

# Margaret River HEART Simulates Emergency Response in USAR Exercise

On August 19, the Nala Bardip Mia (Margaret River Hub of Entertainment Arts & Regional Tourism (HEART)) was the focal point of an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) exercise to test emergency preparedness and response strategies. The exercise simulated a partial collapse in the stage area of the HEART's main theatre, complete with loss of power, necessitating a comprehensive evacuation and rescue operation.

The primary aim of the exercise was to evaluate the emergency response plans and readiness of the HEART and local emergency services, including the SES, St John Ambulance (SJA), and DFES incident Control Vehicle (ICV) volunteers. The event successfully highlighted the effectiveness of current protocols and identified areas for improvement.

Thirty-five community volunteers role-played as patrons and casualties during the exercise. Casualties were provided with briefing and moulage and located throughout the venue's theatres, bars, kitchen and backstage areas.



*Casualties received a briefing and moulage to simulate injuries*

Arts Margaret River staff and volunteers completed an evacuation of the building, after which casualties were returned to the building, and the incident was handed over to arriving SES responders for search and rescue operations.

## Key Objectives and Achievements

The exercise was structured around several key objectives, all of which were met with notable success, including an Evacuation Drill, USAR Operation, Familiarisation with the venue, Coordination and Relationships, Operational insights.

## Exercise Highlights

The scenario started with a simulated collapse in the HEART's main stage area, triggering an immediate evacuation of the building. Arriving responders established a control point at the ICV, a casualty triage area for SJA, and a staging area for SES to begin a search and rescue operation.

## Conclusion

the USAR exercise at the Margaret River HEART was a valuable learning experience demonstrating the strengths and areas for enhancement in emergency response procedures. With actionable insights and recommendations, the exercise underscored the ongoing commitment of all involved parties to ensuring safety and preparedness in the face of potential emergencies.

The exercise involved 25 SES volunteers, 8 SJA paramedics and volunteers, 7 ICV crew and 9 staff and volunteers from the HEART and Arts Margaret River.

