

FRONTLINE

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS' ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

- State Rescue Challenge
- Training

- Around the Units
- History of the SES



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

WARREN HICKS ESM

A lot has been happening in my life of late and not all of it has been related to the SES and my role as Chairperson of the Volunteers' Association. Recently I know a lot of volunteers and staff have been involved in the rescue challenge and from all reports it was well run and the teams all gained from the experience. Unfortunately I was unable to visit over that weekend to see just how well the teams performed.

If you read the last edition of Frontline, you would have read that I have been putting my energies into supporting my family. In January my wife, Linda was diagnosed with a particularly nasty cancer which in her case was untreatable. Sadly she lost her battle and passed away peacefully in early August.

Through these trying times my family's spirits were raised by the support and best wishes from so many people. Trevor Bond and Peter Codrington stepped up and took over my responsibilities of Chair. Susan took time to visit Linda and myself and kept me in the loop as to what was going on. Tony and Lyn from Whyalla kept in touch and visited whenever they were in Adelaide. Linda appreciated the visits but more importantly appreciated the fact that she had my full attention and support. So I would publically thank those people and the many other staff and volunteers who supported us.

Linda was never an SES volunteer, although she did at one stage fill in the paper work to join. SES

was something I did and with a young family it was impractical for both of us to be full time members. That doesn't mean she did not devote her time to SES, far from it. Partners of Emergency Service volunteers sacrifice a lot, they look after the day to day family matters so that their partner can attend callouts and training. They cook and help out with fund raising activities and in my case attended meetings and official functions. They do this with little or no recognition of their efforts, no nationally accredited training, no medals or award certificates, their efforts are not even factored into working out the monetary value that volunteers save the State. There is not a lot the Service or the association can do to change the current situation around recognition for partners but I would ask all of you to not lose sight of just how much support your partners and your families give, so that you can volunteer. Take the time to acknowledge their support and thank them, after all the pager just doesn't wake you up in the middle of the night.

I would also like to publically thank the support of Chris Beattie and the Headquarters staff, David Place and SAFECOM staff and the Minister for their messages of support, especially over the last month or so.

To all those volunteers who took time out of their day to attend Linda's funeral, I know some of you travelled some distance to show your support my family says thanks. It is the little things that can mean so much.

Till next time stay safe.

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

CHRIS BEATTIE



South Australia's State Emergency Service recognises that emergency management is a shared responsibility for all of society. It is therefore not surprising that the service is working to improve levels of understanding of the important role the community plays in contributing to its own safety and to develop and strengthen networks and partnerships between the SES and the broader community.

At all levels throughout the SES there is a clear mandate

to work together to build resilience through collaborative action, shared capacity building and the development of strong relationships built on mutual trust and respect. This means staff and volunteers alike look for opportunities for active engagement with and empowerment of the community. This is central to achieving resilience over the long term and recognises that life loss, injuries and property damage from emergencies and disasters are minimised when communities play a key role in their own safety.

Within the SASES community engagement is core business for all units. Indeed, it is the only way in which the service can achieve its mission and vision. Recent initiatives such as the establishment of the SES Community Engagement Unit, the expansion of the FloodSafe programme, the conduct of extreme weather risk assessments at zone and state levels and a renewed focus on the agency's partnerships with industry and other government entities provides tangible evidence of this direction for the service.

I have also been heartened to hear of other recent local initiatives, such as a recent school competition led by Yankalilla SES Unit that promoted student awareness, engagement and citizenship values. Other initiatives this year focussed on engaging with and recruiting members from recent migrant communities into Edinburgh, Campbelltown, Bordertown and a number of Riverland units have also been a real success.

There are three fundamental principles for effective community engagement to build community resilience:

- The first is to understand the community: its capacity, strengths and priorities. This involves using local knowledge

and experience, leveraging existing networks, identifying and acknowledging community capability and sharing resources, understanding the local risks and assessing levels of community awareness and preparedness.

- The second is to recognise that there is inherent complexity in engaging with the community. This involves embracing diversity, using genuinely flexible approaches, identifying and addressing barriers to engagement and making participation accessible to all.
- The third principle is to partner with the community to support existing networks and resources. Fostering relationships with community leaders, building on existing capacity and identifying and employing strategies that empower local action by individuals, households, businesses, partner agencies and local governments is central to this principle.

The SES will continue to share information so communities are informed of the risks they face and are able to take responsibility for their personal decisions and actions. FloodSafe, StormSafe and HeatSafe program materials and presentations are a great way for local units to improve levels of awareness within their communities. Maintaining connected networks and relationships is also a priority and local unit participation with entities such as road safety committees, town counter disaster planning groups or local emergency management exercise committees are good examples of how this can be achieved.

Through these networks and other approaches SES units can obtain ideas, feedback, knowledge and an understanding of expectations. Importantly, it is through these actions that individuals and communities better understand risk and accept responsibility and take action to reduce the likelihood of life loss, injury or property damage from natural disasters and emergencies. A great example of this in action was the work undertaken by staff and local volunteers from Riverland units during the 2011 flooding of the River Murray. Over 400 homes and a number of businesses were flooded but due to the partnerships with local councils, a strong communication strategy and assistance with community preparedness prior to the peak arriving, there was not one call for assistance during the actual event.

Building community capacity and resilience does not have to be overly onerous or resource intensive, but it does require commitment, planning and a willingness to engage. The return on investment will however, be an improved sense of connectedness and a safer, more resilient and confident community.



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

SUSAN CARACOUSSIS

As mentioned in the July edition of Frontline, Peter Codrington and I appeared before the Select Committee on Community Safety and Emergency Services in South Australia on behalf of the Association, and we had hoped to update you at this time, but regrettably are unable to do so, as the committee's terms of reference were extended to inquire into and report on the Cherryville fire. Once we receive any information, we will provide an update.

The Association continues to be extremely busy through providing ongoing support to individual volunteers and units, and also with its role on the many committees and sub-committees. Additionally, we have recently renegotiated the top up insurance for volunteers.

One such committee was in conjunction with the recent State Rescue Challenge (report in this edition), and firstly we'd like to thank Cathy Allen for her work and the way she and the many volunteers presented a challenge where volunteers really felt involved and appreciated both the camaraderie and learning experience. Many have said they will be returning in 2015.

Other committees that have been working hard over the last quarter are the Executive Advisory Group, the OH&S, District UMAGs, the Strategic Recruitment Pilot Program and the Unit Managers Forum. Of course we can only provide input if you let us know your thoughts, suggestions and / or concerns.

Recognition is another issue, we all constantly say that volunteers should be recognised more, but then we are also at fault in that there seems to be a reluctance to then nominate that special person. So please consider nominating your fellow volunteer and those few words of sincerity are all that is needed, and of course, we are more than happy to assist if additional

information is needed. In the January edition of Frontline we will be recognising our new Life Members, the Keith Lane Award recipient, the Cadet of the Year and of course the Ministerial Emergency Service Medals and Commendations which are being presented in December by the Hon. Michael O'Brien, Minister for Emergency Services. Plus there will be a wrap up from the Unit Managers forum.

Shortly details of the Association's Annual General Meeting will be on our website (www.sasesva.org.au), but in the interim, the following positions will be declared vacant or up for re-election:

- Deputy Chair
- North Region (1 position)
- South Region (3 positions)

We have now received and have been actively distributing the new National Park Passes, so a big thank you to the Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources, as many of our volunteers put their pass to good use and feedback re appreciation has been strong. If you haven't already requested a pass, the application form is on the members only section of our website.



Finally, whilst this is the October edition of Frontline, the year is moving quickly and as the next edition is in January, wishing you all a quiet and enjoyable Christmas / New Year with family and friends. And of course, we know many units are actively involved with community events in the lead in to the festive season.





A few changes

As always there has been a lot happening in the training section over the past few months. Firstly, a few changes...

Greg Mennie, the previous Manager, Training and Organisational Development, has moved to another role in the organisation. The recruitment process to appoint a new manager has now been completed and I'm delighted to be able to take up this role. Many of you would already know me from my previous position as Senior Curriculum Development Officer. I hope to be able to get out visiting units and meeting more members around the state in the coming months.

We are also in the process of recruiting for a new position – Coordinator, Flexible Learning. In the future, we hope to increase our range of on-line training and provide more resources that will be available on the Volunteer



Portal to support members in their professional development. And of course we will soon be recruiting against the now vacant Curriculum Development position.

New learner resources

Over the past few months we have continued our work reviewing existing courses as well as developing several new courses. If you are interested in keeping up with the changes, we are uploading new resources, as well as those in development, to the Volunteer Portal. All members are very welcome



Vertical Rescue

A 'pilot' Vertical Rescue – Access course was undertaken in Loxton and Berri during the weekend 30 August to 1 September 2013 involving members from Riverland. The purpose of the course was to review the revised course program, learning resources and development of assessment tools. Nine participants took part in the course which utilised the facilities of Viterra Tookyerta grain station at Loxton, which has a suitable tower to learn and practice skills and a site for future training activities.



to view these and provide feedback. The revised Land Search learner guide is in the final stages of getting approval and sign-off by the Chief Officer; and the new Rescue Operations course will soon be ready. We are aiming to launch this new accredited course, which will include learner guide, trainers' notes and powerpoint, and of course assessment materials, at the Unit Managers Forum. If you would like to be contacted as courses are being reviewed or developed, contact me at macmullin.diana@ses.sa.gov.au to be included in the Training Reference Group.

The proposed course is similar to previous vertical rescue access courses with some inclusions, with the aim to progress the vertical access capabilities





Road Crash Rescue Challenge 2013

As first responders to Road Crash Rescues each day across South Australia, our regional and remote units would understand the fast developments in vehicle technologies and the impact this has in effecting timely

and safe rescues. To ensure we keep up to date with these changes and how the rescue industry is responding with improved equipment and extrication techniques, our training and development is more important than ever.

The Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO) is the peak body for the development and exchange of information, knowledge and skills in road rescue. ARRO organises an annual road crash rescue challenge where teams from all across Australasia come together to compete, but more importantly to learn new skills and share information. Although South Australia did not enter any teams into the challenge this year, members from SES along with CFS and MFS represented the three agencies. This was an invaluable opportunity to collect and now disseminate new industry knowledge and skills across the agency through training and development, continuing to grow our organisation's capacity.

A learning symposium was facilitated by the ARRO technical reference team on one of the days giving participants the opportunity to move between stands during the day where we were able to

participate in small training sessions. These included stands about the new Holden Volt electric vehicle, lifting airbags and new car technology and cutting techniques.



The remainder of the event saw teams from Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand compete in the challenge while others were able to spectate and identify good practise and techniques which worked well. We



found that different agencies brought to the challenge slightly different approaches in order to achieve the objective. As with any rescue, every motor vehicle accident brings its own unique situation and challenges so it's important to be open in learning different techniques and approaches to best manage the emergency.

Teams were placed in isolation whilst ARRO officials constructed motor vehicle accidents with new Holden VE Commodores which had been damaged earlier to simulate a realistic operational environment. Obstructions

of the SA State Emergency Service. As part of the review of the vertical access course, consultation is also being undertaken with SAPOL's STAR Group and SA Ambulance (SAAS) Special Operations Team. The purpose is to ensure inter-agency consistency with skills and procedures and to continue the positive relationships SASES has with these services. In the future joint training activities with SAPOL and SAAS will also improve the operational response and capabilities as the services gain experience with each other.

The next stage from the pilot course will be to form a Technical Reference Group for the review of the course documentation and to conduct instructor courses for vertical access. Expressions of interest for potential instructors will be called for shortly.

Once the vertical access program documentation has been finalised, the vertical technician program will be reviewed and will follow a similar path, although it should be a more efficient process.



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such as cement barriers and light poles were positioned to challenge teams, testing their ability to develop sound access and extrication plans. After the scene had been created, teams were brought out of isolation, their time starting as they entered the designated scene area. Using both live casualties and dummies, teams applied a systematic approach to the rescue, assessing the scene and stabilising the vehicle, gaining access, releasing pressure and removing the casualty whilst maintaining a safe working environment.

From our short training session where we were able to learn about new car technology and cutting techniques, we were able to use the hydraulic tools ourselves and remove the side of a new Holden VE Commodore. Through the



advancements in structural design and the introduction of additional ultra-high strength steel in the body structure it was evident that our tools reacted differently when applying techniques in comparison to older vehicles. When cutting the 'B Pillar' of the Commodore we found that there was a lot more tension in the body and noise created when cutting. The construction of the 'B Pillar' with its ultra-high strength steel accompanied by layers of folded metal sees this as one of the strongest parts of the vehicle, which rescuers should be aware of during extrication.



Because of the strength of this pillar, teams tended to remove both the front and rear door separately before removing the 'B Pillar' in order to make room from the side of the vehicle, rather than undertaking the full side removal technique. The theory behind doing so is that it was easier to remove the strong 'B Pillar' separately, rather than 'ripping' the base as per the full side removal method. Once the two doors were removed, teams typically managed the bottom of the pillar with a cut from either side, forming a 'v' cut before cutting to top of the pillar. All throughout this process teams were applying the 'peel-and-peak' method, removing trim to identify and avoid cutting through SRS devices.

Going 'back to basics' proved effective for teams removing doors of the Commodores using battery powered tools to remove the three 13mm bolts holding each hinge. This method was both fast and effective whilst allowing another hydraulic tool operator to work elsewhere on the vehicle.

The opportunity to share knowledge and information with colleagues from other agencies in these forums is vital to ensure our organisation

is at the forefront of our business; continuing to grow our capacity to provide a professional response in our local communities.

Future directions

The training team will be working hard to improve our training resources and ensure they meet national standards; increase the range of training we can offer; and

build trainer/assessor capacity so that members have the skills and knowledge they need to keep our communities safe.

Keep a look out for revised resources for storm and water damage operations, a new course on working in an emergency operations centre and professional development opportunities to build skills in community engagement.

Until next time, keep learning and stay safe.

Diana MacMullin

Manager, Training and Organisational Development



**What do
I do when
it all gets
too much?**

**Call SPAM
and talk it
through
with us.**

**Okay, if you've experienced a traumatic situation,
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**Stress Prevention & Management for
SA Emergency Services volunteers**



For SES & VMR volunteers
www.sesvolunteer.org.au



For CFS volunteers
www.csfvolunteer.org.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

The SASES held its State Rescue Challenge at the Metropolitan Fire Service’s state training facility, Angle Park on the weekend of 17 – 18 August. This is the twelfth time this biennial challenge has been run.

The Challenge is based on many of the skills SES members use when responding to call outs across the state including; rescue skills, map reading and navigation, storm damage operations and land search operations. Nine stands were designed to reflect realistic scenarios that were each to be completed in 40 minutes. In some instances the stands involved casualties, therefore leadership, reconnaissance, safety and basic first aid skills were also required. The stands reflected the work conducted by both metropolitan and regional units.

The stand scenarios included:

Stand 1: Mass casualty

A bus was departing from the Adelaide terminal and had collided with a bus arriving at the terminal due to poor visibility and conditions. Due to a heavy workload across the area – no other resources were available at the time of the incident to assist.

The mission was to safely access and triage the casualties and then remove them from the buses by the most suitable method with due regard for their injuries.



Stand 2: Stabilisation

Several members of the public responded as part of an initial storm response to a child washed into a storm drain. The structure then collapsed trapping a member of the



public who subsequently died. Police asked the SES to stabilise the unsafe pipe and concrete in order for them to access the deceased and conduct their investigation.

The mission was to stabilise the concrete pipe in order to make it safe for forensic police to access the bodies.

Stand 3: Rescue from heights

Two local contractors were repairing a gantry on the third level when the structure was struck by lightning leaving one unconscious. The fixed ladder from the ground was unsafe and could not be used to access or rescue the casualties. Due to the severe wind gusts the rescues needed to be performed within the confines of the structure.

The mission was to safely access, locate triage and treat the casualties and affect a safe rescue. The dynamic risk assessment process was to be used for all operations.



STATE RESCUE CHALLENGE 2013

Stand 4: Storm Damage

Due to a severe storm, damage occurred to houses in the Angle Park area. Heavy rains were experienced and there was a flood warning for the area. This flood water was expected to reach the area in the next hour.



The mission was to make temporary repairs using tarpaulins or plastic to ensure the roof structure was water proof and to prevent any further damage to objects inside the roof structure, together with sand bagging the subterranean opening in order to prevent any water entry to protect and minimise damage to the property inside.



Stand 5: Multi level rescue

As a result of a severe storm a unit block experienced major structural damage. Two tenants were not accounted for. The building was declared stable enough for rescue operations to be conducted.

The mission being to access the unit and locate the two tenants and then safely remove them from the building with due regard

to their injuries, and provide first aid until the South Australian Ambulance Service arrived.

Stand 6: Train

Police were called to an incident on a train with reports of shots fired. The offenders were seen leaving the train and police then cordoned off the area to ensure the safety of SES members.

The mission was to conduct a contact search of the train carriage for any evidence that



may have been of interest to the police. Findings were to be documented in the supplied SES notebook.

Stand 7: Heavy Lift and Shift

Due to heavy winds from a storm front, part of a structure had collapsed and was impeding crews from accessing other impacted areas.

The mission was to safely move a cement block from its current location to the marked designated safe area in order to facilitate access by SES rescue crews.



Stand 8: Rubble Pile

The severe weather had resulted in a building collapse. Each team had to search the rubble area to locate the victims.

Teams had to conduct a search of the rubble area as identified by the cordoned area in order to safely access any victims and then provided first aid as required and rescued the victims until the South Australian Ambulance Service could attend.

Stand 9: Plane Crash

As a result of a micro burst a light aircraft carrying multiple passengers had been forced to make an emergency landing and had crashed.

continued next page...



The mission was to locate and treat the casualties in order to safely extract them to a safe area.

Even though this was a rescue challenge, the event also provided a unique and valuable learning opportunity for volunteers who have recently acquired their qualifications in the relevant rescue operations. For those volunteers who are already experienced, it was a skills maintenance opportunity and a chance to show off their skills while sharing their knowledge with volunteers new to the organisation. The teams were judged by experienced SES members.



Eight teams from across the state took part in the challenge: Metro South, Western Adelaide, Eastern Suburbs, Edinburgh, Tea Tree Gully, Yankalilla & South Coast, Western Adelaide & Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln.

The winner of this Challenge was Tea Tree Gully, runners up were Yankalilla & South Coast and in third place was Eastern Suburbs.

The winning team earned the right to represent South Australia at the National Disaster Rescue Challenge which was held in Victoria in September. As the winner of the 2011 National Challenge, South Australia was competing to achieve back-to-back wins, but regrettably the challenge was won by a team from New South Wales, with Victoria second and South Australia third.

Cathy Allen
State Training Officer



Pictured from left to right: Vickie Chapman, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services left and Frances Bedford representing the Minister for Emergency services right with Chief Officer Chris Beattie, Deputy Chief Officer Dermot Barry and General Manager David Carman (rear).




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VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

Port Augusta – 19 September 2013

Port Augusta hosted the second Volunteer and Employer Recognition and Support Program (VERSP) event for 2013 in September. The dinner was held at Port Augusta Golf Club, which looked out over the Flinders Ranges and provided the perfect backdrop for local members of the SES, CFS, MFS and Volunteer Marine Rescue to get together and recognise the enormous contribution made by employers and self employed volunteers and retained MFS members.

The event was attended by over 150 volunteers, retained members, their employers and other local dignitaries and was generously catered for by the Port Augusta Rotary Club who worked tirelessly on the night.

David Place, Chief Executive, SAFECOM host for the evening, introduced guests to the SAFECOM Board members and talked about local issues in the States' Mid North.

Also in attendance were SES Acting Chief Officer Dermott Barry, CFS Acting Chief Officer Andrew Lawson, MFS Chief Officer Grant Lupton and representatives from State and Local Government.



29 certificates were presented to local employers, self employed volunteers and retained members. All are worthy recipients and were publicly acknowledged for their support of the emergency services in South Australia.

While the location for the next VERSP has yet to be determined, keep up to date through the Volunteer Portal for any breaking news!



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Public Information - keeping people informed

Keeping the public informed of what is happening, what is predicted to happen, what has happened and how we (the emergency services) expect them to react and what we want them to do, is becoming one of the most critical parts of managing an incident, regardless of how small or large it is. Whether this is directing someone around the scene of an accident where we are extricating a trapped person, or providing timely warnings to individuals and communities ahead of a flood, the community wants, expects and has the right to timely and accurate information.

The Australasian Interservice Incident Management System (AIIMS) continues to evolve, with the recent addition of the public information function, into the suite of skills and functions for an Incident Controller or an Incident Management Team.

Public information is an important function that must be discharged in the management of any incident. The Public Information function is focused on gathering, assembling and disseminating timely, tailored and relevant information to stakeholders outside the Incident Management Team.

It provides support to the management of the incident through:

- provision of warnings and information to threatened communities, other stakeholders and the general public;
- liaison with news media and management of media liaison issues; and
- consultation and liaison with affected communities.

The Public Information Officer's responsibilities include:

- obtaining a briefing from the Incident Controller;
- provision of a safe working environment for all Public Information personnel;
- obtaining information on the current and projected incident situation from the Planning Section (and Intelligence Section when established) and external sources;
- maintaining ongoing liaison with the Planning Section (and Intelligence Section when established) regarding the accuracy of information released to the public;

- issuing of warnings and information to threatened communities on behalf of, or with the approval of, the Incident Controller;
- disseminating incident information to communities and other stakeholders;
- liaison with media, and management of media needs, including on the incident ground; and liaison with affected communities.

Timely and accurate information is critical when managing an incident, to ensure that communities are informed, communities can prepare and to allow communities to follow the advice and direction provided by emergency services.

Next time you respond, consider managing the information flow when managing the incident.

SES HISTORY

The SES pictorial history book is progressing well and will include numerous stories written from information and material provided by around 70 interested current and former volunteers and staff members.

Thousands of photographs, scans of original articles, extracts from diaries (thanks Mike Witcher) and wonderful anecdotes are now being polished and sorted for the design and print processes. Not all units provided information, some provided photographs, others sent in scrap books, newsletters, newspaper clippings and more.

This will be a wonderful profile on the first 50 years of SES and will contain profiles on units, members, heroes, disasters, funny incidents and woops moments.

Special thanks to Stuart Macleod and John Thorne, Arno Attema, John Lawrence, Keith Smith, Gordon

Hartley, Robbie Klemm, Bob Suba, Barbara Bray, Shane Leedham, Sindy McCourt, Trevor Heitmann, Trevor Arnold, David Place, Lynne Little and many, many more for their patience, kindness and passion about contributing to the book.

Watch this space for information on the release of the book, its cost and how to obtain your copy.



HISTORY OF THE SES

AN EXAMPLE OF ONE UNIT'S CONTRIBUTION

Life of a country SES Unit, or it's a long, long way to.....anywhere.

Ceduna is located 800km west of Adelaide by road on the far west coast of South Australia. By air it is some 546km from Adelaide. Our SES Unit covers an area of 486km west and 200km north including the Nuyt's Archipelago of Islands to the south, totalling some 97,200 square kilometres.

The tasks we attend are quite often counted in days, not hours and every task is different.



Our tasks take us into some of the most remote areas of the State where we have to be totally self-sufficient. They have included:

- Due to our remote area we are not well endowed with the normal communications systems that city folk take for granted. Ceduna SES maintain a VHF Marine Repeater on St Francis Island (some 30nm from Ceduna) as well as UHF CB repeaters that beam into areas of high tourist traffic without mobile phone access. This requires regular maintenance runs to keep the equipment shipshape and is done over weekends.
- Once a year we hold a training camp to train with our equipment in an operational Environment.
- Towing the partly sunken "Minnumurra 11" to the Thevenard Slip area.
- Towing exercise a barge with a vehicle to St. Peter's Island for National Parks and bringing a vehicle off the island.

We get involved in a wide range of activities that give SES a very high prominence in our community. We are blessed with a very talented membership who have wide ranging skills. We have people with "bush skills" who can operate



safely for days in remote areas, others who can operate safely at sea off our rugged coastline and others with good vertical rescue and road crash rescue skills.

Providing power and lighting to the handing over ceremony of the un-named National Park north-west of Maralinga, some 700km from Ceduna in an extremely remote area. Task time: 3 days, 1,425 kilometres travelled.

- Marine Navigation Hazard on the beach between Point Bell and Point Sinclair. A 1.5 tonne steel cyclone mooring had come ashore on the beach and was likely to take to the sea again on the next high tide. The beach was treacherous due to patches of soft sand. The cyclone mooring at sea would have been a serious hazard to vessels. 13 SES members retrieved it. The job took over 6 hours and our vehicles travelled 1,728km.
- A lone motorist was stranded for 3 days near Mt. Finke by a vehicle breakdown on Googs Track. The first passing vehicle in 3 days advised Ceduna Police on arrival in Ceduna and 8 Ceduna Unit members in 3 vehicles then had to daisy chain the vehicle with "snatch straps" over dozens of sand hills. Covering in total some 304km in 11hrs getting the motorist and vehicle back to Ceduna .



The support in procurement of suitable vehicles and equipment from State Headquarters and Western Region Headquarters (now North Region) has been fantastic. As a result we are seen by our community as a credible rescue resource.

Peter Codrington,
Ceduna SES

CHAINSAWS IN THE FOREST

With the fire season over for another year, it was time for some chainsaw practice. A compulsory day in the Kuitpo forest for Noarlunga unit, all started well even with the early start to the day on Sunday 19 May, due to a tree job in Metro South area at 0430 hours, which was diverted to Sturt and then to Noarlunga, with 12 crew on site for 3 hours to complete, due to having to wait for SA Power while a CFS crew also kept an eye on proceedings.



This shows the full range of operational Stihl saws that Noarlunga currently uses.

to ensure everyone was up to speed with safety practices and saw construction, 2 theory papers were also completed by everyone, being open book type theory sessions as a part of adult learning.

Many thanks to the ranger from Kuitpo, although we still don't know what type of tree he told us we could cut, however there were many large trees down waiting for us, as they had only been cut down that week. The campers at Chookarloo



The crew all finished and ready to pack up.

Although many thought that this was part of the chainsaw practice day, it was not the case, but certainly something to keep in mind for next year.

After this effort and a quick breakfast, 25 members travelled to Kuitpo Forest, Kuitpo. All fleets with all chainsaws and morning tea, then lunch back at the unit before cleaning and servicing all of the saws. 7 operational saws. We split into 3 teams, with all facets of chainsaw operation being practiced. A theory session had been held the previous Wednesday night



Some of the many logs that we were able to use.

kept a close eye on us from his vantage point high up in a tree, no need for 'animal rescue' as he seemed to be comfortable. Also many Skippys' watched on from a safe distance.

We had not had the opportunity to do this type of training for many years, fire danger season, timing and operational issues had meant that we were not able to find a free weekend. Thanks to the instructors and senior crew that kept a keen eye on all members, as we managed to cross cut, rip and clear undergrowth, also demonstrate and practice scarfing methods (no trees were felled). The abundance of large green logs with many smaller branches on, gave us the perfect opportunity for all to get plenty of practice, the green pine was kind to the saws and easy to cut. This type of training does not take into account the need for further experience in the field, as we cannot replicate the full effects of mother nature, but gives us a perfect platform for supervised hands on practice.

Peter Higgins
Noarlunga Unit

camping ground (some may know this area) did not seem to mind that there were so many chainsaws running at the same time. Chookarloo would have only been about 500 metres from us. A safety briefing was held before we started and it was impressed upon all to be aware of slips, trips and falls, someone may not have heard this clearly, one very minor excursion with the ground meant for an embarrassing moment.

We did have an aerial observer for most of the time we were there, a Koala



The early morning tree job which started our day.

MARINE SAREX IRON TRIANGLE

On the 9th and 10th of August, agencies involved in marine search and rescue (SAR) gathered at Port Pirie to participate in SAREX Iron Triangle, a two-part training forum conducted under the State Marine Rescue Committee's regional exercise program. The Friday evening saw about 30 members from volunteer agencies around the Iron Triangle attend at the Port Pirie SES Unit, where Officers from the SAPOL Water Operations Unit provided theoretical training in marine SAR procedures, as well as recent developments and case studies. Unfortunately members from the Port Broughton SES Unit had a mixture of illness and work commitments that prevented them from attending.

On the Saturday morning crews mustered at the Pt Pirie Boat Ramp where they were briefed regarding the format and safety considerations for the practical exercise. Following that, local SAPOL Officers outlined a realistic scenario, a vessel with two persons aboard was overdue from an overnight fishing trip, and prompted a requirement for a multi-agency coordinated surface search.

To add a touch of realism to the scenario, crews were faced with a thick fog with only 50 metres visibility, as well as having a number of actual targets deployed within the search area. The search contingent comprised regional vessels from the Port Pirie SES Unit, Whyalla Sea Rescue Squadron and Port Augusta Flotilla of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, as well as visitors from the Cowell Sea Rescue Squadron and the Copper

Coast and Adelaide Flotilla's of the SA Sea Rescue Squadron. The entire operation was coordinated from a Field Command Unit provided by the SA Sea Rescue Squadron, with representatives from the various groups taking the opportunity to rotate through communications and coordination roles under the guidance of SAPOL.



Overall, the exercise went extremely well and notwithstanding that all targets were located, it provided an excellent opportunity for crews from neighbouring areas to come together to practice a response to a realistic scenario under exercise conditions, as well as gain valuable experience in communications and command and control functions. The exercise culminated with a debrief and barbecue hosted by the Port Pirie SES Unit.

Further exercises in the series are planned for Adelaide (North Haven), South Coast (Wirrina), Yorke Peninsula (Wallaroo) and West Coast (Cowell).

Darryl Wright
Manager



Port Pirie (and Port Augusta) Unit Manager Ray Owen looks on as SASRS Communicator Ray Bradley relays search coordinates to search vessels.

LETTERS OF THANKS



18th Fleurieu Local Service Area
54 Gawler Street
Mount Barker SA 5201

Chris Beattie
SES Chief Officer
GPO Box 2798
Adelaide SA 5001

19 AUG 2013

Dear CHM,

You would be aware that on Saturday 3 August 2013 a small 7 year old boy (Simon Kruger) went missing in the Deep Creek National Park and remained missing for about 24 hours in thick and unforgiving terrain. I wish to thank your staff for their commitment and professionalism in assisting the Police to undertake this search over often difficult and unforgiving terrain.

Over the 24 hours of the operation, a large number of resources were utilised for this search. Whilst my figures aren't specific, I am aware that approximately 90 plus SES volunteers and 20 plus CFS volunteers were directly involved in the search. I was the Police Forward Commander for the majority of the operation and express my sincere appreciation to you for the volunteer's assistance. You might also be aware that a number of community volunteers offered their service on Saturday. Some were used, due to their close proximity to the location, whilst many others were thanked but not utilised over the evening and night. I was more than confident and satisfied with the SES and CFS volunteers and relied on their skills and professionalism to safely undertake their duties.

I am very pleased to report that Simon was safely located and rescued. I am also very pleased to reiterate my thanks to you and your volunteers and request that you pass my thanks on to those who participated. I look forward to continuing our productive relationship into the future.

Regards,

Rob Williams
Rob Williams
Superintendent
Officer in Charge
18th Fleurieu Local Service Area
17 August 2013

Sent: Monday, 19 August 2013
To: Beattie, Chris (SES); Nettleton, Greg (CFS)
Subject: Road crash Mt Jagged 18 Aug 2013

Good Morning,

Just a brief email to thank your members for their invaluable assistance at a road crash yesterday near Mt Jagged; a job well done under quite difficult circumstances.

I was returning with my wife from a weekend at Victor Harbor when we stumbled across the job which was only about 10 minutes old at that stage. Armed with a mobile phone and reading glasses I moved forward to do some preliminary stuff pending the arrival of a crew; little did I realise how complex the job was to become and that I would become the Ambulance Forward Commander.

The seamless manner with which everybody worked as part of one great team shows that all of the SA Emergency Services can really come together when it counts.

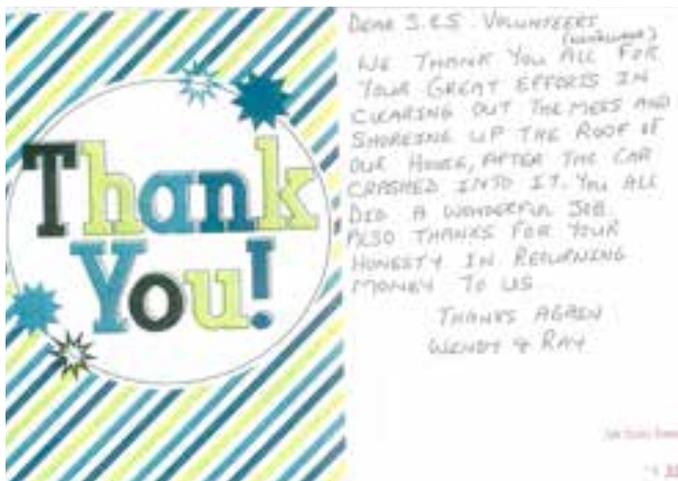
I know that in the almost 2 hours on scene, we all got very wet and windswept during two complex extrication processes – this could not have been done without the direct support from your attending crews.

I note that from this morning's commercial media that 2 patients are still in a critical condition and the others are still listed as serious; this will come as no surprise to those at the job. Although the weather was against us from the beginning two of our MedSTAR teams were able to attend by road and some significantly extended medical management was able to occur on scene. There is no doubt that this was potentially life and limb saving intervention.

I think that the interagency cooperation from SAPOL, CFS and SES was outstanding and I would ask that you relay my appreciation to those members so concerned.

Overall, a really difficult job done well my thanks to all.

Lee Francis
General Manager Special Operations
SA Ambulance Service



AROUND THE UNITS

EASTERN SUBURBS UNIT

Eastern Suburbs Unit celebrated its “legends” and camaraderie on Saturday June 29 with a gathering of long term members and former members at the Unit at Firle. Forty guests gathered including Greg Le Page (former Controller), Don Potter, Erik Talmet, Mike Witcher (whose son Anthony was the Deputy Controller), Mark Gray (former Kings College Cadet, member of Kensington/Norwood and then Eastern Suburbs), John Bosolo, Anne Seed, Max Coulson, Janet O’Heir and Jim Donaghy.

A display of the Unit’s history was set out around the room with plaques, photographs and memorabilia. Plenty of reminiscing and some fantastic anecdotes were tossed around while Judith Grimmett, writer of the SES history book, gathered snippets about the early days.

A slide show ran throughout the afternoon showing early activities, some of the old vehicles, including John Gibson’s amazing orange Volkswagen beetle with a red flashing SES light on top. Several of the chaps spoke about the Unit’s loyalties and the great camaraderie which they felt was still the key to success after all these decades.

Current Unit members cooked a barbecue lunch while the older members and their families enjoyed catching up and swapping stories.

Eastern Suburbs began in 1969 as the Kings College (now Pembroke College) Cadets and then became Kensington/Norwood, and later Eastern Suburbs.

Memories of the early days were cause for much laughter. “Rescue from heights, or cliff rescue or vertical whatever you want to call it. At that time if you did a rescue from a ladder it was considered “rescue from heights” said Greg Le Page.

“We went to a call out for a tree on house. The tree had done a lot of damage but

the chap then tried to blame us. Fortunately we always took photos of the damage and a lot of what he said we had done was long term damage which he was trying to claim off insurance. We had the photos and the insurance company was very grateful for our preparedness.” Greg Le Page said.

Mike Witcher wrote the draft for the original SES chainsaw manual. “ Our area is big on trees-down. When a cold snap came after a long hot spell we had four callouts in three days for huge trees in Kurrajong Avenue, Stonyfell.” He said.

The Unit inherited a lot of Civil Defence equipment, but sometimes there was a drawback. “We had a Radiation Calculation Meter and we were using dummies that had been at Maralinga. They gave off a lot of radiation and we had to dispose of them quick smart.” said Greg Le Page.



Back: Erik Talmet, John Boscollo, Mark Gray, Karen Newton, Brenton Musolino, Kaye McRae

Middle: John Potter, Mike Witcher, Don Mitchell, Max Coulson, Anthony Witcher, Janet O’Hehir, Kim Jenkinson, Allen Dixon, Chris Bazzica, Nigel Rathbone

Front: Jon Brook, Greg LePage, Rowan McRae, Anne Seed and Jim Donaghy.

LEESA VLAHOS THANKS EDINBURGH UNIT VOLUNTERS

On the 24 July, twenty-two members of Edinburgh Unit enjoyed dinner at Parliament House as guests of the Member for Taylor, Leesa Vlahos. Leesa, shown in the centre of the photo with the red rose, is an ardent supporter of the Unit; she even featured a photo of members of the Unit, and the Dog Unit, on her calendar for 2013. Timing for the dinner was perfect, as Leesa was also celebrating getting her first private member's bill through the House just minutes before she joined the Unit for dinner.



Dinner consisted of Tuscan tomato soup with garlic, chicken with roast eggplant compote, mixed vegetables and couscous, followed by sticky date pudding with caramel sauce and cream (some managed a second serve). After dinner, Leesa took members on a tour of the building, including the library with its historical books and both Houses of Parliament. It was a most rewarding and educational evening and members were grateful for the opportunity to visit Parliament House.

John Lawrence

2013

Paralowie Shopping Centre Units 1-2, 8 Liberator Drive, Paralowie SA 5108
 Telephone 08 8290 5144 Fax 08 8290 5526 Email taylor@parliament.sa.gov.au
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AROUND THE UNITS

STRATHALBYN PRESENTATIONS

Recently the Strathalbyn State Emergency Service (SES) was visited by Deputy Chief Officer, Dermot Barry, who presented six of our members with medals and certificates.

Richard Hammond received his 5 year Service Certificate and 10 year Service Medal.

Rodney Gurney received the National Medal 25 year clasp.

Michael Fix received the National Medal.

Colin Goodrich received the Service Medal 30 year clasp.

John True received the 10 year Service Medal.

Jamie Doube, who was absent from the presentation, received a 5 year Certificate and the 10 year Service Medal.



Pictured from left to right: Richard Hammond, Rodney Gurney, Michael Fix, Dermot Barry, Colin Goodrich and John True.



MOUNT GAMBIER & DISTRICT UNIT

Congratulations go to Brenton Erkens-Goss on his recent completion of training to become a Protective Services Officer with the Victorian Police Force.

Brenton along with Dirk Nicholson were volunteer members of the Mount Gambier SES, and were in the same graduating class.

Brenton is pictured being congratulated by current member Lewis Nankivell

NETWORK TEN WEATHER REPORT

On Friday 6 July Network Ten's news weather presenter Kate Freebairn requested an SES background for the weather reports that night. Eastern Suburbs and Campbelltown Units enthusiastically responded and we met at Eastern Suburbs Unit at 4pm.

Originally it had been planned to do the crosses from Campbelltown's new Unit location but the weather played havoc with transmission and they couldn't get clear reception from that location.

Campbelltown volunteers, with their trucks, the Dog Operations Unit truck and dogs joined forces to give a very "orange" presence as they loaded and unloaded equipment from the various trucks to provide an action packed PR backdrop.

Many thanks to those who gave up their Friday afternoon to take part, and to Peter Willmott and Andrew Rose who organised volunteers to take part..

Judith Grimmert



ESM PRESENTATION

SUE GAGE AND TREVOR HEITMANN

In the July edition of Frontline, we congratulated Sue Gage and Trevor Heitmann as our Queen’s Birthday Emergency Services Medal recipients.

In September they were presented with their medals at a ceremony at Government House and they are pictured with Chief Officer Chris Beattie.



WEAR ORANGE TO WORK DAY

National SES Week has been celebrated in November with the purpose of providing community and the service recognition of the efforts of the tens of thousands of SES volunteers across Australia. In recent years the Wear Orange to Work Day has become the primary focus of the week’s activities.

This year, WOW Day will be celebrated on Wednesday 13 November and in future years will be held on the second Wednesday in November.

So start planning your orange outfits now.

The Creek

The waters enter at a steady rate

Where does it wander we should investigate,

All the little crabs hurry around to and fro

Entering the mangroves they hurriedly go.

The water stands still at the top of the tide

Now the creek deepens while getting so wide,

From the ripple in the water appears a little fish

Not big enough to catch and cook in a dish.

An Osprey appears from out of the sun

And grabs the little fish in front of everyone,

It takes the little fish back to its nest

To feed the young for them to digest.

This little creek does meander around

You can hear the silence there’s nothing around,

This creek has a nice setting for a barbecue

It’s here for everyone to use for me and for you.

The water starts to move again on the outward tide

The creeks is getting lower, the crabs sidle to hide,

The little creek empties up to twice in a day

The roots of the mangroves hold them at bay.

There are places like this that are harder to find

A wonder of Mother Earth for all of Mankind,

So enjoy this little creek while it is around

Soon none of these creeks will ever be found.

Pye



Emergency Management

September 2013

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE NEWSLETTER

Tea Tree Gully SES Unit finishes third in NDRC

A team from Tree Tea Gully SES Unit has finished third in this year's National Disaster Rescue Competition (NDRC) which was held in Fiskville, Victoria on the weekend of 21-22 September.

The team had earlier won the State Emergency Service (SES) State Rescue Challenge and was defending its national title which it won in 2011, the last year the national competition was held. Pictured right is one of the stands at the State Rescue Challenge which was held at the Metropolitan Fire Service's state training facility at Angle Park, Adelaide in August.



People with vulnerabilities in disasters

Funded by the Natural Disaster Resilience Grant (NDRG) scheme, the People with vulnerabilities in disasters project aimed at examining the services provided to people with vulnerabilities by mapping where the vulnerable populations are located, overlaid by hazards.

An analysis was then undertaken to determine whether services were meeting the need and whether there was adequate cover across all vulnerable groups to improve resilience and safety during disasters.

Research and consultation during the project was extensive with the working group comprising representatives from the State Emergency Service (SES), Country Fire Service (CFS), Australian Red Cross, Domiciliary Care and Department for Health and Ageing.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate there are about 166,200 people in South Australia in just three of the various categories of vulnerability; people with

limited English, a disability or an age-related frailty.

This represents at least 10 per cent of the state's population who would require extra consideration prior to, during and after a disaster. This is a significant cohort in the community who may not have access to appropriate support when disasters occur.

Project outputs include definitions for people with vulnerabilities and specific hazards; maps and tables of the numbers and location of people with vulnerabilities; maps of areas of high risk for specific disasters and a list of services provided by government and non-government organisations.

The project findings indicate that most services are developed by individual agencies and are provided in specific geographic locations for a specific type of vulnerability or are based on the type of potential hazard.

There is an insufficient range of services for people with vulnerabilities and existing services specifically for these people are not reaching all those in need.

It was also identified that mainstream services for the whole community are not meeting the needs of all people with vulnerabilities.

The report concludes that services could be improved with increased collaboration and coordination of all services and by developing comprehensive all-hazard services that reach as many of those in need as possible. These strategies should reduce duplication and improve service efficiencies and outcomes for people with vulnerabilities.

The report was tabled at the August meeting of the State Mitigation Advisory Group (SMAG).

A copy of the report may be found at www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/disaster-recovery



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RESCUE

Local resilience conference attracts delegates from around 60 organisations

Representatives from around 60 organisations came together in the Adelaide Town Hall in July for the first Building Community and Organisational Resilience conference.

Speakers from New Zealand, Canada, Canberra, Perth and Adelaide provided attendees with information and other data aimed at delivering knowledge, enhancing understanding, promoting discussion and generating networking among participants.

Preliminary analysis of delegate feedback indicated 90 per cent of attendees rated the conference a success, 5 per cent rated it useful and the remaining 5 per cent were undecided.

Planning and coordination for the two-day event was managed by a volunteer committee from the local division of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services (AIES) with support from the state's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR) Implementation Working Group.

While organisers set several objectives for the conference, the principle one was the delivery of a forum that included all of the community. This objective was achieved with delegates commenting on the value of having a broad segment of the community at the one venue at the same time.



All in a day's volunteering for the State Emergency Service

Animal rescues are one of a number of incidents responded to by the State Emergency Service (SES). The recent rescue of a terrified dog stranded in the middle of a swollen creek posed particular difficulties for members of Noarlunga SES Unit. Unit Manager Ian Bonython takes up the story:

The weekend began at 4am Saturday morning. We had to be on the road by 5am to get to the Metropolitan Fire Service's state training facility at Angle Park where the State Rescue Challenge was being held. Home by 6pm was the aim as we were to do it all again the following day. With rain and severe winds forecast for the weekend, coupled with a flood watch, it was going to be a busy weekend for the SES.

The challenge, won by Tea Tree Gully, finished mid-afternoon on Sunday, an early finish but welcomed by all as it was time for a much needed rest.

I was only home for 20 minutes when I received a phone call from the North Region Commander. 'Hope you haven't had your first drink yet, we have a swift water rescue of a dog in a creek.'

Back into the vehicle and off to the unit while the Commander paged for more crew.

The situation: Lucy, a Staffordshire cross, was trapped in the middle of a swollen creek with the water flowing at about running speed. She had entered the creek about 200 metres upstream and found herself on some debris against a tree, which was normally on the edge of the creek's bank. The first responding teams had tried to use a ladder to get to Lucy but found it was too short. The SES crew had swift water safety training and knew that this required a swift water technician team. Peter sent some CFS members upstream to keep a watch for any large objects that might be coming down the creek, and Bruce and Scott took up their positions as downstream safeties.

The creek was lined with blackberry bushes, luckily with a small gap opposite where Lucy was stranded. It was quickly determined that entering the water was out of the question as I could not get upstream to enter and was unlikely to get to Lucy by diving in opposite her as I would have been washed into the bushes. We found some boards that were long enough to reach

Lucy, and laid them across the creek, just above the water line, and then laid the ladder over the boards, a perfect bridge to crawl across.

A pair of pruning shears in hand, a tether to my onshore safety, and I started to make my way across, trimming a path through the blackberry bushes to Lucy. After two minutes of patting and talking to a terrified Lucy, we started to make our way back. But Lucy was frozen with fright and did not want to move. My only option was to lift her front legs forward, then lift her back legs forward, then move her front legs forward and so on, stopping every now and then to give her a reassuring pat and nuzzle of our heads. This continued until we were almost back to the end of the ladder where either a bit of courage or the idea of what we were doing kicked in as Lucy started to crawl by herself towards me. Handing her back to the CFS crew, I got off the ladder bridge and pulled the ladder and boards back to dry land.

As I turned around, Lucy was chasing a goat! I was as happy as her, but not quite ready to be chasing goats.



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RESCUE

Emergency management web-based information portals

At both the national level and in South Australia emergency management authorities are working to bring together all-hazard emergency management information into one-stop-shops.

This is important because the emergency management community of interest is ever expanding, and disaster resilience has progressed beyond simply emergency management plans to become a multidisciplinary learning environment.

It is worth visiting the sites below to find out what information is available.

Australian Emergency Management Knowledge Hub

The AEM Knowledge Hub was launched in November 2012 to provide research, resources and news relevant to emergency management. The site includes statistics and information, photos, video and media about past disasters.

You can also access the AEM library's collection, including the library catalogue and electronic journal databases.

The web address is www.emknowledge.gov.au.

SA Emergency Management Govdex Portal

This secure site is specifically for the South Australian emergency management sector. It contains the suite of emergency management plans, latest news and updates, the SA National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR) Implementation Plan and relevant information resources. It also provides an orientation for new staff and those wanting to learn more about the Commonwealth, state, zone and local government arrangements.

The SA NSDR Implementation Plan outlines the projects underway at the national and state level to progress the NSDR. Related publications are also available on the site.

If you want to register to join the site please email Frittum.julie@safecom.sa.gov.au. If you are an existing member and have forgotten your password you can reset it at www.govdex.gov.au.



These recent publications are available on the SA EM Govdex Portal.

From Disaster to Renewal: The centrality of business recovery to community resilience, Regional Australia Institute. August 2013.

Process and Tools for Building Resilience in Vulnerable Households, Torrens Resilience Institute. August 2013.

Senate Report: Recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events, Commonwealth of Australia. August 2013.

Emergency management planning for children and young people: Planning guide for local government, State Government Victoria. June 2013.

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework, Commonwealth of Australia. July 2013.

National Emergency Warning Policy Documents, Commonwealth of Australia. July 2013

SA Remote Aboriginal Community Emergency Management project (RACEM)

The South Australian Remote Aboriginal Community Emergency Management (RACEM) project is a 12-month partnership project between the State Recovery Office and the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM).

The project has State Strategic Project status under the SA National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) as endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).

The project includes: the completion of an updated community and emergency contact list for the APY Lands; an environmental scan of existing community safety initiatives and programs and the development of a training framework that incorporates prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR).

Included in the project scope is the updating of 2006 APY Lands risk assessments into the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) framework.

This work will link to the recent risk assessments outlined in the APY Lands Community Safety Plans – work undertaken by SAPOL. Liaison with SAPOL and other key identified stakeholders is integral to the success of the project.

The RACEM project is managed by the State Recovery Office and supported by a multi-agency project control group that includes representatives from: the Department of Premier and Cabinet; Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division; the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA); SAFECOM and Australian Red Cross (South Australia).

Communication and engagement with relevant community and emergency management stakeholders is vital to the success of the project and has been factored into the project process.

The RACEM project is expected to be completed by the end of December 2013 and will provide recommendations for stage two of the project, including identified opportunities for implementation.



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Support for deaf, hearing and speech-impaired persons

It is estimated that more than 1.1 million Australians have difficulty communicating or being understood.

Approximately 2.67 million Australians – one in every eight people – have some form of hearing loss.

People who are deaf, hearing or speech impaired are unable to access telecommunications without specialised equipment and services. To help address this issue, since 1995 the Australian Government has overseen a National Relay Service (NRS), an Australia-wide phone service for people who are deaf, or who have a hearing and speech impairment.

Deaf, hearing and speech-impaired persons can use the NRS through any of five different contact options including:

- 1) a TTY (teletypewriter),
- 2) a phone number for those who have a speech impairment (but still use their own voice and can hear) and can use an ordinary handset,
- 3) an access point to an internet relay for those users who prefer to phone online,
- 4) video relay for those who prefer make their call using Auslan (Australian Sign Language), and
- 5) via SMS relay for those who prefer to use a mobile phone.

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) is currently undertaking a project looking at improving the accessibility of emergency information and services to the deaf,

hearing and speech-impaired community in South Australia.

This project is funded by a grant that SAFECOM successfully applied for as part of the Natural Disaster Resilience Grant (NDRG) scheme for 2012-13.

The agencies that form part of this project include the CFS, SA Police (SAPOL), SES, SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), SAFECOM and the State Recovery Office.

The project began in May 2013 and will conclude in November 2013. The project is guided in part by the NRS steps for becoming NRS friendly for deaf, hearing and speech-impaired persons. More information about these steps can be found at <http://relayservice.gov.au/business/becoming-relay-service-friendly/>.

The project team is currently drafting implementation strategies and an associated plan to help assist the various agencies improve the accessibility of their information and services to deaf, hearing and speech-impaired persons in South Australia.

As part of this process, the team is seeking feedback from interested parties that work with, represent or regularly interact with deaf, hearing and speech-impaired persons in South Australia.

For further information about the project, please contact Justin Ward on 8463 4064 or email ward.justin@safecom.sa.gov.au.



Flood management conference attracts 300 attendees

More than 300 people from state and federal government agencies, as well as local government, attended the recent Floodplain Management Association national conference in Tweed Heads in New South Wales.

Local attendees included representatives from the State Emergency Service (SES), South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR).

Conference highlights included:

- The keynote speech by **Larry Larson, the Senior Policy Advisor to the Association of State Floodplain Managers (USA)**. Mr Larson pointed out that the United States had experienced the two largest disasters in history in the past few years – Hurricane Katrina (2005) and Superstorm Sandy (2012). These were both coastal events with evidence showing that coastal areas are becoming more vulnerable from rising sea levels and increased storm activity. The United States is also experiencing rainfall in many of the internal riverine areas that is unprecedented.

- The speech by **Brendan Nelson, the Asia Pacific Director – Risk for MWH Global**. Mr Nelson presented evidence indicating that the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of natural disasters is expected to increase as a result of climate change. As a result, it is more important than ever that emergency management authorities learn from the past and plan for the future. Innovation and out-of-the-box thinking leads to future investment in providing mitigation for communities most at risk.

- The speech by **David Parsons, the Manager Emergency Management and Security Network for Sydney Water**. Mr Parsons' presentation Decision making during extreme events looked at how the human brain functions during an extreme event when people are required to make critical decisions with insufficient information in a short time frame.

Another presentation highlighted the development of a flash flood warning system for Sydney's Northern Beaches area.

The Northern Beaches Flood Warning and Information Network program is a joint partnership involving Pittwater, Warringah and Manly councils with guidance from the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage and the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).

The aim of the program is to develop a flash flooding warning system for the community using strategically located rainfall, water level and flow gauges across the Northern Beaches area. Currently there are 16 rainfall and eight water level gauges. However this will be expanded over the next five years with the addition of a further seven rainfall, three water level and five flow gauges.

A website has been developed to provide the community with real time gauged information. This information will also be fed to the BoM to support its severe weather and flash flood services.



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