

# WA SES



*History Edition 1*

**2016**

*This document has been compiled by Gordon Hall from information provided or researched and traces the history of the WA State Emergency Service from the early Civil Defence days through to 2015 and includes information on a number of operations and other interesting matters*

***As a first edition it will be added to as further information becomes available***

*This document is dedicated to all those State Emergency Service Volunteers who sacrifice their time and home comforts to get up in the middle of the night during storms, floods, cyclones and other emergency events to respond to the needs of their community*

*It is also very important to acknowledge all the partners, family members, friends and employers who support the State Emergency Service Volunteers*

***We must remember not to forget that it is the true altruistic nature of Emergency Service Volunteers that assists communities to survive and recover from disasters***

## CONTENTS

Foreword .....	3
Acknowledgements .....	4
1. Overview .....	5
2. Commonwealth Government and Civil Defence .....	6
3. The Civil Defence .....	10
4. The WA State Emergency Service – 1959 to 1999 .....	17
5. The State Emergency Service – 1999 Onwards .....	21
6. State Emergency Service Units .....	24
7. SES Volunteers Association .....	27
8. Volunteer Representation .....	30
9. Fire and Emergency Services Authority .....	36
10. Emergency Services Levy .....	39
11. Awards for Outstanding Service .....	41
12. Lives Lost During Active Service .....	52
13. The Bunker .....	56
14. SES Publications .....	62
15. Training .....	64
16. State Emergency Service Insignias (WA) .....	65
17. Uniform Styles and Appointment Indicators .....	68
18. Major Awards and Achievements .....	70
19. Earth, Wind, Water, Fire .....	73
20. State Emergency Service Units Historical Notes .....	74
21. Significant Operations .....	84
22. Historical Notes by SES Volunteers .....	97
23. Anecdotes and Funny or Quirky Stories .....	103
24. Appendix 1 – Papal Visit .....	104

## **FOREWORD**

The compilation of the history of the State Emergency Service in Western Australia is intended to bring together as much of the history as possible which led up to the formation of the State Emergency Service in Western Australia and covers the subsequent years, from when it was part of *Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia*, part of the *Police Department*, its' own entity as the *State Emergency Service*, in more recent years as a clear role within the *Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia* and finally in 2012 being merged into a fire culture within the new *Department of Fire and Emergency Services*.

The first edition is in an electronic form and as more information is added it is expected that subsequent editions will be formed into an eBook.

It is intended that the electronic document will be updated and reissued as more information is added.

More than eighty State Emergency Service units have been formed throughout the state as a follow on from the Civil Defence groups in Western Australia. Many of these units are based in country and remote areas as well as metropolitan Perth.

Traditionally the State Emergency Service Volunteers respond to storms, cyclones, flood, earthquake, and tsunami, as the hazard management agency, to combat roles including road crash rescues, cliff and cave rescues and support roles such as searches at any time of day or night, to assist their local community and other State Emergency Service units through the state.

The support and assistance by Local Government, State Government, local Members of Parliament and the public generally, is greatly appreciated by all the Volunteers.

It must also be noted that the staff of the Bureau of Meteorology work very closely and assists the State Emergency Service in information and public warnings for flood, storm, cyclone and tsunami. In addition to this the staff of GeoScience Australia are involved in research and monitoring of earthquake and tsunami that may affect Australia.

Further to this it is the true altruistic nature of State Emergency Service Volunteers throughout the state that greatly assists the communities through the preparation, response and recovery phases of storms, cyclones, earthquakes, floods and tsunami.

To all the Volunteers in the Service, both past and present, the community greatly appreciates your assistance and thanks you for being there.



**Gordon Hall**  
**President**  
**SES Volunteers Association**  
**September 2016**

Please send any additional information you want considered for inclusion to  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To gather the information and then thread it together would not have been possible without input from many Volunteers and Staff, past and present.

Some of these are mentioned below;

John Capes OAM	Phillip Petersen ESM	Bernie McNamara ESM
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*The cover has been designed by Christopher Williamson – Graphic Design student (TAFE)*

## 1. OVERVIEW

Western Australia is regularly subjected to a number of natural disasters including cyclones, floods, tsunamis, storms and earthquakes. All of these represent a threat to life and property.

The Australian Constitution places responsibility for natural hazards within the State jurisdictions. However the Commonwealth Government has provided some support and guidance through the Civil Defence and other organisations.

At a state jurisdictional level the responsibility has not always been clearly defined.

Over the years the roles have moved from one organisation to another, both at a State and Commonwealth Government level.

In Western Australia, during the many years where there was no legislation covering these natural disasters, there was uncertainty within the command structures along with a lack of legal authority for emergency management agencies to take appropriate action.

Until 2005, Western Australia was the only state in Australia that did not have emergency management legislation covering its response to these potential disasters.

The *FESA Act (1998)* covered the structure and responsibilities, however still did not give any legal coverage for emergency management for the State Emergency Service Volunteers in their response roles Management Agency (HMA) for cyclones, floods, tsunamis, storms and earthquakes.

As a result of no legislation the Volunteer Manager of a State Emergency Service unit was threatened with legal action after a town was flooded.

This document sets out the timeline from civil defence to SES over a number of years and the subsequent fire and emergency agencies under which the SES Volunteers operate.

It also attempts to cover some of the support aspects of the SES as well as a number of interesting operations.

It is well recognised by communities and all levels of government that the altruistic nature of State Emergency Service Volunteers provides significant social capital by instilling a sense of community and caring, a level of civic pride, and a sense of self-reliance and security for their own community.

This model of volunteerism for the State Emergency Service provides the volunteers with a great sense of achievement and community belonging, although at times they may feel undervalued when changes are made without consultation and an assumption that they will always respond to an emergency regardless of circumstances.

Change within the SES is constant. A considerable amount of time and resources are dedicated by Volunteers to keep up with these constant changes in training, command organisations and the general requirements and demands by the parent body and their communities.

As more information is provided they will be added to this document and further editions released.

## **2. COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL DEFENCE**

In a ministerial statement in 1959, then federal Minister for the Interior, Gordon Freeth, stated,  
*“It is a basic principle that the States are responsible for the development of their own civil defence planning and programs with the Commonwealth providing national guidance and coordination as necessary”*

This principle remains the basis of the Commonwealth Government’s involvement in civil defence.

During this period 1936 – 1966 all State Governments and Territories established civil defence directorates. Over that period it was considered that these organisations were little more than planning and coordinating headquarters with a limited and ill-defined role in the event of a disaster.

There was considerable variation between the States in the way they set up for Civil Defence.

In 1966 the Commonwealth Government convened a special Federal – State ministerial meeting to discuss civil defence. That meeting agreed to the following division of responsibilities:

(a) **COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT**

- i. Provide the States with information on the strategic situation and on possible forms and scales of attack, and give national guidance on civil defence policy,
- ii. Organise civil defence in Commonwealth Territories,
- iii. Arrange such cooperation between Commonwealth and State as is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the civil defence planning and preparations and provide assistance in the implementation thereof as agreed with the States,
- iv. Provide advanced training facilities for selected students in consultation with the States,
- v. Provide, in consultation with the States, manuals and other documents for civil defence training and the information of the public,
- vi. Supply to the States scientific and technical information on civil defence matters,
- vii. Arrange for cooperation by Commonwealth Government Departments and Authorities and the Armed Forces with State civil defence organisations,
- viii. Arrange for interstate and Commonwealth assistance as necessary in an emergency, and
- ix. Prepare Commonwealth civil defence legislation as may be required.

(b) **STATE GOVERNMENTS**

- i. Establishing and operating a State civil defence organisation including voluntary civil defence services,
- ii. Coordination of State and Local Government services and other services in civil defence activities,
- iii. Civil defence planning and preparations in conjunction with the Commonwealth and other States,
- iv. Preparation of legislation required for civil defence,
- v. The publication and dissemination of information, advice and instructions on civil defence,

- vi. Supply to the Commonwealth scientific and technical information on civil defence matters resulting from investigations by State Department and Authorities, and
- vii. Liaison and cooperation with neighbouring States or Commonwealth Territories on all civil defence matters of common interest.

Following the 1966 meeting there was no apparent change in the level or direction of Commonwealth civil defence activities until the creation of the Natural Disasters Organisation (NDO) in 1974.

The NDO was deemed to have included the responsibilities of the Commonwealth, however this was not made explicit in the documentation put to the Government.

After 1966, the post-war civil defence directorates in the States were remodelled into State Emergency Services.

#### **THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AND CIVIL DEFENCE AS A ROLE**

The following paper was compiled in 2004 by State Emergency Service District Manager Colin Brown and presented to the FESA State Emergency Service Executive Management Team on 28 April 2004 by the Regional Director Gordon Hall.

#### **THE CIVIL DEFENCE ROLE**

##### **OVERVIEW**

Civil Defence is broadly defined as protection of the civil population from effects of armed conflict.

The State Emergency Service Division of the Fire and Emergency Service Authority of Western Australia (FESA) has as its origins a Civil Defence background.

In 1956 the organisation that we now know as FESA - State Emergency Service was called the WA Civil Defence Organisation. By 1961 this became the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of WA.

Between 1977 and 1981 the organisation changed its name to WA Volunteer Emergency Service (WA VES ) and then to WA State Emergency Service (WASES).

Throughout this period ties were maintained with the role of Civil Defence.

On January 1, 1999, the WA State Emergency Service became a Division of the new Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) and is now known as FESA-SES.

##### **GENEVA CONVENTION AND THE 1977 ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS**

Australia has ratified (circa 1991) the 1977 "Protocols Additional" to the Geneva Convention Protocols of 1949.

Protocol 1 (Article 61) gives the following definition of Civil Defence as well as listing 15 specific humanitarian roles that apply to Australia under International Law.

Civil Defence means the performance of some or all of the under mentioned humanitarian tasks intended to protect the civilian population against the dangers, and to help it to



recover from the immediate effects, of hostilities or disasters and also to provide the conditions necessary for its survival.

**THE 15 HUMANITARIAN TASKS ARE:**

- I. Warning
- II. Evacuation
- III. Management of shelters
- IV. Management of blackout measures
- V. Rescue
- VI. Medical services, including first aid, and religious assistance
- VII. Fire-fighting
- VIII. Detection and marking of danger areas
- IX. Provision of emergency accommodation and supplies
- X. Emergency repair of indispensable public utilities
- XI. Emergency disposal of the dead
- XII. Assistance in the prevention of objects essential for survival
- XIII. Complementary activities necessary to carry out any of the tasks mentioned above, including, but not limited to, planning and organisation.

As a result of this definition the functions of Civil Defence can be summarized as:

- a. protecting the civil population against the effects of hostilities or disasters
- b. assisting the civil population in recovering from the immediate effects of hostilities or disasters: and
- c. providing the conditions necessary for the survival of the civil population.

**WHO MAY BE DESIGNATED CIVIL DEFENCE?**

All agencies with responsibilities for carrying out any of the 15 listed humanitarian tasks and which have not been assigned to support the military Defence effort are entitled to be designated as civil defence by competent authorities at Commonwealth or State level. Eligible agencies include WA Police Service, fire, ambulance, State Emergency Service, public utilities, emergency planning committees, providers of welfare services and any other organisation rendering humanitarian assistance.

**FESA'S ROLE IN CIVIL DEFENCE**

Clearly from the 15 humanitarian tasks listed in Article 61 of Protocol 1 Additional to the Geneva Convention, FESA (in particular FESA-SES and Fire Services) have an important role to play in Civil Defence. This would be achieved by an extension to our normal peacetime roles and responsibilities and would not require any additional training or the provision of any specialist equipment should FESA be required to discharge its Civil Defence responsibilities during time of hostilities.

**WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED**

To access "Civil Defence Protection from Enemy Action" all participants must display the Civil Defence symbol (blue triangle on orange background) on:

- Personnel
- Equipment
- Facilities

***and carry a Civil Defence Identification Card***

(The identification cards issued in the 1980s to State Emergency Service volunteers were a laminated card with photo ID that displayed the Civil Defence Symbol).

The question then being debated by the Commonwealth Civil Defence Committee was:

*“Do we supply those organizations, who would have responsibility for the humanitarian tasks listed in Protocol 1, with I.D cards, equipment and facilities, and marking such things as tabards, magnetic vehicle markings etc. now, or do we assume that in any deterioration of international relations that might result in a threat to Australia’s sovereignty, will have enough lead-time for the production and issue of I.D Cards and display material.”*

The current thinking of the Commonwealth Civil Defence Committee is that sufficient lead-time will exist.

## End of Paper

### 3. THE CIVIL DEFENCE

There was a long lead up to the formation of the State Emergency Service in Western Australia, involving both the Commonwealth and State Government over a number of years and was based on the provision of a Civil Defence role for Australia by the State jurisdictions.

The Commonwealth Government was heavily involved with the State jurisdictions, providing guidance and resources over a number of years.

A brief chronological overview of the events relating to Civil Defence is detailed below.



Volunteer Air Raid Wardens

#### 1936

In 1936 a Commonwealth and State Government ministerial conference was held in Adelaide where it was agreed that each State should be responsible for protecting their population against gas attack along with training personnel for essential civil defence services.

To supplement State efforts, the Commonwealth agreed to train key personnel and provide equipment, manuals, technical information and key advice.

There was no formal agreement at this stage between State jurisdictions and the Commonwealth Government relating to areas of responsibility.

Most of the Civil Defence work was handled by different Commonwealth Government Departments.

## **1939**

In 1939 the Department of Defence was appointed as the co-ordinating authority for national defence plans.

Following the Commonwealth/State Conference of 31 March 1939, a Directorate of Civilian Defence and State Co-operation, within the Department of Defence Co-ordination, was established to handle civil defence and State co-operation matters.

This Directorate was the authority for national air raid precaution activities and dealing with State works of defence value. The OIC of the Directorate corresponded directly with each State's responsible officer regarding technical matters and the execution of agreed policies including arranging for these Federal and State officers to meet in direct conference regarding the preparation of defence plans.

Col R.W.M. Thirkell MBE VD was the Director of Civilian Defence and State Co-operation from 1940 until the Directorate was abolished on 26 June 1941.

## **1941**

With the growth of Civil Defence Organisations and the general development of Civil Defence measures, a separate Commonwealth Department under separate Ministerial direction was established on 26 June 1941.

The Directorate was thereafter administered by the newly formed Department of Home Security which had the following responsibilities;

- a) Acting in an advisory and co-ordinating capacity in relation to the government of the states in the measures for the protection of the lives and property of the civilian population in the event of an emergency arising out of the war;
- b) Compensation for civil defence workers and the dependants of personnel who suffered injuries while on duty or whilst training; and for injuries sustained while carrying out essential duties during periods of enemy action;
- c) Protection of bulk oil installations by screen walling, bunding and precautionary fire measures;
- d) Preparation of schemes and supervision of their implementation to meet the requirements of the services., along with preparation of technical bulletins and posters illustrating the need for camouflage measures to protect vital installations and to protect vital equipment;
- e) Prohibition of work near aerodromes under National Security (Supplementary) Regulation No 58;
- f) Securing appropriate measure of uniformity in essential codes with regards to lighting of vehicles, air raid warnings, shelter facilities;
- g) Air raid precaution measures in respect of Commonwealth establishments;
- h) Financial arrangements between Commonwealth and State governments in connection with civil defence matters; and
- i) Securing firefighting equipment, steel helmets, respirators and other essential equipment for the Commonwealth and for distribution to the states.

Other responsibilities of the Department of Home Security in civil defence matters included:

- (i) establishment of schools for air raid precautions training;
- (ii) furnishing technical advice to the state and Commonwealth departments;
- (iii) conducting research and experiments;

- (iv) preparation, printing and distribution of standard textbooks; and
- (v) distribution of films

In 1945, these functions were extended.

The Department of Home Security also administered the following;

- I. National Security Regulations;
- II. National Security (General) Regulations;
- III. National Security (Civil Defence Workers' Compensation) Regulations;
- IV. National Security (Supplementary) Regulations No 58;
- V. National Security (Camouflage) Regulations; and
- VI. National Security (Protection of Bulk Oil Installations) Regulations.

The work of the Department of Home Security was closely related to wartime activities and was a vital national necessity in the early months of the war with Japan. At its peak in 1943 the department employed 183 staff; however as the war moved away from the shores of Australia, the department declined in importance.

During the vital stages of establishing the Department of Home Security, the Secretary of the Department was also the Secretary of the Department of Defence, but later the Assistant Secretary, Mr A.W. Welch became Secretary. Around the same time, Professor W.J. Dakin was appointed Technical Director (Camouflage). Shortly later, the National Security (Camouflage) Regulations were promulgated under which control over camouflage was vested in the Defence Central Camouflage Committee administered by the Department of Home Security.

Rapid extension of Service Requirements following Japan's entry into the war necessitated the establishment of an expanded camouflage organisation to cope with these growing demands.

### **1942**

A Research and Experiments Section was established in the Department of Home Security in March 1942. Around this time, a Scientific Advisory Committee was established and liaison channels were opened up between Great Britain, the United States, Russia, and other countries through which technical information was received in this country.

### **1943**

In January 1943, a Training and Inspection Section was established in the Department of Home Security with an advanced course for Instructors from the State Civil Defence Organisations conducted by the Department in Melbourne. This was followed by tests of the Civil Defence arrangements in Hobart, in the Queensland coastal towns and in the Perth-Fremantle areas.

### **1944**

From April 1944 onwards civil defence policy was reviewed on a number of occasions and restrictions were gradually relaxed.

## **1945**

In June 1945, a report was issued by the Committee of Review into the Civil Staffing of Wartime Activities determining that the Department of Home Security was responsible for the following matters:

- (i) the recovery and disposal of equipment, some of which is Government property and some of which was secured under Lend-Lease;
- (ii) the administration of the financial agreement between the Commonwealth and the states in regard to civil defence measures;
- (iii) the administration of National Security Regulations referred to in paragraph 5 above;
- (iv) the compilation of the history of the department's activities;
- (v) camouflage research;
- (vi) the preparation of detailed proposals for a nucleus civil defence organisation; and
- (vii) the compilation of a departmental war book and chapters in the Commonwealth War Book relating to civil defence measures

In November 1945, on the advice of the Defence Committee, War Cabinet resolved that;

- (a) there was no longer any necessity to maintain civil defence organisations on a reserve basis;
- (b) the nucleus civil defence organisation in the post war period should be limited to a planning organisation;
- (c) the Commonwealth should set up a planning organisation to keep state planning organisations advised on civil defence matters and to co-ordinate all state civil defence plans.

## **1946**

On 1 February 1946, the Department of Home Security was abolished and its activities were absorbed by the Department of the Interior.

This was notified in Commonwealth Gazette No 23 of 7 February 1946.

The following persons were appointed by the Commonwealth Government to the position of Minister for Home Security:

Hon Joseph Palmer Abbott	June 1941 to October 1941
Hon Hubert Peter Lazzarini	October 1941 to February 1946

The following persons were appointed by the Commonwealth Government to the position of Secretary:

Sir F.G. Shedden	July 1941 to December 1941
A.W. Welch	July 1942 to March 1944
M.S. Thomson	March 1944 to July 1945

W.N.C. Fairweather of the Department of Defence acted as Secretary from 25 July 1945 to February 1946.

## **1955**

In February 1955 the full brunt of a La Nina weather pattern affected the central NSW area, which resulted in severe flooding of a number of places including the severe flooding of the entire Murray-Darling river system.

Many lives were lost and more than 7000 buildings and homes were damaged.

As a result of this disaster, the States of NSW and Victoria commenced the formation of State Emergency Service Units.

## **1959**

In a ministerial statement in 1959, Interior Minister Gordon Freeth said,

*“It is a basic principle that the States are responsible for the development of their own civil defence planning and programs with the Commonwealth providing national guidance and coordination as necessary”.*

This principle has never been challenged and remains the basis of the Commonwealth Government’s involvement in civil defence.

## **1966**

The Commonwealth Government convened a Federal-State ministerial meeting to specifically discuss civil defence. This meeting agreed to the following division of responsibilities between States:

### **COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT**

- Provide the States with information on the strategic situation and on possible forms and scales of attack, and give national guidance on civil defence policy;
- Organise civil defence in Commonwealth Territories;
- Arrange such cooperation between Commonwealth and State as is necessary to insure the effectiveness of the civil defence planning and preparations and provide assistance in the implementation thereof as agreed with the States;
- Provide advanced training facilities for selected students in consultation with the States;
- Provide, in consultation with the States, manuals and other documents for civil defence training and the information of the public;
- Supply to the States scientific and technical information on civil defence matters;
- Arrange for cooperation by Commonwealth Government Departments and Authorities and the Armed Forces with State civil defence organisations;
- Arrange for interstate and Commonwealth assistance as necessary in an emergency; and
- Prepare Commonwealth civil defence legislation as may be required.

### **STATE GOVERNMENTS**

- Establish and operate a State civil defence organisation including voluntary civil defence services;
- Coordinate State and Local Government services and other services in civil defence activities;
- Civil defence planning and preparations in conjunction with the Commonwealth and other States;
- Prepare legislation required for civil defence;

- The publication and dissemination of information, advice and instructions on civil defence;
- Supply to the Commonwealth scientific and technical information on civil defence matters resulting from investigations by State Department and Authorities; and
- Liaise and cooperate with neighbouring States or Commonwealth Territories on all civil defence matters of common interest.

***In the period after 1966, the post-war civil defence directorates in the States were gradually remodelled into State Emergency Services.***

## **1974**

In early 1974, a series of major floods in Queensland and northern New South Wales highlighted organisational problems associated with disaster relief.

With no apparent change in the level or direction of Commonwealth civil defence activities since the 1966 meeting, a new organisation was created as a Commonwealth body.

The Natural Disasters Organisation (NDO) commenced operation on 2 July 1974. While the NDO was deemed to have included the responsibilities of the Commonwealth Government, it was not made explicit in the documentation put to the Government.

### **FUNCTIONS**

The NDO was responsible for the co-ordination of all civil defence and emergency relief operations together with the co-ordinated use of National resources through its National Emergency Operations Centre.

### **ROLE**

The NDO specifically directed federal programmes of equipment and finance for civil defence and emergency services:

- Co-ordinated research, prepared plans for coping with natural disasters, and directed information dissemination.
- Via the Civil Defence School at Mt. Macedon Victoria, it provided a National training function for State civil defence organisations.

At that time the Natural Disasters Organisation appeared to have no legislative authority. On 2 July 1974, Executive Council Minute No.155 announced the appointment of Major-General Sir Alan Stretton CBE, AO as the Natural Disasters Organisation's first Director-General.

The Natural Disasters Organisation was deemed to have included the responsibilities of the Commonwealth. However, this was not made explicit in the documentation put to the Government.

## **1993**

The Natural Disasters Organisation was renamed Emergency Management Australia (EMA). While emergency management in Australia remained a State-based activity, the Commonwealth undertook a variety of support roles, particularly in financial assistance to States.

EMA was the Commonwealth agency through which the Attorney-General exercised responsibility for Australia's emergency management matters.

EMA's prime functions were, in the event of a disaster or emergency, to coordinate Commonwealth physical assistance to States and Territories and assist them to develop their



emergency management capabilities. The EMA had an additional function of assisting in the development, coordination and support of effective National emergency management arrangements.

## **2002**

The Commonwealth Counter Disaster Task Force (CCDTF) is the peak Commonwealth body with emergency management responsibilities.

The CCDTF is comprised of representatives of Commonwealth Government departments and agencies. This interdepartmental committee, responsible to the Minister for Defence, provides policy advice on emergency response matters. It is chaired by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC) is Australia's peak consultative emergency management forum.

AEMC, chaired by the Director General, Emergency Management Australia, comprises chairpersons and executive officers of State emergency management committees.

The AEMC met annually to provide advice and direction on the coordination and advancement of Commonwealth and State/Territory interests in emergency management procedures and arrangements.

## **2015**

Australian Emergency Management Institute at Mount Macedon was an emergency management training campus, providing training to emergency managers from the CFA and SES for over fifty years, with many staff and Volunteers from WA receiving their core training at short residential courses from this Institute.

In 2015 the federal government transitioned the Australian Emergency Management Institute into a Canberra-based virtual institute as a finance saving exercise.

The Mt Macedon short residential courses were then outsourced or replaced in 2015/16 by an online service from Canberra.

The Mt Macedon Institute had forty-four employees who were relocated or left employment.

The institute played an active role in implementing the findings of the royal commission into the Black Saturday bushfires.

#### **4. THE WA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE – 1959 TO 1999**

As the cold war threat to Australia abated, the civil defence role of the State Emergency Service disappeared, however State Emergency Service Volunteers remained as busy as ever with a wide range of emergencies for which they can be called upon.

##### **PLANNING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SES**

Early efforts were devoted to planning, the formation of committees to examine specific aspects and the appointment of liaison officers.

- In November 1956, Mr W.S. Lonnie was seconded to the Premier's Department as the Deputy Director of Civil Defence.
- In October 1958, a Western Australian Government inter-departmental committee was established to prepare an appreciation on civil defence and make proposals for future policy and programming.

##### **1959**

In July 1959 the State Emergency Service was established in Western Australia for the purpose of:

*“coping with civil disasters, including fires, floods, cyclones, railway accidents, crashed aircraft, explosions and the search for lost persons”.*

The Commissioner of Police was responsible for the operation of the State Emergency Service.

##### **1961**

In October 1961, following a royal commission on bush fires, a government review into ways to combat cyclones and floods was conducted by a committee consisting of the Under Secretary Premier's Department, the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Director of Civil Defence.

As a result of this review the State Emergency Service and Civil Defence were combined to form the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia (CDESWA).

The committee also recommended, along with other matters, that further investigation be made into the necessity for legislative authority to ensure adequate control measures during emergencies.

The combined organisation functioned, by authority of a cabinet minute, as a section of the Western Australian Premier's Department.

##### **1962**

In February 1962 Mr W.S. Lonnie was appointed as the first Director of the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia.

The formation of the civil defence organisation at local level was intensified and a State wide public information programme was developed.

## **1974**

In July 1974 the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia was transferred to the Public Works Department. The Hon. Minister for Works, Water Supplies and Housing assumed responsibility for the Department.

Part of the title, "Civil Defence" was dropped from its name and it was renamed the Western Australian State Emergency Service (WASES).

The organisational headquarters were situated at Leake Street, Belmont where the State Emergency Operations Centre was contained in an underground facility known as "the bunker".

In the early days, the State was divided into various regions to provide coverage throughout Western Australia. Local volunteer units were located at Subiaco and Perth, along with diverse locations like Westrail and the Swan Brewery.

## **1976**

From 1976 onwards, State Emergency Service Regional Coordinators were appointed to each of the regions. The first coordinators to be appointed were in the Gascoyne/Murchison and Pilbara regions.

The new aim of the State Emergency Service of Western Australia became:

*"to provide for the co-ordination of planning, training and operations to counter the effects of disaster, both natural or war caused, in Western Australia".*

In August 1976, the formation of a State Counter Disaster Committee was approved by State Cabinet.

The purpose of this committee was to provide advice to government at the time of a disaster, with its function being to:

- Advise Government on action necessary to provide relief.
- Co-ordinate the resources available to Government Departments and Instrumentalities to ensure that all steps are taken to plan for and to counter the effects of a disaster.
- Co-ordinate the provision of necessary services, materials and equipment not available from Government Departments and Instrumentalities.

On 13 December 1976 the State Counter Disaster Plan was approved by Cabinet.

This plan provided for the establishment of functional Emergency Committees and Regional and Local Counter Disaster Committees.

## **1977**

The responsibility for the Western Australian State Emergency Service was transferred back to the Premier's Department and responsibility remained with the Hon. Deputy Premier although the Public Works Department (PWD) remained the parent department.

## **1983**

In March 1983 the responsibility for the Western Australian State Emergency Service was transferred to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Local Government.

A review of the emergency services in Western Australia was commenced in October 1983.

## **1985**

In August 1985, the review of emergency services in Western Australia was finalised and the Western Australian State Emergency Service was transferred by authority of a cabinet minute:

*“as a separate identifiable entity within the Police Department”.*

As a result of the review the WA Government approved:

- The responsibility for overall co-ordination of emergency services be assigned to the Commissioner of Police;
- The establishment of a State Counter Disaster Advisory Committee (SCDAC) for the determination of policy and the development of necessary planning to achieve an effective response to disaster or emergency situations;
- The placement of the Western Australian State Emergency Service as a separate identifiable entity within the WA Police Department;
- The retention of the Regional and Local Counter Disaster Committees; and
- The establishment of an appointment designated Executive Director, Emergency Services Co-ordination, to oversee the operation of the Western Australian State Emergency Service. This appointment to be filled by a Police Officer of Chief Superintendent rank.

In November 1985 the State Counter Disaster Advisory Committee approved the Role, Objectives and Responsibilities of the Western Australian State Emergency Service to:

- foster the State Counter Disaster and Civil Defence arrangements; and
- discharge assigned responsibilities in accordance with counter disaster plans, approved by the State Counter Disaster Advisory Committee or as directed by the Commissioner of Police

At this time, a Chief Superintendent of Police was appointed as the Executive Director of Emergency Services Coordination to oversee the operation of the Western Australian State Emergency Service. All paid staff positions of the State Emergency Service were retained as Public Service staff of the Police Department.

## **1991**

In April 1991, following an internal management review of the Western Australian State Emergency Service, a number of changes were initiated, including the creation of the Emergency Management Unit within the State Emergency Service.

## **1992**

In March 1992, an internal review of the Police Department resulted in further changes to the WASES structure.

This included the separation of the Emergency Management Unit from within the WASES. The Police Emergency Services Unit (PSEU) was formed and placed within the Police Department's Operations Support portfolio.

The PESU consisted of the WASES, and the Emergency Management unit.

## **1995**

During 1995, the State Emergency Service was established as a separate department, which remained in place until 1997.

## **1997**

In June 1997, a taskforce was established by the Western Australian Government to look at ways of improving planning and coordination across the State's emergency services.

As a result of the Barchard Report, the State Government formed a committee to assess the emergency services in Western Australia. This committee was chaired by John Lloyd and provided regular updates to the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association.

There were strong recommendations for legislation contained in the Barchard Report, however they did not result in legislation which was subsequently noted in the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Report to the Legislative Assembly in 2002.

## **1998**

On 1 January 1998, following recommendations made by the committee, and as an interim arrangement whilst legislation was being prepared, the Fire and Emergency Services of Western Australia was created as a department under the Public Sector Management Act.

### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

As Western Australia did not have emergency management legislation prior to the *Emergency Management Act (2005)*, the emergency management arrangements in Western Australia operated under a series of Policy Statements setting out the operational rules for particular incidents and processes.

- Policy Statement No. 1 - Emergency Management Information Dissemination System
- Policy Statement No. 2 - Standard Emergency Warning Signal
- Policy Statement No. 3 - Local Community Emergency Management Planning Policy
- Policy Statement No. 4 - Emergency Management in the Perth Metropolitan Region
- Policy Statement No. 5 - Bushfire Evacuation Decision Policy
- Policy Statement No. 6 - Change of Titles Emergency Management Committees
- Policy Statement No. 7 - Western Australian Emergency Management Arrangements
- Policy Statement No. 8 - Integration of Emergency Plans for Offshore Petroleum Operations
- Policy Statement No. 9 - Commonwealth Physical Assistance
- Policy Statement No. 10 - Procedure for Activating State Support Plans
- Policy Statement No. 11 - Development and Promulgation of Hazard Management Agency Hazard Plans
- Policy Statement No. 12 - Post Operation Reports
- Policy Statement No. 13 - Funding for Multi-Agency Emergencies
- Policy Statement No. 15 - State Level Emergency Management Exercises

The State Emergency Service utilised Policy Statement No. 7 as the main document for the emergency management arrangements in Western Australia.

## 5. THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE – 1999 ONWARDS

### 1999

On 1 January 1999, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of Western Australia was formally established as a statutory government authority, replacing the Fire Brigades Board and Bush Fires Board.

The establishment of FESA brought together a number of emergency services including the State Emergency Service under one board and one chief executive officer. In subsequent years the Volunteer Marine Rescue Service and the Emergency Service Cadets were also incorporated within FESA.

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority Board of Management was formed and first met on 4 January 1999.

Under the *FESA Act (1998)*, the Board was a representative Board which resulted in the Minister appointing a Volunteer from the State Emergency Service as a full member of the FESA Board.

Under the legislation FESA inherited the State Emergency Service functions as the hazard management agency for tropical cyclone, flood, storm, earthquake and tsunami when the Act commenced in January 1999.

FESA also became the combat authority for land search, road crash rescue, and cliff and cave rescue. Previously these roles were fulfilled by the State Emergency Service.

During 1999, FESA also restructured the State Emergency Service as a Division and made a number of appointments. Some of the key positions were:

<b>Executive Director</b>	Susan Rooney
<b>Regional Directors</b>	Nial Wilmot Keith Harraway Barry Jones Gordon Hall Gary Gifford
<b>Director Operations Support</b>	Jim Burnett
<b>District Managers</b>	Bernie McNamara Russell Hayes Gordon Tiddums Peter Cameron Paul Igglesden Colin Brown Linda Elms Allen Gale Paul Shakes Darryl Ott

## **2005**

In July 2005, FESA had a major restructure and the State Emergency Service in the country areas were amalgamated with the Fire Services into a number of multi service regions.

State Emergency Service Units now became part of the FESA structure, reporting to managers who did not necessarily have experience with the State Emergency Service. Country Regional Directors were now responsible for Fire and State Emergency Service.

The Metropolitan State Emergency Service became part of the new Operations Portfolio reporting to an Assistance Chief of Operations.

The Western Australian (WA) *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act) was proclaimed in December 2005. In accordance with section 103 of the EM Act, a review of the EM Act is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after 5 years of operation.

## **2009**

In 2009, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of Western Australia's greatest volunteer organisations, the State Emergency Service.

## **2012**

In the second half of 2012 the Fire and Emergency Services act (FES act of 1998) passed through parliament and the new Department of Fire and Emergency Services commenced operation on 1 November 2012.

Through this act a Commissioner for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services was appointed.

The FESA Board was abolished as well as the SES Volunteer Consultative Council. See section 8 for the replacement of the SES VCC.

The District Managers were now termed Natural Hazard District Officers and the SES no longer had any staff exclusive to that role.

The State Emergency Service functions now became part of that new department.

## **Today**

Today, after more than 57 years, the State Emergency Service Volunteers are the most versatile and widely used rescue and public safety organisation in Western Australia – made up of males and females from all walks of life.

Today, the State Emergency Service is part of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, with:

- 63 State Emergency Service units operating across the state
- 4 SES Support Units (Canine, Mounted, CSU and Sword)
- 12 Fire and Emergency Service Units performing the State Emergency Service role along with their Fire role.
- more than 2000 Volunteers aged from 16 to over 80
- district Officers (termed Natural Hazard DOs) based in the DFES regional offices

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (SES Volunteers as the first responders) has the primary or Hazard Management roles for:

- Floods
- Tsunami
- Earthquake
- Storm, and
- Cyclone

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (SES Volunteers as the first responders also has a combat role for:

- Road Accident Rescue
- Vertical rescue and
- Land search

State Emergency Service Volunteers are easily recognised by their orange overalls with the letters “State Emergency Service” emblazoned on the back.

Over the years a range of vehicles have been utilised which have included, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), all-terrain units (ATUs), Toyota personnel carriers, trucks, buses and purpose built trailers.

The State Emergency Service also maintains a number of flood rescue boats which are strategically located across the state. These rescue boats have a secondary role for resupply of communities during emergency situations.

Another key role of the State Emergency Service is to raise community awareness and preparedness relating to natural disasters. A prepared community is better able to respond to and recover from a disaster. State Emergency Service Volunteers educate people to be as self-reliant as possible during emergency events caused by any of the above hazards.

Over the Service’s half century of existence, the Volunteers have been a part of some of the state’s most significant natural and human disasters. During this time there have been very many notable floods, cyclones, earthquakes and storms affecting many areas and communities.



## 6. STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS

Throughout the life of the State Emergency Service and its' predecessors, there have been many State Emergency Service Units representing the local communities.

In addition to these Units, there are also Fire and Emergency Service Units who have a composite role serving the community that includes the State Emergency Service. These composite Units exist through communities approaching FESA for assistance as they were struggling to maintain a number of emergency service roles within their area. By merging at least two roles together, administrative time and resourcing for the community were effectively reduced.

This document also includes a brief history of many State Emergency Service units.

### STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS EXISTING IN 2015:

**Albany State Emergency Service**

Lot 4 Sanford Rd  
ALBANY

**Augusta/Margaret River State Emergency Service**

Le Souef St  
MARGARET RIVER

**Bassendean State Emergency Service**

Scadden St  
BASSENDEAN

**Belmont State Emergency Service**

12 Hehir St  
Belmont

**Bridgetown State Emergency Service**

150 Hampton St  
BRIDGETOWN

**Bunbury State Emergency Service**

Cnr Nuytsia & Ecclestone Sts  
BUNBURY

**Canning-South Perth State Emergency Service**

Fleming Ave  
WILLETTON

**Coastal Districts State Emergency Service**

Horsemans Ground EneabbaDve  
ENEABBA WA 6518

**Collie State Emergency Service**

27 Wallsend St  
COLLIE

**Derby State Emergency Service**

Derby Airport  
DERBY

**Armadale State Emergency Service**

53 Owen Road  
KELMSCOTT

**Australind State Emergency Service**

AUSTRALIND

**Bayswater State Emergency Service**

27 Clavering Road  
BAYSWATER

**Boddington State Emergency Service**

45 Bannister Rd  
BODDINGTON

**Broome State Emergency Service**

Orr St  
BROOME

**Busselton State Emergency Service**

BUSSELTON

**Carnarvon State Emergency Service**

11 Camel Lane  
CARNARVON

**Cockburn State Emergency Service**

13 Kent St  
SPEARWOOD

**Denmark State Emergency Service**

Zimmerman St  
DENMARK

**Donnybrook State Emergency Service**

1 Bentley St  
DONNYBROOK

**Esperance State Emergency Service**

Cnr. Phillis & Norseman Rds  
ESPERANCE

**Geraldton-Greenough State Emergency Service**

Cnr Edwards & Davies Rd  
GERALDTON

**Gosnells State Emergency Service**

Canning Park Ave  
MADDINGTON

**Harvey State Emergency Service**

HARVEY

**Kalbarri State Emergency Service**

Magee Crescent  
KALBARRI

**Karratha State Emergency Service**

Balmoral Rd  
KARRATHA

**Kulin State Emergency Service**

312 Johnston St  
KULIN

**Mandurah State Emergency Service**

93 Park Rd  
MANDURAH

**Meekatharra State Emergency Service**

Lot 25 Hill St  
MEEKATHARRA

**Merredin State Emergency Service**

7 Benson Rd  
MERREDIN

**Morawa State Emergency Service**

Solomon Tce  
MOROWA

**Mundaring State Emergency Service**

Lot 41 Burra St  
MUNDARING

**Nannup State Emergency Service**

319 Sexton Way  
NANNUP

**Newman State Emergency Service**

Lot 300 Kurra St  
NEWMAN

**Northam State Emergency Service**

Jubilee Oval  
NORTHAM

**Exmouth State Emergency Service**

Payne St  
EXMOUTH

**Gnowangerup State Emergency Service**

Bell St  
GNOWANGERUP

**Goomalling State Emergency Service**

GOOMALLING

**Kalamunda State Emergency Service**

42 Raymond Rd  
KALAMUNDA

**Kalgoorlie - Boulder State Emergency Service**

Hamilton St  
BOULDER

**Koorda State Emergency Service**

Cnr Smith & Ningham St  
KOORDA

**Kununurra State Emergency Service**

12 Agate Lane  
KUNUNURRA

**Manjimup State Emergency Service**

Cnr Bath & Brookman Sts  
MANJIMUP

**Melville State Emergency Service**

Bramanti Rd  
Murdoch

**Moora State Emergency Service**

Clinch St  
MOORA

**Mount Barker State Emergency Service**

Ormond Rd  
MOUNT BARKER

**Murray State Emergency Service**

71 Forrest St  
MURRAY

**Narrogin State Emergency Service**

Off Gordon St  
NARROGIN

**Norseman State Emergency Service**

Cnr Allsop & Princep St  
NORSEMAN

**Northshore State Emergency Service**

7 Lynton St  
MT HAWTHORN

**Pingelly State Emergency Service**

Paragon St  
PINGELLY

**Ravensthorpe State Emergency Service**

Morgans St  
RAVENSTHORPE

**Serpentine-Jarrahdale State Emergency Service**

6 Paterson St  
MUNDIJONG

**State Emergency Service  
Communications Support Unit**

91 Leake St  
BELMONT

**State Emergency Service Regional Ops Support**

91 Leake St  
BELMONT

**Stirling State Emergency Service**

33 Carcoola St  
NORTHLANDS

**Tom Price State Emergency Service**

492 Coolibah St  
TOM PRICE

**Useless Loop State Emergency Service**

10 Kangaroo Court  
USELESS LOOP

**Wanneroo-Joondalup State Emergency Service**

Lot 21 Winton St  
JOONDALUP

**Wickham-Roebourne State Emergency Service**

WICKHAM

**Port Hedland State Emergency Service**

SOUTH HEDLAND

**Rockingham-Kwinana State Emergency Service**

Crocker St  
ROCKINGHAM

**State Emergency Service Canine Section**

91 Leake St  
BELMONT

**State Emergency Service  
Mounted Section**

296 Keane Rd  
FORRESTDAL

**Shark Bay State Emergency Service**

6 Hartog Crescent  
DENHAM

**Swan State Emergency Service**

Bishop Rd  
MIDLAND

**Toodyay State Emergency Service****Walpole State Emergency Service**

Latham Avenue  
WALPOLE

**Waroona State Emergency Service**

WAROONA

**Support SES Units**

The Canine, Mounted, CSU and SWORD units are based at the State Wide Operational Response Division (SWORD) facility in Forrestfield.

**Previous Civil Defence/State Emergency Service Units;**

Swan Brewery; WestRail; Subiaco; Perth and Nedlands

**Fire and Emergency Service Units with a State Emergency Service Role include;**

Eucla, Trayning, Goomalling, Coral Bay, Bruce Rock, Bremer Bay, Mt Barker, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Onslow and Wyndham.

## **7. SES VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION**

During the attempts to form a consultative committee for the State Emergency Service Volunteers it was decided to form an Association with an advocacy role that would represent the State Emergency Service Volunteers on issues that were not being resolved by the State Emergency Service.

As the formation of the Consultative Committee had stalled WA Volunteer Emergency Service Association (WAVES) was formed in 1990.

Presidents of the Association have included – John Capes (inaugural President) followed by Clive Abel, Phil Petersen, David Price and Gordon Hall.

### **1996**

A meeting of the members of WAVES was conducted with the express purpose of revitalising the Association for the State Emergency Service Volunteers.

At this meeting a number of objectives were decided including;

- Formation of a new constitution,
- A new name to easily reflect the role of this group
- A marketing plan
- A new logo

Later that year a new constitution was approved by the membership.

The new name “State Emergency Service Volunteers Association (SESVA)” was adopted.

A marketing plan was formulated and put into action.

A new logo designed by John Capes and Gordon Hall was adopted by the committee.

### **SESVA PRESIDENTS**

John Capes OAM	1989
Clive Abell	1995
Phillip Petersen ESM	1999
David Price	2009
Gordon Hall	2013

### **SESVA LAPEL BADGE**

In 2014 the SESVA committee decided to have a lapel badge for SES Volunteers

The lapel badge was based on the SES flag that the SESVA had designed a few years earlier.

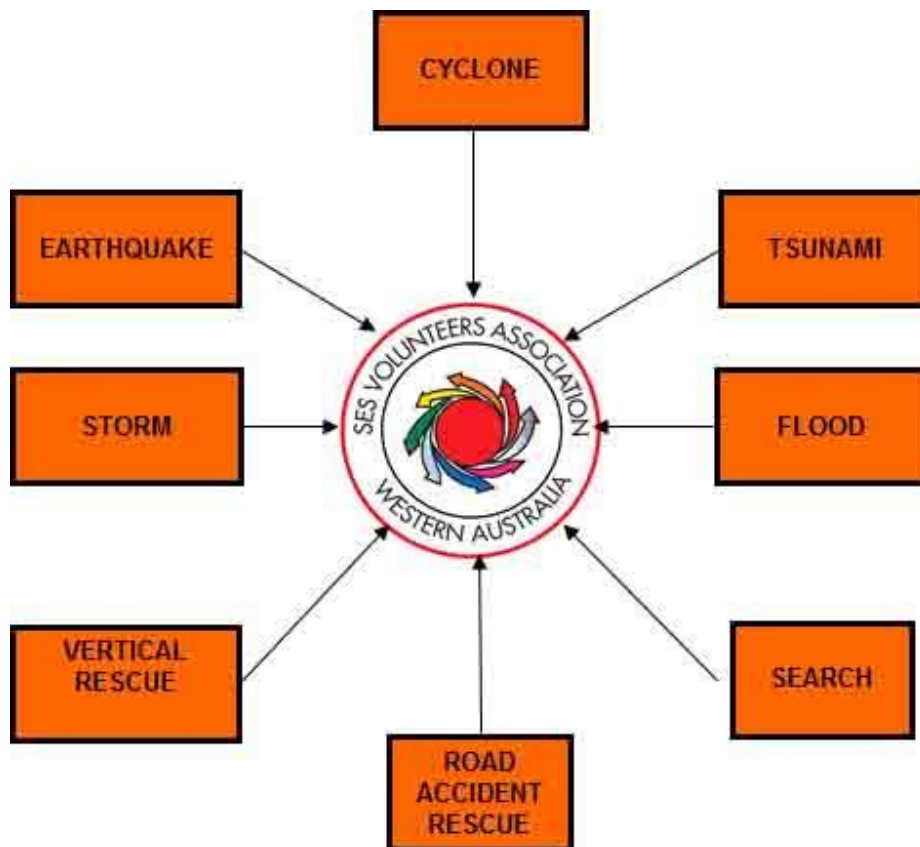


## SESVA Logo

The State Emergency Service Volunteers Association logo was designed in 1996 by John Capes and Gordon Hall as part of rebadging and updating the image of WAVES.

The logo design depicts the Volunteers and the roles undertaken:

- The eight arrows represent five lead combat and three combat roles that State Emergency Service volunteers are involved in,
- The outer ring is orange, representing the internationally recognised State Emergency Service (Civil Defence) colour,
- The centre circle has a rotating look to represent cyclones, a large component of volunteer work in Western Australia,
- The red in the centre of the logo represents the life blood of the Volunteer spirit and culture,
- The name of the association became an integral part of the logo saying what and who the organisation represents.





### **THE NATIONAL SESVA**

Members of the SESVAs in NSW and WA met during AFAC in Perth in 2012.

The reason for meeting was to discuss forming a National Association. This national Association would consider matters of mutual interest, in particular strategic matters affecting all or a number of states or territories. Some of the matters of common interest were common training, across border acceptance of qualifications during deployment, Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum, and a Volunteer Respect Act.

The NSESVA came formally into being in 2015 and meets quarterly somewhere in the nation.

The NSESVA is a Company, with a Board of Directors made up of one member from each state or territory, plus a Chair.

Assisting the Board is a Council which also has a member from each state.

The Chair is Charlie Moir *ESM* (NSW), Deputy Chair is Gordon Hall (WA), and the Company Secretary is Doreen McEnroe (ACT).

The NSESVA is affiliated with AFAC

## **8. VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATION**

### **1985**

The WA State Emergency Service Volunteer's Advisory Committee (VAC) was first mentioned as a consultative committee in a ministerial statement dated 15 August 1985 under "State Emergency Service Volunteers"

The statement advised "*that the role of volunteers will be enhanced by the establishment of a State Emergency Service Volunteer Advisory Committee, which will report to a Senior Officer in the State Emergency Service on Policy Development and Implementation*".

Support from the volunteers for a committee representing the volunteers was very strong, and a letter to the Minister from these Volunteers was sent requesting that the VAC be formed.

After a year had lapsed with no action, a group of volunteers met with the Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable Gordon Hill, MLA, to discuss their concerns. The Minister took an interest in the VAC and established a steering committee with aims including gauging volunteer support for the VAC; deciding the structure of the committee; and seeking funds for country delegates to travel to Perth for meetings.

The steering committee met with the Minister and the State Emergency Service executive in March 1987 to discuss the timing and venue for the first VAC meeting; structure of the committee; and funding for country delegates.

Terms of Reference for the Volunteers' Advisory Committee were drawn up;

#### **AIM**

To promote, foster and protect the interests, professionalism and development of the volunteer members of the WA State Emergency Service.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To advise and consult with the Hon Minister for Police and Emergency Services in regard to matters that may affect the volunteer members of the WA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE and to consider matters as referred from the Hon Minister to the Advisory Committee.
- To liaise and co-operate with authorities, agencies, departments, other advisory committees and organisations involved in the provision of emergency services and counter disaster planning.
- To research, implement and/or evaluate special projects, policies, resources, functions, training or other issues of importance to local State Emergency Service units throughout WA.

#### **POWERS**

- The committee is an advisory body and therefore shall only act on behalf of any particular local State Emergency Service unit, the Hon Minister or any other individual or organisation when specifically authorized.
- The Committee may exercise any function, right or privilege, provided that all such action is conducive to the pursuance of the Aim and attainment of the Objectives.
- The Committee shall act in a consultative role for the expression of opinions on any matter relating to the provision of emergency services as they affect State Emergency Service volunteers.

## **STRUCTURE**

- The Committee shall consist of one delegate from each State Emergency Service region in WA, elected by the Local Co-Ordinators in that region, provided that the delegate is a volunteer member of the State Emergency Service.
- The Committee shall elect an Executive comprising a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Treasurer/Secretary for an annual period.
- The Committee shall convene a meeting at least twice per annum and at other times as requested by the Hon Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

## **VOLUNTEERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1987**

In May 1987 the Volunteers' Advisory Committee was established and the inaugural meeting held.

Attendees of the inaugural meeting included the Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable Gordon Hill, MLA, his executive secretary, and the Director and Deputy Director of the WA State Emergency Service, Ron Sparks and Les Butler.

The inaugural meeting elected John Capes, Wanneroo State Emergency Service Unit, as the Chairperson of the Volunteers' Advisory Committee, Paul Canet as Deputy Chairperson and Fred Ordynski as Secretary/Treasurer.

There was one delegate representing each of the twelve regions of the State Emergency Service.

The Volunteers' Advisory Committee could now provide the 2400 State Emergency Service volunteers a direct link to the Minister and the executives of the WA State Emergency Service.

## **1987 VOLUNTEERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

John Capes	Chairperson
Les Panting	Great Southern region
Steve Jeffery	Metro South region
Bill Moore	Goldfields region
Paul Shakes	Metro North region
Arnold Carter	Pilbara region
Richard Grigson	Midlands region
Peter Keillor	Southwest region
Paul Canet	Geraldton/Midwest region
Bill Mulroney	Central Southwest region
Arthur Bush-Jones	Kimberley region
Fred Ordynski	State Headquarters
Kevin Burkett	Gascoyne Murchison region



## THE FIRST VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Back Row: Steve Jeffery, Bill Mulroney, Paul Shakes, Arnold Carter,  
Kevin Burkett

Middle Row: Bill Moore, Les Panting, Fred Ordynski, Arthur Bush-Jones,  
Richard Grigson

Front Row: Paul Canet, Les Butler, Ron Sparks, John Capes

Absent: Peter Keillor

### **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEER CONSULTATIVE/ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

1987	John Capes was the in-augural Chair of the committee in 1987.
1990	Richard Grigson
1992	Bill Mulroney
1999	Rod Willox
2001	Vivienne Lambert
2004	Sandra Gregorini
2014	Gordon Hall

### **SES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (1999)**

When the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) was established on 1 January 1999, the Volunteer Consultative Committee ceased to exist and under the *FESA Act (1998)* the State Emergency Service Consultative Committee was formed.

Each FESA service (Bushfire, State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue and the Volunteer Marine Rescue Service) established an individual consultative committees based on the State Emergency Service model.

With the advent of FESA, an independent (not from the consultative committee) State Emergency Service Consultative Committee Chairperson was appointed by the Minister of Emergency Services. The Chairperson was also appointed to the FESA Board as a member.

### **SES Volunteers Advisory Committee (2012)**

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act (1998)* amended in 2012 the FESA Board and Volunteer Consultative Committees were abolished.

The origin of the current Volunteer Advisory Committees was identified in the Keelty Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire 2011 Review, which recommended:

*“FESA’s volunteers and industry groups be actively engaged through the establishment of an emergency services advisory group.”*

In September 2011, the WA Government Cabinet approved the roles of Volunteers who are to be recognised through appropriate advisory structures.

In November 2012, the Fire and Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2012, commenced, where FESA as an Authority was restructured to become a Department (DFES) led by a Commissioner.

This Act enabled the introduction of the current system of advisory committees.

*Section 25 (2)* of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1987* states that the Minister must establish an advisory committee for each of the following services (as per *s. 25 (3)* of the Act):

- Bush Fire Brigades (under *Bush Fires Act 1954*);
- Volunteer Brigades (under the *Fire Brigades Act 1942*);
- SES Units;
- VMRS Groups; and
- FES Units.

Each Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), is comprised of Volunteers, DFES staff and a Police Officer. Each service based Volunteers Association forwards the details of suitable Volunteers, to be considered by the Minister, for appointment. The Minister appoints the Volunteers he thinks fit to appoint, but the majority of the members are to be appointed from people nominated by the relevant prescribed association (*as per s. 25 (4)* of the Act).

Each VAC member is bound by a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement. This enables them to provide high level and strategic advice to DFES on a range of matters that cannot be disclosed until any embargo or confidentiality is released.

The VACs are responsible for advising the FES Commissioner upon, and making recommendations in relation to, anything that may impact on the represented service, operationally, administratively or otherwise.

The SES VAC conducts quarterly meetings with urgent matters being considered as out of session business.

The SES Volunteers Association was appointed, under the new act, by the Minister as the Prescribed Association representing the SES Units in WA.

The SES VAC committee consists of a number of Volunteers, DFES staff and a police officer.

All members-elect are required to submit CVs to be considered by the WA Government Cabinet for approval to then be appointed by the Minister.

### **2013 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Gordon Hall	SESVA President
Dave Beard	SESVA Vice President
Phillip Petersen <i>ESM</i>	SES Gosnells
Mac Holt	SES Kalbarri
Mathew Thomas	SES Cockburn
Trevor Paton <i>ESM</i>	SES Karratha
Shelley Staff	SES Swan
Lloyd Bailey <i>AFSM</i>	DFES Deputy Commissioner
Brad Stringer	DFES Assistant Commissioner
Allen Gale	DFES District Officer
Nikki Young	WA Police
Helen Croke	VAC Support Officer

### **Deputies**

Bernie McNamara <i>ESM</i>	SES Melville
David Fyfe	SES Melville
Keith Squibb	SES Karratha

The first meeting was held on 3 October 2014 for the purpose of an induction of the Volunteers and election of the Chair and Deputy Chair.

The first full meeting was held on 6 December 2014.



**THE FIRST SES VAC TEAM – 6 DECEMBER 2014**

- Back Row      Allen Gale, Brad Stringer, Helen Croke, Shelley Staff, Matthew Thomas,  
Lloyd Bailey
- Front Row     Mac Holt, Phillip Petersen (Deputy), Gordon Hall (Chair), Trevor Paton,  
Bernie McNamara
- Absent         Dave Beard

## **9. FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY**

### **BOARD**

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority legislation passed through the Western Australian parliament late in 1998.

On 1 January 1999, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of Western Australia was formally established as a statutory government authority under the *FESA Act (1998)*, replacing the Fire Brigades Board and the Bush Fires Board. The State Emergency Service had no legislation, operating under the Cabinet Minute of 1985.

The establishment of FESA brought together under one Board and one Chief Executive officer:

- Fire and Rescue Service
- Bush Fire Service
- State Emergency Service

In subsequent years the Volunteer Marine Rescue Service and Emergency Service Cadets were also incorporated under FESA.

Under the *FESA Act (1998)*, the Board was a representative Board with the Minister responsible for Emergency Services appointing a Volunteer from the State Emergency Service as a full member of the FESA Board.

The Fire and Emergency Services Board of Management was formed and conducted their first meeting on 4 January 1999. Barry McKinnon was the first Chairperson.

The newly formed State Emergency Service Consultative Committee Chair was appointed by the Minister responsible for Emergency Services and as an independent person, not an SES Volunteer. The Chair was also appointed by the Minister as a FESA Board member.

### **BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED FROM THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS**

The first Volunteer from the State Emergency Service to receive a ministerial appointment to the FESA Board was Gordon Hall, Swan State Emergency Service Unit and Vice President of the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association.

Gordon Hall resigned later in 1999 to take up an appointment as a State Emergency Service Regional Director with FESA.

John Capes OAM, from the Wanneroo State Emergency Service Unit and committee member of the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association, was appointed by the Minister to replace Gordon as the Board member.

John served as a Board member from late 1999 until the abolition of the FESA Board in late 2012.

### **FESA BOARD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Rod Willox	1999
Vivien Lambert	2001
Sandra Gregorini	2004

### **FESA BOARD SES REPRESENTATIVES**

GORDON HALL	1999 – JULY 1999
John Capes	1999 – 2012 (FESA Board abolished in 2012)

**FESA BOARD CHAIRPERSONS**

Appointed

Barry McKinnon	1999
Mike Barnett	2003
Alan Skinner	2009

**FESA CEOs**

Bob Mitchell PSM	1999
Jo Harrison-Ward	2005
Wayne Gregson APM	2011

**DFES COMMISSIONERS**

Wayne Gregson APM	2012
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## **STAFF**

Listed below are a number of staff who were appointed to and played a significant role in the State Emergency Service or associated organisations.

<b>CIRCA</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>Main SES ROLE</b>	<b>CIRCA</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>Main SES ROLE</b>
1957	Lonnie WS	Director Civil Defence	1996	Lake Rod	Manager Finance
1970s	Hill Dean	Director	1996	Major Tonya	Support Officer
1970s	Beer Allan		1996	Murray Sandra	Logistics Officer
1970s	Hutchinson Ken		1996	Piper Mike	Training Officer
1981	Dyson Russell	Director WASES	1996	Pudney Jodie	Public Relations Officer
1981	Yates Julian	Dep Director WASES	1996	Reynolds Terry	Volunteer Support Officer
1982	Burnett Jim	Director Operations	1996	Robins Chris	Communications Officer
1982	Glendenning Duncan	Regional Coordinator	1996	Ryan Mark	Ops and Planning Officer
1985	Sulc George	Manager Operations	1996	Waddington Kevin	Supply Officer
1985	Wilmot Nial	Regional Director	1999	Brown Colin	District Manager
1987	Butler Les	Dep Director WASES	1999	Cameron Peter	District Manager
1987	Holmes Ross	District Manager	1999	Hall Gordon	Regional Director
1987	Ives Rod	Training Manager	1999	Gifford Gary	Regional Director
1987	Sparks Ron	Director WASES	1999	Harraway Keith	Regional Director
1988	Alan Beer	A/Director Corp Svces	1999	Johnson Brian	District Manager
1990	Eayrs Jim	Comms Manager	1999	Jones Barry	Regional Director
1990	Gale Allen	District Manager	1999	Ott Daryl	District Manager
1990	McNamara Bernie	District Manager	1999	Rooney Susan	Executive Director SES
1990	Te Robert	District Manager	1999	Tiddums	District Manager
1994	Carr Paul	District Manager	2000	DeKleer Adrian	District Manager
1994	Langridge John	Training Manager	2000	Summerton Steve	District Manager
1994	Manson Angela	Clerk	2002	Cahil Jim	District Manager
1994	Umney John	Regional Coordinator	2003	Brown Naomi	Executive Director SES
1994	Watkins Les	Manager	2004	Marshall Phillip	Executive Director SES
1995	Hayes Russell	District Manager	2005	Wadley Mike	Manager
1995	Igglesden Paul	District Manager	2005	Weeks Jo	District Manager
1995	Paterson Rod	Training Officer	2006	Hall Glenn	District Manager
1996	Barrett Betty	Support Officer	2007	Pipe Grant	Regional Director/Supt.
1996	Bell Irene	District Manager	2008	Blackshaw Will	District Manager
1996	Brooks Margaret	Ops/Planning Officer			
1996	Davies Mike	Storeman			
1996	Elms Lynda	District Manager			
1996	Perry Gail	Clerk			
1996	Hayes Chris	IT Manager			

## **10. EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Prior to the Emergency Services Levy the State Emergency Service Volunteers and Units received equipment and training considered by the government to be essential for their operational requirements, with local governments providing accommodation for equipment and vehicle/s. The standard of accommodation varied depending upon the local government and what it felt was required for that community.

State Emergency Service Volunteers would conduct fundraising throughout the year to purchase and maintain other equipment that was required to deliver a reasonable level of preparedness and safety within their community.

By the 2007/08 financial year a very clear picture of the cost for most State Emergency Service units had evolved.

### **2002**

In 2002, the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) legislation passed through parliament.

Within FESA, the grant expenditure was broken into three areas: Fire and Rescue, Bushfire and the State Emergency Service.

The process for ESL within the State Emergency Service was multi-levelled to ensure as much input, from as many people as necessary, was obtained.

The State Emergency Service of each region commenced assessments of all recurrent costs to ascertain the approximate annual costs required to operate each State Emergency Service unit. This data, along with a membership census in March/April of 2003, was then used to determine an indicative cost to run each unit for the year.

Indicative costs to run the units at this time were:

- Metropolitan Units: \$800 – \$900 per member per year
- Pilbara/Kimberley Units: \$1200 – \$1400 per member per year
- Other Regional Units: \$1000 – \$1200 per member per year.

In the first funding period, \$2M was allocated for the recurrent costs and \$1M for capital, with this figure basically remaining the same for the following years.

A capital grants committee for the State Emergency Service was formed, consisting of:

- Local Government representative
- SES volunteer representative (Rockingham-Kwinana SES Unit Manager, Mike Wadley)
- SES staff representative (Gordon Hall)
- FESA chairperson
- SES Executive Director

The grants committee was altered for the 2006/07 financial year with the SES Executive Director and the SES staff representative being deleted.



## **THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE PROCESS**

At the inception of the ESL process it was expected that there would be a transitional period of four to five years. It would take this long for local governments and State Emergency Service units to determine the actual costs and to show any costs hidden elsewhere within the unit or local government. Much of this was a result of the survival mode of many units who relied on the goodwill of organisations and people within local government to assist them.

For the first four funding years, the ESL letter and manual went to local government late in November and submissions were to be in by the end of January. For the 2007/08 financial year the manual went out in November and submissions required by 20 December.

Some State Emergency Service unit applications for recurrent funding was artificially low as some local governments and units did not understand what was paid for by local government, especially with certain costs hidden in other areas, or what the unit was required to fund.

Other units took an altruistic view in the early days to allow the new funding process to shake out and settle down.

SES staff believed in consultation with local government and SES volunteers. Under the guidance of the Executive Director of the State Emergency Service, Susan Rooney, a process was developed by the SES that involved all stakeholders. This process was successfully used for the 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 financial years.

- SES unit submitted ESL application to local government
- Local government forwarded a copy of the application to the SES District Manager responsible for that area.
- The District Manager checked the SES component of the application. Where it did not fit within expected costs, or had anomalies, they would then work through the matter with local government and the volunteers.
- The District Managers met with their Regional Director looking for anomalies or other matters that needed to be addressed. A priority list for the capital applications in the region was determined at this meeting.
- The Regional Directors met and went through each unit's recurrent budget with a representative from finance to ensure the applications fitted within the \$2M allocated for SES recurrent budgets. At this time, the capital priorities at a state level were determined, with up to \$1M allocated for capital expenditure.
- The Capital Grants Committee then met and endorsed, or otherwise, the list of capital items recommended for approval.

No appeals regarding ESL funding for SES were received for 2003/04, 2004/05 or 2005/06 financial years while this process was undertaken.

However it is understood that once the SES process ceased and a whole of FESA approach taken, there has been a number of appeals and a higher level of dissatisfaction amongst the Volunteer units.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

As expected, it took many units four to five years to establish the appropriate budget levels for effective management of their SES unit. This included identifying the hidden costs and costs that local government and others had been paying in the past.

Over the years, there has been a reduction in the dollar value of grants to SES units.

As a result, a number of SES units are now struggling with local government and the grants process to ensure they have sufficient funds to maintain the service expected of them by their communities.

**11. AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE**



## ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL

The Order of Australia Medal (OAM) was instituted by Her Majesty The Queen on 14 February 1975, establishing:

*“an Australian society of honour for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or for meritorious service”*

The OAM comprises a General Division and a Military Division.

Australian citizens, including members of the Defence Force, are eligible to receive awards in the General Division.

Awards of the Medal of the Order are made for service worthy of particular recognition

State Emergency Service (WA) personal awarded the Medal of the Order (OAM):



**Name:** Norman Stanley Herold  
**Year:** 1994  
**Citation:** For service to the WA State Emergency Service and to the community.



**Name:** Gregory Bruce Withnell  
**Year:** 1996  
**Citation:** For service to the community particularly through the State Emergency Service road accident rescue service.



**Name:** Neil Davidson  
**Year:** 1997  
**Citation:** For service to Fire and Emergency Services in the Mandurah area, and the development of training programmes in high schools.



**Name:** Michael Howard Wadley  
**Year:** 1999  
**Citation:** For Service to the community, particularly through the Rockingham-Kwinana Unit of the State Emergency Service.



**Name:** John Charles Capes  
**Year:** 2000  
**Citation:** For service to the community through the State Emergency Service and as an advocate for volunteer representation in emergency service management.



**Name:** Paul Arthur Shakes  
**Year:** 2000  
**Citation:** For service to the Western Australian State Emergency Service, particularly in the areas of training, occupational health and welfare.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL**

There is a long tradition in Commonwealth nations of recognising employees for outstanding public service.

Members of the Australian Public Service were first rewarded through the Imperial Honours system with awards similar to their British counterparts; however this ceased in 1975 when the Order of Australia was established.

The Australian Public Service Medal (PSM) was established on 18 October 1989 and is awarded:

*“for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or for meritorious service”*



In the State Emergency Service (WA), one person has been awarded the Public Service Medal:



**Name:** James Warren Eayrs

**Year:** 10 June 1996

**Citation:** For outstanding public service through his contribution to the WA State Emergency Services.

## EMERGENCY SERVICE MEDAL

The Emergency Services Medal (ESM) was introduced into the Australian system of honours in 1999 and may be awarded to a person:

*“who has given distinguished service as a member of an emergency service”*

The medal may be awarded regardless of whether the person is eligible for any other award through their service; however this medal can only be awarded to an individual once.



State Emergency Service (WA) personal awarded the State Emergency Service (WA) personal awarded the Emergency Service Medal:



**Name:** Robin James

**Year:** 2000



**Name:** James Warren Eayrs

**Year:** 2000



**Name:** John Francis Coates

**Year:** 2001



**Name:** Peter Stanley Angel

**Year:** 2002



**Name:** Darren Bruce Entwhistle

**Year:** 2003



**Name:** Christopher Widmer

**Year:** 2003



**Name:** William Vincent Mulroney

**Year:** 2003



**Name:** Herman Hoffman  
**Year:** 2003



**Name:** Colin Nicholson  
**Year:** 2004



**Name:** Nicholas James Elrick  
**Year:** 2004



**Name:** Wayne Henry English  
**Year:** 2005



**Name:** Christopher Michael Stickland  
**Year:** 2005



**Name:** Phillip Lawrence Petersen  
**Year:** 2005



**Name:** Kenneth Rex Pember  
**Year:** 2006



**Name:** Joyce Mary White  
**Year:** 2007



**Name:** Paul John Dwyer  
**Year:** 2008



**Name:** Rodney Alan Paterson

**Year:** 2008



**Name:** Bernie McNamara

**Year:** 2009



**Name:** Graham Fixter

**Year:** 2011



**Name:** Connie Eikelboom

**Year:** 2011



**Name:** Joe Taylor

**Year:** 2013



**Name:** Trevor Lindsay Patton

**Year:** 2014

## COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Australian Bravery Decorations are part of the Australian Honours system and date from the establishment of that system in February 1975. The Group Bravery Citation was added in 1990.

These decorations recognise:

*“acts of bravery by members of the community”*

A Commendation for Brave Conduct is awarded for acts of bravery which are considered worthy of recognition, and has been awarded to one SES volunteer:



**Name:** Gordon Martin Edwards  
**Year:** 1996  
**Citation:** For the attempted rescue of a youth from the sea at Moses Rock.

### **GORDON MARTIN EDWARDS**

Gordon was a long standing member of the Busselton State Emergency Service Unit and an active member of the Cliff Rescue team.

Late in 1995 Gordon was involved in a rescue of a surfer whose return was overdue. The surfer had been found floundering near the rocks and in the vicinity of Moses Rock near Cowaramup.

The State Emergency Service had been activated as the surfer was near the rocks and the SES Cliff Rescue team would be able to rescue him from the cliff area.

On the teams arrival the situation was becoming very urgent and the light was fading. The team decided to send a swimmer in tethered to a rope.

Gordon was tied to static kern mantle rescue rope and he then commenced swimming to the surfer.

The rope sank putting extra stress on Gordon who continued swimming to the surfer.

Eventually the rope became caught on rocks resulting in Gordon struggling to stay above the water. The rope eventually snagged and Gordon was suspended under water. He managed to break free and was washed to shore.

On reaching the shore Gordon was given immediate medical aid, and because of his condition admitted to hospital. Gordon recovered and was later discharged from hospital.

The rest of the team were able to successfully complete the rescue of the surfer.



## **NATIONAL MEDAL: FOR SERVICE**

With the introduction of the Australian system of honours and awards on 14 February 1975, the National Medal replaced a number of long service and good conduct awards issued under the imperial system.

The Commonwealth National Medal is awarded to a person:

*“in those eligible organisations which fulfil the ‘primary function’ of their service organisation, who has completed a period of 15 years diligent service or periods of diligent service that, in the aggregate, amount to 15 years”*

In 1987 the regulations were changed to include “an Australian Emergency Service” in the list of eligible services whose members could be awarded the National Medal. It was from this date that members of the State Emergency Service were eligible for this award.

A Clasp to the National Medal may be awarded after the completion of a further period of 10 years' qualifying service or of periods of service that, in the aggregate, are not less than 10 years.

Further 10 year periods of qualifying service attract further clasps.



## **PETER KEILLOR AWARD**

The Peter Keillor Award (recognised as the SES Volunteer of the Year) recognises volunteer excellence, achievement and enthusiasm and was first awarded in 1995.

Peter Keillor was a volunteer with the Murray State Emergency Service Unit for many years. He overcame adversity, through sheer courage, willpower, dedication and respect for his fellow men. Such efforts were despite being confined to his wheelchair following an injury received during active service in Vietnam.



Past Peter Keillor Award recipients are:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1995:</b> Michael Hutchings - Geraldton      | <b>1996:</b> Graeme James Down – Pilbara/Kimberley |
| <b>1997:</b> Christopher Stickland - Mandurah   | <b>1998:</b> Gary William Logan - Albany           |
| <b>1999:</b> Ronald Geoffrey Panting - Albany   | <b>2000:</b> Christopher Widmer - Bunbury          |
| <b>2001:</b> Pam Yates - Augusta/Margaret River | <b>2002:</b> Monika Nicholson - Collie             |
| <b>2003:</b> Bernie O'Brien – Metro HQ          | <b>2004:</b> Siegmund Belcsowski – Mandurah        |
| <b>2005:</b> Phillip Petersen - Gosnells        | <b>2006:</b> Gordon Williams – Midwest RHQ         |
| <b>2007:</b> Ray Mahoney - Bayswater            | <b>2008:</b> Graham Fixter - Gosnells              |
| <b>2009:</b> Sergio Bottacin - Northam          | <b>2010:</b> Trevor Patton - Karratha              |
| <b>2011:</b> Ean Gruszecki - Northshore         | <b>2012:</b> Keith Drayton - Cockburn              |
| <b>2013:</b> Martin Hale – Bayswater            | <b>2014:</b> Steve Cable - Kalbarri                |
| <b>2015:</b> Jane Campbell - Bayswater          | <b>2016:</b> Keith Squibb – Pt Hedland             |

### **TEAM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Team Achievement Award recognises in the State Emergency Service volunteer excellence, achievement and enthusiasm.

The first Award was presented in 2002.

Past Team Achievement Awards have been presented to:

**2002:** The State Emergency Service 2000 Road Accident Rescue Team

**2003:** The River Ambulance Team – Bassendean and Belmont State Emergency Service Units

**2004:** Rockingham-Kwinana Tracker Dog team

**2005:** Newman State Emergency Service Unit

**2006:** Eneabba State Emergency Service Unit

**2007:** Karratha State Emergency Service Unit

**2008:** Goldfields Challenge Working Group – Kalgoorlie-Boulder State Emergency Service Unit

**2009:** SES Communications Support Group

**2010:** Mandurah SES Training Section

**2011:** Carnarvon SES

**2012:** Kununurra SES

**2013:** Bayswater SES Bike Team

**2014:** Karratha and Roebourne SES Units

**2015:** Manjimup SES Unit

**2016** SES Bunbury Management Team

## **YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Youth Achievement Award recognises volunteer excellence, achievement and enthusiasm and was first awarded in 1998.

Past Youth Achievement Award recipients are:

**1998:** Scott Green – Tom Price

**1999:** Geoffrey Gorham - Northam

**2000:** Annabel Harvey - Albany

**2001:** Greg Mulroney - Pingelly

**2002:** Michael Wilcox - Nannup

**2003:** Stuart Romeo - Belmont

**2004:** Harold Nicholson - Collie

**2005:** Andrae Lee Moore – Tom Price

**2006:** Ian McMahon - Australind

**2007:** Samuel Dinnison – Rockingham-Kwinana

**2008:** Ash Smith - Bayswater

**2009:** Keaton Widmer - Bunbury

**2010:** Phillip Hale - Melville

**2011:** Andrew Treen - Melville

**2012:** Ben Gardiner - Busselton

**2013:** Melusha Robson - CSU

**2014:** Meggan Millar - Mandurah

**2015:** Kirsten Beidatsch – Mt Barker

**2016** Mary-Therese Shanks - Mandurah

## **JUDGING OF THE AWARDS**

Early each year the parent body (SES/FESA/DFES) calls for nominations for Awards.

In the early days, the SES Volunteer Consultative Committee considered all of the nominees and selected the most suitable for the award from that group.

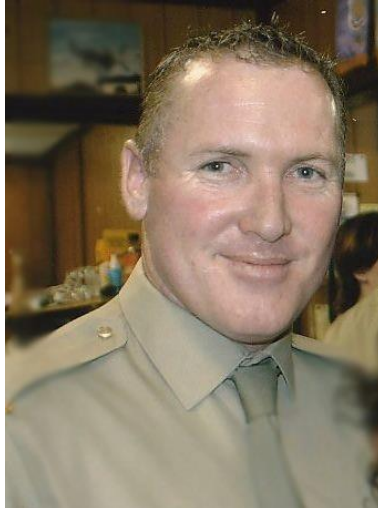
In recent years the Awards Judging Panel is usually chaired by a senior staff member of DFES (FESA in the past) and SESVA Executive Member, John Capes, has organised the Volunteer panel.

There are generally three finalists, who are show cased just before the announcement of the winner at the annual SES Awards Night.

## **12. LIVES LOST DURING ACTIVE SERVICE**

### **JAMES REGAN**

(1967 – 2004)



James (Jim) Regan was the first member of the West Australian State Emergency Service to lose his life while on operational duty.

To date there have been no other lives lost during active service.

Jim, who was thirty-six years of age, had been a member of the State Emergency Service since October 1999. His work as a Volunteer of the State Emergency Service became a passion of his.

During a rescue attempt in the Karijini National Park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2004 the father of two drowned.

A tourist party had been in the Hancock Gorge area of the Karijini National Park when one of the party had become injured.

Jim was part of a Cliff Rescue team of State Emergency Service volunteers dispatched from Newman and Tom Price, who worked with police officers and CALM National Park rangers to rescue the injured tourist.

Late at night on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April the male tourist was hauled to safety.

Soon after this rescue was completed, news came through that a second tourist, this time a young woman, had fallen and was injured at the bottom of Hancock Gorge.

The SES Cliff Rescue team set off that night to rescue the second injured tourist.

At 4am on Friday morning the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, as they were about to attach ropes to the stretcher holding the 25-year-old tourist, they were hit by a two-metre wall of water.

Eyewitness accounts say that Jim was hit by the full force of the flash flood and he was swept away.

Response efforts included the immediate deployment of additional ground based personnel, an expansion of the operation control team, fresh vertical rescue teams from around the state and aerial reconnaissance in the form of helicopter support.

Jim's body was recovered by Police divers from a pool at the base of the gorge late on Saturday afternoon the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April.

**BRIEF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

*By the Hon Michelle Roberts, MLA, Minister for Police and Emergency Services*

**Incident at Karijini National Park**

Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge a very sad event in this State's history.

Last Friday morning at 4am the unthinkable happened. One of our State Emergency Service volunteers was killed. Jim Regan was the first member of the West Australian SES to lose his life while on operational duty.

Jim, who was thirty-six years of age, joined the SES four and half years ago. From all accounts, his work with the SES became a passion.

On April 1 and 2 Jim was part of a team of SES volunteers from Newman and Tom Price who worked with police officers and CALM National Park rangers to rescue two British tourists in the remote Karijini National Park.

Once the injured man from the first incident was hauled to safety at about midnight the news came that a second tourist, this time a young woman, was at the bottom of a gorge after a separate fall.

In the middle of the night the team set off again.

As they were about to attach ropes to the stretcher holding the 25-year-old tourist they were hit by a two-metre wall of water. Eyewitness accounts say that Jim Regan was hit by the full force of the flash flood and he was swept away.

Response efforts included the immediate deployment of additional ground based personnel, an expansion of the operation control team, fresh vertical rescue teams and aerial reconnaissance in the form of helicopter support.

Jim's body was recovered by Police divers from a pool at the base of the gorge late on Saturday afternoon.

On Friday morning, immediately after the incident the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) sent two senior managers to Tom Price and Newman to support Jim's family and SES colleagues and provide whatever assistance was required.

The peer support network also swung into action, with counsellors and chaplains dispatched to Newman and Geraldton, where Jim's parents live.

Today FESA's Board Chairman, Mike Barnett, Acting CEO, Bill Forbes, the President of the SES Volunteer Association, Phill Petersen and a senior FESA volunteer manager will travel to Newman to meet with Jim's family as well as his SES unit colleagues. All of those close to him must be acutely feeling his loss at this time and our thoughts and prayers go out to them.

Mr Speaker, our State has 29,000 FESA volunteers including 2,300 SES volunteers. They provide emergency services to the community of West Australia twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, every week of the year. These selfless individuals also put in hours of training and prevention work. They deserve our highest praise.

I extend the deepest condolences of this House to Jim's family, friends and colleagues. Words cannot express the gratitude that we feel for Jim. He will be remembered as a hero.

## ONE WITNESS ACCOUNT DURING THE RESCUES

2 April 2014

10 years ago today (and all of last night) was a time I will never forget.

We went to Karajini National Park for a rescue of an English Tourist from Junction Pool. When we arrived we discovered a 2nd casualty, completely separate from the 1st incident... We completed the 1st rescue and were preparing for the 2nd lift.... I and a few others had left the gorge as we weren't needed, leaving a ranger, a police officer, the casualty and 4 SES volunteers, Gary, Jimmy, Ian and Michael, to finish the lift.

Shortly after getting to the top and drying off I heard words I will never forget for the rest of my life...

***"Emergency, Emergency, We have had guys washed away, Emergency, Emergency"***.

A flash flood had come down the gorge system and washed the team down the narrow gorge. I didn't know where Gary was and I didn't believe he was ok until I saw him about 3 hours later.

Michael and Gary were anchored above the flood and saw it all unfold. The ranger, Paul kept the casualty, who was strapped in a stretcher, above water and saved her life and Ian broke his wrist.

Unfortunately Jimmy was not so lucky.

Jim's body was recovered the following day by police divers and SES volunteers from Perth.

This is a time in my life that changed my perspective on everything. It is an event that we will NEVER forget. We can't.

All my thoughts to Jimmy's family and my Orange Family from Tom Price and Newman.

### EXCERPTS FROM CORONER'S REPORT (15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2008)

Deputy state coroner Evelyn Vicker said that while there had been absolutely no warning of the flood which caused Mr Regan to be washed away, knocked unconscious and drown, the tourists could have done more to assess their own skills and possibly prevent the tragic circumstances unfolding.

"The death of the deceased well illustrates how a lack of appreciation of the remoteness of the Australian terrain can so quickly result in a death, which could have been avoided," Ms Vicker's report found.

"In this case, it was not the deceased who created the circumstances which resulted in his death but the unpreparedness of tourists in Karijini National Park for the realities of the activities they undertook.

"Accidents will always happen and people injured will seldom be left abandoned for poor-decision making, but the death of the deceased demonstrated how poor-risk assessment on the part of individuals may well result in the death of a person other than themselves."

After Oliver Peace, a 29-year-old travel agent from Yorkshire, had been successfully winched to safety after falling 150ft into a gorge, an emergency call came to a team including Mr Regan to go to the aid of Michelle Suri, 25, who had had also fallen at a spot called Plunge Pool.

\*\*\*

Ms Vicker said that even with the help of "experienced and talented tour guides", falls during trips of this kind were inevitable and it was essential tourists were properly directed.

"An over-estimation of their own capabilities by Mr Peace and Ms Suri, and to some extent by their tour guides, led them to attempt climbs which it should have been obvious needed more qualified assistance," Ms Vicker said.

"While I accept both were on guided tours with the input of experienced and talented tour guides, the reality is, when it comes to the type of terrain involved, it is inevitable there will be falls.

"It is largely a matter of luck as to how badly injured a person may be as a result of a fall in those conditions.

"It is for these reasons it is essential people are adequately warned, directed and instructed as to what should and should not be attempted without skilled input."

\*\*\*

"It is my view there is a very strong argument, for the benefit of the whole community, (for) DEC (to) look at building activity-accredited leaders into their licensing conditions for tour operators over time as the facility to accredit in certain activities progresses," Ms Vicker said.

"This, in conjunction with the power to prohibit certain activities due to the danger, and incidentally consequent damage to the environment, will enable those properly supervised to enjoy specific activities safely and also lessen the impact of activities on a fragile environment."

She ruled Mr Regan's deaths misadventure.



## **13. THE BUNKER**

### **HISTORY OF BUNKER AT LEAKE STREET / EPSON AVENUE, BELMONT**

The State Emergency Service has a long history associated with the World War II Bunker located between Epson Avenue and Leake Street, Belmont.

Some research on the internet and anecdotal information has revealed some of the history about the early purpose of the bunker.

### **SEMI UNDERGROUND BUNKERS**

A number of bunkers were built during World War II through out Australia as part of the war effort.

These were built as gun placements, radar and radio sites, all part of the defence from the threat to Australia initially from the war in Europe and later the more direct threat in the Pacific from the Japanese.

### **6 FIGHTER SECTOR HEADQUARTERS RAAF**

The 6 Fighter Sector Headquarters RAAF, later known as 106 Fighter Control Unit, was setup in the Masonic Hall in Alma Street at Mt. Lawley on 11 April 1942. The Headquarters was connected to American Radar Units using SCR radars, north and east of Perth.

Between January and March 1945 they moved into a new underground bunker in Epson Avenue at Belmont in Perth. This complex was used by the State Emergency Service of Western Australia and today is under the control of Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)

The 6 Fighter Sector Headquarters was later renamed to 106 Fighter Control Unit (106 FCU) on 7 March 1944.

106 Fighter Control Unit was disbanded at Mount Lawley, WA on 21 January 1945.

### **A TYPICAL RAAF FIGHTER SECTOR HEADQUARTERS**

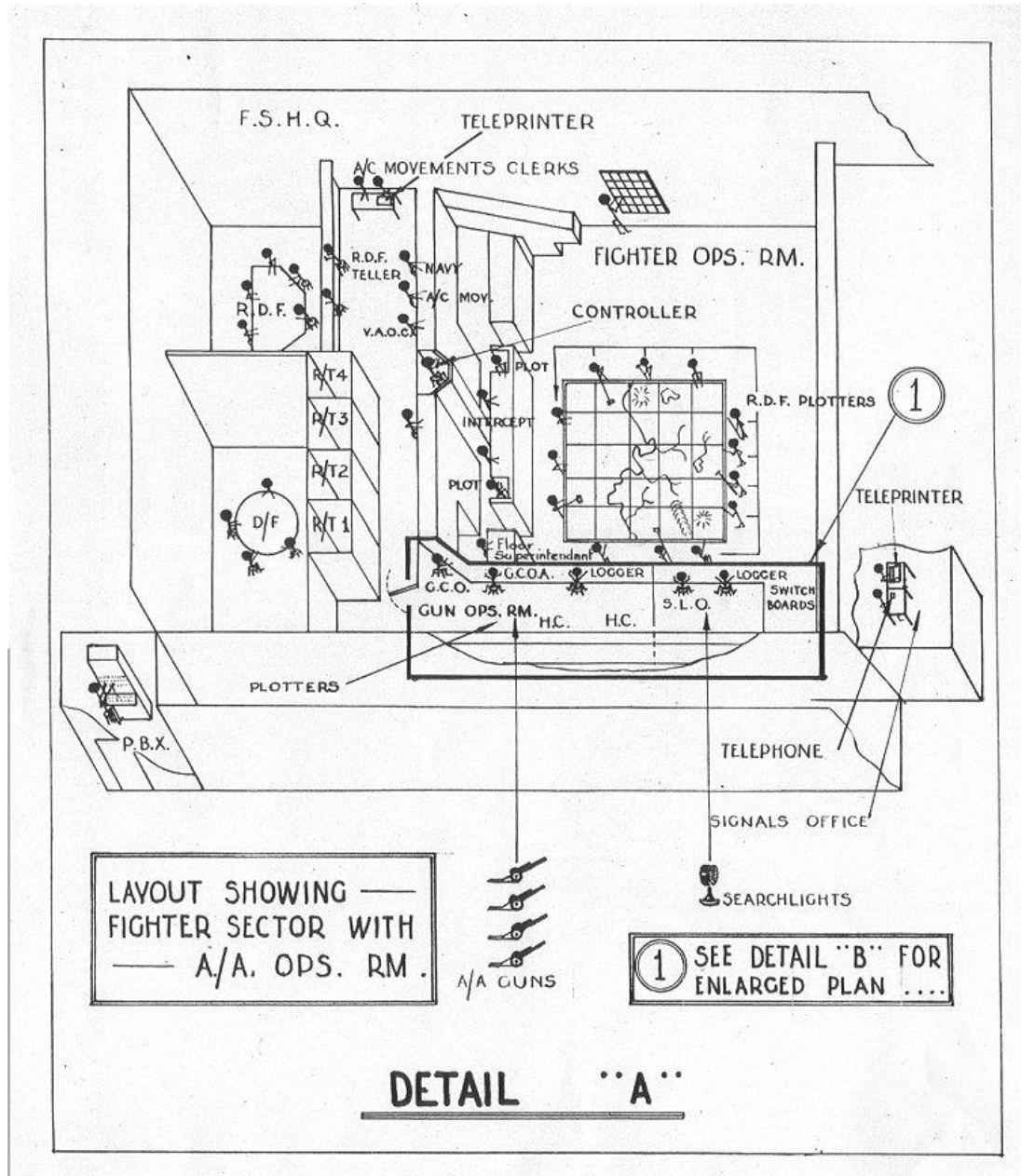
A typical RAAF Fighter Sector Headquarters was located in a secure location where squadron movements were controlled and checked by radio-telephony and every move was recorded, usually by WAAAF's, with symbols on a large grid map.

Fighter Sector Headquarters would receive co-ordinated reports of aircraft and ship sightings from the local regional Voluntary Air Observer Corps Headquarters. These reports were then co-ordinated with other intelligence from the various Radar Units in their allotted area, and plotted before the information was also sent on to Area Combined Headquarters.

Counter measures were determined and communicated to counter any enemy actions. These directions were delivered minute by minute via radio-telephony.

The Chief Controller sat in the centre of one end of the room on a large raised rostrum. He received reports direct from the fighter pilots in the air. He ensured that the best advantage was obtained and every tactical opportunity seized.

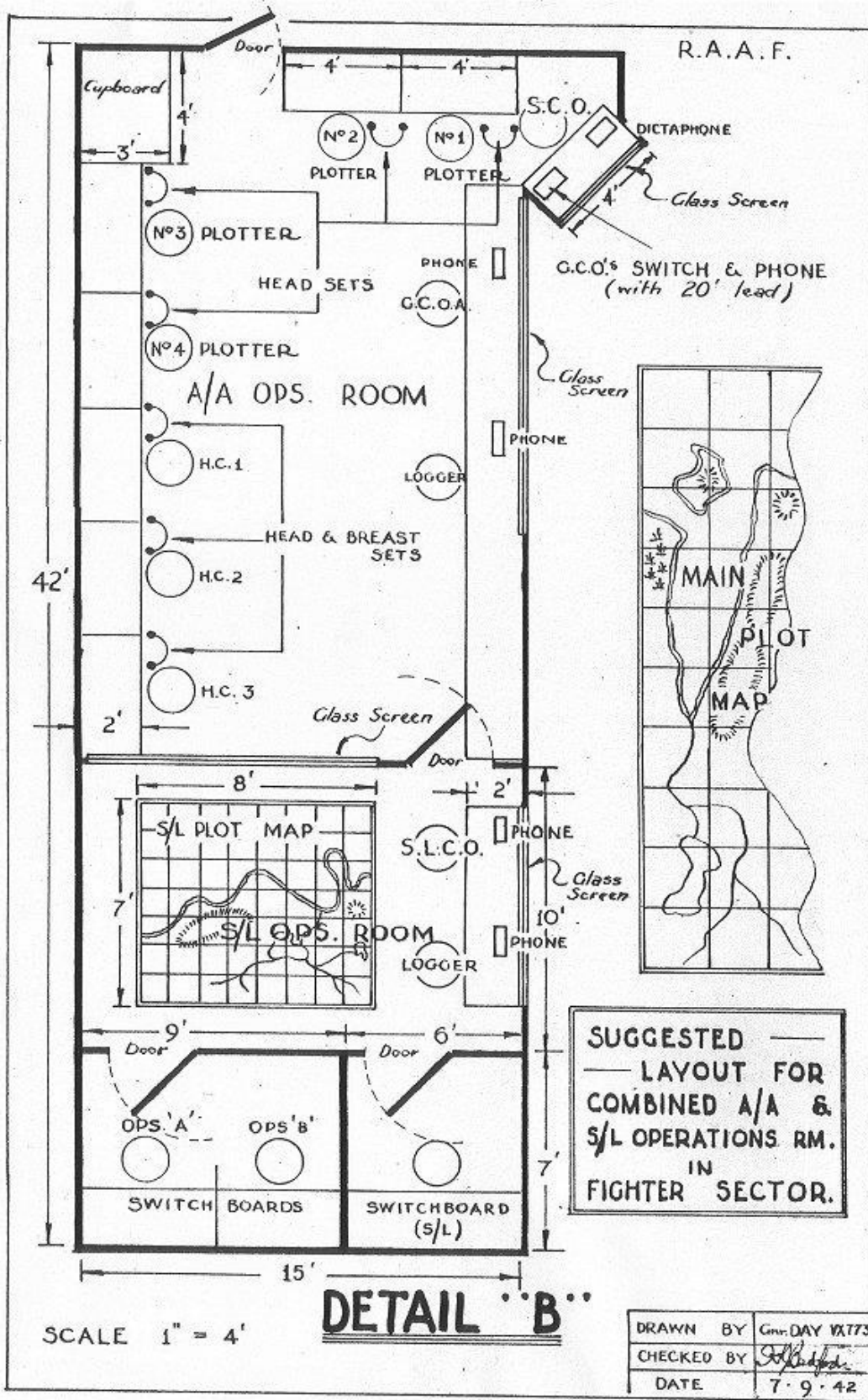
IMAGE: DRAWING DETAIL A



Fighter Sector Headquarters with combined Anti-aircraft and Searchlight Operations Rooms

(Drawing via Russell Miller)

IMAGE: DRAWING DETAIL B



Suggested layout of combined Anti-aircraft and Searchlight Operations Rooms contained within the Fighter Sector Headquarters above

(Drawing via Russell Miller)





**AN OPERATIONS ROOM FOR RAF FIGHTER COMMAND PROBABLY SIMILAR TO OUR RAAF FIGHTER SECTOR HQ'S**

**AFTER THE WAR**

Following WWII, the bunker, was mostly derelict, it remained in the hands of the Commonwealth of Australia and was used by the defence department as part of a HF radio network known as Australian Communications Army Network (AUSTCAN). Prior to satellites, this telemetry HF radio and landline system was used for passing diplomatic and other sensitive messages around the world to Australian allied partners. The bunker provided an intermediate point for the armoured telecommunication cables between the HF radio transmitter equipment located further up Epsom Avenue Belmont, in a bush location towards Perth airport and the associated HF radio receiver equipment located at Guildford. This was then connected to the communications centre located at Swan Army Barracks in Northbridge, Perth.

The Commonwealth “ceded” the bunker to the Western Australian government. This then became the home to the West Australian Civil Defence which became what is now known as the State Emergency Service.

**DATES OF INTEREST:**

- Civil Defence, Emergency Powers Act 1940;
- West Australian Civil Defence formed in 1944;
- State Emergency Service in Western Australia formed in 1959;
- Civil Defence merged with State Emergency in 1961.

Anecdotal information: A past SES career officer, Mr George Sulc, explained it was one of his duties as an Australian Army communications officer was to conduct tests on the radio equipment and communications cables in 1963.

In his later career as an SES training officer, he was aware that the SES HQs possessed a copy of “top secret” WWII evacuation plan for Perth. There was also a plaque in the bunker that indicated the date of when the Commonwealth “ceded” the bunker to the Western Australian government.

## **USE OF THE BUNKER BY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

At the time of the property transfer from the Commonwealth to the state government, there was only the Bunker and a large storage shed. The bunker was the first State Emergency Service (SES) HQs, however under the leadership of the first SES Director, Dean Hill, a complex for the administration and training of the newly formed SES was developed at 91 Leake St, Belmont. This also included an undercover parking area and a climbing tower.

The Bunker was the operational centre for controlling the response to all natural disasters that occurred in Western Australia from the mid-1970s, until the formation of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) in 1999. Operationally it was manned by staff and volunteers of the SES who provided Planning and Logistical support to the Operational Controller. In March 1999 the Bunker, was manned continuously whilst Cyclone Vance devastated Exmouth and Cyclone Elaine flooded Moora.

At that time Cyclone Vance was the most severe Cyclone to impact the Australian mainland and Cyclone Elaine caused the evacuation of about 1000 people from the town of Moora. All this was controlled from a facility that was state of the art at the time. During many major natural disasters the Bunker was visited by many leading politicians including the Premier and Minister for Emergency Services. Offices were there for their use, and even a room was set aside for a Cabinet Meeting if so desired.

After the formation of FESA there was the amalgamation of a number of functions including the Fire Services and Volunteer Marine Services also based staff at this complex in the 2000s. During this period all the State Emergency Service support roles such as payroll, human services and communications were merged into FESA and relocated to 480 Hay Street, Perth. Soon after the new Perth Fire Station was opened in 2010 the Metropolitan State Emergency Service Managers and support staff were relocated from the Belmont complex to FESA Headquarters at 480 Hay St, Perth.

Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) changed to Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) on 1 November 2012, as result of one of the key recommendations from the special inquiry conducted by Mick Keelty into the Perth Hills bushfires.

## **FUTURE OF THE BUNKER**

Many of the defence bunkers have fallen into ruin over time. A few pieces on concrete are still around, surviving the elements and vandals such as the gun placements at Point Peron or Rottnest Island. The World War I army camp of Blackboy Hill, near Greenmount has been turned into suburban blocks and houses. There are only a few pristine examples of our past military defences that exist and are available for viewing by the public. Some of these are Radio Hill, Melville (the early HQs for Melville SES Unit), but today is a military radio communication museum and the remains of gun placements and tunnels of Buckland Hill in North Fremantle a survivor of land developers.

The bunker at Leake St/Epson Avenue, including the climbing tower, which is currently part of land managed by Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and is now listed with the National Trust.

The future of the Leake St/Epson Avenue bunker appeared to be under threat when plans for a new DFES headquarters at Cockburn were mooted. The area that was once the state Head Quarters of the State Emergency Service today accommodates a range of DFES services.

Whilst the future of the bunker was not clear, it has recently been refurbished by DFES who announced on 4 April 2014, that the bunker was to be used as a state of the art emergency and exercise centre known as SIMCEN.

“The SIMCEN uses the latest audio visual technology to simulate real life emergencies, allowing our career and volunteer personnel to gain valuable experience in incident management” said Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis MLA.

The Leake St/Epson Avenue bunker represents an important part of Australian history.

### **INFORMATION SOURCES**

The following web sites can provide a very useful understanding about the history of the Epson St Bunker and large range of others that were part of Australian defence system of WWII.

- Primary Article Information Source: <http://www.ozatwar.com/raaf/6fshq.htm>
- WAAAF – Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force: <http://www.ozatwar.com/waaaf/waaaf.htm>
- Volunteer Air Observer Corps: <http://www.ozatwar.com/sigint/ach.htm>
- Area Combined Headquarters (ACH): <http://www.ozatwar.com/sigint/ach.htm>

Thanks to Peter Dunn for permission to reprint images and information from his web site <http://www.ozatwar.com>

**Phillip Petersen ESM**  
**SES Volunteer**  
**April 2014**

## 14. SES PUBLICATIONS

### WASES NEWS

One of the challenges in a diverse, scattered volunteer organisation such as the WA State Emergency Service (known then as WASES) is how to keep members abreast of developments within the organisation and allow them to share their experiences with members in other, often distant, units. This was placed on the agenda for an upcoming Regional conference to be held at the headquarters in Belmont.

During a periodic Regional Managers' conference held at the WASES Headquarters at Belmont in the mid 1980's the subject was discussed and various options were explored. Eventually it was decided that the most effective way would be to publish a periodic news sheet in which the State Headquarters could disseminate information to all members and to which individuals and units could contribute news on operations and other matters of interest.

The then State Training Manager, George Sulc, agreed to undertake the task to do a trial news sheet, and assess whether it would be an acceptable vehicle for information distribution. Thus the one sheet publication called "WASES NEWS" was born.

Initially this was a double sided A4 sheet with the contents almost entirely provided from the State Headquarters. While this was not the intended format, the system of soliciting input from regions and units had yet to be put in place. Over a number of issues the feedback from regional offices was that WASES NEWS was well accepted and some units had expressed a desire to provide input. It was now time to launch in the next phase of its development into a magazine rather than a simple news sheet.

George Sulc (the State Training Manager) was given the task of developing the concept and was appointed as the Editor. The challenge was to find an organisation to print and distribute the publication in a professional format without "breaking the bank".

After some searching a printer was found who was willing to print and distribute the magazine in return for the rights to advertising revenue that might be generated. Amongst the conditions was that the publication was to be printed and distributed on a quarterly basis. This was agreed and a contract was signed between WASES and the printer.



## THE WESTERN ALERT

As the magazine was to have a new look it was decided that “WASES NEWS” was no longer the appropriate title for the new publication and a competition was run to select a title.

Many responses were received to the competition and eventually the panel decided to adopt the suggestion “Western Alert” as the most appropriate.

Developing a format and obtaining material for its pages from regions and units was the Editors next challenge.

Regional Offices were offered the opportunity to have a section for their regional news and WASES Headquarters staff members were asked to provide articles on their area of expertise to fill its pages.

Through articles in its first issues individual units were encouraged to put together articles on operations in which they had been involved and to “showcase” their units.

As time went on many units supplied interesting and informative articles on unit activities and the publication became a valued source of information for units and individual members and a valued part of WASES life.

In October 1990 the WASES appointed Mr Roy Johnson as the organisations Public Relations Officer and the position of Editor passed to him on this appointment. Western Alert continued as a valuable tool for the distribution of information for WASES Headquarters and from units for a number of year until the formation of FESA.

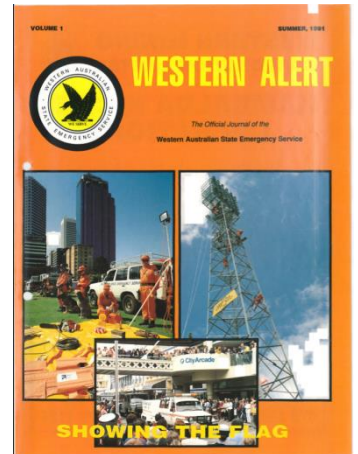
Scanned copies of the Western Alert are available on the SESVA website.

Please note that the series starts at Vol 1 Summer 1991 and the number system repeats some Volume numbers. Volume 4 is 3 times, Volume 21 never existed, Volume 29 was 3 times and so on.

## 24SEVEN

With the advent of the Fire and Emergency Service Authority support functions, such as the compilation and production of the Western Alert, were moved to FESA headquarters.

Soon after this, in 2001, the Western Alert ceased to exist and a new quarterly magazine, the 24Seven, was produced covering all FESA services.





## **15. TRAINING**

In the Civil Defence and early State Emergency Service days the training was based around Basic Mass Rescue (BMR) of civilians in a war or civil defence scenario.

A number of Volunteers and staff went to the Australian Counter Disaster College (ACDC) at Mt Macedon in Victoria to get basic training and associated skills

In areas like the wheat-belt gas masks and other civil defence equipment was stored and utilised for training

In the mid-1990s the State Emergency Service migrated to General Rescue and new packages were written which included a number of training scenarios such as rescue from heights

The General Rescue training was packaged so it could be conducted over a weekend and a number of training nights

The General Rescue training lasted until after FESA was formed and the training section was restructured and relocated to the Fire and Rescue Training Centre at Forrestfield. This was subsequently renamed the Forrestfield Training Centre

Under the leadership of Janet Undy and later Les Hayter all SES Volunteer training was built into Competency Based Training Resource Kits (TRK's) with national competencies an outcome in most instances.

All trainers and assessors were then required to gain nationally recognised qualifications before being able to deliver or assess State Emergency Service courses

These new training resource kits were all part of the national 'Public Safety Training Package' (PSTP) which was first endorsed for use across Australia in 2000 (PUA00). The second full revision of this Package was endorsed August 2012 (PUA12).

The future of training for the Volunteers was centred around these national training packages and were sourced from some very diverse areas (i.e. Health [HLT], Forest Products Industries [FPI] and Sport & Recreation [SRO] to name a few) and up until the beginning of 2012 the State Emergency Service retained their autonomy in delivering TRK's for the Volunteers. Soon after this the SES Training Group at the DFES Training Academy was abolished and the SES training staff disbanded.

In 2015 DFES moved away from national competencies and qualifications and has a number of new 'Skill Sets' which are varied in content. DFES believe these 'Skill Sets' make training more focussed and capture the essentials of a meaningful set of competencies to perform a role. These courses are mapped in a pathway to assist the SES Volunteers in choosing the training courses they require.

### **WASES Training Section 1989**

Rod Ives

George Sulc

Allen Gale

Roy Johnson



## 16. STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE INSIGNIAS (WA)

### CIVIL DEFENCE CLOTH BADGES



STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CLOTH ARM PATCHES CIRCA XXX



EPAULETTES



ROUNDEL IN THE STATE COLOURS – BLACK AND GOLD



**CLOTH BADGE ROUNDEL IN THE STATE COLOURS – BLACK AND GOLD**



**FIRST STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CLOTH BADGE UNDER FESA – CIRCA 1999**



**SECOND STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CLOTH BADGE UNDER FESA – CIRCA 2001**

Note that the Black Swan, part of Western Australia's emblem, always faces forwards. So when the badges are on both sides of the garment (such as sleeves) two badges are required so the duck always faces forward.

There have been occasions when uniforms have arrived with the duck facing forward on one sleeve and facing to the rear on the other – these were always sent back.



The above badge was commissioned by DFES and had the word "Volunteer" added.

Many Volunteers have rejected this badge and go to a lot of trouble removing it and placing the older badge on their uniforms.

This has become a contentious issue and many Volunteers do not wish to be segregated from other responders that do not have this word added to their clothing, especially as they are trained to a very high level to take on all types of emergency situations and rescues.

## **17. UNIFORM STYLES AND APPOINTMENT INDICATORS**

The State Emergency Service Volunteers are easily recognised today by their orange overalls which are the standard field dress.

These can also be two-piece in lieu of the one piece overalls.

This was not always the case as prior to the rollout of the Orange Overalls the field dress was blue overalls.

Around 1981 the work uniform changed to orange.

The Northam LVES (then known as the Local Volunteer Emergency Service) was still wearing blue overalls at the 1980 Competition Day at Nedlands however, by the competition in the following year they were in orange overalls.



During the 1980s the office or headquarters staff uniform was changed to dark brown trousers and a tan coloured shirt or equivalent for females. These uniforms were intended for the Coordinators, senior unit personnel or full time staff.

In the spring of 1994 new uniforms for coordinators, senior unit personnel and full time staff was announced. These were khaki trousers, shirt and jumper with the equivalent for female staff. A tan skirt for females was also added soon after.



By the summer of 1994 an appointment indicator system for staff and Volunteers was implemented

The purpose of the indicators was to visually show a Volunteer and Staff appointments in a particular role. The appointment indicators do not relate to that person, only to the position that person occupies.

**VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENT**



Volunteer Team leader



Volunteer Section Leader  
WHQ Storeman



Volunteer Coordinator Deputy



Volunteer Coordinator

**STAFF APPOINTMENT**



Assistant Regional Manager



Regional Manager  
WHQ Section Manager



Executive Officer



WASES Director  
Regional Director (FESA)

The khaki uniform for the Volunteers survived the restructuring of FESA and the subsequent changes in the 2000s.

Soon after the formation of FESA, the State Emergency Service staff uniforms changed.

All staff above District Manager level went into corporate uniform, whilst the managers changed to a FESA uniform with State Emergency Service badging.

After a restructure within FESA and the formation of the Operations Division in 2005, all operations staff migrated to a new FESA uniform.

Operations staff were issued with hats and a dark tunic for ceremonious occasions.

The appointment indicators for Volunteers changed to orange stripes on a black background.

**VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENT**



Deputy Team Leader



Team leader



Section Leader



Deputy Manager



Manager

## **18. MAJOR AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **2007 – THE GOLD SWAN AWARD**

The Gold Swan Award honours a voluntary service organisation that demonstrates outstanding commitment to and concern for, the community it serves, as well as effectively improving the lives and opportunities of fellow Western Australians at a state-wide level.

In 2007 the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association of Western Australia won the coveted Gold Swan trophy.

The State Emergency Service Volunteers Association President Phillip Petersen ESM accepted the Award from His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC, Governor of Western Australia, on behalf of all State Emergency Service Volunteers at a vice-regal ceremony in June 2007.

FESA Chief Executive Officer, Jo Harrison-Ward, was present at the event and congratulated Phillip and the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association of Western Australia on receiving the award.



**PHILLIP PETERSEN (SESVA PRESIDENT) AND JO HARRISON-WARD (FESA CEO) AT THE AWARD CEREMONY**



## **2004 – AWARDS TSUNAMI PLANNING AND PREPARATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

The occurrence of the Indian Ocean Tsunami on 26 December, 2004, which had such a devastating impact on many countries bordering the Indian Ocean, raised concern among Australian emergency management authorities about the lack of information on the tsunami threat to Australia.

This made it difficult for emergency managers to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

As tsunami response is one of the State Emergency Service roles the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of Western Australia took the initiative in forming the Tsunami Working Group for Western Australia (TWGWA).

The members of TWGWA included FESA, Geoscience Australia (GA), the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), and Emergency Management Australia (EMA).

FESA appointed Regional Director Gordon Hall as the Project Director for the Tsunami Project with the brief including an active involvement in the national committees to ensure the effective planning and preparation for any further tsunami events in Western Australia.

The main players nationally were Geoff Crane, Bureau of Meteorology, Peter Whillet, Emergency Management Australia, Dr Jane Sexton and Trevor Dhu, Geoscience Australia and Gordon Hall, Fire and Emergency Services Authority.

The tsunami research was conducted by Geoscience Australia which included data gathering and assessment in Western Australia.

The National and International warning systems were put in place by the Bureau of Meteorology.

The finance was provided by Emergency Management Australia.

In Western Australia a team led by FESA Director Gordon Hall worked nationally on all facets of tsunami planning.

This included State Emergency Service District Managers working with coastal communities in Western Australia to assist them in their planning and preparation for an event.

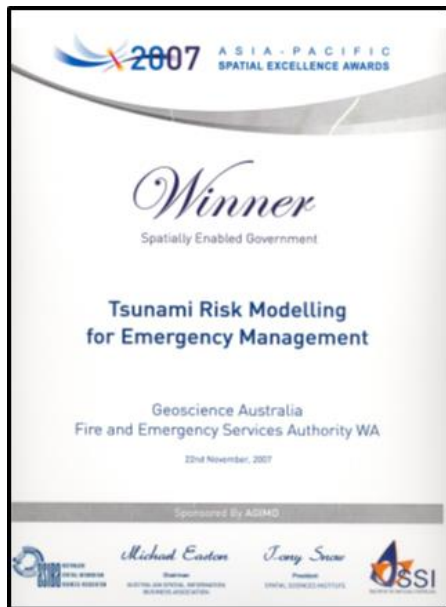
Further work was done by Geoscience Australia and FESA for planning and preparation for a tsunami event that may affect the harbour and loading facilities in the Pilbara.

In 2007 FESA and Geoscience Australia were jointly awarded an Asia - Pacific Spatial Excellence Award for their work in Tsunami Modelling for Emergency Management.

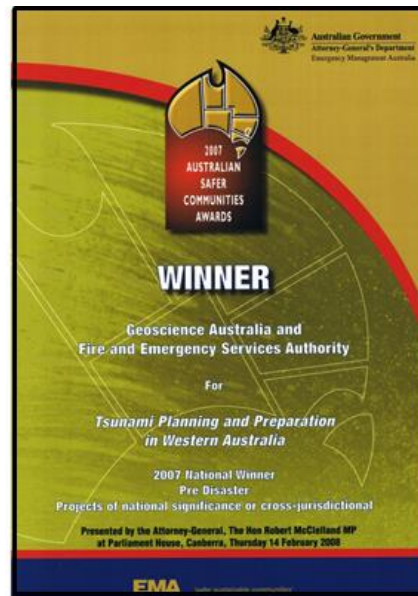
FESA and Geoscience Australia were also jointly, a national winner for *“Projects of national significance or cross-jurisdictional”* for their tsunami planning and preparation in Western Australia.







**ASIA – PACIFIC SPATIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**



**NATIONAL AWARD BY EMA  
ATTORNEY GENERALS DEPARTMENT**



**FESA AND GEOSCIENCE AUSTRALIA RECEIVING A TSUNAMI PLANNING AWARD**

John Butcher, Gordon Hall, Dr Ole Nielson, Attorney-General Robert McClelland, Dr John Schneider, Dr David Burbidge, Dr Jane Sexton, Trevor Dhu.

**Footnote:** *Geoscience Australia's scientists are phenomenal people who are the unsung heroes behind much of the planning and preparation by many emergency management agencies in Australia.*

## **19. EARTH, WIND, WATER, FIRE**

As part of DFES the State Emergency Service, for the first time, has access to what was previously the Fire Museum.

Under the leadership of the Curator, Sue Ferreira, the facility was refurbished and turned into DFES's Education and Heritage Centre.

The centre is located in the original Perth Central Fire Station on the corner of Murray and Irwin Streets, in central Perth.

The building itself is heritage listed and was commissioned under the authority of the Western Australian *Fire Brigades Act of 1899* and was the first purpose built fire station in Western Australia.

The facility characterises both past and present emergency services through displays dedicated to the history of Western Australian (WA) fire services and a Natural Hazards and disasters education gallery.

The Natural Hazards gallery is made up of four areas, three of which belong to the State Emergency Service as their lead combat or hazard management roles.

These three hazards, water, cyclone, and earth, represent a risk to many areas of Western Australia and provide the opportunity for school children and adults to learn about these hazards and their affect.

### **THE DISPLAYS**

This display has a unique tsunami tank which was built with funding from the Commonwealth Government. It has a dome on the floor so visitors can place their foot on it to activate this wave. The dome was designed such that persons with disabilities could operate this demonstration easily. The tank when activated demonstrates the wave actions of a typical tsunami.

Further displays include simulated earthquake damage, fire displays and a "breaking wind" display which is centred on Tropical Cyclones.

## **20. STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS HISTORICAL NOTES**

### **PINGELLY STATE EMERGENCY UNIT**

<b>Name of Unit:</b>	Pingelly Volunteer State Emergency Unit Inc.
<b>Location:</b>	3 Paragon Street, Pingelly
<b>Established:</b>	1984
<b>Reason for Establishment:</b>	As a result of a fatal road accident west of Pingelly and the inability to be able to release the victim from the wreckage, a public meeting was convened. As a result of the meeting funds were raised to set up a Road Rescue Trailer and equipment within the town of Pingelly. There was a need for Volunteers to train and respond to road accidents with this trailer. This was the beginning of the Pingelly State Emergency Service Unit.
<b>Inaugural Local Coordinator:</b>	Mr. Bunt Whiting for the first 6 months. This was followed by Mr. David Ford for a period of 12 months. Mr. Rex Peters followed for a period of 8 months. Mr Bill Mulroney was appointed the local Manager in 1986
<b>Major/Significant Events:</b>	<p>The Road Accident Rescue (RAR) equipment was tested out at an incident in 1985 and since then has attended on an average of 6 road accidents a year from minor injuries to fatal incidents. The longest RAR task took 2 hours to release the trapped person who, after 3 weeks confined to hospital, returned to employment completely recovered from the ordeal.</p> <p>The unit was issued with its first vehicle in March 1988 and this as a significant step as prior to this date the RAR trailer was towed by private vehicle.</p> <p>Over the years the Unit has been successful in obtaining financial grants to assist with the purchasing of new equipment, a lighting tower, extension to the building and refurbishing of existing building. A swing pole tower for communications and a training tower were also added from funds raised.</p> <p>In all financial assistance through these grants amounted to in excess of \$100,000.</p> <p>The Unit members were selected to participate in Interstate RAR competitions and were heavily involved with both Western Rescue competitions held in WA.</p>
<b>Special Aspects of the Unit:</b>	<p>The unit boasts a very competent team of trainers, especially in Road Accident Rescue.</p> <p>It has over the period of time been seen to be a high profile Unit throughout the region of the Great Southern and the Unit members are very proud of their achievements.</p>

**National Medal Recipients:**

W V Mulroney (plus 1<sup>st</sup> bar), K C Box (plus 1<sup>st</sup> bar),  
H G Williams (plus 1<sup>st</sup> bar),  
D G Goldsmith, S R Smith, R G Rayner, J W Sewell,  
G J Mulroney, M Clarke.

**Significant Award Recipients:**

W V Mulroney, has received the ESM and FESA –FOAM Award.

T Graham received the OAM for outstanding service to the community of Pingelly through various organisations including 10 years as Administration Officer of the Unit.

Mr. G Mulroney was the recipient of the FESA Young Achievers Award 2001.

**Current Local Manager**

W V Mulroney ESM

**Contact person:**

W V Mulroney, ESM, Ph 9887 1191- M/P 0427 871191

Email- Pingelly SES @bigpond .com

## **ROCKINGHAM-KWINANA STATE EMERGENCY UNIT**

In the mid-1970s, and following several major storm events impacting the Rockingham area, a need was identified for an emergency service unit to assist the community.

<b>Name of Unit:</b>	Pingelly Volunteer State Emergency Unit Inc.	
<b>Location:</b>	Crocker Street, Rockingham	
<b>Established:</b>	1977 as the Rockingham Voluntary Emergency Service unit  In 1990 the Town of Kwinana was included and the name changed to the Rockingham- Kwinana State Emergency Service Unit	
<b>Reason for Establishment:</b>	A requirement was identified for an emergency services unit following several major storm events impacting the then Shire of Rockingham.	
<b>Local Manager:</b>	The first Local Coordinator was George Earnshaw (1977 – 1987)  George was the Manager of the Rockingham Commonwealth Bank, a member of Rotary, and a Lt Colonel of the Australian Army (Ret).  The second was Michael Wadley, OAM.  Current local manager is Dave Beard.	
<b>Major/Significant events:</b>	1982 - Won the Rescue, Communications & Welfare components of the SES Week annual competition, Nedlands.  1986 - 250 lb unexploded bomb found in Warnbro – support role  1990 - Major search operation - Gabor Lovasi (Leda)  1994 - May storms - major storm response operation  1997 - Major search operation - Gerard Ross (Rockingham)  1999, 2000 & 2001 - Organised the Emergency Services Expo in  Rockingham	
<b>Special Aspects:</b>	Rockingham had a Tracker Dog team until 2008  Rockingham had a strategic role with quad bikes, which were placed with a side by side ATU in 2015.	
<b>National Medal Recipients:</b>	Mike Wadley Phil Heckingbottom Tony Brandt Andrew Jenner Bob Polson Ian McKay Dave Price Dave Beard Darren Hicks Gordon Hall	Grant Pipe Marty Kimpton Mike Rooke Albert Boeyinga Janine Stevens Dave Catchlove Frank Meredith Steve Norton Lyn Meredith

**Significant Award Recipients:** Mike Wadley OAM (1999)



**ROCKINGHAM-KWINANA SES UNIT - 1991**

## **BASSENDAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT**

<b>Location:</b>	The unit is on the corner of Scadden and Troy streets in Bassendean
<b>Established:</b>	The Bassendean State Emergency Service had its first meeting on 14 December 1983
<b>Reason for Establishment:</b>	<p>Like many State Emergency Service units there was a need relating to response to natural hazard events in the local community. In 1983 the unit had its first meeting and grew from there.</p> <p>In 1987 the new headquarters were opened at the current location.</p>
<b>Local Manager:</b>	1983 to 1985      Peter Gilberthorpe 1985 to              Clive Abell 200 to                Gordon Munday
<b>Special Aspects:</b>	The Bassendean unit has a flood rescue boat role. This boat is also utilised for large public events where safety is of concern including the Australia Day fireworks.

## KARRATHA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

Location:

Established:

Historically the Karratha Unit of the SES can be traced back to the late 1960s. Initially the unit was somewhat fragmented and as recently as 1985 it operated from within a tiny room at the local Police Station. The communication centre was located within a borrowed office at the Water Authority Building, its equipment was housed in half a dozen nooks and crannies and training occurred at many venues. Rescue, EOC and Comms sections existed virtually independent of each other. In all, it lacked cohesion, was somewhat independent of mainstream SES and experienced negligible leadership beyond the team level.

The appointment in 1987 of a new Deputy Coordinator, Lyn Rankin, saw the first injection of an attempt to pull all sections together and to bring the unit back on line with regard to Training and Administration. Encouraged by Roebourne Shire Councillor, Ben Sharpe, and with significant input by Lyn Rankin, 1986 saw the emergence of plans for an emergency service headquarters. In 1987 construction of the \$350,000 "building with no windows" commenced and was ready for occupancy in February, 1988.

Reason for Establishment:

The Karratha Unit was born out of the requirement of the remote and isolated community to have some form of coordination for a number of emergency events including searches and preparation for cyclone events.

Local Coordinator/Manager.

Years to 1988	OIC Karratha Police
1988 to 1989	Lyn Rankin
1989 to 1996	Robert Te
1996 to 2007	Steve Cable
2007 to current	Trevor Patton

Special Aspects:

Apart from the standard SES training the Karratha Unit has conducted training external to the SES, some of the main sessions conducted were, General Rescue training for Woodside employees. This commenced in 1999 and concluded in 2001.

Orientation sessions were conducted annually for the WA Police Pilbara District which commenced in 1992 which covered map reading & navigation, bush survival, basic 4WD, basic communication and night navigation, these sessions concluded in 1997. The aim of these sessions was to give the officers assigned to the Pilbara Region an understanding of the harshness of the area and better equip them for their service in the Pilbara Region of WA

The Karratha unit foreseen the need for a catering team during the early 1990's, once a trailer was set up the team would travel



to where ever there was a requirement regardless of the location. The team would cater during Operations, Regional Exercises, and Unit Exercise along with many Mining Industry remote camps for Native Title meetings.

The team could cater from a small team of five members to an entire community such as Exmouth during cyclone Vance where they were catering for 350 people twice daily for a period of twelve days. Their activations extended into the Kimberley during cyclone operations along support to the WA Bush Fires.

Some of the major operations the Karratha Unit have been activated for are;

Cyclone Bobby	Halls Creek Floods
Cyclone Vance	Dampier Downs Fires - Broome
Cyclone Rosita	Countless Road Crash Rescues
Cyclone John	Countless Vertical Rescues – Karijini
Cyclone Olivia	Countless Air Observer & Drop Mast
Cyclone Orson	Countless Land Searches
Cyclone Steve	Numerous Crime Sense Cordons
Cyclone George	Ashburton River floods

National Medal Recipients:	Twelve members have received the National Service Medal One member has received the bar One member, Steve Cable, has received the Emergency Service Medal
Current Membership Numbers:	The average length of service within the Karratha Unit has remained at a steady 5.2 years with the average membership being 42 with a steady attendance of 16 to 25 members. The unit has experienced fluctuations like all units within the state however we have been able to maintain a strong and consistent membership core of around 12 members, which are all trainers across all training spectrums. Current membership is 40 with a good mix of female and males.
Current Local Manager	Trevor Patton

The building was officially opened on 25 June 1988



At the official opening

Left to Right

Steve Cable,

Sgt. Terry Simms,

Lyn Rankin,

Ewin Rankin,

Trevor Patton &

Phillip Petersen



The first official vehicle and trailer



## KALAMUNDA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

<b>Location:</b>	42 Raymond Rd, KALAMUNDA																										
<b>Established:</b>	<p>The Kalamunda unit was born in October 1963 and met monthly in a room at the rear of the Kalamunda Agricultural Hall</p> <p>In 1968 the unit moved to an old house next to the Shire Offices in Canning Road (this house was later demolished to make way for the Jack Healy Senior Citizens Centre)</p> <p>We believe that the unit disbanded in 1970/71.</p> <p>We have been unable to locate any records from this time until the unit was reformed in 1978;</p> <p>Moves were made to reform the unit in 1973; however it was not until 1978 that the unit as we know it today came into existence.</p> <p>Meetings were held in a room shared with the BFS at the rear of the old Shire office building and vehicles and trailers parked in double garage adjacent to this building.</p> <p>The unit moved into a new purpose built Headquarters at Raymond Road Walliston in 1991.</p> <p>Kalamunda unit has responded to Severe Storm, Local Flooding, Land and Air Search and Fire Fighting support locally and at locations throughout WA and the eastern states.</p> <p>Significant events include the loss of the Kalamunda Library roof during a storm and support at a Fireworks Factory explosion.</p>																										
<b>Local Manager:</b>	Richard Price, Colin Ainsworth, Neville Armitage, Richard Maslen, Derek Fletcher (1991 -1996 and 2000-2006) Bruce McLennan, Chris Kin-Maung and John White Arthur Hutchinson (retired May 2016)																										
<b>National Medal Recipients:</b>	<table><tr><td>Norman Campbell,</td><td>37Years - Wanneroo 1973/83,</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Kalamunda 1983/10</td></tr><tr><td>Dennis Tiggerdine</td><td>28 years</td></tr><tr><td>Gordon LeGeois</td><td>25 Years</td></tr><tr><td>John White</td><td>25 years</td></tr><tr><td>Des Oregioni</td><td>24 years</td></tr><tr><td>Ron Davey</td><td>23 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Doug Maley</td><td>23 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Fred Smith</td><td>23 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Derek Fletcher</td><td>18 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Warwick Martindale</td><td>17 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Adrian Rumble</td><td>17 Years</td></tr><tr><td>Marian Tiggerdine</td><td>17 years</td></tr></table>	Norman Campbell,	37Years - Wanneroo 1973/83,		Kalamunda 1983/10	Dennis Tiggerdine	28 years	Gordon LeGeois	25 Years	John White	25 years	Des Oregioni	24 years	Ron Davey	23 Years	Doug Maley	23 Years	Fred Smith	23 Years	Derek Fletcher	18 Years	Warwick Martindale	17 Years	Adrian Rumble	17 Years	Marian Tiggerdine	17 years
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Derek Fletcher	18 Years																										
Warwick Martindale	17 Years																										
Adrian Rumble	17 Years																										
Marian Tiggerdine	17 years																										

**Significant Award Recipients:** Derek Fletcher 2001 Centenary of Australia Medal

**Current Membership Numbers** The Unit currently has 60 members (19 females and 41 Males)

**KALAMUNDA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT – 2010**



## 21. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONS

### 1978 – CYCLONE ALBY

Severe Tropical Cyclone Alby was first identified on 27 March 1978 by the Bureau of Meteorology. It was situated 800 km north-northwest of Karratha. Early on March 29, the system was classified as a tropical cyclone by the Perth Bureau of Meteorology.

TC Alby steadily and attained its peak intensity as a Category 5 .

TC Alby slowed as it began turning towards the southeast. By 3 April, the storm rapidly accelerated and attained a forward speed of 50 km/h. The storm gradually weakened and passed within 100 km of Cape Leeuwin. The system maintained winds of 120 km/h (75 mph) as it reached this point, making it one of the most intense storms to strike the region. By 5 April, the cyclone rapidly lost its identity as it became caught up in a northwesterly flow before merging with the cold front over the Great Australian Bight

The winds resulted in widespread agricultural, environmental and structural damage. Hundreds of structures sustained severe damage, mostly consisting of roofs blowing off. The most severe losses took place in Albany where most homes had partial or complete roof failure. Numerous power lines and stations failed during the storm. Large portions of the South-West were without electricity due to Cyclone Alby.

Alby's winds fanned at least 50 individual fires across the region, prompting more than 1,000 firefighters to assist in putting them out. Some of these fires turned into full-fledged wildfires, expanding at a rate of 5 to 10 km/h.

A total of 114,000 hectares of land was burned, more than 10,000 sheep, 500 cattle and horses were killed. Over 100 structures, 1,300 km of fencing and tens of thousands of hay bales were destroyed.

Along the coast, large swells produced by the storm resulted in two fatalities in Albany Harbour as well as significant coastal damage. The highest storm tide was in Busselton at 2.5 m (8.2 ft), leading to a storm surge of 1.1 m. Here, the surge penetrated roughly 200 m inland, forcing several evacuations. This led to significant coastal flooding that damaged dozens of structures. In Bunbury, water breached the sea wall, inundating homes and prompting the evacuation of 130 residents.

Tropical Cyclone Alby was responsible for seven fatalities and more than \$50m damage. Due to the extensive damage, the name Alby was retired from the list of cyclone names to be used in Western Australian.

The State Emergency Service was activated and assisted many people across the lower southwest who required help. Records of the actual numbers of people involved and calls for assistance have not been found.



## **1979 – SKYLAB**

Skylab was a US space station launched by NASA in 1973, and was manned by teams of astronauts as it orbited the earth. It collected vast amounts of data and images before being abandoned in space in 1974.

In the early hours of the 12th of July, 1979, Skylab crashed on WA's south east coast, scattering debris across the Nullarbor and the eastern goldfields. This caused a worldwide sensation.

In 1979, NASA realised that Skylab was starting to break up and would re-enter the atmosphere. They could neither control Skylab's path nor could they predict exactly where the pieces might land.

As NASA, and the world's media tracked Skylab's progress in early July 1979, it seemed it could end up anywhere.

State Emergency Service Units along the predicted path of possible re-entry, were activated and Volunteers manned these units throughout the night in readiness for a response if the debris fell in their area.

In the early hours of 12 July, Skylab crashed on WA's south east coast, scattering debris across the Nullarbor and the eastern goldfields causing a worldwide sensation.

These days, Skylab is a source of pride to the people of Esperance and the Nullarbor, who remember the lights, the sonic boom and the fuss that followed.

The US President at the time, Jimmy Carter called the Balladonia hotel to apologise for any damages and an US Ambassador and Miss America visited the Hotel Motel as a goodwill gesture.

## **1986 PAPAL VISIT**

In November 1986 the Pope visited Perth.

The SES had a key role in this visit by the provision of communications personnel from SES Units to man the Site Directors communications organisational networks and to adopt a state of readiness during the visit.

SES Volunteers ha a key role in this operation with Wanneroo SES Volunteer John Capes being the senior Volunteer involved.

Appendix 1 is a copy of the Operations Instruction

## **1994 – PERTH STORMS**

On 23 May a severe storm hit Perth causing serious damage.

The damage bill is estimated to be in excess of \$37m.

More than 600 homes in Perth had sustained some form of damage.

More than 250 000 homes and businesses were without power and it took nearly a week for power to be completely restored. This loss of power also affected sewerage pumping stations resulting in minor spills of raw sewage into the Swan and Canning rivers.

Two people on board a yacht were lost at sea off Jurien, north of Perth. Huge seas and above normal tides caused significant erosion to beaches, while parts of the Perth river foreshore were inundated.

Fremantle recorded 25 wind gusts of at least 129 km/h, more than three times the number recorded for any other event since the 1960s.

The State Emergency Service received over 1700 calls for assistance and the Volunteers responded to these by providing temporary repairs to rooves, cutting trees up, clearing debris and numerous other tasks to assist their communities to return to normal as soon as possible.

### **1997 – GERARD ROSS SEARCH**

Gerard was abducted from the Perth suburb of Rockingham in October 1997 during a family holiday.

The WA Police activated the State Emergency Service Volunteers and a search base was set up at the Rockingham-Kwinana State Emergency Service unit.

Volunteers from Metropolitan Units responded and thorough searches were conducted in bush land in the near vicinity of Rockingham's CBD.

After a week of searching the Police called off the search as there was no evidence anywhere of where he was or may have been.

Gerard's body was found 15 days later dumped in a pine plantation in Karnup. His killer has never been found.

There is a reward for information leading to a conviction in Gerard's murder. If you have any information please contact Crime-stoppers on 1800 333 000.

### **1998 – THE PANNIKIN PLAINS RESCUE**

*as told by Jim Ridgwell*

#### **OVERVIEW**

In 1988 the State SES Cliff and Cave Rescue Team was called to respond to a rescue on the Nullarbor Plain. Jim Ridgwell was one of those rescuers and 21 years later he visited the site that posed a challenge so many years before. Below is Jim's recollection of the events of that rescue.

#### **THE RESCUE**

For anyone who has been in the SES for a while they will have one or sometimes several callouts which stand out as being memorable in your career. The rescue at Pannikin Plains is mine.

Back in 1989 I was a member of the state Cliff and Cave Rescue Team. We trained during the week nights at Leake St, Belmont and on weekends at quarries. We honed our skills, read books on the subject and continually practiced. We lived and breathed abseiling. Some of us even found time to get involved with private abseiling companies to learn more, pick up different skills and use equipment which wasn't necessarily taught at SES. An example of this would be, I am still a fan of the rappel rack, must to the consternation of my colleagues. Up until then I can't recall us having doing a "real" cliff rescue before the Pannikin Plains rescue.

#### **THE CALLOUT**

On the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1988 we received a call directing us to be at Perth airport at sunup. The information at that time was there were some people trapped in a cave. That was it! Oh and take enough clothes for a couple of days!

The members called were to my recollection, Bob Coops (team leader) Neil Mc Caulay, Neil Brooks, Rod Ives, and myself. We went to Belmont and collected the gear we would need and headed off to Perth Airport. When we arrived we found that we would be flying in a Beechcraft

King Air twin turbo prop aircraft which had just been negotiated into a contract some weeks earlier between the SES and the State Government to be available for just this type of emergency. It was a cool plane! The briefing finally came and we were informed we were going to Cocklebidy to rescue some cavers who had got stuck in a cave. We unloaded our kits and equipment onto the tarmac next to the plane and I can still clearly remember one of the two pilot's face when he saw all our gear. He started laughing but got kind of serious when we told him we needed everything. We had enough rope and hardware to start our own store. There were anchor systems made from sheet steel, steel pickets, stretchers, first aid kits and on it went. The Landcruiser was grunting just to get us there and as the pilot said, we had to cut back or we wouldn't even get off the ground. We trimmed and trimmed until eventually the pilot gave his OK. We thought at this stage we may as well not go. Almost everything we thought we needed was in the "reject" pile.

So we took off. On board was a cameraman from a current affairs program and it was his job to document the whole event. He interviewed us and had his camera on us often. Sometimes this was a little disconcerting if you were trying to have a nap and you opened your eyes to find him videoing you. We couldn't sleep though because we were all so hyped up I think we had adrenalin oozing from our pores. As it turned out the documentary never went to air and to my knowledge none of us ever become a TV star.

### **GETTING THERE**

The trip over there was relatively uneventful. Just sitting back in leather seats being supplied (you couldn't call it served) coffee by one of the pilots. As if we needed coffee! The pilot told us they were clearing a section of white posts from either side of the Eyre Highway so we could land on the highway near the cave. Police were on site. So far so good but it was about now things started to go pear shaped.

We got word the highway had too much debris on it which would prevent us from landing. What do you mean debris I was thinking? OK so plan B was that we would land a bit further away at Caiguna airstrip at the back of the roadhouse. An hour or so later the pilots told us the cloud cover was very low, (we call it fog at ground level) but we would try and land anyway. The pilots seemed pretty confident. Wrong! After a couple of passes the pilots concluded the cloud cover was too low. So now what? We were getting low on fuel and couldn't land. Now I started to take more of an interest. As it turned out plan C was to divert to the small community of Forrest, a stop for the Indian Pacific train, which was a few hundred kilometres away. We landed OK and by now we were starting to get hungry. Well, we will just duck up to the shop. Wrong again, there are no shops in Forrest but a guy working at the airstrip offered to race back home and get his wife to make sandwiches. We fuelled up and the sandwiches arrived just as we were ready to go. We had got the word the clouds were thinning out. Things were looking up again. As we flew back over Caiguna the clouds had come back in again and we were back where we had been a few hours ago. The pilots got another plan. We would fly out over the Great Australian Bight and then as we fly back to land we would look for a break in the clouds. Seemed like a reasonable plan until I realised how the pilots planned to do it. The cliffs there are around 60 metres high and the plan was to fly out to sea and then turn and come back in below cliff height looking for a clear spot and at the last minute lift and go under the cloud cover. Let me tell you right now I wasn't a fan of this plan, but I don't remember being asked what I thought of it either. So there we were, flying out at sea at somewhere about 40 metres above the sea and looking out the front window and all I could see was cliffs. Just as planned at the last moment the pilots lifted the plane and we ducked in under the clouds. They landed us at the airstrip at Caiguna and now it was up to us. Thanks guys.

Police were on hand so we loaded up the highway patrol cars and off we headed.



## **THE BRIEFING**

On route we were briefed by the police.

There had been a storm with an immense amount of rain. As the plains out there are flat much of this water had run into a cave which acted much like a sink in your bathroom. According to the police this water had caused the mouth of the cave to fill in. Talking later to one of the people we rescued “there were rocks as big as caravans falling on us.” There were 13 people trapped in the cave. No injuries were known. Our task was to get them out.

## **THE SCENE**

We arrived to find a camp wrecked by torrential rain. Gear strewn over hundreds of metres, tarps in the top of trees and mud. Deep, slimy red mud, the type that sticks to the bottom of your boots and makes it hard to walk. Here, there were a couple of people who could brief us further. They were part of a documentary team who were diving in the underground rivers. They were using the cave as access and had gone several kilometres along this river so far. Most of it underwater. There were still 13 of their team trapped underground. The good news was they still had communications with them. I had never seen this type of communication set up. They had a huge loop of wire on the surface about 40 meters across and evidentially the same underground directly below the top loop. This set up gave them a scratchy but readable signal, so we had communications with the trapped explorers.

## **THE RESCUE**

There were a few trains of thought on how to get them out. The most popular for awhile was to bring in a drill rig and drill a vertical shaft to the cave. The popularity declined as everyone debated how long it would take to get a rig in, drill the hole and the inherent dangers to those in the cave below. We could potentially cause the roof of the cave to fall in on them. It was decided we would attempt to clear the debris and get them out that way.

We started setting up a safe way to descend into the cave and clear the debris. After some time it became evident this could take days so some of us were sent back to Cocklebidy to try and get some sleep. Neil Mc Cauley and I ended up in a motel unit which had been flooded by the storm. The floor was red with mud and water and the bedding was wet up to just below the mattress level. I think we managed to get a bit of sleep. Pretty soon we were woken up and told to get back to the cave. It was night time.

When we got back found that Darren Brooks had found a way through the debris and would escort each trapped person out individually to the cave opening and we would get them to the surface. Each person appeared one by one over several hours. They were very grateful to be out of what they thought could have been a tomb for them. There were no serious injuries to any of us or the people we rescued. A good result all round.

We all congregated back at the Cocklebidy pub where they put on free, everything for us. We could have drunk all night for free but by now we were all starting to get tired, the adrenalin had worn off and all we wanted was a shower and a sleep. Cocklebidy motel was not suitable to sleep in so we had to get back to Caiguna (about 120KMs) where there were dry motel units and hot showers.

## **20 YEARS LATER**

I have retired now .In March 2009, Phil Petersen and I accompanied and directed by our wives were on a caravanning trip to Cape York. As we were crossing the Nullarbor Plain, I said to Phil, “How about we drop into the Pannikin Plains Cave and see what it looks like now.”

Finding it was the first challenge.

Fortunately the Cocklebiddy roadhouse has a mud map of some of the caves in the area. The cave didn't look much different, except that the debris has settled now and it is dry and the sun shining.

It got me thinking though. All about the "what ifs"

What if we couldn't land the plane?

What if they were all deceased when we got there?

What if we couldn't get them out in time and we just had to wait for them to die?

What if we hadn't trained so hard and become such a close knitted team?

There are always lots of "what ifs" but this couldn't have turned out any better. All rescued safe, no injuries and a life experience which I found relatively easy to recall so I guess it has left a lasting imprint on my life.

When the others involved read this I hope I have recounted it accurately on their behalf, but if there are discrepancies, I hope you remember I am 20 years older and a lot uglier with a fading memory.

#### **INTERESTING INFORMATION**

The movie "Sanctum" is based on the rescue of a group of researchers trapped in a Nullarbor cave at Pannikan Plains, near Cocklebiddy.

On that day there were thirteen cavers making a documentary on underwater diving in the cavern when there was a flash flood that rearranged rocks to form a blockage at the entrance.

They were trapped on the wrong side of the entrance however they were able to radio to five members of a ground crew who were outside the cave.

The State Emergency Service Cliff and Cave Rescue Team was activated and responded immediately.

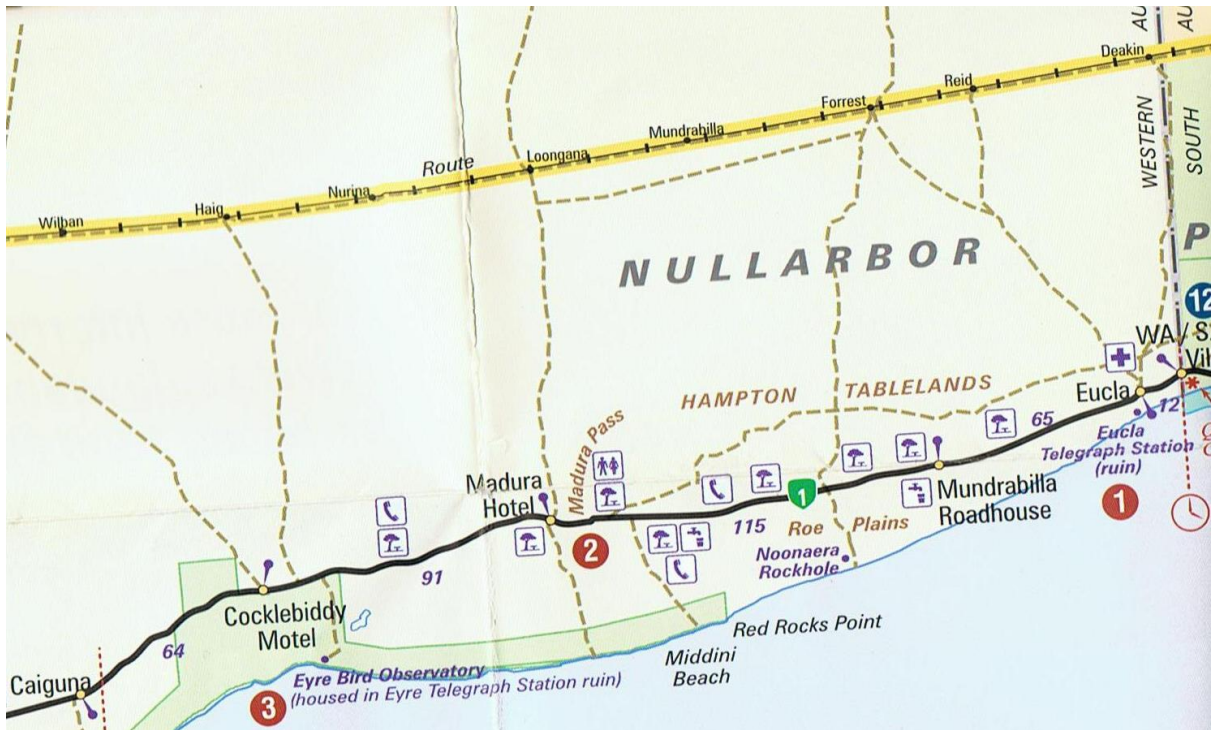
The team consisted of Bob Coops (Team leader), Neil McCauly, Neil Brooks, Rod Ives and Jim Ridgwell.

The team got right into it and eventually a path was found and established by Neil Brooks. After many hours each of the researchers was brought to the surface. They had been trapped for nearly 36 hours.

The survivors, including Liz Wight, Jamie Hurworth and Dirk Spoffels from Sydney, were dragged out the main cave entrance after a huge pile of rubble and boulders had been removed by a team of rescuers, including 10 police and a dozen men from the Main Roads Department and the State Emergency Service.

They had been trapped for nearly 36 hours before being brought safely to the surface.

The Fire and Emergency Service Authority no longer supports the State Emergency Service Volunteers in the cave rescue role. This role is now performed by the Department of Environment and Conservation.



**WITH THANKS TO:**  
**Jim Ridgwell**  
**Gosnells SES**

### **1999 – FREMANTLE TORNADO**

On 13 August the State Emergency Service were called to an apartment block in Fremantle where a suspected tornado had hit and caused severe damage to a block of flats.

The Volunteers were able to clean up the debris and make the area safe pending building repairs.



### **1999 – THE ROBERT BOGUCKI SEARCH**

In late July 1999 a tourist had gone missing in the desert. His camp site had been found, on the Pegasus track, and it appeared to be deserted for at least three days. There was a bike, backpack, water and small hutchie left there.

The police were alerted and the search began.

The Derby and Broome State Emergency Service units were activated for a search.

The search was conducted for thirteen days and he was Mr Bogucki was not found.

The country was described as harsh and unrelenting. There were track and bush searches conducted. More than 10 heavy tyres were punctured or staked. Springs on a number of trailers were broken. Vehicles bogged in the fine sand. It was a nightmare for the Police and State Emergency Service Volunteers and Staff.

The McLarty track and associated areas were also searched.

Rotary winged and fixed wing aircraft joined the search.

From time to time footprints would be sited and then lost. Every lead draw a blank which led to all sort of campfire stories about his intentions.

The searchers knew the chances were slim however they did the best they could for thirteen days.

Mr Bogucki was eventually found alive and his story is amazing.

He had 3 days of food when he became lost. He lived off leaves and grasses for the other 37 days.

Mr Bogucki saw the planes and never realised they were looking for him. He had dug 3 metre holes to get water and then filled them in so animals wouldn't get trapped.

### **1999 – MOORA FLOOD**

Friday night 19 March 1999 saw the town of Moora carry on its business as usual even though they had had 2 days of relentless rain. It was continuous, but not heavy, and most people were able to carry on their normal activities.

Some water started to come up into the town on the Saturday at about 4.00pm and then slowed down. The last time there was a flood in Moora was 1917.

By 8pm it was still raining and the river had reached its banks.

The State Emergency Service had been activated and teams of Volunteers from the Metropolitan area went to Moora to assist. About 10.00pm, the State Emergency Service came to town to monitor what was going on, but by 11.30pm, the rain stopped and everyone went to bed, convinced it was just another State Emergency Service Red Alert.

In the early hours of Sunday morning at about 0120am, the Volunteers who were asleep on the motel room floor started to get wet and woke up.

The Volunteers and towns people awoke to the sound of dogs barking and to find the water quietly rising into their back yards. A number of people stepped out of their beds into knee-deep water that had already entered their houses. The phones went out and all communications were cut.

The Hospital was evacuated as it was among the first to go under. Car floated down the street.

In the early hours of Sunday morning people began moving into the streets looking for high ground. The water was recorded as rising as much as 30 cm in 7 minutes.

On Sunday morning the town was frantic without communication and many children who had been on sleepovers came back to a closed town 5 feet deep in water

There cattle trucks, front end loaders and super spreaders carrying people everywhere. Waves were made down the streets by these vehicles. These waves hit many fences and houses

One of the first buildings to be inundated with water was the State Emergency Service.

The two high spots in the town were the Recreation Centre, and the High School. Both of these places were immediately turned into crises centres, with the front-end loaders sent to the supermarkets to break the windows and get food for the people huddled in these two areas.

Buses arrived from Perth to take people to the Noalimba Reception Centre in Perth. This caused families to be split with the subsequent chaos.

On Monday the 22 March the full extent of the situation became apparent. Windows and walls were broken and there was mud everywhere. The town was closed to everybody except the Emergency Services and those people who were housed close by so they could take care of what was required

The State Emergency Service Staff and Volunteers had worked relentlessly on the Saturday night and continuously for 8 days to rescue people and their animals, resupply where required and assist during the mop up and recovery phase.

The rescues included helping people on and off the back of cattle trucks who were then relocated to safe areas.

This flood was caused by rain resulting from cyclone Elaine however, by the Thursday a further severe tropical Cyclone, Cyclone Vance, was advancing with fierce winds and pelting rain. All Monday and most of Tuesday was a frightening tense race against time to save whatever could be saved in Moora, however at the last minute Cyclone Vance skirted Moora by 150 kms.

It was a time of devastation, but the community rallied together, and along with the generosity of businesses and the WA public, rebuilt the town.

### **1999 – CYCLONE VANCE**

Severe Tropical Cyclone Vance formed on 19 March in the Timor Sea and moved towards the Pilbara coast. On 22 March it moved down the Exmouth Gulf causing winds in excess of 260kmh to severely damage or destroy many buildings in the town of Exmouth and to the south.

As there was advance warning of impending danger many people were evacuated from the town of Exmouth. There are no recorded fatalities and the damage estimate was in excess of \$100m.

The effects of TC Vance were felt in a number of places with storm surge flooding a number of houses in Onslow, roads being washed out, dust storms and more than 50 000 people losing their power.

The State Emergency Service (part of FESA) were activated and had a team of staff and more than 20 Volunteers stationed in the town for 2 weeks doing recovery and clean-up work.

### **2001 – KIWIRRKURRA FLOODING AND RELOCATION**

Kiwirrkurra is a small community in Western Australia in the Gibson Desert, 1,200 km east of Port Hedland and 850 km west of Alice Springs.

It was established around a bore in the early 1980s as a Pintupi (western desert) outstation and became a permanent community in 1983. It was one of the last areas with nomadic Aboriginals who lived a traditional life, with little change from centuries past. They lived a migratory life, surviving as hunters and gatherers in the desert rich in food and other resources – the last of the desert people.

In early 2000 the community, being in a low-lying area without drainage, was flooded. Further flooding occurred in early March 2001. This second flood caused inundated of the dwellings and community buildings.

The State Emergency Service in the Pilbara/Kimberley region became involved and conducted an evacuation of its population of 170, first briefly to Kintore and then to Norforce's base in Alice Springs.

The State Emergency Management Committee met to decide what they could do about the situation. The SEMC appointed Regional Director Gordon Hall, reporting to FESA CEO Bob Mitchell, to build a temporary community for the 200 Kiwirrkurra people at Moropoi, (a station near Niagara Dam north east of Menzies) and relocate the displaced persons from the military base in the Northern Territory. This was to be completed within 14 days.

The team was established and included Gordon Hall (leader), Les Watkins, Mike Breen, Francis Mott, Colin Brown (Kalgoorlie) and Barry Jones (located at Alice Springs).

Contractors were employed to supply accommodation units and meeting place was established.

Three elders were brought to Moropoi from Alice Springs. A number of bush meetings were conducted and the elders advised on a number of matters.



After 10 days, a 737 Passenger plane was contracted for the uplift of the community. The only planes available were after National Jet had finished the east west run at 12 midnight. They had to be back on the tarmac in Perth by 530am for the east west run. Two trips were made 2 days apart arriving in Alice Springs at 2.30am. The planes landed at Kalgoorlie and then the community members were transported by bus to Moropoi.

After 4 weeks at the Norforce base in Alice Springs, the Moropoi Community was completed and all of the people transported by the end of day 13.

Moropoi was then handed over to the Department of Family and Children's Services.

### **2005 – PERTH MAY STORMS**

The State Emergency Service received advice that a significant event, in the form of a severe cold front, was moving towards Perth.

Four days later on 15 May, the Co-ordination Centre was set up at the bunker in Belmont, in preparation for widespread damage and calls for assistance.

At 6am 16 May the severe cold front crossed the coast. Several tornadoes formed on the leading edge of the front and were reported from Bicton and Bunbury. Other possible tornadoes or severe winds affected the suburbs of Maddington, Martin and Roleystone; Hope Valley to Serpentine; Westfield, Kelmscott and Clifton Hills; Toodyay, Australind and Bokal (near Darkin).

Cars were pushed from one lane to another on the Kwinana Freeway as the tornadoes crossed the river.

In Perth the most serious damage was to a primary school in Bicton and a house that was demolished in an adjacent street. Other damage included several roofs completely lifted off and a significant amount of tree, fence and roof tile damage.

More than 100 000 homes were reported to have lost power during the event.

In Bunbury a tornado caused a trail of damage along the main street of the CBD. The most significant damage was the destruction of the rear section of the ABC studio as a result of a falling crane. Businesses along the main street were badly damaged with 3 or 4 older buildings unable to be repaired. The Bunbury High School was also closed following building damage.

The State Emergency Service activated rescue teams and more than 2000 calls for assistance were received.

### **2010 – PERTH STORMS**

Severe thunderstorms occurred on the afternoon and evening of Monday 22 March causing large hail, heavy rain and severe winds that resulted in damage estimated in the several hundreds of millions of dollars. This storm produced the largest hail known to have occurred in Perth. This storm was one of the costliest natural disasters in Perth's history with damage estimates in excess of \$700m.

The storm was the most significant weather event since the May 1994 wind storm.

The rainfall in Mt Lawley was 40.2 mm which was the fifth highest daily rainfall for March on record for the official Perth site. The largest recorded hail occurred in Perth's western and northern suburbs. Hail stones 5 to 6 cm in diameter were measured in a number of areas including Wembley, Crawley, Nedlands, Shenton Park, Subiaco and Floreat. Many other areas report hail with some as big as golf balls.

More than 150,000 properties were without power at the peak of the storm.

There were widespread reports of property damage caused by rain, strong winds and hail.

Twenty people had to be evacuated from the emergency department at Joondalup Hospital in Perth's northern suburbs after parts of the ceiling caved in.

The storm's trail of destruction extended from Joondalup down through the western suburbs and further south to Mandurah.

Flights in and out of Perth as well as metropolitan train and bus services were disrupted.

More than 100 people had to be evacuated from an apartment block on Mounts Bay Road near King's Park in Perth's CBD after the storm caused a landslide.

Affected suburbs included Rockingham, Orelia, Baldivis, Waikiki, Medina, Coo loongup, Wilson, Hillman, Maida Vale, High Wycombe, Bicton, Mosman Park, Clarkson, Girrawheen and Currambine.

A block of units in Harrison Street, Rockingham had its roof blown off.

A school in Kewdale sustained major damage when the roof blew off one of the buildings.

Other homes received internal water damage, and some householders reported broken windows and fallen fences.

In Waroona, south of Perth, many calls were received with reports of fallen trees, powerlines and fences. The South Western Highway was closed in the area due to storm damage and debris.

The State Emergency Service received more than 3000 calls for assistance and the volunteers responded throughout the night and subsequent days to effect temporary repairs or help community members.

## **2010 – CARNARVON FLOODING**

The town of Carnarvon was hit by its worst flooding in 50 years that year and the main town was cut off.

Carnarvon town goes through floods regularly (typically about every 5 years) and the town is saved from devastation by a series of levy banks that have been installed around the main part of town.

Helicopters were called in that year to rescue people from rooftops after a monsoonal low dumped over 245mm of rain on Carnarvon. This rain constituted 20mm more than the yearly average.

Families were flooded out of their homesteads on isolated inland stations, and at the Gascoyne Junction outpost, water rose to the top of buildings. A police helicopter winched 19 people from the roofs of the pub and other buildings.

The normally dry Gascoyne River broke its banks as water rushed towards Carnarvon, where it reached a height of 7.9m.

During the town's previous worst flood, in 1960, the river rose to 7.61m.

Plantations around Carnarvon were devastated by the floods with many crops and roads destroyed.



The State Emergency Service, a part of FESA, were activated and carried out many rescues, welfare checks, resupplies and continual updates to residents on the progress and height of the flood waters.

### **The Search for the Missing Aircraft - MH370**

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 was an international passenger flight operated by Malaysia Airlines that disappeared on 8 March 2014 while flying from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia, to Beijing Capital International Airport in China.

The aircraft had last made voice contact with air traffic control at around 1am (WAT) 8 March when it was over the South China Sea. This was less than an hour after take-off.

MH370 disappeared from air traffic controllers' radar screens shortly afterwards. Malaysian military radar continued to track the aircraft as it deviated westwards from its planned flight path and crossed the Malay Peninsula.

The aircraft, a Boeing 777-200ER, was carrying 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers from 15 nations.

Analysis of satellite communications between the aircraft and Inmarsat's satellite communications network concluded that the flight continued until at least 08:19 and flew south into the southern Indian Ocean.

Although the precise location could not be determined, Australia took charge of the search on 17 March, when the search moved to the southern Indian Ocean.

The final phase of the search, the largest and most expensive in aviation history, was a comprehensive survey of the sea floor about 1,800 kilometres south-west of Perth, Western Australia. This began in October 2014.

Nothing was found of the aircraft until 29 July 2015, when a piece of marine debris, later confirmed to be a flaperon from Flight MH 370, washed ashore on La Réunion Island.

Dedicated and professional Volunteers of the State Emergency Service from WA and the rest of Australia, both as Air Search Observers (ASO) and Ground Crew, swung into action. They worked tirelessly throughout the above operation flying many missions across the Southern Indian Ocean.

There were 138 SES Volunteers, 12 DFES staff and 2 AMSA staff involved in the roles of Air Search The SES Ground Crews came from CSU and Bayswater whilst the SESVA provided the VLOs.

Further to this, DFES provide a total of 12 staff as ground support and Air Search Observers.

### **Observers, Ground Crew and VLOs.**

**Intrastate 89 volunteer, 12 career**

**Interstate 49 volunteer**

	WA ASO's	Ground Crew	SA ASO's	NT ASO's	QLD ASO's	TAS ASO's	ACT ASO's	NSW ASO's	VIC ASO's
<b>Metro</b>	SES 67 FRS 6	SES 7 SESVA 3 DFES 6							
<b>Country</b>	SES 12								
<b>Interstate</b>			SES 4	SES 4	SES 4	SES 8	SES 8	SES 9	SES 12

## **22. HISTORICAL NOTES BY SES VOLUNTEERS**

### **S.E.S. HISTORY**

*by Bernie McNamara ESM*

Members might be wondering why a number of Units are celebrating 40th Anniversaries at this time (2016).

In 1976 the Government appointed a former Army Officer to lead the State Emergency Service and charged him with the responsibility to upgrade and expand the organisation. Up till then SES Units were generally run by the particular Local Government that they represented. The Controller or Manager was usually the Shire Clerk or CEO or Mayor or Shire President.

This was the Cold War era and Local Governments had been supplied with quantities of welfare Equipment to care for the expected mass evacuees after a nuclear war. This equipment consisted of such gear as furley stretchers, field coppers (ask your mother or grandmother what that was), large boilers, canvas man packs containing basic rescue equipment such as a handsaw, wrecking bar, and hammer. Shoulder bag first aid kits full of bandages (Made in India in 1946) and a dosimeter (which measured radiation). Some Units may still have some of this equipment tucked away in their store.

Some basic equipment and a rescue trailer was being supplied by State and Commonwealth authorities. Units were using donated or private vehicles to tow the trailers, and it was much later that vehicles were also supplied. Local Authorities were sending people to the Australian Counter Disaster College in Victoria to train as Rescue team leaders, Communications Officers, or Managers.

The state was divided into a number of Regions and Regional Co-ordinators were appointed to each of these regions to manage and start new SES Units in these areas. Each of these new appointees had a military service or existing public service background as the general feeling in those days was that the only people capable of managing an emergency was someone with a service background.

That is why most of the SES Units that started about that time were initially led by people that had a similar background.

As the State Emergency Service Headquarters at Belmont increased its staff in Planning, Operations and Training, this feeling prevailed, and all new appointees came from a service background. It was 1985 before a volunteer was appointed to a staff position. Since then the majority of staff positions have been filled by volunteers.

The first Regional Co-ordinators were based at Carnarvon and Port Hedland as they were considered the areas with the biggest threats of natural disasters. State of the art operational headquarters were built at each of those centres. In other areas of the State Regional Co-ordinators used existing facilities. The Metro area was divided into two regions, North and South of the Swan river.

The role of SES volunteers has also changed over the years since 1976. There was no vertical rescue, aerial observing, flood rescue, or chainsaw training. If you attended a car in a house you cut a piece of timber to use as a prop. (Acrow Props were not issued till 1989)

A private roping school was hired in 1986 to teach SES Members vertical rescue. Three of their team joined the SES (two are still members) and we now train our own people.

A private Eastern States organisation was carrying out air searches in the east and in 1988 wished to expand to the West. They contacted the Regional Co-ordinator in Carnarvon to see

if they could run a course out of Carnarvon, being fairly central along the coast. In those days we were under the Police and we were given permission to run the course as long as we had policemen on the course. Consequently four Carnarvon SES volunteers and four policemen qualified as the first air observers. The Police air wing then took over training in the West and the Eastern States organisation eventually folded.

Flood rescue boats were issued in the early 80s to some country Units that had a flood problem, but with no formal training provided. It was 1989 before any Metropolitan Unit got a flood boat, with one in North metro (Bassendean) and one South (Belmont). When the SES got involved with Sky show they were also used as river ambulances.

When SES Units started using chainsaws there was no formal training, so some Units sent their members to do the Forest Industry course(I still have my qualification certificate),It was the early 90s before we ran our own courses.

Over the years Units have come and gone. A number of wheat belt Units have folded as the population declined. In the Metro area Nedlands and Subiaco amalgamated with Perth and became Northshore. There was a Swan brewery rescue team and a Railways team based at Midland. The Midland group joined Swan SES, and the brewery team folded but some of their members are still around. One in Cockburn and one at Melville. The Mounted section were originally part of Armadale but became a Regional resource in the early 90s.The Canine section were originally based at Serpentine-Jarrahdale and over the years came under the umbrella of several Units but are now a Regional resource.

I hope that this article may be of interest to members, telling of the development of the SES over the years. I have deliberately not given names, however I would be remiss if I did not mention Ray Peake and Bill Budney, two of the best volunteer rescue trainers who ran rescue courses all over the state in the early days.

**Editor's Note:** Bernie is a long serving and highly respected Volunteer and former SES Career Officer. As a Volunteer, Bernie served at Carnarvon SES including 8 years as Local Manager and as a Regional Co-Ordinator with the SES and FESA. After retirement Bernie joined Melville SES as a Volunteer. Bernie was a committee member of the SESVA for a number of years.

## MELVILLE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

03/08/2003

### **NOTES FOM TOM B. JOYCE EARLY DAYS OF MELVILLE S.E.S. GROUP**

*(Typed by Kerry Hall from hand written notes)*

Early 1973 made contact with then controller of the Melville Civil Defence and Emergency Services Group, Mr R.F. Fleay.

After exchanging correspondence with Mr Fleay during 1973 and 1974, with a view to joining the group, nothing eventuated.

Enquiries at the Melville City Council, regarding re-activating a Civil Defence Unit, which at the time appeared to have faded out, the Town Clerk advised me that it was my prerogative to do something if I wished.

During 1975, the Melville Council were advised that a training course was coming up at Mt Macedon in Victoria.

An employee of the Council was nominated to attend this course, which was for a "Rescue Instructor". The person nominated was not interested in attending and as he knew that I was, advised me his intention to decline the offer.

After discussions with the Town Clerk I was nominated to attend the "Rescue Instructor's" course, at the Counter Disaster College. At this time the initials "C.D." were known generally as Civil Defence but these were now being used to mean "Counter Disaster".

After completing the course and being qualified as a "Rescue Instructor", the next move was to organise a group of volunteers and become an active unit.

Being a member of the Four Wheel Drive Club of WA at this time, I called for volunteers at a Four Wheel Drive Club meeting and immediately received nominations from 19 very keen club members who were eager to learn new skills and rescue techniques.

As an employee of the Melville City Council, I was given the use of the "old" Melville Road Board Building located at the intersection of Canning Highway and Stock Road in Palmyra, a suburb of Melville, to use for meeting and general training.

This old building was quite dilapidated and run down, but cleaned up okay, and it did include the original lock-up strong room which was ideal as a storage area. The strong room and council room had in fact been used but the now defunct Civil Defence group and did contain a small amount of equipment, such as a few ex-army folding stretchers, bits and pieces of first aid kits, some military style leather boots and gaiters, a few pairs of blue, ex-air force overalls and some torches.

Radio communications were very poor from this location and it was necessary at times to drive or walk across the road to a better location to improve this problem. There were odd occasions when it was necessary to travel down the road a short distance and use the Palmyra Police facilities.

The first official vehicle the group was given the use of, was an old 1950's Dodge, ex St John Ambulance, which had been used as a First Aid Post at sporting and other functions, but was no longer in service. The vehicle was owned and serviced by the Melville Council. It was a real asset to the group for several years. All other vehicles in the group were privately owned and mainly four wheel drives.

In its early years, the group was known as "The Melville Voluntary Emergency Service" and its first meeting was held in the old council owned building on the corner of Canning Highway and Stock Road in Palmyra on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1976.

The Town Clerk of the Melville City Council, Mr Ralph Fardon, due to his position, became the first co-coordinator of the group, but only as a figurehead. He was never actively involved in the running or operation of the unit. This also applied to the next Town Clerk, Mr Garry Hunt, who was also known as the City Manager.

During 1988 Mr Hunt was unable to be actively involved in the operation of the unit and the position of coordinator was given to Mr Doug Anderson, an active member of the unit.

During the early years of the group, all activities, including training, were organised and coordinated by Tom Joyce and as the members were trained, some were efficient enough to assist with training new members.

Training was carried out fortnightly with some weekend training, including some overnight training camps, all of which were popular and well attended.

On November 7 1976, after having been established and training for just a few months, a team of 8 members, including the leader Mr Tom Joyce, competed against 6 other well established units in the first annual rescue competition held at Nedlands WA. The Melville unit came third in the competition with only a single point separating the first three places.

During 1976 the Melville unit was fortunate enough to be issued, from state headquarters of The State Emergency Service, a single axle, completely enclosed trailer, fitted out with the following equipment:-

- 1 set of hydraulic rescue equipment (porta-power)
- Some ex-army style grey blankets
- 8 basic first aid kits (bandages etc)
- 8 man-packs containing:-
  - A 12 metre lashing
  - 5 metres of sash cord
  - 1 set of webbing bands for casualty handling
  - 1 light steel wire bond
  - 1 cold chisel
  - 1 25mm auger with wooden handle
  - 1 Gympie hammer
  - 1 multi-purpose hand saw
  - 1 dust mask and pair of dust goggles
  - 1 water bottle
  - 1 pair gloves
- 1 stirrup pump and bucket
- 1 tirfor hand winch
- 1 bushman saw
- 1 shovel
- 2 extension ladders – 1 long and 1 short
- 6 ex-army MK2 folding stretchers came later.

With this trailer and its equipment the unit was able to carry out an efficient training program.

Over a short period following the issue of this trailer and equipment, numerous other items were supplied by Tom Joyce and added to what was originally supplied.

Several poles to be used for the construction of "A" frames, tripods, and other lifting apparatus were also added to the unit's equipment.

The unit was now capable of efficiently training an eight man rescue team.

Training was carried out at various sites within the City of Melville, but mainly, prior to the residential development of the Winthrop, Murdoch, Kardina/Sommerville areas between Leach Highway, South Street, Murdoch Drive, Bowen Street and Garling. This land was a large pine plantation Street as well as the area between Northlake Road, Leach Highway, Murdoch Drive and South Street across to Farrington Road; the section nearest to Leach Highway includes Piney Lake where the unit was given permission to carry out training exercises.

A small section of the pine plantation adjacent to South Street and close to what is now known as Cusack Way had been cleared and contained several houses and other buildings and a high fire lookout tower. This had been a Forest Department (C.A.L.M.) settlement and workshop area as well as a fire lookout from the tower.

At the time of the establishment of the Melville State Emergency Service the pine plantation area was under the control of the University of WA and was patrolled by a ranger, Mr Bob Abel, who was employed by the University and lived in one of the houses on site near the lookout tower. He also had the use of the other houses buildings.

The Melville unit had a very good rapport with Bob Abel who, through the University, granted permission to use the lookout tower and any other suitable areas of the pine plantation for rescue training purposes.

A particularly good area for training was in the vicinity of what is now known as Piney Lake.

Because of problems from louts and other undesirable types loitering in the pine plantation, it was always necessary to advise the local (Palmyra) police of the units' training arrangements in the area. Police officers often attended to watch the group's activities.

September 21 1986 – The building at Wireless Hill in Ardross, now occupied by the S.E.S. unit after moving from the old building at Stock Road and Canning Highway was officially opened.

August 25 1988 – Doug Anderson officially appointed by Melville Council as Coordinator of the unit.



## LETTER FROM 1883

This letter was found in the Onslow Museum during the research of Tsunami affect along the WA coastline.

The earthquake and subsequent tidal wave mentioned in paragraph 7 is a result of the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883.

Nanutarra Sept. 18th 1883.

My dear Maud,

Since writing to you last I have received your two letters per Epeat? and Laughing Wave, but I cannot tell you how disappointed I felt yesterday on receiving the Roebourne mail and Planet's also, at not receiving any letter from you.

I cannot tell you how glad I was to hear from you that Edward had again taken the pledge, and I sincerely hope that he may keep it both for his own and our sake, for I cannot help thinking that many of his faults have been mainly brought about by intemperance and I believe that with this one fault, many of his others will disappear. I was very glad to hear that you had also taken the red ribbon. I cannot tell you how flattered I felt when I received your letter as you are the second young lady who has become a total abstainer for my sake. Now don't feel jealous! nor angry either for my thinking of you with somebody else for in thinking of you with Meresmary Jane I meant no comparison, and with your letter before me I am quite afraid that you will be jealous of my thinking of this other young lady, who I think I might call "Meresmary Maud" but I really feel so proud of my last convert (for I am not going to #give Mr Burnett the credit of it) that I cannot help telling you of it. Now don't you think me conceited!

David Forrest was on board the Dolphin with Mrs Forrest when the child died, it was buried at the station and Mr Hooley read the burial service.

I am sorry to say that the two men I expected to get to build the house, have disappointed me and will not now do it, so that I am quite at a loss at present to know what to do, but should nothing turn up before the Dolphin goes to Roebourne at the end of the month I shall have to get men from Fremantle, under these circumstances I cannot say when I shall be able to get down, but the house is not likely to be started much before Xmas.

Lambing has again commenced and we have every prospect of another good one.

Mat has not yet gone out but I hope he will get away by the end of the month. I think he will have to ask my permission to come and see you at Nanutarra, he is jolly and fat as usual and always wishes to be remembered to you.

The most startling news we have is that we have had a shock of earthquake, also a tidal wave, the sheep were just being landed from the Laughing-Wave when it took place and one of the dingys was swamped while another was washed up high and dry, sheep and all. 12 sheep were drowned out of the dinky swamped. The noise was heard all over the district and we have heard also in the South.

Mr Hillyard has joined a Mr Taylor, son of Taylor of Taylor, Bethel and Co. the great shipping agents. I do not know if Bryan (The man who was making such a fool of himself with.....girls when I was down) is on with them - he was Hillyard partner before.

Mr Rouse has also returned but I have not had the honour of seeing him yet and don't wish to have it.

That poor baby! how could I forget it but tell Edie I will give it any amount of kisses when I come up to make up for my neglect, more than I have ever done for anybody else's baby! I am sure with the virtues and good looks of the Highams, it must be a little angel and I am certain it can't have any vices - at least not on our ~~ix~~ side.

I must now conclude hoping to be remembered to all at home, not excepting the wonderful baby and with much love

From your affectionate (Sgd.) Harry.

## **23. ANECDOTES AND FUNNY OR QUIRKY STORIES**

### **SKYLAB**

Many stories evolved out of this event but one of the more unique ones happened at a southwest unit where two Volunteers worked together on a practical joke.

One of them ran into the Operations Room shouting that he had just seen the bright lights of Skylab heading this way.

The other Volunteer then threw a handful of gravel on the roof of the Operations Room.

After things settled everyone saw the funny side.

### **EXMOUTH**

The team, staff of FESA and State Emergency Service Volunteers, located at the State Emergency Service building in Exmouth did a fantastic job, for the community over the three weeks following TC Vance impacting the town of Exmouth.

Many funny stories came out of this period but the funniest one involved the then FESA Logistics Manager, Craig Hynes.

The Police walked into the Operations Room at the Exmouth SES Unit and approached Craig about a matter.

Craig had earlier in the day been followed by the Police as he drove down the road in the “staff” car.

The Police advised Craig that he was observed driving a vehicle that was reported as stolen! Everyone had a good laugh at Craig’s expense.

What had happened was as TC Vance approached Exmouth, people jumped buses and planes to get out of the area.

Some international tourists dumped their hire car at what they thought was the back of the Police station and left their keys in the vehicle.

In fact it was the back of the State Emergency Service building.


When someone needed a vehicle they went out and grabbed the most available one.

At some point the hire company reported the vehicle as stolen and it was on the Police list.



## 24. APPENDIX 1 – PAPAL VISIT

S.E.S. A8



GH/20

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**

TELEX: 93097  
TELEGRAMS: "SESWA" PERTH  
TELEPHONE: 277 5333

91 LEAKE STREET,  
BELMONT 6104.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE  
Ref: 01-01-21

12 November, 1986

See Distribution:

PAPAL VISIT TO PERTH  
VISIT OPERATIONS INSTRUCTION

General

1. The above visit is scheduled for the period 30 November to 1 December, 1986.
2. The Pope is expected to arrive at approximately 1310 hours on Sunday, 30 November, 1986 at the Perth Airport Domestic Terminal and depart on Monday, 1 December from the International Terminal at approximately 0730 hours.
3. While the Pope will be visiting a number of locations, the prime activity is the celebration of a religious service at Belmont Race Course, on the afternoon of his arrival, at which in excess of 100,000 persons are expected to attend. This is scheduled to take place from approximately 1400 hours to 1800 hours on Sunday, 30 November, 1986.
4. The WASES is to support the visit through the provision of communications personnel from SES units to man the Site Directors communications organisational networks and to adopt a state of readiness during the visit.

Aim

5. The aim of this instruction is to detail the WASES state of readiness during the duration of the visit and the communications support arrangement for the Site Director at Belmont Race Course.

Execution

6. General Outline

The WASES support for the visit will be provided by:

a. State of Readiness

- (1) Manning of the SEOC for the duration of the visit.
- (2) Manning of the Metropolitan RHQ's for the duration, of the activity at Belmont Race Course.

b. Communications Support

- (1) Provision of approximately 60 SES volunteers as radio operators attached to the Site Directors Staff for the duration of the religious celebration at Belmont Race Course.
- (2) Maintaining communications between the SEOC RHQ's and on-site control point at Belmont Park.

7. State of Readiness

To ensure WASES capability to respond to an emergency, the following manning levels will be adopted:

a. State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC)

Manning levels will be as follows:

- (1) 0700 to 1200 hours, Sunday 30 November, 1986
  - (a) Duty Officer
  - (b) 1 x radio operator (volunteer)
  - (c) Senior Duty Staff Officer (on call)
- (2) 1200 to 1800 hours Sunday, 30 November, 1986
  - (a) Duty Staff Officer
  - (b) 2 x Radio Operators (volunteers)
  - (c) 2 x Operations Staff (volunteers)
  - (d) Senior Duty Staff Officer (on call)

- (3) 1800 hours 30 November, 1986 to 0815 hours 1 December, 1986
  - (a) Duty Staff Officer
  - (b) Senior Duty Staff Officer (on call)
- b. Metropolitan (North and South) Regional Headquarters
  - (1) 1200 to 1800 hours 30 November, 1986
    - (a) Regional Co-ordinator (Metro South only)
    - (b) Regional Clerks
    - (c) 1 x Radio Operator (volunteer)
- c. Emergency Manning

Full emergency manning of facilities if required, will be determined by the SDSO in consultation with the Director.
- d. SES Units

State of readiness and manning at unit level will be determined following intelligence and information from Police Headquarters.
- 8. Communications Support - Belmont Race Course
  - a. WASES Operations at Belmont Park will be co-ordinated by the Metropolitan North Regional Co-ordinator, and shall comprise of the establishment of a control and rest tent at Belmont Race Course, and the provision of approximately 60 SES personnel to act as radio operators, on a roster basis.
  - b. The provision of this support on Sunday 30 November, 1986 shall be as follows:
    - (1) 0700 Hours
      - (a) All participants assemble at WHQ, Belmont.
      - (b) Participants are requested to use personnel vehicles in a pooling system.
      - (c) Unit vehicles should be left at Unit HQ for use in the event of an emergency.

- (2) By 0730 Hours
  - (a) Participants will be ferried from WHQ to Belmont Race Course.
  - (b) It is anticipated that all ferrying will be completed by 0730 hours.
- (3) From 0730 Hours Onwards
  - (a) Establishment of WASES Control Point at Belmont Race Course.
  - (b) Final briefing, issue of equipment and deployment of operators.
  - (c) Radio checks with SEOC.
- (4) From approximately 1800 hours
  - (a) Radio operators will be gradually stood down and ferried back to WHQ to return equipment and collect their own vehicles.
  - (b) Standing down of operations will be authorised by RC Metro (N) only.

9. Tasks

- a. No specific tasking details beyond the support functions detailed above have been allocated at this stage and will only become known:
  - (1) When further intelligence becomes available;
  - (2) when the nature of a happening becomes known.
- b. Above information, if and when available, will be communicated to the SEOC by Police COMCO, and relayed to Regional Headquarters accordingly.
- c. It is anticipated that manpower and material resources may be requested by the Police following the impact of any emergency.
- d. The task of those WASES personnel at Belmont Park Racecourse is to provide staffing for the visit organisers radio communications network over the period of the venues operation. The WASES staff at the venue will be self sufficient for the period on site as the area will be sealed off by W.A. Police Force.



Communication

10. Radio

Standard WASES radio facilities employing UHF channel 1 will be used to provide radio communications linking the SEOC to RHQ Metro North, RHQ Metro South, Regional Co-ordinator Metro North, and the Metro North Forward Headquarters (FWD HQ).

The Regional Co-ordinator Metro North and his FWD HQ will be located at the Belmont Park Racecourse. A radio Communications Network Diagram is at Annex A.

11. Telephone Checks

Upon manning the SEOC at 0700 hours, Sunday 30 November, 1986 the Duty Staff Officer will establish telephone communications with Police COMCO. He will establish telephone communications with RHQ Metro North and RHQ Metro South when they man up at 1200 hours.

12. Radio Check

A Radio Check with the two RHQ's will be conducted at 1200 hours, Sunday 30 November, 1986. The Radio Check with RC Metro North and the FWD HQ will be conducted on Sunday 30 November, 1986 and will commence once they are in location at the Belmont Racecourse.

The radio network is to remain open until approval is given by the SEOC to close down. Vehicles leaving the WHQ area during the operation are to carry out a Radio Check with the SEOC before leaving and upon returning to the WHQ area.

13. Pager Check

Pager units of the two Regional Co-ordinators and the Senior Duty Staff Officer are to be checked as part of the 1200 hours Radio Check.

14. SEOC PABX

The Duty Staff Officer is to ensure that the SEOC PABX Operators console is placed on ABSENT MODE upon arriving for duty at 0700 hours Sunday 30 November, 1986.

Rehearsal

15. A rehearsal of the Communications Support at Belmont Park is scheduled for Saturday 29 November, 1986 from 1330 hours to 1600 hours.

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15. A rehearsal of the Communications Support at Belmont Park is scheduled for Saturday 29 November, 1986 from 1330 hours to 1600 hours.

16. All participants are to assemble at WHQ, Belmont at 1330 hours. Units may arrive in unit vehicles if desired.
17. Participants will be ferried to and from Belmont Park for the rehearsal.

Administration

18. Catering

- a. Staff Officer Administration is to ensure adequate rations are available in the SEOC, for WHQ duty staff.
- b. Regional Co-ordinators are responsible for catering in their REOC's.
- c. Regional Co-ordinator Metro (N) is to ensure adequate catering for all WASES personnel at the Belmont Park Racecourse location.

19. Dress

- a. Duty Staff are to be in uniform.
- b. Volunteers attending Belmont Park will wear the standard dress for the day as follows:
  - Boots - Black High Leg Polished.
  - Overalls - WASES Safety orange with issue Roundel and shoulder flashes.  
Elastic bands at ankles.
  - Belt - Waist webbing and water bottle with carrier.
  - Hat - <sup>Safety</sup> Safety Orange/
- c. In the event of wet weather all personnel are to wear wet weather clothing on issue to units.

20. Transport

- a. Staff Officer, Stores and Transport is to ensure all WHQ vehicles are refuelled and ready for operational use. Four FJ60 Toyota Landcruisers are to be made available to R/C Metro (N) by 1630 hours 28 November, 1986 for Belmont venue support.
- b. Vehicles bearing the WASES logo and W.A. Government registration plates will be the only vehicles allowed to enter the VENUE AREA.

- c. RC Metro (N) is to ensure that vehicles returned are locked and the keys put away.

21. Stores

- a. Staff Officer, Stores and Transport has been separately advised of all store requirements.

- b. The store will need to be opened as follows:


- (1) Saturday 29 November, 1986 from 1300-1500 hours (SO S&T to attend).  
(2) Sunday 30 November, 1986 from 1700-1900 hours (DSO to attend).

22. Parking

All personnel and unit vehicles are to park at the outer car park at the junction of Leake Street and Durban Street.

Document Status

23. This instruction replaces an earlier instruction on the same subject issued on 27 August, 1986.

  
R.J. SPARKS  
DIRECTOR  
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Distribution:

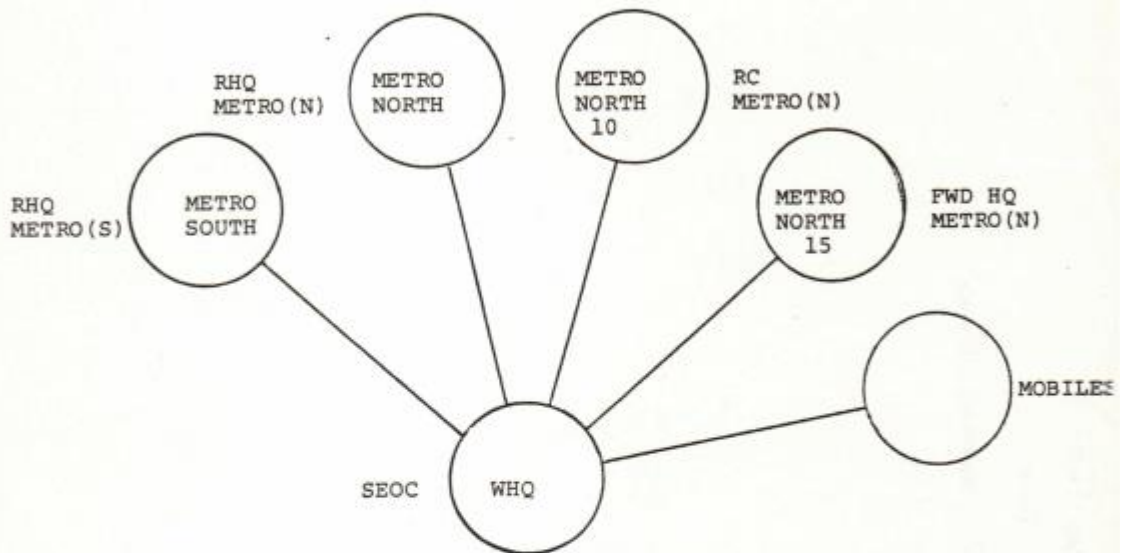
RC Metro (N) - 60 copies  
RC Metro (S) - 10 copies  
List A

For Information:

Chief Inspector F. Zanetti  
Police Department



RADIO COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK DIAGRAM



Frequency:

UHF Channel 1 Primary  
UHF Channel 2 Secondary (if required)

Net Callsign

Channel 1 - 6DG  
Channel 2 - 6LE (if required)

Radio Schedules:

1. With Metro North 10, and Metro North 15 - when they are in location on 30 November, 1986.
2. With Metro South and Metro North - at 1200 hours 30 November, 1986