

National Disaster Rescue Challenge 2024 SYDNEY 27—29 September

The National Disaster Rescue Challenge has come and gone for another two years. The WA Team travelled to Penrith via Sydney in preparation for two days of Challenge participation.

State Emergency Service (SES) teams from across Australia converged on Sydney to test their skills and learn new techniques from each other in this National event hosted this year by NSW SES.

The Challenge put teams through their paces in various scenarios. It is unique in that teams compete against each other in the form of scenarios and gain as many points as possible by undertaking roles in a safe manner, working together as a team, decision making and casualty handling/first aid.

NSW SES Assistant Commissioner, Dean Storey ESM said, “interagency exercises like the NDRC are a great way for our experts to further enhance their capability to save lives and build safer communities if disaster strikes.



WA NDRC Team L-R: Cherese Green, Kettesse Hansen, Ming Lim, Megan Davies, Mark Geary, Warren Taylor, Melissa Baker

Competing in events like this allows teams to share best practice and learn how each agency works state-to-state so they can work better should they be deployed together in the future”. Every mainland state and territory are usually represented at the three-day challenge, which involves more than 200 people and 12 different types of scenarios.

Some of the scenarios were challenging for the WA team, being outside the scope of work for most WA SES volunteers. A scene with a vehicle having run over two casualties who were trapped under a vehicle and concrete block with more casualties in the vehicle. In another situation a team of three rescuers initially were faced with 14 casualties who had been struck to varying degrees by debris. They also faced a structure which had extensive damage including ceiling collapse and teams using power tools to cut through fallen walls to access the trapped person and her baby.



The WA team had a very valuable learning experience and will take away many ideas and rescue techniques which can be utilised in developing training programs. No doubt they will implement some of the scenarios into their own unit training.

We are very proud of WA’s accomplishment competing against some very strong teams who spend 20 months preparing and practising for the games. The WA Team came together with three months preparation time but the feedback from each of the stand evaluators being very positive and in one instance the judge made the comment the technique the team used “made my weekend”.