

SESVA CYCLONE SEROJA DEBRIEF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

SESVA Debrief of Cyclone Seroja deployment was held to determine the role of SES Volunteers and their contribution in attending incidents of this nature.

The debrief is intended to capture as much information as possible to assist DFES, together with SES Volunteers, to operate in an area that DFES acknowledges it has limited experience of, given this is the first major incident of this type from a natural hazard perspective from some time.

1700-1800 RFAs were recorded. In Kalbarri alone, 75% of all houses were impacted, 45% severely and 10% were written off. The damage to trees was significant.

Representatives of 15 SES Units participated in the debrief which examined aspects of the Seroja deployment which worked well and those which could be improved on.

The summary outlines the experiences of SES Volunteers and puts forward recommendations for solutions that will assist both DFES and the SES to develop an improved an integrated emergency service response to incidents of this nature in future.

The SESVA acknowledges that the response overall was successful and this was due to the extent of collaboration between volunteers of various disciplines and DFES. Everyone worked well together to get the job done.

1. UTILISATION AND MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

a. Local knowledge

Recommendations:

- ***Give priority to Utilising local knowledge and people.***

b. Relaying Information of Skills and Qualifications

Recommendations:

- ***Skills & Qualification Register: DFES to record skills and qualifications of each volunteer being deployed to an incident site and relay this information to the Team Leaders.***
- ***Aim to have greater consistency of training to ensure uniformity of practices.***

c. Length of Deployment – Loss of Continuity and Situational Awareness

Recommendations:

- ***Increase deployment to this type of major incident to a minimum of 1-5-1 but preferably two weeks. Down time to be at the deployment site rather than being transported backward and forward for long distances as this is contributes to fatigue.***

2. DEPLOYMENT

a. Accurate and Consistent Communication of Numbers being Deployed to Site

Recommendations:

- ***With an Increased deployment rotation core crews could be established for a two week period with additional people scheduled to supplement them. This would alleviate the impact on team building of unknown and fluctuating numbers new arrivals.***

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b. Anticipation in the Planning Process

Recommendations:

- ***Devise strategies for better anticipation of the impact of events and the resources and logistics required for deployment. Employ pre-staging accommodation for crews travelling long distances.***

c. Coordination and Timing of Deployment

Recommendations:

- ***SES Units and SOC/MOC work together to devise methods/procedures to troubleshoot and improve deployment scheduling and dissemination of deployment instructions.***
- ***Endeavour to give volunteers advance notice of deployment to taken into account of their personal and work commitments.***

d. Deployment Register, Inclusiveness, Accuracy and Flexibility

Recommendations:

- ***Deployment register practices to be reviewed so it does not impede the deployment of available volunteers and provides great flexibility for volunteers who have employment commitments.***

e. Provision of Pre-Deployment Briefing and Assessment of Volunteers' Experience

Recommendations:

- ***Have pre deployment briefings for people before they arrive on site, particularly for people with no prior experience of a type of incident.***
- ***Volunteers to be briefed to maintain a flexible mindset so they can better adapt to the situation on site.***

f. Staggering Team Deployment on Site

Recommendations:

- ***Rather than shifting a whole new team out at once, have 10 people remain to act as mentors and ensure a smooth situational change over.***

g. Resourcing of DFES Staff

- i) *Shortage of District Officers*
- ii) *Reduce staff meetings times*

Recommendations:

- ***Develop a leave roster of DOs to avoid a simultaneous loss of critical management skills, particularly in the event of an impending natural disaster.***
- ***Prioritisation of DFES activities to ensure lengthy meetings do not delay deployment response times in critical incidents.***
- ***Allow greater self governance by senior SES volunteers experienced natural.***

3. TRANSPORTATION

- a) *Communication about methods of transportation*
- b) *Coordinating road transport to coincide with flight schedules*
- c) *Utilisation of RAAF Hercules*

Recommendations:

- ***Improvement in logistics practices to coordinate motor transport with flight schedules to avoid delays in deployment of resources, and avoid frustration of long waiting times.***
- ***Utilise local air fields where practical.***

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- *Utilise Perth Airport rather than Pearce if possible.*
- *Allocate one DO whose sole responsibility is deployment transport/logistics, as in eastern states deployments.*

4. COMMUNICATION

- a. Sharing information to avoid duplication in a time critical environment
- b. Loss of Tele-communication Systems

Recommendations:

- *Utilise the manual RFA recording methods employed by Kalbarri for future events where this is a loss of power and telecommunications for an extended period.*
- *Maintain UHF and VHF systems as a stand by for loss of power incidents.*

- b. MOC and SOC

Recommendations:

- *Initiate and maintain a standardised process for each event that is adhered to across change overs of staff to maintain consistency of instructions issued to the incident site and situational awareness in the MOC/SOC.*
- *Simplify the chain of communication to avoid duplication and misinterpretation.*

5. TRAINING for NON NATURAL HAZARDS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Recommendations:

- *Provide Natural Hazards training to non SES volunteers as well as DFES staff so they can be more effectively deployed in future major storm incidents.*

6. ASBESTOS EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT AND OHS

Recommendations:

- *Specialised clean-up crews and asbestos monitoring should be put in place on day one to mitigate risk in areas where there is known to be significant quantities of asbestos.*
- *Provide all Volunteers training and information about coming into contact with asbestos.*
- *Have available appropriate PPE when and if exposure is suspected.*
- *Provide information/links on registering on the National Asbestos Register.*
- *Ensure lessons from this incident and previous major incidents are recorded and learned, particularly in relation to old towns and the prolific use of asbestos.*

7. WELLNESS SUPPORT ON SITE

- a. Community
- b. Volunteers
- c. On Return from Deployment:

Recommendation:

- *DFES to investigate ADF model of having Chaplaincy support available at critical incident sites for members of the community and volunteers.*
- *Ensure consistent procedures are implemented by DOs in every region in relation to wellness follow up.*

8. NORTHAMPTON, MIGENEW, MORAWA AND PERENJORI

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Recommendations:

- *DFES to liaise with inland Local Government areas in regard to what emergency response communications back up systems are available and in place.*
- *Education of Local government authorities on use of communication systems like WAERN and available radio frequencies in instances where there is loss of power and the mobile network is down.*
- *Utilise BOM information to predict path of major storms and check on small townships. Don't presume because they haven't been heard from they are alright.*

9. HISTORICAL LEARNING

Recommendations:

- *Document and review lessons learned so mistakes are not repeated.*
- *Reinstate comprehensive holistic PIAs to devise and implement strategies that improve emergency responses, encompassing the issues outlined in this report.*

10. ACCOMMODATION

Recommendations:

- *Provision of accommodation that provides proper nutrition and a level of comfort to overcome fatigue.*
- *More effective and timely processes to pay outstanding accounts, particularly when the natural hazard has severely impacted the cashflow of local businesses.*
- *ameliorate poor perception of Emergency Services so it does not reflect negatively on Volunteers.*

11. USE OF SES UNIT VEHICLES by INTRA STATE COHORT

Recommendations:

- *Put in place processes (and requirement for loanee to sign declaration of responsibility that includes a register of equipment) that protects an SES Unit from having to bear the costs of vehicles on loan returned with damage, equipment missing and drivers not taking responsibility for speeding fines.*
- *Put in place processes whereby contaminated vehicles are immediately decontaminated in accordance with OS&H best practice.*

CONCLUSION

You may want to write something in here