camps north east of Melbourne. We have continually offered to increase the level of support, but thus far Victoria SES is coping with its roles. This fire situation is still a major operation and a major risk, and time will tell. It may well be that by this time next week from my writing that we will be asked to step forward, and as always, SASES volunteers and staff will be there.

Susan Caracoussis has suggested to me that *Frontline* should include a column to inform you of changes and developments in SES. The whats and whys and hows of issues and significant concerns. I am very supportive of this, but with all our minds full of the tragedy across the border, now is not the time to tackle this suggestion. I believe that such a column would be a great innovation, and I am very happy to be the bunny providing all the information. The challenge to you is to ask the right questions. Obviously this issue of *Frontline* is too late, but send your questions to Susan and the other SASESVA office holders for the next issue. With a batch of questions from Susan on my desk, I can then sit and provide you with the answers, starting with the next issue.

Our operational work is our main priority, and I have not even touched on the launching of the new Port Lincoln rescue boat *Yakata*, the institution of our Long Service Medal, or many other current issues. One thing that is very current is to congratulate Stuart Lambert, Unit Manager of Barmera, on being awarded the Emergency Service Medal in the Australia Day Honours List – well done Stuart. And well done too, to Daniel Schulz of Loxton, the South Australian Young Citizen of the Year.

For now, spare some thoughts for our friends in other places who are doing it tough. Also remember that the 2008 SA heat wave came in March, and that we had major fires quite late last summer. South Australia is not yet off the hook. Stay safe, stay alert and look after one another,

**Stuart Macleod**



# Executive Officer's report

January saw our volunteers supporting fire fighters from the MFS and CFS at Proper Bay where the fires came within 300 metres of the Port Lincoln township and caused millions of dollars worth of damage to property including two tuna processing businesses. The SES assisted with servicing fire fighting equipment, logistics support, controlling road closures and then helping the Salvation Army in providing meals to the fire fighters.

Less than three weeks later, I had the pleasure of travelling to Port Lincoln for the Port Lincoln Unit's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and would like to thank all for the hospitality

have worked tirelessly and still continue to do so.

However, with the events of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February and the Victorian fire disaster, all has been forgotten elsewhere, with the fire being described as the greatest single natural disaster since settlement in 1788.

The loss of lives is devastating and sent shockwaves around the country, and the generosity and support has been overwhelming and still events are being planned for the bushfire victims.

Even as we go to print, fires are still burning and the SASES continues to have support teams in Victoria, and how long will this continue?



afforded me. It was a pleasure to meet and chat with so many volunteers. It was also great to see the number of former Port Lincoln and still-active volunteers who travelled over to attend the event, including a contingent from Adelaide.

I was also taken for a tour of the Proper Bay area, and besides putting it all in perspective for me, I was amazed at the devastation, yet also saw areas unscathed, with one property in particular; standing alone, simply due to its preparedness. The photograph of burnt trees on this page was taken as we drove along a dirt track in the area.

Statewide, due to the extreme weather conditions and then the heat stress impact, trees toppled everywhere, causing considerable damage to property and kept all units extremely busy. Over 500 jobs have been attended to late February, mostly for fallen tree branches due to this increase in heat stress.

With February upon us, Queensland again suffered extreme flood damage and isolation for some towns, where our fellow SES volunteers

The simple answer: we're not sure. The SASES initially deployed two senior officers to work in the Victorian SES Integrated Emergency Coordination Centre, and then two additional specialist incident managers assisted with providing situational overviews and reporting on SES activities.

Further support continues with volunteers subsequently being deployed.

Yet, I feel we must not forget the devastation of Queensland, the loss of livestock, crops destroyed and subsequent impact on the economy, which will be felt nationally. Of course, and in particular, we mustn't forget the people of Ingham, who have been isolated for nearly two months and are having water and other supplies dropped to them. With these ongoing water levels still remaining, the consequence means that so much property will now be beyond repair. The level of personal and public infrastructure damage is still to be assessed, and the ultimate rebuilding will take a long period.

Then just a week later, the floods hit New South Wales, where the State Government declared the Mid North Coast a natural disaster, with the area in particular around Bellingen having over 4,000 people isolated. 500 SES volunteers helped out people affected by the floods; they had 11 helicopters and fixed wing aircraft on standby across the region for any medical or other ongoing emergencies. They also ferried food, medical supplies and other essentials into the area using floodboats.

The comments made by the NSW Emergency Services Minister, Mr Steve Whan, reflects how SES volunteers, regardless of location, always react in times of need:

“Our SES volunteers can always be relied upon to respond quickly to calls for help in storms, floods and other emergencies. As always, they have worked tirelessly to assist those affected by these floods.

“The community and the Government thank them not only for their hard work but also for their generosity and community spirit in helping those in need.”

Additionally a comment made in Queensland is now certainly applicable in Victoria where it was said: “We’re getting new people in all the time to relieve fatigued crews.”

I’ve now been informed that Volunteering Australia has secured the support of a major sponsor to conduct a national “volunteer thank you” media campaign, which will commence shortly and continue until National Volunteer Week (May 11-17, 2009).

The campaign, which will run across television, radio and in the print media, will feature a broad range of volunteers and given the bushfires and floods, newsroom footage of these events will be featured.

The key message of the campaign will be to thank volunteers for their ongoing commitment to their communities, and of course, to draw focus to National Volunteer Week, being an excellent opportunity for public acknowledgement.

As a member of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum and from the forum’s perspective, we feel that this provides an opportunity for our volunteers to be recognised for their role, and whilst we believe that there will be a significant focus on the Victorian bushfires, we feel that a theme for all emergency sector organisations must be to recognise all and not just those on the front line.

Remember there have been two national summits for volunteers in the emergency sector, plus a report recently commissioned on attracting and retaining volunteers, and one of the complaints was a lack of recognition.

So let’s endeavour to do something about it.

The SASES has of course started the ball rolling with the SASES Long Service Medal, which is in recognition of both volunteers and paid staff. We also should consider other awards in the public arena to enhance awareness of volunteers and at the same time give additional and appropriate recognition to the volunteers concerned. The Association is willing to assist units in this regard, and has assisted in

developing an information package on local government awards, which is an excellent award for recognition within the community in which you assist.

We are delighted to recognise some award recipients in this issue of *Frontline* and congratulate all our SES volunteers who were recognised on Australia Day.

There are several reviews occurring at the present time and we are awaiting updates in this regard, which we hope to include in the next issue of *Frontline*.

A newly formed working party has now met for the first time and is focussing on Emergency Services Delivery Standards. The Association has two representatives on the group, being Simon Kretschmer from Port Augusta and John Lawrence from Western Adelaide.

I’d also like to thank the numerous Unit Managers who have undertaken membership drives for the Association and the influx of membership forms has been most encouraging.



In actual fact we have run out of DEFCOM membership cards, and are still awaiting receipt of the membership directory and cards for distribution. Your ongoing assistance in this regard is appreciated.

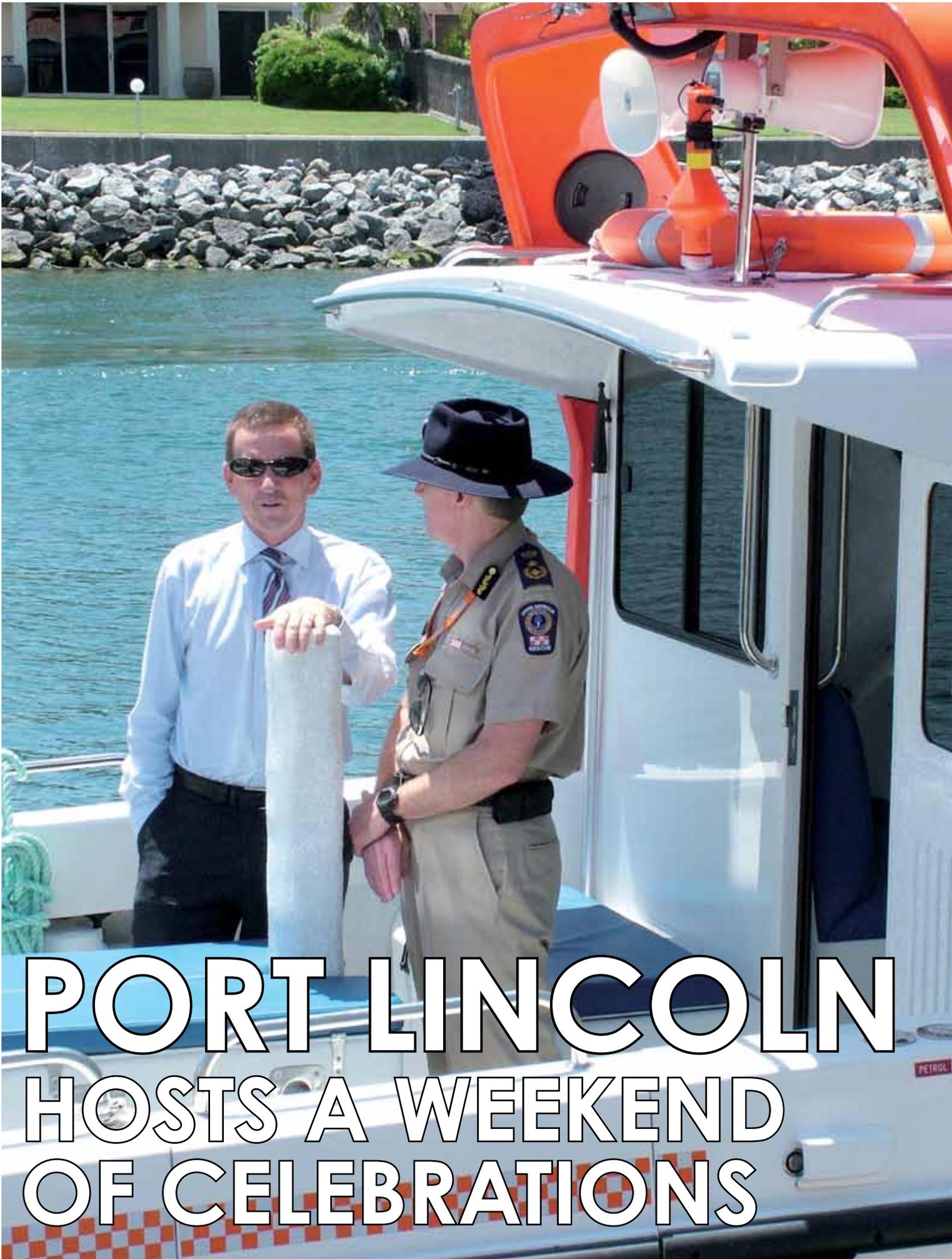
Also don’t forget with the change in seasons, it may be time to order vest or polo items, which the Association can arrange for you and an order form is featured in this issue.

Next issue of *Frontline* will feature an article from Peter Willmott on “Factors influencing recruitment and retention of volunteers in a local SES unit”, which will be a must read for all.

In the meantime congratulations to Port Augusta Unit on its recruitment campaign and signing of new volunteers.

Don’t forget, if you have any issues, please feel free to contact me, and have a safe and hopefully quiet Easter.

**Susan Caracoussis**  
Executive Officer SASESVA



# PORT LINCOLN HOSTS A WEEKEND OF CELEBRATIONS



*The Minister and Stuart Macleod.*



*Cadets at the launch with Port Lincoln Unit member Jarrod Jones, far right, who flew in from Broome, WA for the Unit's celebrations. Cadets from left are: Daniel Elkington, Kaitlyn Davidson, Sam Bird-Balek, and Jeffery Shannon.*



*The Minister and Chief Officer arriving at the launch were met by Tony Brown, Unit Manager Port Lincoln and Robert Charlton Regional Commander West Region. In the background Adam Brown and Greg Shannon from Port Lincoln Unit.*

To celebrate Port Lincoln's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a comprehensive program to recognise both past and present members of the SES was arranged by Port Lincoln Unit, commencing with the Commissioning Ceremony of the new SES Rescue Vessel, MV *Yakata*, a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner followed that evening and the next day a community barbecue and Open Day was held at the Unit. In between, a "Sod Turning Ceremony" was held on the new combined facilities site.

### COMMISSIONING CEREMONY AT THE PORT LINCOLN MARINA COMPLEX

Formalities were overseen with Port Lincoln member Max Coulson acting as Master of Ceremonies. He invited the Unit Manager, Tony Brown, to welcome all and then say a few words on the history of marine rescue in Port Lincoln.

Tony outlined that as there was no marine rescue system in the area, the SES decided to take on the role, and this was done initially by members using their own boats. After several rescues, it was agreed that the Unit needed its own boat purely for rescue purposes.

This first vessel was purchased in 1983, and provided good service until it was replaced in 1996 by the present fibreglass Hydrofield, the *City of Port Lincoln*. This vessel was slightly longer than the first vessel, at 27ft with a hull designed specifically for rough water.

Tony then went on to say: "With SES Marine capability building around the State, approximately two years ago it was decided to replace the Port Lincoln rescue vessel. After some negotiation, State Headquarters applied to the State Government for funding and an amount was granted to purchase a new vessel for Port Lincoln and then deploy our existing one to Kingston SE to set up marine rescue capability there.

"The new vessel which you see before you is a Noosa Cat Patrol 3100 Series. Constructed of fibreglass, it is designed by the manufacturer for rescue purposes.

“Special thanks should go to State Headquarters staff for all the hard work involved in this acquisition. To the State Government for funding it and to those local businesses, who in the past have already assisted us to get this vessel operational, in particular, Q Mechanical, Boat Supplies, EP Fire and Safety and Harders Transport, and last but certainly not least, the volunteer members of the marine crew of SES Port Lincoln who will ensure the vessel is put to good use in helping to protect the community and visitors who venture out on the water in our area.”

Stuart Macleod, Chief Officer of the SASES, then expressed his pleasure of being in Port Lincoln for the celebrations, commencing with the launch of the Yakata, and also expressed his appreciation of the many months of work by local SES personnel with the builder – Noosa Cat, which was ably coordinated by Darryl Wright.

Stuart also acknowledged the high level of support from the Government to SES Rescue Services, with the Yakata replacing the City of Port Lincoln and the many years of marine rescue service provided to the community and boating public, as SES volunteers attended many tasks over the years, working closely with police and other emergency services.

Stuart then said: “With the launching of this new vessel, we look forward to many more years of rescue service to Port Lincoln and the Eyre Peninsula.

“I thank you for coming to support the Port Lincoln SES as their new rescue vessel Yakata officially joins the SES fleet.”

Captain Gary Cox from the Salvation Army was then invited to bless the vessel, prior to Max inviting the Minister to commission the vessel.

The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Michael Wright then addressed guests and expressed his pleasure of being in Port Lincoln to commission the new search and rescue vessel for the State Emergency Service.

He then went on to say: “The South Australian State Emergency Service has a long history of service to the community. In addition to its traditional roles of providing assistance during storms, floods, land searches and the many other emergencies that they attend, the SES, along with the other Volunteer Marine Rescue Associations, also provides a marine search and rescue capability in strategic locations throughout the State.

“The Government and the community at large greatly appreciate the dedication of all of our emergency services personnel, particularly those who generously volunteer their time.

“The sea change trend is seeing a substantial increase in the number of people living in coastal communities. We are also seeing that anglers are purchasing larger vessels and venturing further out to sea in search of their catch, and more and more people are spending recreational time cruising in yachts or undertaking some other type of marine pursuit.

“This is particularly relevant to the pristine waters surrounding Port Lincoln, including the Sir Joseph Banks group of islands and Thorny Passage. Whilst being home to some of the best fishing and cruising waters in Australia, these waters can at times be some of the most dangerous. Add to this mix the substantial amount of marine activity generated by the various aquaculture industries that abound in these waters, and you start to realise the level of marine related risk that exists.

“It is an unfortunate reality that even through greater education and developments in sea safety, vessel reliability and communications, there will continue to be accidents and incidents at sea, which require a search and rescue response.

“It is through the need to address this risk that the State Emergency Service identified that the existing rescue vessel, the City of Port Lincoln had limitations in relation to range and configuration. Given these limitations, a proposal was put to this Government that would not only see a new vessel here in Port Lincoln, but allow the original vessel to be redeployed to Kingston in the south-east, where it will become the first government-funded search and rescue vessel for volunteers in that part of the State. The Government was



*The Minister about to officially launch Yakata.*



*Stuart Macleod.*



*City of Port Lincoln.*



*Tony Brown.*



*The Minister.*

indeed very pleased to be able to support the proposal through the provision of an additional \$350,000 in funding to the State Emergency Service.

“I am advised that the new vessel, Yakata, substantially improves the response capability of the Port Lincoln SES Unit and other emergency services to marine emergencies in their very large area of responsibility. At nine metres in length with a fully enclosed cabin, state-of-the art electronics, navigation and safety equipment, she is well equipped to respond to marine emergencies and has the capability to remain at sea for extended periods of time whilst maintaining crew safety.

“Additionally, given her portability, she is also able to respond to other locations throughout the state as required, particularly in support of search and rescue operations being conducted by the other nearby marine capabilities at Ceduna, Tumby Bay and Cowell.

“I was also very pleased to learn that the name *Yakata*, a local aboriginal word meaning “to seek”, was submitted by members of the aboriginal community and selected as the winner of a competition conducted by the SES through the local media. The word *Yakata* not only reflects the long standing aboriginal cultural ties to the area, but the very nature of the duties that she will perform.

“I would like to acknowledge the many people that have played a role in the planning and acquisition of this vessel. I am aware that it has been a long project, which at times has not always run to plan, but you should all feel very proud as the fruits of your efforts are displayed before us today.

“I would also like to acknowledge the many volunteers who give so freely of their time, often at considerable personal sacrifice and risk, to answer the calls for assistance from the community. Your dedication and commitment is indeed appreciated by this Government and I commend you all.



*The Minister.*

“It is with a great deal of pleasure and a privilege, that on behalf of the State Government, I am able to officially commission Yakata into service today.”

The Minister then was invited to pour the champagne over the vessel to confirm her commission and in doing so, said: “I commission this vessel Yakata into service. May she keep safe those that sail on her, and those that she seeks to assist.”

Guests then mingled and reminisced on rescue experiences.

### **SOD TURNING AT NEW COMBINED FACILITIES SITE**

With the Minister being in Port Lincoln, the opportunity was taken for him to turn the sod for the new combined MFS/SES/CFS facility, which will be completed in the next 12 months. A large contingent of representatives from across the Sector attended this event.

A short break followed and then all were off to the:

### **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

Where the SAFECOM Commissioner David Place addressed guests on behalf of the Minister, before handing over to Stuart Macleod.

With attendees representing a broad cross section at the dinner, either having been associated with the SES in its early days, plus the many younger and hence newer members being present, provided Stuart with the opportunity to provide a little insight.

“Tonight recognises 30 years of undetected crime by our very enthusiastic SES volunteers here in Port Lincoln.

“This unit started in 1979, not long after Civil Defence evolved into the SES, yet Port Lincoln Unit very rapidly became known as Hartley’s Heroes. The first Unit Controller being Gordon Hartley, but always with the lovely Gwen at his side.”

Stuart then acknowledged that it was hard for them all to remember back that far, however, “in 1979, the SES staff comprised three



*Combined Emergency Services group at the Sod Turning ceremony.*



*Family, friends and members of Port Lincoln and surrounding units attended the 30th anniversary barbecue held at Port Lincoln Unit.*

senior officers and an administration officer at State Headquarters. The three brand new Regional Officers were Peter, Darian and me.” Or more precisely “the three amigos, but sometimes the three something else.”

Stuart then outlined how quickly the Unit established its clear rescue role in the community responding to incidents.

Pointing to one of the attendees, Stuart said: “My first contact in 1980/81 with Bob Pycroft and others was on cliff rescue training at Red Rock – I’m not sure that Bob is still active in that role.”

The marine rescue role for the Unit was mentioned and how in its early days it had a great deal of council and community support, with the first two rescue boats proudly carrying the name *City of Port Lincoln*.

Mention was made of the brand new vessel, Yakata, launched by the Minister that afternoon, showing clear evidence of government support to both the SES and the community.

He then stated that marine rescue, whilst having a major role, was not the only role, with search, cliff rescue, storms, etc, and also providing strong support to the CFS and police.

Stuart then reflected on the early days, when Gordon and the Port Lincoln Unit used to be our eyes to the west for weather alerts, as it always hit Port Lincoln first.

Gordon subsequently was appointed a divisional officer in 1985, being one of ten. With Gordon as the divisional officer, the Unit continued to develop and to support the entire West Coast and Eyre Peninsula area.

Port Lincoln has been the venue for many training exercise over the years.

Stuart then said: “Under a succession of excellent unit managers, the Unit has become a very strong and viable force in the community.



*Pictured from Left to right: With the Chief Officer Stuart Macleod, Commissioner SAFECOM David Place, Whyalla Unit Manager Tony Fahlbusch, Helen McCarthy, Unit Manager, West Operations Coordination Unit Gordon Hartley, Cheryl King, Gwen Hartley, West Regional Commander Robert Charlton, Dean Andrews, John Probert, Jim Darling, Peggy Darling, Anne Davidson, Robert Pycroft, Leonie Hankin, Adam Brown, Wendy Pycroft, Nita Berkenhouzen, Unit Manager Port Lincoln Tony Brown, Max Coulson, Robyn Coates, Colin Coates and Richard Bach.*



*Stuart Macleod, Robert Turner, Robert Charlton, Gordon Hartley, Tony Brown, Helen McCarthy, Darrell Wollaston and Robert Pycroft.*



*Peggy Darling, Tumby Bay.*



*Ten year Long Service Medal Recipients.*



“Tony Brown, Robyn Coates and the officers and crews are a credit to SES and to the State.

“Strong support for Commander Robert Charlton, Tony, Judy and Sue at Regional HQ is appreciated.”

Stuart concluded by saying: “My thanks go to local government in the city and surroundings, and to the community for supporting such a strong and effective SES Unit.

“To all the SES members, past and present and too numerous to name, I give my thanks.

“Our volunteers give so much to their communities and neighbours and to the broader community of Australia.

“My special thanks to the families of our volunteers, their friends and of course their employers, because without their support there would be no volunteers and no SES.”

After the formalities were concluded, the dinner provided an excellent forum for the First Round of SASES Medals to be presented.

Recipients were:

**NATIONAL MEDAL – 15 YEARS SERVICE**

**Peggy Darling**, Tumby Bay Unit

**LONG SERVICE MEDALS – 10 YEARS SERVICE AND A CLASP ISSUED FOR EVERY 10 YEARS SERVICE AFTER THAT 20 + YEARS SERVICE**

**Dean Andrew**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**Nita Berkhuisen**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**Tony Brown**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Max Coulson**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Jim Darling**, Tumby Bay Unit

**Tony Fahlbusch**, Whyalla Unit

**Gordon Hartley**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**Gwen Hartley**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**Sheryl King**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**Helen McCarthy**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Wendy Pycroft**, Tumby Bay Unit

**Robert Pycroft**, Tumby Bay Unit

**John Probert**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Robert Turner**, West Operations Coordination Unit

**10 YEARS SERVICE**

**Richard Bach**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Colin Coates**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Robyn Coates**, Port Lincoln Unit

**Peggy Darling**, Tumby Bay Unit

**Leonie Hankin**, Port Lincoln Unit

A large cake was cut and then each guest also had placed in front of them a cupcake with its own candle to ensure all joined in the birthday celebrations.

Guests then mingled and talk certainly focussed on the Unit and how it has evolved over the years, and its close ties with the local community was evident.

The next day, Sunday February 1, was an Open Day and barbecue at the Unit and many members and their families and friends enjoyed the barbecue lunch, followed by the cutting of the cake.

We also learnt that it was Dean Andrews’ birthday, so an extra celebration occurred and Dean’s grandchildren enjoyed the day.

Congratulations to the efforts of all members for their work in planning the celebrations and here’s to Port Lincoln’s next 30 years.

# CYCLING MAY BE PETER'S PASSION, BUT IN THE SES HE'S BETTER KNOWN AS THE UNIT MANAGER OF WESTERN ADELAIDE

Cycling doyen Phil Liggett was in Adelaide for the recent Tour Down Under and while here, was guest speaker at the South Australian Press Club (SAPC) lunch.

When the SAPC decided to hold a lunch with Phil in January, mention was made of the group of cyclists who assembled outside the Hilton International each morning to go riding with Phil before ending up at Bocelli's for a breakfast of bacon sandwiches.

Phil's early morning rides have become a tradition and have been known to attract more riders than the Tour Down Under itself. Little was I to know when the SAPC was arranging its luncheon, and liaising with Phil, that Peter Larvin, President of the La Squadra Adelaide Cycling Club, was responsible for this tradition being established and what is now regarded as an integral part of the Tour.

Most mornings commenced at 6.15am sharp, when Phil and up to 200 riders assembled before heading off. As Phil said: "We try to do a couple of hours, which means we'll probably do 50-60kms, Norton Summit, Lobethal or the coast".

"I lead the boys. They're very kind when I first come into town because they know I've not done much cycling coming from the European winter."

"They're just a great bunch of guys, they're so good to be with. They've all got stories to tell. They range from dustmen to top flight lawyers, we even have police who ride with us." Regardless of the destination, breakfast is 8.30am at Bocelli's. Due to Phil's love of the bacon sandwich, and at his request, it's now a permanent fixture on Bocelli's menu.

"A bacon sandwich after a long ride is fantastic in the morning. You start to dream about these things when you're climbing Norton Summit," he said.



*Phil addresses guests at the SAPC Luncheon.*

"That's the highlight of the day, if I started there I'd never go out on the bike."

This tradition dates back to the first Tour Down Under in 1999, when in the first year, 15-20

people turned up and now it's always around the 200 mark.

"The rides never cease to amaze me, when you look over your shoulder and see how long this group is, there are more riders

on my ride than in the Tour Down Under," Phil said.

Besides establishing the La Squadra Adelaide Cycling Club tradition, by approaching Phil to join the club's morning ride each day while in Adelaide for his commentary role with the Tour, Peter is also a close friend of Phil. Phil is the club's patron.

Peter said of his friend: "The only time he's got to himself is early mornings and Phil loves riding."

What Peter forgot to mention is that Phil is one of the most approachable commentators around, highly respected and known as the man who always has time for others, which was certainly reflected at the Press Club lunch where he mingled with guests, was happy to pose for photos and answered any question put to him.

**Susan Caracoussis**

*Phil and Peter Larvin at Norton Summit.*





# MINTABIE PROMOTED SES WEEK



**On Saturday, November 15, as part of SES Week, the Mintabie Unit held a promotional exercise in the centre of town. Posters had provided details of the event to town residents and a sizable crowd was in attendance at the designated time of 11.30am to watch the exercise.**

**T**wo vehicles had been set in position to simulate a road crash situation. One vehicle was precariously perched on its side while the other car was upside down.

For authenticity, the SES Unit Manager and CFS Captain, Peter Burgess, had brought in the fire truck and set the hoses out, and had even provided

for the Clinic nurse to be on hand with the ambulance, but circumstances at the last minute, precluded that from occurring.

Peter talked to the onlookers about what was unfolding, leaving his team leader Jill Krebs to manage the exercise, which went smoothly and according to plan.

After assessing the situation, the cars were stabilised



and the team, comprising John Underwood, David Underwood, Annie McGovern, Mark Underwood and Punu McGovern, set about rescuing the trapped passenger in one of the vehicles. Demonstrating the state-of-the-art equipment available to them, the team used spreaders and cutters to remove the car door and enable the victim, “Jonesey”,

to be retrieved and placed on a stretcher. The second vehicle was checked to make sure it was safe and then the team proceeded to do a roof peel. Spectators were impressed by the professionalism shown by the team, and many people asked searching questions. As an added bonus, members Kay and John Marshall cooked up sausages and

onions on the barbecue for the spectators to enjoy. The ingredients were donated by Mintabie Area School who were keen to sponsor the event because of the benefit to the community and as several SES members were also students at the school. The entire exercise was deemed a success as several community members expressed interest in joining

the SES and most onlookers spoke about the confidence they felt knowing their remote community was so well serviced by such a professional team.

Regrettably, due to time constraints, we were unable to include this article in the December issue of *Frontline* and apologise to Mintabie for the delay.

# FLOODSAFE PROGRAM

The new FloodSafe Program is up and running in 6 southern metropolitan council areas with 23 SES Volunteers now fully trained, and expressions of interest from 3 non-SES volunteers to join the crews. The non-SES volunteers will be trained in FloodSafe and presentation skills, but will not be required to undertake the full induction and rescue training. However, some of those people have indicated they would like to join SES as full members in the future.



*Pictured from left are: Peter Miller, Susan Bennett, Risk Management Officer, Mitcham Council, Alan Mundy, Sharon Kelsey, Director Environment and Legal Services, Mitcham Council. Gillian Sheldon (front) Risk Management Officer, Mitcham Council, Ken Cocks and Allan Cuk (FloodSafe team leader).*

**O**ur FloodSafe crews have access to a trailer with demo door and wall protection devices (loaned by Unley and Mitcham Councils), and we can provide sandbagging demonstrations, barbecue units can be used for community sausage sizzles and we have developed new Powerpoint presentations for community meetings and school visits. The crews all have new FloodSafe polo shirts to wear at meetings. Neighbourhood Watch at Sturt Police have kindly loaned their green Neighbourhood Watch promotional trailer to our Mitcham, Unley and Holdfast groups when it is free, and we hope to be able to borrow the East Region trailer for a few months.

**“With training completed the crews are visiting their risk areas, looking at flood history and stormwater solutions, contacting councils and preparing for the first round of community meetings.”**

With training completed the crews are visiting their risk areas, looking at flood history and stormwater solutions, contacting councils and preparing for the first round of community meetings. They have trialled their presentations on their own SES Units to raise unit awareness of the program.

The Mitcham Council FloodSafe crew Allan Cuk, Alan Mundy, Ken Cocks and Peter Miller (from Sturt), already has displays or presentations booked at the Rotary Club Plant Fair at Blackwood, the Blackwood Over 50's Club, a community meeting at Westbourne Park Primary School and another in a park

## OUR SES VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO THEIR COUNCIL AREAS:

### HOLDFAST BAY

Jessica Mitchell	Metro South
Raf Sciezka	Metro South
Sandra Preston	Metro South

### MITCHAM

Allan Cuk	Sturt
Alan Mundy	Sturt
Peter Miller	Sturt
Ken Cocks	Sturt

### UNLEY

John Evans	State Operations Centre
David Hall	State Operations Centre
Barbara Hall	State Operations Centre
Tony Tezac	Mt Barker Unit

### ADELAIDE

Felicity Hopkinson	Campbelltown
Megan Wilton	Eastern Suburbs

with support from Arno Attema, Peter Mundy and David Hall

### MARION

Peter Mundy	Prospect
Karen Shippen	Enfield
Lyn Little	Enfield

### WEST TORRENS

Arno Attema	Enfield
Keith Smith	Western Adelaide
Kerin Coulter	State Operations Centre
John Lawrence	Western Adelaide
John Smith	Western Adelaide
Felicity Wilson	Western Adelaide
Merise Adamson	Prospect (reserve)

near Suffolk Avenue at Hawthorndene. They will also host a sausage sizzle and training session at Mitcham Council Depot in coming weeks.

It is hoped that the FloodSafe Program will be extended into the northern metro councils in 2009-10. CFS are also looking at our model in relation to using volunteers in their bushfire education program. SES North Region has also taken the FloodSafe material for implementation in their region, and West are considering a similar tactic.

If anyone else in metro units is interested in joining FloodSafe, please call Judith Bleechmore on 8345 9100.

Please see the FloodSafe information on our website – [www.ses.sa.gov.au](http://www.ses.sa.gov.au)



Photos courtesy of SES and CFS volunteers.

# SASES SUPPORTS INTEGRATED EMERGENCY COORDINATION CENTRE AND BASE CAMPS

**February 2009 provided Australians with a wake-up call that we would never expect or even imagine experiencing. Bushfires were ravaging Victoria. For the next few weeks, Death, Destruction, Heroism, Compassion and even Blame would be splattered across the media.**

**A**ustralians rallied as they always do when their fellow countryman is under threat.

Bushfires are sometimes referred to as “a way of life” for many communities across the land, however, no words can ever return lost loved ones, nor take away the shock, horror or sheer scale of these fires.

Chief Officer Stuart Macleod and Deputy Chief Officer Matt Maywald offered SASES assistance immediately. In fairness to our colleagues in Victoria, who were having to deal with the most devastating disaster ever to befall them, we were only initially asked to send a small command team to the Integrated Emergency Coordination Centre in Melbourne. Later, management teams were deployed to two base camps. Graeme Wynwood, Ian Bonython and I were deployed to the Caulfield Base Camp just out of Yarra Junction. Our task: to set it up,

manage it and ensure that the “firies” came in, grabbed some kip and then went back out on the Line.

Seems simple enough, but we certainly had our share of setbacks, yet I was part of an experience, a time where whilst

We were too engrossed in our task to actually go out on the Line, but through interaction with the firefighters, their humour, their anger, their frustration and their tears, I had a backseat insight into their experiences.

just returned from.

I am immensely proud that I am a member of the SASES. I am honoured to have worked side by side with volunteers and staff, and I am confident in our ability to tackle any task asked of us. Even though there wasn't a request to deploy more SASES personnel to Victoria, I know we had teams ready to go if the need had occurred.

The long, hot, dry and windy summer is far from over and we can sometimes only pray that what occurred across the border does not happen here in SA.

Love your families, your friends and your lifestyle, and know that as volunteers in an emergency service, you ARE the backbone of our country in times of need.

Stay safe.

**Peter Nygaard**

Regional Operations Officer, Central Region

**“The long, hot, dry and windy summer is far from over and we can sometimes only pray that what occurred across the border does not happen here in SA.”**

being a clog, I viewed the big machine ticking over, being worked by some of the most committed individuals I have ever had the honour to work with. Men and women from all walks of life, from other states and countries, had come together for two reasons: to fight fires and rebuild dreams.

A quiet moment of reflection at the end of each day / night came to a head when I returned home, hugged my wife and two small children, safe and sound in a suburban house in the shadow of the Adelaide Hills Face, that, in a split second, could erupt into a similar disaster that I had



# AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Stuart Lambert** received the **Emergency Services Medal** in the Australia Day Honours.

Stuart joined the South Australian State Emergency Service in 1978 as a Founding Member of the Barmera Unit, serving 3 years as Deputy Controller, and for the past 27 years has been Controller/Unit Manager.

He has taken the lead role at more than 2,000 incidents, the majority of which have been road crash rescues, and is highly respected by Barmera Unit members for his outstanding leadership qualities and his dedication to the training and welfare of the Unit.

In 2002, his service and commitment as a SASES volunteer was recognised in his local community when he was named Barmera's Citizen of the Year.



*Stuart Lambert.*

Stuart was also a founding Member of the SASES Volunteers' Association, and represented the volunteers in his region for three years. At a state level, he is an active member of several Advisory Groups for Road Crash Rescue (RCR), Inland Marine Rescue, Assets and Infrastructure, and Operations.

As an accredited trainer and assessor in Reconnaissance and RCR, he has travelled all over South Australia to deliver training courses. His dedication to mitigating community risk from road crashes has included working to assist in the planning, development and implementation of the new RCR Training Resource Kit, and instigating and conducting a review of the RCR operational capability of SASES units in East region.

Stuart also received the South Australian Emergency Services

Medal in 2002 and then a Ministerial Commendation for his ongoing dedication and commitment to RCR in 2005. In 2007, he was the recipient of the Association's Keith Lane Memorial Award, for outstanding contribution by an individual member.

**Michael Cook of Berri** also received an award from the Berri Barmera Council, being named the Council's **Senior Citizen of the Year**.

Michael was recognised for his tireless work within the community over many years. His work has included Scouts, Rotary Club, hockey, MFS as an auxiliary fireman, St John Ambulance Service, SES, Life Accommodation Support Services and for the last 12 years' his involvement with Operation Flinders.

The elected members of Council in December stated Mr Cook "to be a worthy recipient of the award."

Michael was presented with his award at a breakfast in Barmera on Australia Day.

**Daniel Schulz** was named the **Young Citizen of the Year** for Loxton Council and from all award recipients, a **South Australian Young Citizen of the Year** is selected and this honour was also bestowed on Daniel, when he was announced the winner at a breakfast at Government House on Australia Day.

Daniel's Loxton citation stated that he was an outstanding young man in the community who epitomised the ideals of citizenship.

At school, Daniel is a Prefect and Peer Support member who actively supports Year 8 students in their transition from primary school to secondary school, covering topics such as friendship, school expectations and harassment.

Both Loxton High School and the local community have come to rely on Daniel when it comes to events such as

the annual KESAB Awards. Daniel is a person who thrives on the opportunity to promote his town and school.

Combined with his secondary schooling, Daniel has voluntarily given of his time and expertise to support many local events such as the Riverland Food and Wine Festival, and his interest in photography and video-making has also benefited his school.

Daniel's role with the SES was summarised as "a committed and passionate volunteer processing the proficiency of discipline, initiative and communication skills."

Daniel is a keen ambassador for youth and featured in our previous issue of *Frontline* where he promoted the SES at the Riverland Field Days.



*Daniel Schulz.*

Daniel's awards have created a positive profile for the SES and for Daniel personally, being named South Australian Young Citizen of the Year was the culmination to a successful 2008 as he also received the Order of Australia Association – 2008 Student Citizenship Award in October.

Then **Metro South Unit** received an **Australia Day Award for Excellence in Community Service**, for the Unit's role in supporting not only the residents of Mitcham, but also surrounding councils and the whole of the State.

The citation noted the long history Metro South has with the Mitcham community, firstly being named Mitcham SES and it was noted that the Unit provides approximately 630 hours of service per month to the local community, including time spent on training and maintaining skill levels to be able to meet any incident.

Another comment was an acknowledgement that much of the volunteer work provided is without publicity or little recognition and that the members put in hours of training to provide these services to a community that does not always understand what the service actually does or that the Unit is only made up of volunteers.

To have the role of the Unit and hence the SES summarised at the announcement has enhanced the Unit's awareness in the local community.



*John McTier, Unit Manager Metro South with Mayor Ivan Brooks, City of Mitcham.*

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**Peter Willmott has been a member of SES for 12 years, and is currently the Deputy Unit Manager of the Eastern Suburbs Unit. To complete a Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management with Emergency Management Australia, Peter undertook a research project to examine the reasons why people join, leave and stay as members of the Eastern Suburbs Unit. This is a summary of his report. Peter's full report "Factors influencing recruitment and retention of volunteers in a local SES unit" will appear in the next issue of *Frontline*.**

## PROFILE OF THE UNIT

Eastern Suburbs Unit is metropolitan based, where it responds to around 300 incidents per year. The main unit responses are for storm damage and land search.

The Unit always seems to get new recruits, is constantly running basic rescue courses, yet never has a surplus of members for callouts. While the total number of members would appear healthy, a quick analysis shows that there is an annual turnover of around 40 per cent. This compares to around 15 per cent for the whole organisation, and 8 to 11 per cent in interstate fire services.

Despite turnover, the profile of the Unit remains reasonably constant, with around half the members under 30 years of age and the Unit Leaders in their 30s. All members are under 50 years of age, which is unusual for an emergency services organisation, where the majority of members are aged 45-60. Most members are either students or professionals.

Several existing surveys have identified general motivation or dissatisfaction issues that occur within volunteer emergency services. It was thought this general knowledge would enable volunteer emergency services to improve recruitment, motivation and retention of volunteers.

These statewide agency surveys whilst developing generalised findings of volunteer satisfaction, are not validated at a local level. Areas of dissatisfaction noted, in exit surveys, may be either not obvious or ignored by the leadership of those local organisations.

The development of organisational volunteer support resources is welcomed and necessary; however they are a resource, not a substitute, for the development of an effective unit culture by the local unit management.

In order to determine more effective ways to improve retention of volunteers at the local unit level, this project sought the opinions of unit members through focus groups, and previous members through an exit survey. By focussing on one unit, specific factors that contribute to effective recruitment and retention practices were identified, which are a subset of the more general issues.

Behind any recruitment and retention problems is the local culture. As you read about this unit, please consider how you may apply the same principles to your unit.

Members participated in focus group discussions, talking of their experiences in joining and being a part of the Eastern Suburbs SES Unit.

The following is a summary of the discussions, where the three main themes of personal attributes, valuing people, and resources are discussed as they relate to successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers.

The **personal attributes** of the volunteer themselves are critical. Long-serving or effective members have a disposition towards volunteering, often with a family history of volunteering, and frequently have already participated in Scouts, Guides or similar community service organisations before joining the SES. They are also likely to continue volunteering in other roles, later in life, after leaving the SES.

The recruitment process itself must be well organised by ensuring that prospective members are followed up, welcomed into the unit, kitted out and put through the initial training courses in a timely manner. A person's early experiences are important in determining whether they will become members.

The unit leadership need to demonstrate that they **value people**. Each member needs to feel that their contribution, no matter how small, is appreciated, that they are included, that equipment

is issued on an equal basis to all, and that they receive appropriate development opportunities. When members feel valued, they also value each other and a healthy inclusive culture develops. A sense of belonging and family develops, which generates loyalty, which is essential for retention.

An emergency service organisation does require adequate **resources** to perform vital functions. While there is an organisation history of doing well with very little, the evidence suggests

that people are prepared to forego better facilities if there is a good unit culture to belong to, and they are valued. This applies particularly where people with limited time to commit to training or callouts are equally valued for their contribution as those who attend almost every callout.

Where the opinions and ideas of members are sought, they must be followed up with actions. Recruitment programs can be enhanced by targeting particular types of people, and unit culture can be improved by understanding what makes people feel valued, and ensuring that everyone has opportunities according to their interest and availability.

Members will always leave the unit for a range of reasons. Many of them are outside of the unit's control. It is necessary to understand the reasons people either do not join, or leave, as this can be a barometer of unit health. In this case, more than half the people who left the district maintained membership by joining other units, and others left through increased work or family commitments.

It is evident that with a strong unit culture, volunteers are loyal to the unit or the team, before the organisation. The unit is cohesive and focussed on delivering a professional service to the community, with the unit management separating organisational issues from local issues.

**"The development of organisational volunteer support resources is welcomed and necessary; however they are a resource, not a substitute, for the development of an effective unit culture by the local unit management."**



Organisational recruitment programs and resources can assist the local unit, however they can not replace local programs. The development of a local culture that values the individual, gives a sense of belonging and provides opportunities to meet each person's self-motivational needs is one that will succeed.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the members of Eastern Suburbs SES who participated in the focus groups, and Adaire Palmer, Felicity Hopkinson and Andrea Haig from Volunteer Support Services, who assisted by interviewing past members and facilitating the focus groups.

### KEY POINTS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN VOLUNTEERS

1. Current members all had knowledge of the volunteer emergency services prior to joining.
2. Most members have a personal and family tradition of community involvement.
3. Good communication with prospective members is vital to recruiting new members.
4. Ensuring a good first experience is vital.
5. Members who join are influenced more by the friendliness of existing members than by the facilities.
6. Friendship, meaningful challenges, opportunities and respect are vital to creating a sense of belonging that leads to retention.
7. Relocation, work or family commitments are seen as valid reasons for reducing or ceasing volunteer involvement.
8. Providing people feel valued, they will stay for as long as their life circumstances allow.
9. People appreciate communication, openness, and accessibility with unit leadership, rather than a regimented hierarchy.
10. A common purpose, respect and inclusiveness or acceptance of all members is important to attracting new members and retaining old ones.
11. Rotating duty crews and allowing people to plan a social life without letting the team down is important.
12. Providing opportunity, responsibility and flexibility for people to contribute to the culture of the unit is important.
13. Smaller time contributions need to be recognised as being of equal value to those who are always there.
14. It is important that contact is maintained with members not present at regular training. Follow up enables people to feel valued and contributes to a greater sense of belonging.
15. Discrimination of any degree, whether perceived or real, is a demotivating and negative experience, not just for the person subjected to it, but also to the entire crew.
16. Even in an overall positive culture of value and inclusion, individuals can still have a negative experience.
17. Recognition through awards at the local level is important. Achievable service awards to recognising volunteers were desired.
18. Recognising the value of contributions by the larger organisation and appreciation shown by other agencies provides satisfaction to individuals.
19. The development of broader volunteer incentives by the government is seen as potentially beneficial to recruitment and retention.
20. Members feel valued when they see recognition by the public of our role and appreciate our assistance.
21. Members would like the organisation to have a higher public profile.
22. Being looked after and valued by the unit and believing in the value of the job you do can make up for poor or inadequate resources. When the things that can be managed locally are done well, it compensates for organisational issues.
23. Training needs to be relevant for the types of tasks undertaken by the unit, yet also provide opportunities for further development of members in their interest area.
24. New members need to move into and through introductory training as quickly as possible so that they can be available for incidents and feel valued through making a contribution to the unit.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## HORI HOWARD ADDRESSES CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS IN THE EMERGENCY SECTOR.

### INTRODUCTION

Climate change scientists tell us that we can expect more severe weather, with higher rainfall in coastal regions, more severe storms, cyclones forming further south and elevated sea levels. Inland, higher temperatures are expected, along with more severe and sustained droughts, which will increase the number, intensity and duration of bushfires.

It is of concern that the fact that the lead agencies for all of these expected effects except drought, are volunteer agencies, and even here the volunteer recovery agencies have day-to-day welfare roles as well as their emergency roles, so they can expect to experience considerable additional pressure for their services. I am not convinced that there has been any real acknowledgement as yet that we will need to strengthen the sector if it is to handle the expected increase in natural disasters.

The volunteer emergency management sector is not in crisis, as some would have us believe, but it is showing some strains, and with the expected increase in operational commitments, it will be necessary for governments, the community and the sector leaders to take firm steps now to strengthen it. I will now examine just some of these pressures and suggest solutions in the hope that it will prompt those in authority to look more comprehensively at what can be done to ensure that we will be able to handle what is increasingly seen as a much less friendly natural environment.

### THE VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SECTOR

To set the scene for you, we need to be clear on the make-up of the volunteer emergency management sector. The main organisations are the members of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum or AEMVF, which was established by EMA following the 2001 Volunteer Summit.

There are also many other organisations, too numerous to mention, which help out during emergencies at state and local level, particularly in the recovery area. While they are not members of the AEMVF, we acknowledge their important contribution.

I find it sometimes frustrating that many senior people from within the emergency management industry don't see beyond the response agencies. The volunteer recovery agencies particularly are the unsung heroes of our emergency management system, but they often don't even rate a mention during the coverage of emergencies, even though without them there would be no recovery system in this country. In some states they are not even properly integrated into the recovery systems, and this should be a priority.

We, the members of the AEMVF, consider that the main pressures faced by the sector are as follows:

- Ageing Population, Sea Change, Tree Change, Rural Restructure.
- Community and Political Expectations.

- Increasing Time Commitment.
- The Costs of Volunteering.
- Legal Action.
- Lack of Recognition.

### AGEING POPULATION, SEA CHANGE, TREE CHANGE, RURAL RESTRUCTURE

As our population ages, the number of young, fit people available to join the emergency management agencies, particularly the front line agencies, which need a high percentage of volunteers fit enough for field work is falling, and our existing members are ageing. There are also many areas particularly along the coast, which are becoming giant retirement villages, where there are insufficient potential recruits. Sea and tree changers, even the younger ones, are less likely to join local volunteer organisations than the original residents, who grew up with the local hazards.

The rural restructure has seen the creation of corporate farms made up of up to ten original family farms, with fewer workers. Many small communities have also lost much of their infrastructure such as shops, banks, etc, along with their employees, who are generally forced to move away. There is already pressure on the local volunteer services in many smaller communities due to declining numbers.

These phenomena are already occurring, but we are starting to come to grips with the new environment. Most states now have a good capacity for out-of-area operations, where volunteers are able to move to assist in areas remote from their home bases. However, there are still a couple which need to improve this capability.

At national level, we have

showed a similar capability for one state to help another, but we need to review our arrangements to ensure that it is maximised. A sleeper here is that employers are generally less happy to release their volunteers for operations in someone else's patch, than they are for those which occur close to home.

We will also need to look at more dramatic options such as combining organisations. This is already occurring in some of the more remote areas of Western Australia, and it is working well. There is, of course, likely to be a cultural problem with this proposal, but it must be examined. The main practical problem would seem to be the need for volunteers to undertake additional training if they are to take on additional roles in an environment where time is the greatest enemy of volunteering. At the very least, organisations will need to create strategic alliances to maximise their capacity to help each other, or they may be forced into alliances which don't suit.

### COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS

There is no doubt that community expectations have grown tremendously over the last few years, putting pressure on for quicker responses, and calls for tasks to be undertaken which should be carried out via insurers or the householder. I believe

**“Most states now have a good capacity for out-of-area operations, where volunteers are able to move to assist in areas remote from their home bases. However, there are still a couple which need to improve this capability.”**

that we have been partly at fault here by assuring people that we will take care of them.

We have recognised that this is a problem and have begun to emphasise in our public education programs that people have a basic responsibility to look after themselves, because we can't be everywhere. We need to keep hammering the self-help message home, along with the need for preparedness, as there is evidence that we haven't yet succeeded in changing behaviour. I might say, that I believe that public education needs more human and financial resources in the volunteer emergency management sector, as it is an area of significant weakness.

Along with increased community expectations has come increased political pressure to complete operations more and more quickly. Politicians today seem to be more sensitive to criticism than in the past, and of course with the ever-present media looking for mistakes, the volunteers ultimately suffer the criticism. We need our politicians to run interference for us, not add to the pressure, so both political leaders and the media need to be re-educated about the nature and difficulties of launching emergency operations quickly, and the sector needs to review its public information and media capability. Again, I believe that this is a general weakness across the whole sector in terms of people and money devoted to it.

## TIME

In the several surveys run since the first Volunteer Summit in 2001, the biggest barrier to volunteering within the volunteer emergency management sector has been shown to be the increasing time commitment in an environment where work and family pressures are also on the rise. The 2006 survey showed that the average commitment is weekly and that the basic volunteer devotes over 200 hours annually. The commitment by those in leadership positions is much higher. It also showed that 75 per cent of the volunteers are employed, so the need to balance volunteering against work and family commitments is a major issue.

Emergency sector organisations need to be very flexible in the attendance requirements they place on their volunteers, which need to be minimised, other than for operations and essential training. They have tended to be quite rigid and this must change. Training needs to be streamlined and minimised without compromising standards. This can be done, and is being addressed in the review of the Public Safety Training Package by introducing Skills Sets as alternatives to full Certificates of Competence. I can also see the need for the employment of more paid trainers so that training can be delivered quickly and efficiently, and mainly in the volunteers' home bases. Time spent travelling to and from training is wasted time, and volunteer trainers, while quite competent, are not coping with the increased workload which has resulted from the adoption of competency-based training.

Equipment is becoming more sophisticated, and with it has come the need for more time to be spent on maintenance. At the same time there are more management and administrative tasks to be carried out at local level, which many volunteers really object to. This keeps surfacing as a major issue, so please note it carefully. Targeted recruiting for headquarters type positions can assist to reduce the administrative load on the operational volunteers, and there

could well be the need for paid administrative staff at a local level. This is already being tried in the South Australian Country Fire Service, and will no doubt need to be examined elsewhere as well.

While fundraising brings volunteers together and keeps them before the attention of the community, it must be controlled as it is just another source of time pressure.

In considering time, we should not forget the employers who allow their employees to take time off work to respond to emergencies. There is employment protection legislation for the volunteers in most states and territories, and in the new National Employment Standards Legislation, but while incentive schemes for employers have been spoken about for years, there is still nothing in place. Such a scheme needs to be national in nature, and something needs to be done about it soon. Our experience so far is that employers have been really good, but we can't afford to lose their support, and the prospect of their volunteers needing to spend more time away from work could stretch the friendship too far in an increasingly tough economic environment.

## THE COST OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers don't want to be paid for their services, and they accept that there will be a personal cost to being an emergency sector volunteer. However, they expect that the costs will be kept to a reasonable level, and this is not necessarily the case. We, the members of the AEMVF, have a position which states that emergency sector volunteers should be provided with

protective clothing, safety equipment, training and professional development, free of charge, and be able to claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. I would have thought that these conditions of service are fairly basic, and they should be standard. I commend them to you.

We also believe that volunteers who suffer severe financial hardship due to extended operational commitments, such as occurred in the 1994 and 2001 bushfires, should be able to receive financial assistance. The precedent has been set, and while the

take-up was low, the gesture was appreciated. Unfortunately, the assistance was not extended beyond the volunteer fire fighters in 2001, and this caused great dissatisfaction. If such assistance is to be provided, it must extend to all responders, not just some of them.

## LEGAL ACTION

While the protection offered to emergency sector volunteers against litigation has improved considerably over recent years, there is still a deal of uncertainty about whether it will be effective, as it has never been tested in court. There have also been examples of volunteers being subjected to intense cross-examination during extended coronial enquiries following bushfires, which has caused extreme personal distress. It is suggested that national Good Samaritan legislation is needed as a means of additional protection.

## RECOGNITION

At the volunteer summits held in 2001 and 2005, and since, the most recurring theme from the volunteers has been that they feel

**“Along with increased community expectations has come increased political pressure to complete operations more and more quickly. Politicians today seem to be more sensitive to criticism than in the past, and of course with the ever-present media looking for mistakes, the volunteers ultimately suffer the criticism.”**

they are taken for granted, particularly at national level. I believe that one of the main underlying causes for this theme is the fact that a number of the organisations are not adequately resourced for their roles, and the volunteers translate this problem into a lack of recognition by governments of the importance of what they do. This is a difficult problem because there is no real consistency of funding of organisations between the states and territories.

There is no doubt that a number of the organisations within the sector will need to be better resourced if they are to withstand the pressures of climate change, and that this will require a joint approach by all levels of government.

A recent statement by Dr Judy Esmond sums it up very well. She said and I quote: "There has never been a volunteer who has left because they were appreciated too much. However, there have been hundreds across all sectors who have done so because they felt unappreciated."

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Last year, the Ministerial Council on Police and Emergency Management tasked the Australian Emergency Management Committee to investigate the Attraction, Support and Retention of Emergency Management Volunteers. While this project was not generated specifically due to climate change, it should help highlight the main issues within the sector. The AEMVF has been consulted and members have provided individual input. We await the outcome of this project with interest as there has been a great deal of talk about providing tangible support to the sector, but there has been very little action.

As I mentioned earlier, there is provision for the granting of community service leave for emergency sector volunteers in the draft national employment standard, which will go before the Parliament this year.

At state level, there has been a combination of the three volunteer marine rescue agencies in NSW, which will put them in a much stronger position with government when they seek additional funds, which they have needed for years.

Also in NSW, the NSW SES has been included in the insurance levy scheme, which has provided the vast majority of the funding for the two fire services in that state for many years. This will make it easier to properly fund that organisation.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a serious need for governments to come to grips with the fact that the lead agencies for all of the likely effects of climate change are volunteer agencies, which are not all well resourced, and while the most consistent complaint is that they are taken for granted, one of the main reasons for this view is that they are not adequately resourced. There are many other contributing factors, but if they are properly resourced, most of these will take care of themselves.

May I leave you with what I consider to be the main message, which is that all emergency management sector volunteers should be provided with protective clothing, safety equipment, training and professional development, free of charge, and be able to claim reasonable out-of-pocket expense. If they suffer financial hardship due to extended emergency operations, they should be able to access financial assistance.

## Hori Howard

Chair  
Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum

# ICE

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN

### A Message from SA Ambulance Service.

**M**ost of us carry mobile phones nowadays, with many numbers stored in its memory, but who is the person to be contacted in the case of an emergency? Hence the "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) Campaign.

The concept of "ICE" is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person, or persons, who should be contacted during an emergency under the name "ICE" (In Case Of Emergency).

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but one didn't know which number to call. Hence he thought it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognised name for this purpose.

In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialing the number stored as "ICE".

For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2, ICE3, etc.

# VALE NOEL GEORGE HODGES

Noel was born on July 11, 1933, and died on December 1, 2008 after a brief illness. From joining the then Civil Defence in 1963 until his death, Noel was enthusiastic about all aspects of Emergency Services. For 22 years, until his appointment as a Divisional Officer in 1985, he maintained joint membership of both the State Emergency Service and Country Fire Service.

After successfully finishing Year 10 at the Nailsworth Boys Technical High School, Noel completed a 5 year fitter apprenticeship.

Later, employed with the Department of Community Welfare, he headed a team formulating that Department's role, function and responsibilities to the State Disaster Plan.

In 1978, he transferred to the Corporate Affairs Commission, becoming involved in a wide variety of responsibilities related to company and business legal obligations. Much of that time was spent working with Keith Lane, another now departed significant contributor during the formative years of the State Emergency Service.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Noel undertook four self-funded trips to the United States to gather further information and trends from emergency services thereat. Upon one such visit, whilst in Texas, a hurricane struck Florida. The regional emergency service officials being aware of Noel's knowledge of flooding, evacuations, etc, sought his evaluation of their collective responses, effectiveness and efficiencies.

His attendance upon the disaster scene exposed him to the use of cadaver dogs. Returning to South Australia, he instigated the Dog Unit and later the Horse Squad.

Ultimately, Noel was offered a salaried position within the Texas emergency services. After consultation with wife, Deirdre, he declined. In 1987, in recognition of his contribution to their local disaster plan, the Governor of Texas awarded Noel the title of Honorary Citizen of Texas.

His other service recognitions included an Order of Australia Medal in 1985, British Fire Service Medal in 1983, Prospect Community Service Award in 1982 and three years later he received the Australian Day Council, City of Enfield Citizen of the Year. In 2002, Noel was awarded the third clasp of the Australian National Medal (45 years).

For seven years, Noel served as the First President of the South Australian branch of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services.

Noel actively participated in the Cyclone Tracy evacuation of 1974, Ash Wednesdays (1980 and 1983), Flood Wednesday, 1983, the Windstorm of 1986 and the 1982 Two Wells floods.

After retirement, Noel continued his commitment to emergency service in undertaking the gratuitous critiquing of the Disaster Plans of several local councils and other community organisations. He continued to expand his counter disaster library of an estimated 8,000 plus books, 20,000 plus published articles, various videos and audiotapes.

Up until August 2008, when failing eyesight took away his ability to read newsprint, Noel would scan the main newspaper of every Australian capital city and seven South Australian regional publications for any articles relating to emergency services. Topical items were cut out and collated into a variety of emergency services activities categories.

His wife, Deirdre and three sons Kingsley, Gregory and Brenton survive Noel.

**Trevor Bond**



## VSS BRANCH

**Did you know that each year in Australia, more than 6 million people over 18 years of age do some kind of voluntary work in their local community? That's over a quarter of our entire population – a great effort by any comparison.**

Emergency Service Volunteers play such a key role in our community – safety, awareness, protection, prevention – and you are part of this! While we all have different reasons for volunteering, each role that a volunteer plays is part of a much bigger picture – so remember you are part of a process which makes a significant contribution to our community.

I have recently commenced in SAFECOM as the Manager of the Volunteer Strategy

and Support (VSS) Branch (you might know us by our former name – the Volunteer Management Branch). I have a background as a social worker, and worked for The Salvation Army before joining Housing SA (in the Department for Families and Communities). Having worked with volunteers in my previous positions, I'm excited to be in SAFECOM, and working on ways to support you as a volunteer in the SES.

During 2008, Volunteering SA undertook a review of the VSS Branch. This review had a

number of recommendations which looked at how the Branch meets the National Standards in Volunteer Management. We're working through this report to look at ways we can improve our services to volunteers, and will be working with the SES and the SESVA to do this. In coming editions, we'll report back on some of the exciting projects we are working on, and what we are planning to achieve over the next 12 months.

If you would like any further information or want to get in



touch with the VSS Branch, please contact the Volunteer Support Officer through your local SES Office, or call 8463 4102.

**Mark Groot**

# LETTERS

Peter Codrington  
Unit Manager  
State Emergency Service - Ceduna  
PO Box 386  
CEDUNA SA 5690

Dear Peter,

On behalf of SAPOL, please pass on to your members our thanks for their assistance with Operation Eyre Lock 3 which was conducted at the Ceduna Checking Station between the 31st October and the 3rd November, 2008. Their assistance was invaluable and much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

**Chief Inspector Brad Flaherty**

Officer in Charge

West Coast Local Service Area

Dear Sir,

On Saturday morning, 22/11/08, because of a large tree limb which had been torn from the tree by the very strong winds and blocking my driveway, I had occasion to ring SES. I was most impressed with the reception of my phone call and the very professional and efficient manner in which the work was carried out by the four-man team.

They could not have been more helpful or courteous, please thank them for me.

Many thanks,

**Joan Wright**

# SASESVA CLOTHING AND GENERAL MERCHANDISE

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ITEM NO.	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY ORDERED	COST PER UNIT \$	TOTAL COST \$
VAPS1	Polo shirt Men's	Navy blue Micromesh Cool Dry Polo Shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left chest. No pocket. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge Custom made to order		\$44.00	
VAPS1L	Polo Shirt Ladies cut	Navy blue Micromesh cool dry polo shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left chest. No pocket. Sizes: 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, Then refer to Men's polo shirt sizing		\$44.00	
VAPS2	Polo shirt Men's	Navy blue Micromesh Cool Dry Polo Shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left chest. With pocket. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge Custom made to order		\$45.00	
VASPS3	Polo shirt Men's	Blue/White Cross Dye Polo Shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left hand chest. No pocket. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge Custom made to order		\$42.00	
VASPS3L	Polo shirt Ladies cut	Blue/White Cross Dye Polo Shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left hand chest. No pocket. Sizes: 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, Then refer to Men's polo shirt sizing		\$42.00	
VAPS4	Polo shirt Men's	Blue/White Cross Dye Polo Shirt with knitted collar "State Emergency Service" and knitted cuffs "Rescue". SES logo on left hand chest. With pocket. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge Custom made to order		\$44.00	
VAV1	Vest	Shower-proof reversible vest with polar fleece inner and full zip with SES logo on the outside left hand chest. Johnny Bobbin brand. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge		\$42.00	
VAPF1	Polar Fleece 1/2 Zip	Navy blue 1/2 polar fleece jumper with SES logo on left hand chest. Winning Spirit. Sizes: XXSmall, XSmall, Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge, 5XLarge		\$38.00	
VAPF2	Polar Fleece Jacket	Navy blue full zip bonded polar fleece jacket with SES logo on left hand chest. Winning Spirit. Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XLarge, 2XLarge, 3XLarge, 4XLarge, 5XLarge		\$44.00	
VAWBH	Wide Brim Hat	Akubra style. Synthetic, putty colour with SES logo embroidered on front. Bushie plus brand. Sizes: Small 55cm to 57cm, Large 59cm to 61cm		\$42.00	
SEST	Tie	SES		\$27.50	
UME	Epaulettes	Unit Manager set		\$13.50	
OE		Officers set		\$11.00	
SAE		Stripes set		\$11.00	
SB	Badges	Shoulder set		\$3.30	
SESLR	Lanyard	SES		\$3.30	
SESP	Plaque	Quality timber - SES logo		\$49.50	
SESWB	Water bottle	Blue		\$4.40	
		Black		\$4.40	
SESTM	Thermal Mug	Blue		\$7.70	
		Black		\$7.70	
CCM	Coffee mug	China with SES Logo		\$5.00	
MYOV	Badge	Mini Year of the Volunteer		\$2.20	
MPP	Mobile phone pouch	Orange with SES logo		\$5.50	

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## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE S.A. S.E.S. VOLUNTEERS' ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

NAME IN FULL.....

ADDRESS .....

TOWN / SUBURB..... POSTCODE.....

MAILING ADDRESS (if different to the above address)

.....

TOWN / SUBURB..... POSTCODE.....

EMAIL .....

TELEPHONE OR MOBILE .....

FACSIMILE.....

UNIT.....

I wish to apply for membership of the Association and in terms of the Association's Funding agreement with the Minister via the S.A. S.E.S., plus its Constitution and Rules, declare that I am an Ordinary member of the Association, being a current serving S.A.S.E.S. Volunteer Member.

Signed:..... Dated:.....

Please return your completed membership application form to:

**S.A. S.E.S. Volunteers' Association**  
**G.P.O. Box 2706**  
**ADELAIDE S.A. 5001**

Or Email to: [susan@sasesva.org.au](mailto:susan@sasesva.org.au)  
Or Fax to **8410 3115**