

THE OFFICIAL YEARBOOK OF THE NATIONAL STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

NSESVA

Yearbook 2023





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Debbie Howie and Myra Rist

The NSESVA Yearbook 2023

"To Lead and Influence Change"

About the NSESVA

The National State Emergency Service Volunteers Association Ltd (NSESVA) was formed in 2015. NSESVA is an incorporated association established as a not for profit entity and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

The National State Emergency Service Volunteers Association Ltd has been established to represent the thousands of State and Territory Emergency Service volunteers. The Association works to achieve nationally consistent goals that represent the interests of its volunteer members, advocating for them when appropriate.

With over 43,000 State and Territory Emergency Service volunteers the Association provides a forum for national cross jurisdiction communication, collaboration and coordination on common issues in the emergency management arena that affect volunteers.

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ON THE COVER:



Falls Creek 58

Winter presents a unique set of demands for our unit. The winter environment can be harsh and ever changing, the weather being unforgiving and brutal.



ACT 23

- ACTSES: Recruit training
- NAVCAN: A testing of navigation skills of volunteers



NSW 29

- What is a Microburst?
- The Australasian Road Rescue Organisation Challenge Adelaide 2023
- + more!



NT 39

- Northern Territory's Response to NSW Longest Flooding Operation
- Kalkarindji Floods



QLD 45

- Queensland SES Reform
- Anita Tredrea



SA 49

- SASES Defencell Flood Mitigation

Contents

REGULAR FEATURES

- 7** From the Minister
- 9** From the Chair
- 11** Editor's Note

FEATURES

- 12** AFAC National Memorial Service 2023
- 15** Era of Global Boiling
- 19** NSESVA Young Emerging Leaders (YELs) Canberra Program

FROM THE JURISDICTIONS

- 23** Australian Capital Territory
- 29** New South Wales
- 39** Northern Territory
- 45** Queensland
- 49** South Australia
- 52** Tasmania
- 57** Victoria
- 63** Western Australia

FROM THE ARCHIVE

- 68** 1970 West Gate Bridge Disaster

OBITUARIES

- 70** Vale Christine Bethwaite
- 71** Vale Gordon Thornton
- 71** Vale Bob White
- 72** Vale Lizzie Britt
- 74** Vale Paul "Paddy" O'Brien
- 76** Vale Tony Graham


TAS
52

- King Island Dog Rescue
- SES State Skills Workshop
- Volunteer Strategy and Support Unit


VIC
57

- Denis Brain: 50 years service
- Falls Creek
- Pride March 2023


WA
63

- Sarge Serves with the SES for 35 Years
- SES Volunteers Camaraderie and Generosity of Spirit
- Bayswater SES 200 Years of Service



Federal Labor proudly supports SES Volunteers, who serve our communities with courage and compassion.

Thank you for keeping our communities safe.



**The Hon
Anthony Albanese MP**



**The Hon
Richard Marles MP**



**Senator the Hon
Penny Wong**



**Senator the Hon
Murray Watt**



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From the Minister

✘ Senator the Hon Murray Watt

*Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Emergency Management*

The past few years have been incredibly tough on our emergency services.



I KNOW THAT VOLUNTEERS HAVE

put in countless hours across the country to support their fellow Australians through some of the toughest days of their lives. Last year alone, nearly 70% of Australians lived in a local government area that experienced a natural disaster.

We know that Australia is going to face more frequent and more severe natural disasters, due to climate change. The Albanese Government is committed to better preparing Australia for future natural disasters, so we can respond and recover quicker.

Since coming to Government, we've committed jointly with states and territories nearly \$400 million through our flagship Disaster Ready Fund, to build disaster resilience and mitigation projects like flood levees, cyclone shelters, bushfire detection technology and evacuation centres.

We've simplified the Fire Danger Rating System, and begun building Australia's first national stockpile of critical disaster goods and services, such as emergency shelter, water and electricity, to enable states and territories to quickly access these resources in times of need.

We have also commenced consultation on what we as the Commonwealth can do to better enhance our crisis response and recovery capabilities for when Australia faces compounding, concurrent crises. We recognise that states and territories have primary responsibility for responding to natural hazards, but I believe that there is a supporting, not supplanting, role the Commonwealth can play when a disaster becomes too severe for a state or territory to handle alone.

This is a unique opportunity for people to have their say on how Australia can better respond to disasters in the future, and help shape major changes to the way the Commonwealth assists in the years to come. I encourage all readers of this magazine to engage in this process.

It is with gratitude and thanks that I write to the readers of the NSESVA Yearbook. As the Federal Minister responsible for Emergency Management, I have the privilege of witnessing first hand the invaluable contributions of SES volunteers.

As we reflect on the past year, let's look to the future with hope and determination, knowing that our collective efforts will continue to make our communities safer and more resilient to natural disasters.

Thank you, and stay safe this higher risk weather season. ✘



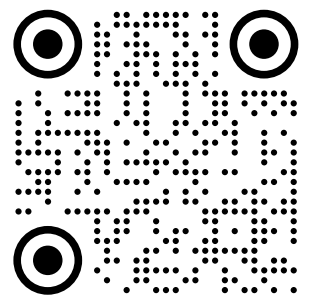
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- Access information and resources to help manage your symptoms.



Visit our website nationalemergencyworkersupport.org.au



Black Dog
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From the Chair

✘ Gordon Hall ESM

NSESVA Chair

SES Volunteer Mandurah WA

Welcome to the second yearbook edition for the NSESVA.



IN LOOKING BACK OVER THE

past year, I acknowledge the great job the SES Volunteers have done in response to floods and cyclones in a number of jurisdictions. Further to this, the work they have done in bushfire support and through many searches is just amazing – well done to all.

The human loss and suffering as well as the financial losses through all of this has been enormous with flood response currently being one of the SES's leading roles. The Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist states that 23 people died from floods in 2022, with the Natural Hazards Research Centre showing that non-fire (natural) hazards are eight times more costly to the Australian economy than fire.

The communities around the country are very appreciative of the work the SES Volunteers do in supporting them in performing rescues and assisting people during these disasters.

Once again, we saw deployment of Volunteers and staff from other Australian jurisdictions to assist during these flood disasters. It is great to see them come together to help those in need.

It is in times like these that we see the resilience of people and their communities come together to work through the tough times.

In the past year the National SESVA has been working closely with the federal government to show what the SES Volunteers do and how they assist their communities in times of natural disasters. This includes meeting with some Senators and their staff as well as working closely with AFAC.

Now that Covid has slowed down and everything has opened up we have been able to recommence one of our objectives in including a group of SES Young Emerging Leaders attending the National memorial Service in Canberra.

This year it included a tour of some establishments, and they were also able to meet with the Governor General at his residence – see separate story.

The Association has been working hard to assist all state-based SES Volunteer Associations in supporting their Volunteers and showcasing nationally what the SES Volunteers do.

The support we receive by many groups including Volunteering Australia, AFAC and others is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Councillors I acknowledge the support given to the SES Volunteers by their families, friends, employers, and many supporters that makes it all possible throughout their training and response activities.

Stay safe. ✘

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Editor's Note

✘ Dr Faye Bendrups OAM

NSESVA Vice Chair

Editor, The NSESVA Yearbook 2023

Volunteer, VICSES Footscray, Victoria

It is with great pleasure I welcome readers to the 2023 NSESVA Yearbook.



IT IS A CHALLENGING TASK TO

collate the content, because there is a limit on how much can be included and there are so many great stories available to choose from. Every day across the nation, SES volunteers are busy doing a multitude of tasks to support their local communities. Every day someone, somewhere is feeling that spirit of camaraderie and mutuality that underpins disaster and emergency response in Australia.

This yearbook is a small opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifice made by ordinary people, to celebrate their achievements and awards, and to mourn their passing. For every story in this journal, there are hundreds more untold. Volunteers do not seek to promote themselves nor do they expect acclaim; they work for the good of their fellow citizens and that commonwealth is their reward. This is a social attribute that we must continue to recognise and support.

After a period of compounding emergencies -covid, bushfires and floods- it is clear that the job ahead for those working in the sector is immense. I urge everyone to take a moment to think about the service given to the nation by SES volunteers, and to take the time to thank them for that service. It is beyond monetary value, it represents heartfelt dedication, commitment to community, and selfless application in the face of significant challenges. ✘



AFAC National Memorial Service 2023

What is the National Memorial Service? AFAC explains:
<https://memorial.afac.com.au/>

THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Services Memorial was opened in July 2004 by Prime Minister John Howard, in honour of the thousands of people who have served in Australia's emergency services organisations. Emergency services is used as a collective description for a wide range of services provided by agencies during

incidents and emergencies, and includes career and volunteer workers.

In May 2018, a Memorial Wall was unveiled at the site by The Hon. Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Law Enforcement and Cyber Security. The wall displays the names of emergency services personnel who have been killed in the line of duty, and honours their commitment

to keeping our communities safe. The wall was jointly funded by the Commonwealth of Australia and AFAC, the National Council for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand.

The Memorial provides a place for remembrance and quiet reflection for families, colleagues and visitors.



afac

2023 NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Friday 12 May 2023

National Emergency Services
Memorial, Canberra

An annual service is held at the Memorial in early May each year to remember those who have died in the line of duty and is streamed live so those who cannot attend Canberra in person can view it online.

Since 2019, the Directors and Councillors of the National SES Volunteers Association (NSESVA)

have attended the service. A key project of NSESVA is to sponsor Young Emerging Leaders from every jurisdiction to also attend the service and participate in other activities in Canberra. In 2023, fourteen Young Emerging Leaders were sponsored. At the Memorial Service they assisted attendees with seating, handed out

sprigs of rosemary and formed a guard of honour for the arrival of the Governor General His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd). After the service they were addressed by the Federal Minister for Emergency Management Senator the Hon. Murray Watt and the Special Envoy for Disasters, Senator Tony Sheldon. ✘

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Era of Global Boiling

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1139162>

As wildfires raged across Southern Europe and North Africa, top UN climate scientists said on Thursday that it was “virtually certain” that July 2023 will be the warmest on record.

ECHOING THAT WARNING IN

New York, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that “short of a mini-Ice Age” in coming days, July 2023 would likely “shatter records across the board”.

“Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning,” said the UN chief, warning that the consequences are as clear as they are tragic: “children swept away by monsoon rains, families running from the flames (and) workers collapsing in scorching heat.”

Remarkable and unprecedented

In Geneva, scientists from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the European Commission’s Copernicus Climate Change Service described conditions this month as “rather remarkable and unprecedented”.

They said that new data showed that so far, July has seen the hottest three-week period ever recorded and the three hottest days on record.

“We can say that the first three weeks of July have been the warmest three weeks periods ever observed in our record,” said Carlo Buentempo, Director of Copernicus Climate Change Service, via Zoom.

“This anomaly is so large with respect to other record-breaking months in our record that we are virtually certain that the month, the month as a whole will become the warmest July on record, the warmest month on record, in all likelihood.”

Ocean temperature record

Just as worrying was the fact that ocean temperatures are at their highest-ever recorded levels for this time of year. This trend has been apparent since the end of April.

Citing “a clear and dramatic warming decade on decade” since the 1970s, WMO’s Director of Climate Services Chris Hewitt noted that 2015 to 2022 saw the eight warmest years on record, based on a 173-year dataset.

This was despite the fact that the La Niña sea-cooling phenomenon prevailed towards the end of that period in the Pacific region, which reined in global average temperatures slightly, Mr. Hewitt explained.

“But now the La Niña has ended” - to be replaced by the sea-warming El Niño effect - waters have begun to heat up in the tropical Pacific, bringing the “almost certain likelihood that one of the next five years will be the warmest on record”.

It is also “more likely than not” that global average temperatures will temporarily exceed the 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial levels “for at least one of the five years”, the WMO scientist continued.

Era of global boiling

Speaking at UN Headquarters, the Secretary-General underscored the need for global action on emissions, climate adaptation and climate finance.

He warned that “the era of global warming has ended” and “the era of global boiling has arrived.”

Although climate change is evident, “we can still stop the worst,” he said. “But to do so we must turn a year of burning heat into a year of burning ambition.”

Climate action now

He said leaders “must step up for climate action and climate justice”, particularly those from the G20 leading industrial nations, responsible for 80 per cent of global emissions.

He pointed to upcoming summits - including the UN Climate Ambition Summit in September and the COP28 climate conference in Dubai in November - as critical opportunities.

Net-zero goal

Mr. Guterres highlighted the need for new national emissions targets from G20 members and urged all countries to push to reach net zero emissions by mid century.

He said all actors must unite to accelerate the just and equitable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, while stopping oil and gas expansion and phasing out coal by 2040.

Action from companies, cities, regions, financial institutions and fossil fuel companies is also critical.

“No more greenwashing. No more deception. And no more abusive distortion of anti-trust laws to sabotage net zero alliances,” he said.

Investment for adaptation

With extreme weather “becoming the new normal”, Mr. Guterres appealed for “a global surge in adaptation investment” to save millions from the impacts of climate change, particularly in developing countries.

He said developed countries must present a clear and credible roadmap to double adaptation finance by 2025. Furthermore, all governments should implement a UN action plan aimed at ensuring everyone on the planet is protected by early warning systems by 2027.

Honour the commitment

On finance, the Secretary-General urged richer countries to honour their commitments to provide \$100 billion annually for climate support in developing countries and to fully replenish the Green Climate Fund.

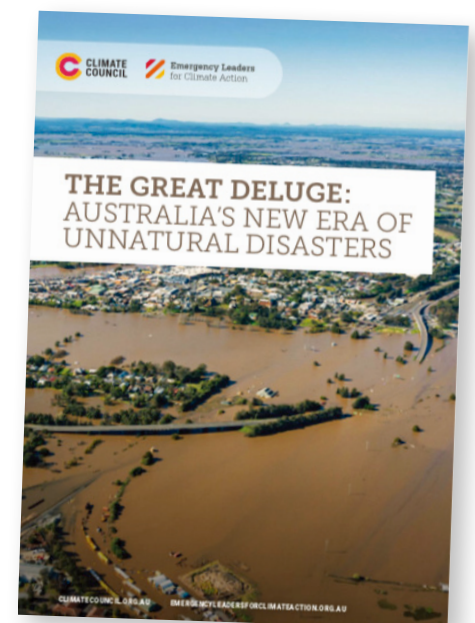
“I am concerned that only two G7 countries – Canada and Germany – have

made replenishment pledges so far,” he said. “Countries must also operationalise the loss and damage fund at COP28 this year. No more delays or excuses.”

Mr. Guterres also reiterated the need for “a course correction in the global finance system” to support accelerated climate action.

Measures would include putting a price on carbon and getting multilateral development banks to scale up funding for renewable energy, adaptation, and loss and damage.

The warning from the UN came not long after Australia experienced its worst and most costly year for flooding on record.



The Great Deluge

The Climate Council and the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA) released a report towards the end of 2022, ‘The Great Deluge: Australia’s New Era of Unnatural Disasters’.

Among the Key Findings (ii-iii), the following points are made. These will come as no surprise to emergency volunteers who have experienced their busiest periods in recent months and have been responding to what seemed to be never ending flooding across the State:

- 2022 will be remembered as the year of the Great Deluge, when rain and rolling floods swamped Eastern Australia breaking many records.
- From Queensland to Tasmania all eastern states were affected by prolonged and intense rainfall events that led to wide-spread and repeat flooding.
- Wettest monthly records were smashed for Brisbane (Queensland), Lismore, Sydney (New South Wales), Shepparton, Falls Creek (Victoria) and Lorrina (Tasmania), with up to three to nine times the typical rainfall recorded in these places.
- Collectively, the storms and floods that affected southeast Queensland and coastal New South Wales in February and March were equal to Australia's costliest ever extreme weather event at \$5.56 billion in insured losses from more than 236,000 claims.
- All Australians are bearing these costs with insurance premiums and food prices on the rise, and more than \$1.5 billion of essential infrastructure needing repair in New South Wales alone. In fact, the average cost per household of extreme weather disasters increased by 73 percent from the ten-year average to \$1,532 in 2021-2022.

The report's findings state that this new era of climate-fuelled, unnatural disasters carries severe consequences for disaster and emergency management in Australia:

- Those in the disaster and emergency management sector know we have entered a new era of escalating disaster threats, where the next impact often hits while communities are still reeling from the last. For some families in the

Hawkesbury region, for instance, the July 2022 flood was the fourth time they had been inundated in 18 months.

- Long-term recovery operations - which are already difficult and expensive - are being set back by subsequent climate disasters. For example, on the NSW South Coast many people made homeless by the 2019/20 Black Summer fires had their temporary accommodation flooded in 2020.
- As a result, the systems we use to plan for and manage disasters no longer cut it. We need to rethink and transform our response to climate-driven disasters starting with more accurate and accessible risk models.
- All governments should focus on reducing people's exposure and vulnerabilities to disasters. However, risk cannot be eliminated and much greater investment should be made in supporting communities to respond, recover and remain resilient through programs like 'Community First Responders'.

Greg Mullins is a councillor with the Climate Council and founder of Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA). He is the former NSW Fire and Rescue commissioner and a serving volunteer firefighter. He was quoted in The Age (28/11/22):

"We lurched straight from unprecedented hot, dry, windy conditions driving jaw-dropping mega-fires to flooding rains of incredible intensity.

The sheer volume of extreme weather records that have fallen in the past 12 months – across Australia and globally – is shocking. From Lismore to Lahore to London, extreme weather records have been broken on every continent on Earth".

Mullins describes the new era as "a frightening new era of climate-driven 'unnatural disasters'" and that "Australia's disaster planning, management and recovery systems are regularly overwhelmed".

Mullins states that "Emergency systems we developed in the 1990s and early 2000s simply cannot cope with the scale and ferocity of the worsening disasters being thrown at us...

Compounding disasters are becoming far more common. Terms such as 'one in 1000-year event' are becoming meaningless".

The Climate Council make some salient recommendations (pp35 - 38), including:

There is an urgent need for a National Climate Change Risk Assessment to be conducted as a baseline for all levels of government to focus on and coordinate climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. The Assessment should underpin production of a national strategy and plan enabling climate risk information to be mainstreamed across all government agencies and sectors and at-risk communities.

They also recommend

- Getting emissions to plummet this decade
- Strengthening disaster management coordination
- Implementing recommendations from expert inquiries
- Prioritising investment
- Supporting communities to 'build back better'
- Putting community first
- Ending fossil fuel subsidies and creating a climate disaster fund ✖

Download and read the full report

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/the-great-deluge-australias-new-era-of-unnatural-disasters/>

See also

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/power-up-ten-climate-gamechangers/>

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Brendan and Karen Helmrich built their own home at Little Hartley in the Blue Mountains. "We decided on a kit home and build it ourselves, so that there wouldn't be a ridiculous mortgage. We estimate that we saved well over \$100,000," he said. "Now it feels just amazing to be in a home that we built."



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NSESVA Young Emerging Leaders (YELs) Canberra Program

The National SES Volunteers Association is committed to developing younger members who will in turn develop the emergency services for the future of Australian communities.

A DECISION WAS MADE TO RUN AN annual program in Canberra to coincide with the AFAC National Memorial Service. NSESVA devised a program of activities that would expose the Young Leaders to strategic thinking in the sector, developments in science, networking with peers, senior sector leaders and federal policy-makers, and involve them in the formalities of the AFAC service. It has been a successful program and the calibre of Young Leaders from every jurisdiction has been outstanding: we are in good hands for the future.

In 2023, the Young Leaders were:

- Jay Tanase (TAS)
- Jamien Frankcombe (TAS)
- Codie Powell (VIC)
- Alex Bartaska (VIC)
- Torben Smith (ACT)
- Amy Lambert (ACT)
- Max Moon (NSW)
- Aiden Petersen (NSW)
- Teghan Hunt (QLD)
- David Lang (QLD)
- Marie Cunningham (NT)
- Stuart Catt (SA)
- Cassidy Kempster (WA)
- Alex Corinaldesi (WA)

Some reflections of their time in Canberra follow:

The Most Memorable Occasion of my Volunteering Career

By Alex Bartaska

Southern Metro Regional Unit, Victoria



“Participating in the Young Emerging Leaders program is perhaps the most memorable occasion of my volunteering career and my work in the emergency service sector”

For anyone who has ever had the chance to travel interstate or overseas on a deployment or has worked with members on deployment to Victoria, you’ll be familiar with that profound sense of community, relatability and identity as an SES volunteer that transcends borders and jurisdictions. This feeling is certainly at the heart of what Acting Controller Codie Powell (Sale Unit) and I had the privilege of experiencing when we were selected as young VICSES representatives at the recent National SES Volunteers Association’s Young Emerging Leaders Program in Canberra.

Alongside two representatives from every SES jurisdiction in the country, we were certainly in for an incredible few days in the nation’s capital. Arriving on the Thursday, we were introduced to our fellow representatives from interstate, and the connection and camaraderie was instantaneous. That afternoon we were treated to a brief tour of the easily under-appreciated sights, sounds and natural beauty of the bush capital’s surroundings by local ACT SES members who provided our transport. Before dinner, we met with NSESVA and AFAC representatives at the Emergency Services Memorial site to familiarise ourselves with the space and our roles for the following morning’s memorial service to honour emergency service members who have died in the line of duty and from workplace injury and illness.



Under clear sunny skies and classic fresh Canberra morning air, we ushered guests to their seats and distributed programmes and rosemary, before forming a guard of honour for the Governor General and his wife, who alongside delegates from agencies across the country and from New Zealand spoke to the spirit of volunteering and working in the emergency service sector and the impact we all have on those around us. We heard the names honoured of those who had recently passed away; it was certainly confronting to hear of how many have died from workplace cancer. Amongst the solemnity of the wreath laying at the end of the ceremony, I can safely say that all who were present had been very moved by the sacred

event we had participated in, with a new dimension being added to our bond as a community. Life certainly is precious, and what better way to spend it doing something you love and with the people you love.

After the ceremony we were greeted by Senator the Hon. Murray Watt (Minister for Emergency Management) and members of his staff, who expressed their gratitude and support for our work before we attended a tour of Parliament House, which is always a fascinating visit. It was at this time that we were let in on a very special secret - we had been formally invited to attend Government House to meet the Governor General and his wife, who presented us all with a Governor General's Medallion each. His Excellency spoke to us of his own experiences as

a young leader and the skills required to lead an age-diverse team, and Her Excellency lead us in singing 'You Are My Sunshine' to renew our commitment to each other as members of the SES family.

Afterwards, we attended the Governor General's barbecue and garden party for the Coronation of King Charles III and his wife Camilla, where the contribution of volunteers and emergency service members in particular was highlighted alongside the theme of service, in light of the upcoming National Volunteers Week. It was certainly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, with highlights being cupcakes with the best icing I've ever tasted and getting to meet volunteers from around the country and dignitaries from all realms of the Commonwealth.



Following the party it was off to Geoscience Australia, where we learned about the science that informs the events we respond to, including some interesting emergency management considerations of less commonly considered natural phenomena such as solar storms. Getting to touch a piece of the moon was certainly a popular highlight here.

With a surreal and fantastic day behind us, we sat down for a formal dinner with NSESVA representatives to learn about their advocacy and support for SES volunteers, with Sarah Wilson, the Director of Volunteering Australia's National Strategy for Volunteering, speaking to us about some of the challenges we face as volunteers and how their organisation's work advocates

for volunteering to become more accessible to combat declining volunteer numbers and keep volunteering sustainable for current volunteers.

We were then presented with awards from the NSESVA, with a special mention going to Doreen McEnroe ESM who is now the first person who has been awarded life membership within the National SES Volunteers Association.

With the formalities concluded, we were left to celebrate and explore Canberra before returning home on the weekend.

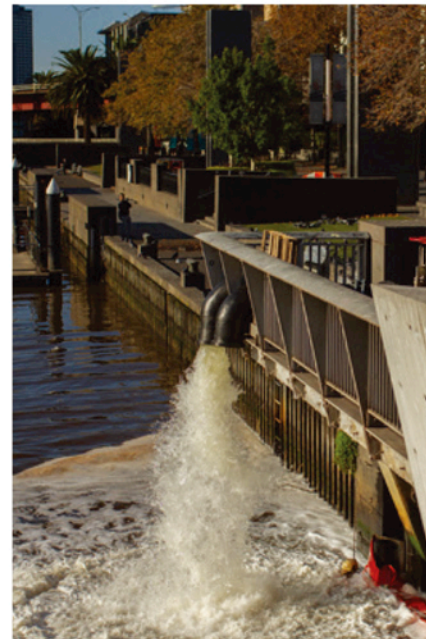
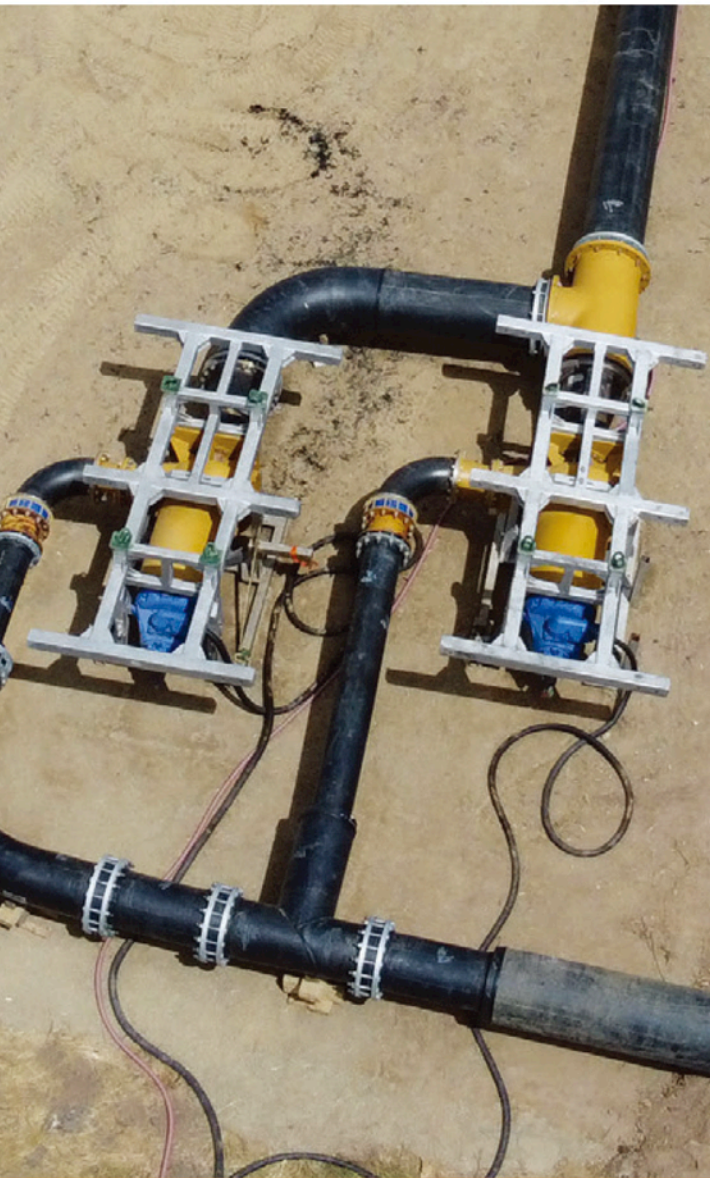
Participating in the Young Emerging Leaders program is perhaps the most memorable occasion of my volunteering career and my work in the emergency service sector, and my highlight would certainly be the new friendships I have made across the country. There is little

more satisfying than spending time in the company of like-minded people who inspire you, and that really speaks to how lucky we all are to have found ourselves a home in the broader SES community.

This reminds me of a quote from *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, which goes something along the lines of "who you choose to be around you lets you know who you are".

I would like to thank Gordon Hall, Faye Bendrups and the other NSESVA members who have worked tirelessly to put together this incredible opportunity, as well as the ACT Emergency Services Agency members for their hospitality, and Sarah Wilson, Murray Watt, the Governor General and Mrs Hurley and Geoscience Australia for supporting the work that we do. ✨

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ACTSES: Recruit training

Preparing the Centurions....

Hours of dedication

Recruits were required to undertake training of induction (to the service), radio communication, first aid, asbestos awareness, basic wildfire awareness and either storm and water damage (SWD) or incident management support courses.

Well over 120 hours of commitment for the new recruits to get to the level of basic trained member in the SES – and for the trainers that time plus 30%.

One hundred and five new recruits trained

This year the ACT State Emergency Service (ACTSES) took on the significant task of recruiting over a hundred new recruits to the service. The ACTSES has seven local units located across the territory with each unit picking up around 15 new recruits each. The recruits, being a mix of the young and (like the author) more life experienced, were developed and trained to the level of basic storm operator (or support to operations) with the next stage beyond the training getting experience in actual storm and water damage operations.

The task of taking these recruits through the was left to the dedicated volunteer trainers of the ACTSES.

The timing of all the necessary initial training was conducted over multiple months and required a significant dedication of time by the recruits and even greater time and dedication by volunteer trainers. Weeknights and weekend days were allotted to ensure the recruits were trained to a level that



The basics of building a sandbag wall are learnt.



Working at Heights - Recruits learn how to setup Height Safety Systems haul material to height.



Recruits training on one of the dedicated training roofs.



Recruits forming a honour guard celebrating a successful assessment.



A foggy day in the ACT – around 5C ...luckily no wind chill factor.

allowed them to be comfortable and safe in the activities they will encounter in their service to the community.

Some of the recruits committed to a short intense course for the SWD component – 10 days over two weeks, others to a weeknight and every second week Saturday (all day) training. In SWD they learn to operate pumps, generators, deploy lighting, divert water (using sandbags), access heights, build and operate safety systems and undertake temporary repairs of roofs and windows. The intense group even managed to get on the local news <https://fb.watch/IK9hA6bWhS/?mibextid=qC1gEa>.

Regardless of the way they sought to learn they all were assessed to the same standard and all showed the right energy and enthusiasm required

to achieve success. The recruits, while destined to operate out of different units once they completed the training, got to know people from different units and build friendships with like-minded individuals willing to give their time to the community. The ACTSES is a small service in comparison to say NSW but that just means the “family feel” of the group is that much stronger.

Oh and this enthusiasm and energy of the recruits and their trainers was there in despite of the fact they were training during an ACT winter, where early morning days or nights see temperatures hovering around 5 degrees Celsius (or colder) with the odd fog and misty day thrown in for good measure. We are a tough breed here in the ACTSES. 🏠

NAVCAN: A testing of navigation skills of volunteers

The ACTSES have been running an event to test the 'old school' navigation skills of their volunteers and invited guests (RFS, Police, Parks personnel) since 2005 with only the COVID year of 2022 disrupting the event.

Wally Blumfield Shield

In 2016 in honour of a recently deceased, long term ACTSES member and very active participant of NAVCAN (well into his 80's) – Wally Blumfield – a shield award was first presented to the team who displayed the spirit of NAVCAN (people who had a go and supported others). Every NAVCAN since awards the shield to such teams.



BY OLD SCHOOL I MEAN

participants use only a map, compass and their ability to read a map and the ground to navigate a set course, locating control points (markers / flags) and building points based on the difficulty of reaching a control point. NAVCAN itself provides an opportunity for people to hone their navigation skills, to learn some bushcraft, to determine their level of fitness, maybe to see parts of the ACT that you have not seen before, and to have some fun.

The purpose of the ACTSES NAVCAN event is for teams to determine their own route to enable them to navigate their way to control points within a given overall timeframe. Each control point has an assigned point value. The winning team is the team that gains the most points.

The end aim for teams (particularly the SES teams) to practice the skills we use when assisting police with search and rescue operations, particularly focusing on navigation and first aid.

This year nearly 100 volunteers and staff from multiple agencies - 12 teams from ACTSES, RFS, ACTAS and NSWSES (NSW members from Wollongong and Ulladulla) participate in the 6-hour event and 3 teams in the 3-hour event. With over 60 participants and a host of 'behind the scenes' members, the teams searched for markers across a 24km² area of bushland around the Weston Creek region.

The weather was in our favour, although with a chilly and foggy start, and a bit of a cold finish,

the majority of the day was clear, giving our members an opportunity to take in the wonderful views at some of the 'higher' checkpoints.

Congratulations this year go to the ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS) Team, who won the day, followed by the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Team and the SES Remote Area Search (RAS) Team.

How does the event operate?


During the event each team member must stay together (operate as a team throughout the NAVCAN event). Only non-electronic compasses and maps (maps issued by event organisers) may be used in this event. Any form of GPS, pedometer, altimeter, phone

app and similar devices are expressly forbidden. Limitation on how teams can communicate also apply and mobile phones may only be carried on the course providing they are turned off, they are registered with event staff, and they are sealed in a container by event staff. Emergency procedures are put in place in case of any unexpected hazards and risks arise.


The control points may be visited in any order, as determined by each individual team. Point awarded for reaching each of the control point differ, with those points the greater distance away or most difficult to reach being of a higher value than those closer or easier to reach but each team must visit at least one Radio Control Point and teams failing to attend a radio control point will be penalised. Finally, to attract extra points teams get asked to fill out their intended route before they leave the Staging Area.

There are points deducted for various reasons (like losing a Control Point Card) and points gained for finding things lost by other teams (like a control card) and a list of mandatory equipment must be carried by each team (such as a first aid kit). Bushrangers (checkers) will be active on the day. They will be checking that each member of the team has all mandatory equipment with deductions made for missing item or items.


Teams returning after the designated finish time are penalised 100 points for 0 – 5 minutes, and 250 points for coming in more than 5 minutes late so careful planning by the teams is required to ensure that disaster does not occur.

And they are off...Finally, like all volunteer activity, the event itself requires such support from a range of people across the ACTSES staff and volunteers. People are needed to lay the course, run the day, be the bushrangers and after the event retrieve the flags from the course. Our thanks to all that provided that support and continue provide that support to others. 




 The winning team.



 And they are off.



 What the teams are looking for.

CHECKING IN ON OUR ORANGE FAMILY

Ashleigh, a volunteer crew member, and training officer with the State Emergency Services (SES), has shared her story to normalise R U OK? conversations among emergency services workers and volunteers nationwide.

Ashleigh (she/they) first put on her SES uniform at 18 years old, immediately feeling part of the orange family. Eleven years on, she's responded to some of our country's major floods and fires, and at times felt the brunt of natural disasters on their mental wellbeing.

"When you respond to a natural disaster you're running on adrenaline, the devastation is in front of you, emotions are high within the community, but you're razor focused on getting people the help they need. When you return home, and take the uniform off, it can be quite lonely and isolating trying to process and understand what just happened."



Left: Luke (Ashleigh's Unit Controller)
Right: Ashleigh



"After a deployment in 2022, I hit a wall and began to fear putting my uniform back on. I was so anxious about getting paged to another job. I was struggling to cope but was too scared to admit it to anyone, so I faced it alone for months."

Ashleigh says she internalised how she was feeling because she believed that to do her job, she had to remain strong. "I was worried I had failed as an emergency services volunteer because I'd reached a point where I couldn't do it on my own. I couldn't keep everything in and deal with it."

A colleague of Ashleigh's noticed she seemed different and took the time to check in.

"One day my controller approached me to ask if I was OK. He said 'I don't know you as well as other people in your life probably do, but I have noticed you've been different. You don't have the same enthusiasm as usual, so I wanted to check in and see how you are doing.'"

"Him starting that conversation gave me the permission I wasn't giving myself to open-up. Feeling heard and understood took the weight off my shoulders and made me realise I wasn't failing as an emergency services volunteer, I just needed a bit of support, and that's perfectly OK."

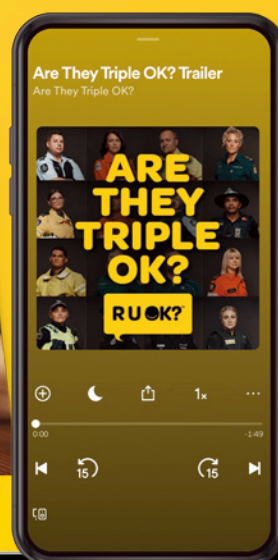


Ashleigh and her crew

Ashleigh wants everyone to understand the power of having an R U OK? conversation.

"Without that conversation I wouldn't be in my uniform anymore, I wouldn't be where I am today. I now know I don't have to go it alone and I can bounce back stronger."

"If you notice someone isn't themselves, trust your gut and check in. Most importantly, make sure you have enough time to really hear their concerns if they say they aren't OK. It changed my life, and it could change theirs."



Ashleigh's story can be found at ruok.org.au along with the free 'Are They Triple OK?' resources for police and emergency services workers and volunteers, as well as their family and friends. These include a conversation guide, a podcast and other personal stories.



If you're worried about someone, encourage them to contact their Employee Assistance Program (EAP), agency support service or connect with their GP.

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What is a Microburst?

On Thursday 2 February there was a nice little red batch on the BOM Radar suggesting we might get some much needed rain in Port Macquarie and our members started placing bets on how many leaking roof's we would get as a result.

THE NUMBERS RANGED FROM TWO

to six however the official count was three – right in the middle however the rain was only of short duration and intensity and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Friday 3 February there was an identical looking patch on the BOM Radar, our members commenting “Looks very similar to yesterday at this time...” and “six jobs...” when just before 3pm it hit. Hail, heavy rain and high winds in the Port Macquarie CBD and immediate surrounding areas this was also a short duration event (15-30mins) however a high intensity – unfortunately there were no official rain gauges in the footprint of the storm so we don't know the actual Annual Exceedance Probability. By 15:30 the storm was over and the sunshine was back

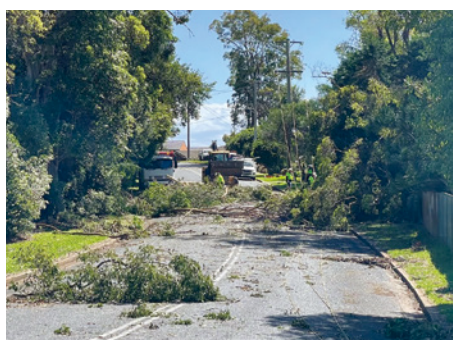
– apart from the damage you wouldn't have know what had just occurred.

The Unit mobilised, the jobs started rolling in and didn't stop. We were operationally active for the next two weeks without a break with over 300 jobs ranging from large trees down blocking access to buildings where the entire roof had blown off and everything in between.

Given the event occurred late afternoon on a Friday the majority of our members were available including our incident management team. I headed into HQ and arrived at approximately the same time as Michael Brumby (Deputy Unit Commander Rescue) – I started the conversation with a choice – one of us needed to front the media (Prime 7 Film Crew) within the next 15 mins and the other had to take on the Incident

Commander Role – I gave Brum the choice and he told me to have fun with the media!

After a quick drive through the CBD of Port Macquarie and an interview with Prime 7 I returned to HQ to advise the size and scope we were likely to expect. We quickly established contact with Robert Fish (LEMO from Port Macquarie Hastings Council PMHC) and representatives from our emergency services partners. It was determined that whilst it wasn't large enough to require activation of the EOC we requested the attendance of Liaison Offices from the different organisations so we could have a coordinated approach during the response phase. We also put the call out for a strike team from Fire Rescue for the remainder of Friday and then into Saturday and Sunday (if needed),



likewise Rural Fire Service for Friday and Sunday (they had a memorial service for one of their well respected members of Saturday and we didn't want to disturb that). We also called for Out of Area Assistance (OOAA) crews from within the SES to commence on Saturday Morning.

We stood down the teams around 21:00 on Friday, by that stage the majority of the roads were clear and it was determined that there was no benefit to working into the night. We planned to recommence at 08:00 Saturday Morning. Saturday morning started with 120 outstanding RFA's and by lunch time we still had 120 outstanding RFA's – this was with 15+ crews in the field – as quick as they

were completing the tasks more were being called in. Brum put the call out for additional resources for Sunday and I worked with Envirofrontier to streamline the process and get additional arborists in town for Sunday.

We pushed hard on Sunday – thanks again to a significant number of OOAA Teams, our emergency service partners, Council and arborists we completed the majority of the tasks by Sunday evening however the jobs continued to roll in over the next few weeks.

Over the weekend of the 4-5th we had over 100 emergency service personnel on the ground working each day through the overwhelming number of requests for assistance.

We had a hot debrief on the Wednesday and the tally at that stage was:

- 285 jobs and counting.
- 40+ referred to arborists.
- Out of Areas Crews attended from the Central Coast to Coffs Harbour and everywhere in between.
- Strike Force from FRNSW and RFS .
- Council resources mobilised for trees on roads.
- Community members helping themselves and their neighbours.

A few of our learning outcomes are worth sharing – we quickly identified that we needed to undertake some additional Beacon training so people had the required access and reinforce that jobs are not closed until they have positive



confirmation no further action required by any organisation.

What we found worked well was Brum determined and communicated the IC's intent early and a consistent message was relayed to ensure everyone was working towards this goal. The priority was to clear roads and provide access for residents, followed by clearing and securing residents dwellings before moving on the commercial premises and outstanding trees down on properties.

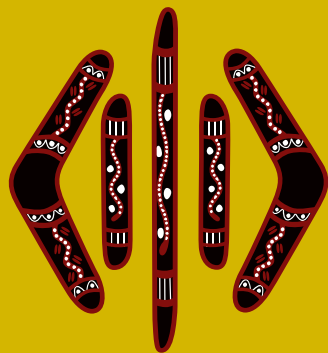
We arranged with Envirofrontier that we would task the arborists directly, record which RFA's we had sent them on and provide a summary and combined emergency orders at the end of the event. Whilst this is outside their normal activation

process it facilitated the timely response to trees that exceeded the capacity of our field crews and by knowing what resources each arborist crew had ensured they were working constantly throughout the event.

As Unit Commander I am fortunate in that the Unit and Cluster has people that can undertake the various roles within an IMT structure as this allowed me to maintain the media role (with countless interviews including two television news crews, three radio stations and three newspapers along with regular Facebook updates) and assist with problem resolution as required. We were able to draw on cluster resources to step into IMT roles especially as the operation continued into the following week.

Back to the start – what is a microburst – I had a radio interview where the representative from the BOM was asked this question – I am still not sure of their response however I was able to inform their listeners as to the effect that a microburst had on the Port Macquarie CBD and know now that the effects last for a extended time as we are still recovering from the impact – people are still waiting on roofs being repaired and trees removed.

I subsequently found out that a microburst is an intense thunderstorm downdraft concentrated over a small area. However for Port Macquarie SES it represented twelve months of work in two weeks. ❏



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Eastern Guruma has been in operation for 15 years as a successful and respected First Nations owned business, providing services in construction, landscaping, facilities management, traffic management and more. EG is owned by members of the language group Muntulgura Guruma, the lands of which surround Tom Price in the Pilbara region of WA, the team has delivered services to Australia's largest mining companies, Rio Tinto, BHP, and Fortescue Metals Group.

Its facility management services alone provide cleaning and maintenance services for mine sites, Eastern Guruma employs opportunities to 80+ First Nations people across 25 different language groups. Opportunities are created through the jobs directly available, including traineeships, apprenticeships, cadetships, scholarships, and graduate program.

A 5 year concurrent contract for facilities management between Eastern Guruma and Rio Tinto fuelled jobs and growth in the Pilbara region while keeping the site's mine site facilities clean and sanitised. A full list of past and current projects can be found on Eastern Guruma's website.

Samantha Connors and Tania Stevens are the owners and directors of Eastern Guruma. Ms Stevens has been the company's owner since its foundation in 2004, Tania is an Eastern Guruma Traditional Custodian of the Muntulgura Guruma in the Pilbara of Western Australia.

Ms Connors was born and raised in Roebourne Western Australia and is a Muntulgura Guruma Member from the Tom Price area. Samantha's father was a Ngarluma man, and her mother is a Bunjima/Muntulgura Guruma woman.

A strong culture of teamwork and collaboration has led Eastern Guruma to enter partnerships and joint ventures with other First Nations groups such as Wirlu-Murra Enterprise & Karlayura Group. Karlayura Group is 100% owned by the traditional owners of the Nyiyaparli and Banyjima country, while Wirlu-Murra is also a 100% owned First Nations company.

EG partnerships with First Nations businesses have seen the growth of new business opportunities and further employment and training for First Nations people. Our joint venture with Wirlu-Murra Enterprises has led to a successful project at Solomon Mine. The Road Maintenance contract has a growing number of First Nations employees, over 50%, and has led to further business for both Eastern Guruma and Wirlu-Murra, as joint venture partners and individual businesses.

This partnership has seen Eastern Guruma become the major partner mentor, helping Wirlu-Murra to build their capability and operations and take on 50% of the Road Maintenance contract as well as grow their business.

Eastern Guruma endeavours to grow the number of First Nations people within its company through direct employment and subcontracting. Our vision is to create pathways to empowerment for First Nations people to participate in the Australian economy.

Eastern Guruma and Karlayura Group have established a joint venture that provides services across different "native title" land areas. The Eastern Guruma Native Title Agreement states the area of about 6,774 Square kilometres is located 40km north of Paraburdoo Western Australia.

Ms Stevens and Ms Connors strongly believe that the knowledge, skills, and experiences of First Nations people provide a rich learning environment for all people who contribute to improving the design and delivery of services for Eastern Guruma.

To find out more about high-quality facilities management, construction and landscaping services that enrich a vibrant and diverse community, please visit

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The Australasian Road Rescue Organisation Challenge Adelaide 2023

 By Jane Huebner

In the heart of Adelaide, a remarkable event unfolded that showcased the dedication, skill, and teamwork of emergency responders from across the Australasian region.

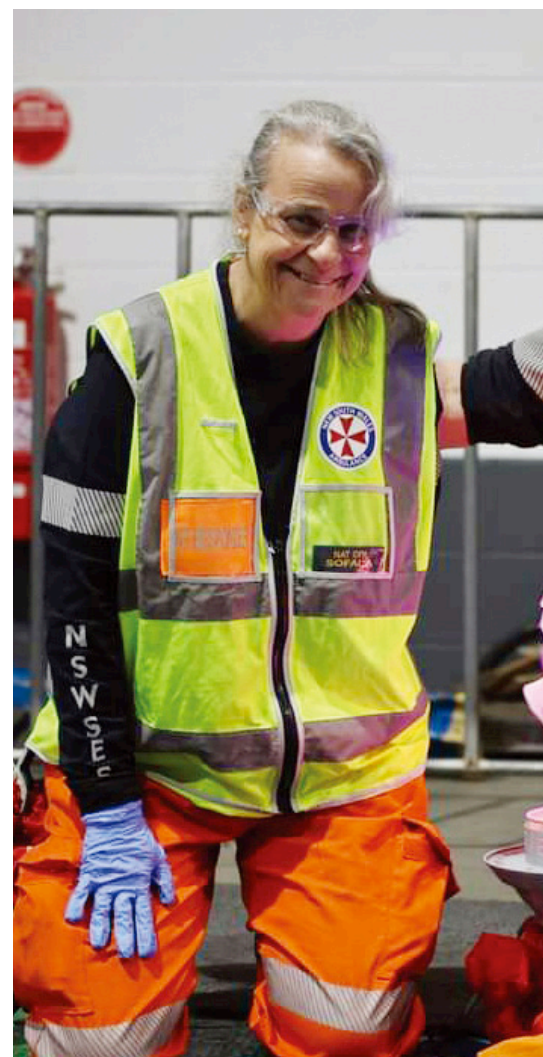
THE AUSTRALASIAN

Rescue Challenge 2023, jointly hosted by the South Australian Metro Fire Service, South Australian State Emergency Service and the South Australian County Fire Service, bringing together the best of the best in road rescue operations. Held amidst the picturesque backdrop of Adelaide's urban landscape, this event provided an extraordinary opportunity to witness first hand the exceptional abilities of those who stand ready to save lives in the most challenging circumstances.

The Rescue Challenge is a premier event that brings together road rescue teams from various emergency service organisations in the Australasian region. These teams consist of highly trained professionals specialising in extricating individuals trapped in vehicles following accidents, often employing complex techniques and tools to ensure the safety and well-being of both victims and responders. The theme of this year's event was CHALLENGE - yourself, your team and your skills LEARN - new techniques, new equipment

and knowledge sharing and REFINE - your skills and capabilities and improve our response to the community.

The Challenge is not just a competition; it's an arena where the true capabilities of these rescue teams are put to the test. Participants face simulated accident scenarios that require them to deploy their expertise in swift, safe, and efficient extrication. The challenges are designed to mimic real-life situations in high fidelity, allowing teams to demonstrate their problem-solving skills, technical proficiency, and ability



to work seamlessly as a unit. One of the most captivating aspects of the Rescue Challenge is the emphasis on teamwork. The challenge encourages participants to communicate effectively, allocate responsibilities, and make split-second decisions under pressure – all while keeping the safety of the victims and themselves as the top priority.

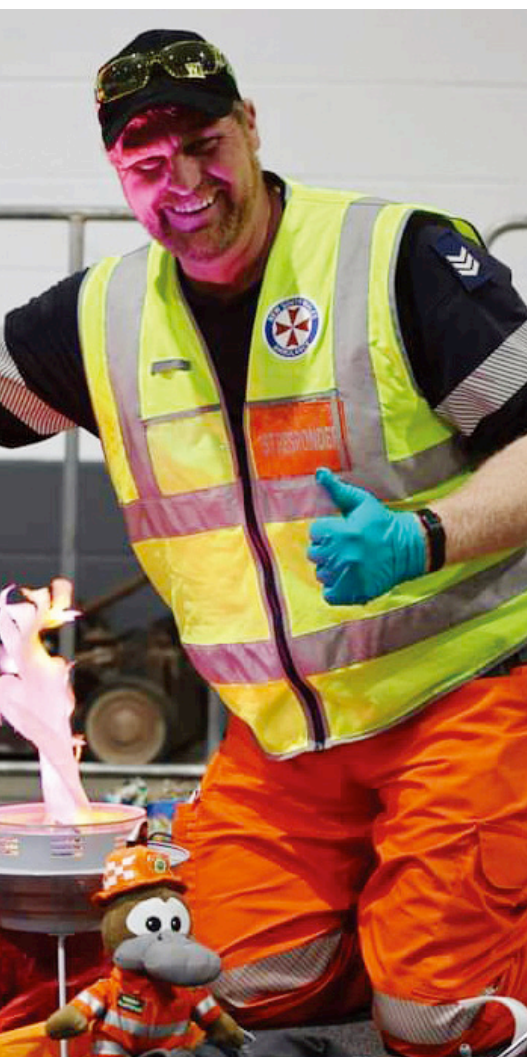
Attending the Rescue Challenge in 2023 also provided a glimpse into the cutting-edge techniques and tools on show for demonstration and evaluation at the Sponsor's day and stands during the event. From hydraulic tools to advanced medical equipment, the event showcased how technology continues to advance the field of emergency response, enabling responders to save lives more efficiently than ever before.

Beyond the competitive aspect, the Australasian Rescue Challenge serves as a platform for learning and collaboration. Participants and spectators alike have the opportunity to exchange insights, strategies, and best practices with their counterparts from different regions. This cross-pollination of ideas contributes to the ongoing evolution of road rescue techniques and further elevates the capabilities of emergency responders across the Australasian region. This year 23 Extrication Teams tackled the three events of the Rescue Challenge - being time critical, entrapped and controlled rescue - including our own New South Wales State Emergency teams from Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Port Stephens, and international teams from Hong Kong Fire Services Department

and Hampshire Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue. These teams also undertook an Industrial Rescue event, new to ARC in 2023, again based on real-life scenarios such as a washing machine entrapment, impalement or hand in a meat grinder. Six additional teams also took part in the Trauma Challenge, including our own Sofala CFR, who treated their patient with care, skill and precision.

The overall challenge winner for 2023 was the joint team from South Australia Metropolitan Fire Service and South Australian Ambulance Service, proving they are a very difficult team to match.

Witnessing the Australasian Rescue Challenge in Adelaide was an inspiring experience that highlighted the dedication and professionalism of those



who put their lives on the line to protect and save others. The commitment displayed by the participating teams underscored the importance of continuous training, preparation, and a relentless pursuit of excellence in the realm of emergency response.

Conclusion

The Australasian Rescue Challenge 2023 in Adelaide was a resounding success that brought attention to the exceptional skills and teamwork of road rescue teams across the region. The event not only showcased the technical prowess and cutting-edge tools utilised in road rescue operations but also emphasized the significance of collaboration and communication in high-pressure situations.

All NSW SES participants would like to thank the Challenge Management Team for their exceptional efforts and dedication in successfully managing this event. NSW SES members also dedicate their time and expertise in the crucial roles as Assessors, Challenge Co-Ordinators, patients and behind the scenes in media and safety. It is evident the hard work and determination of individuals, have contributed to the success and positive outcomes achieved. The meticulous planning, coordination, and commitment have truly made a significant impact and seamless execution of the challenge is truly commendable, showcasing what can be accomplished when a group of talented individuals comes together with a common goal.

The volunteers of the NSW SES express our gratitude for NSW SES's support in facilitating our efforts through the financing of travel and accommodation expenses. This generosity not only demonstrates a commitment to our cause but has also significantly enhanced our ability to serve our communities effectively. The financial support provided has enabled us to participate in this challenge, expand our skills and knowledge and bring this back to our units. This support has strengthened our sense of unity and purpose within our teams and the impact of investment in our volunteers ripples through every successful operation, every life saved, every person helped and instils a sense of pride, motivation, and belonging among us all. ❏

Unique Collaboration Combines Art and Emergency Preparedness to Build Resilient Communities.

By Regina Böhler, Manager, Community Preparedness, NSW SES City of Sydney Unit

Photos by Sarah Malone (PACT Centre for Emerging Artists) and Seini Taumoepeau

NSW SES City of Sydney Volunteers working with local artists.



THE INCREASING NUMBER AND intensity of weather events around the world have highlighted the importance of building resilient communities. One way to do this is by strengthening the bonds between neighbours and working together to adapt to changing conditions.

In time of crisis, neighbourhoods come together to provide vital support, whether it's through sharing resources, helping with clean-up efforts,



or providing emotional support to those affected by disaster.

The recently held Hyperlocal – Emergence workshop series, led by artist Latai Taumoepeau involving volunteers of the NSW SES City of Sydney Unit, is an excellent example of how communities come together to build resilience and prepare for emergencies.

Latai is a well-renowned and award-winning performance artist whose practice is strongly influenced by her



homelands, the Kingdom of Tonga, and her birthplace of Sydney, Gadigal land.

Inspired by Latai's own climate change advocacy for Pacific Island Nations, the workshops fused live art with emergency preparedness, thus allowing young people and their guardians an opportunity to learn critical emergency response skills while also exploring the importance of community and local resources.

Working with Latai and emerging artist and educator Paris Taia, NSW SES

City of Sydney Unit volunteers gave context to emergency preparedness and led discussions on flood safety and the role of the NSW State Emergency Service in time of disasters. Teaching practical skills, such as knot tying, setting up tarps for shelter, and the use of a flood rescue throw-bag made the workshops highly interactive, as participants explored themes such as emergency events, access and shelter, food, and medicine as well as flood safety and awareness.

Participants also visited the NSW SES City of Sydney unit, viewed NSW SES Flood Safety videos, as well as being taught the dangers of playing in flood waters via the use of a 'dirty water' tub simulating contamination typically found in flood waters.

Through live art, the workshops gave voice to the concerns of young people



about climate change and its impacts on their future. By exploring tough topics such as floods, heatwaves, and emergency preparedness, participants learned critical emergency response skills and gained an understanding of the importance of community and local resources in times of crisis.



A big thank you to the PACT Centre for Emerging Artists hosting the event, and to Latai Taumoepeau for her inspiring work and for reaching out to the NSW SES City of Sydney Unit.

Thank you also to our fabulous SES volunteers, Leila, Pat, Cole, Nic, Rosie and Sione. ❖



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Flood rescue training in a natural environment

❖ By Brendon Field, Port Macquarie Unit

It was a beautiful Saturday, although a little chilly, as we assembled on the banks of the Hastings River at Koree Island on the stunning Mid North Coast.

WITH SOME TREPIDATION WE

chatted on the riverbank, SES, RFS, Police, Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving all represented.

After introductions and a quick briefing, we were ushered down to the trailers that have been set up by the flood rescue training task force to find some gear and start to get dressed in the appropriate attire. As we debated exactly what size wetsuit was required and found a PFD, helmet and even boots, there was no question that the investment the SES has made into quality equipment was second to none, as we would find out in the not-too-distant future.

We started with land base rescue techniques, as this is the foundation of the course, but true to the Mid North Coast climate the sweat was soon running down our cheeks and the river was looking more and more inviting.

Next up we got to cool down as we were instructed to jump into the river, and, guided by our trainers, we started the in-water aspect of the course by learning both defensive and aggressive swimming techniques. Although the water wasn't the warmest the cooling effect was welcome.

Round and round we went, doing multiple runs through the selected rapid, defensive swimming to avoid rocks and submerged tree trunks, then quickly swapping to an aggressive position and powering our way into the eddy.

Just as we are getting comfortable with the newly taught techniques, out came the strainer...



One of the most dangerous obstacles you could encounter, we are advised the best way to deal with a strainer is to avoid it, straight away followed by being told to swim aggressively towards it and push yourself over the strainer, off you go.

Once we had battled our way over the strainer a few times each, we split the group with some members on the bank refining their throw bag rescue techniques, following on from our morning practise. Being in the natural environment a few real-world hazards needed to be negotiated, low hanging branches, and a tree trunk on the far bank, sometimes with varying success.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the multi-agency course was seeing the variety of coloured uniforms in the river.



It's great to work with the people we see at incidents, in a less pressured environment, and have the time to get to know one another.

The hard work the Flood Rescue Training Task Force have put into developing, and now delivering, the flood rescue training courses in the natural environment was very evident. It meant all participants had a great time, whilst learning new skills which will hold us all in good stead when the next event arises, and we are called upon to step up and help our communities, as we all love to do.

If the opportunity arises for you to participate, or even help out with the delivery of one of the natural environment flood rescue courses, drop what you're doing and get involved. ❖

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CARBIDE OVERLAY	UP TO 40mm
ALUMINIUM PLATE	UP TO 32mm
PGI, ZINCANNEAL, GALVANISED & COLORBOND	UP TO 6mm
STAINLESS STEEL - ALL GRADES	UP TO 40mm



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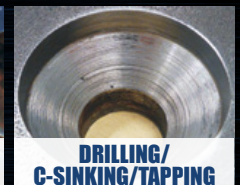
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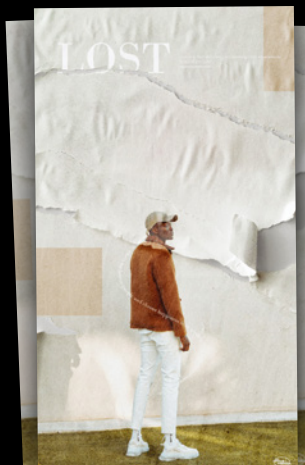
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Northern Territory's Response to NSW Longest Flooding Operation

Since 14 September 2022, the NSW SES had been active across widespread parts of the State as unprecedented flooding brought devastation as the water moved south.

THE NATURE OF FLOODING SAW THE NSW SES draw on support from emergency partners from across the State and all over the country.

Northern Territory responded with teams of NT Emergency Service (SES) and Fire & Rescue Service volunteers who took time off work to assist their interstate counterparts in areas such as Moree, Menindee, Deniliquin and Wentworth.

A total of eight rotations were deployed with the majority of volunteers coming from Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, and Alice Springs. Each deployment was a total of seven days, with the first and last day allocated for travel.

Team Foxtrot was split into two groups, with one team sent to Deniliquin and the other sent to Wentworth, where the Darling River meets the Murray River.

A brief diary account of the Wentworth team gives a picture of the jobs and actions that occur during a deployment.

Day 2

Today saw the team at the local showgrounds with shovels and sandbags assisting at the community sandbagging event.

By the end of the day approximately 100 tonnes of sand had been bagged and stacked on pallets ready for collection.

Small teams were sent out during the day to attend to a small sand bagging job and a chainsaw job.

The day ended with Mandurah Marine Rescue volunteers transporting 4 pallets of sandbags by

boat to help a homeowner who has the rising Murray River creeping up the back lawn towards their home.

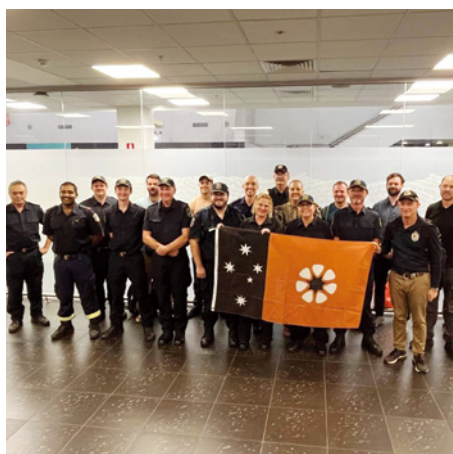
There were certainly a lot of tired volunteers who stumbled back to their accommodation this evening.

Day 3

Today the team spent 6 hours transporting by boat and laying 8 pallets of sandbags around a house that is now on an island and cut off by the rising Murray River.

The owners were very grateful for the assistance.

A big shout out to Scott from the Wentworth Council who would drop everything and come down with the Manitou to load pallets of sandbags whenever we needed them.



The afternoon was a slower pace and included providing information to residents and delivering sandbags to homes and roadside pick-up locations across the Wentworth district.

The team were glad to sit down to a hot meal when it was all done.

Day 4

The NT Emergency Service team of 8 was called to assist a property on the Darling River where the water had risen substantially overnight.

Using around 22 pallets of sandbags, with the help from neighbouring properties, a 100m sandbag wall was built across the rear of the house block.

This was followed by a further 4 1/2 pallets of sandbags along the top of a dirt wall that was already stopping a shed from being inundated on the property next door.

A big shout out to local boy, Nathan, and WICEN operator Phil who really pitched in to help the team.

Day 5

Taskings today initially saw the team split into two. Team 1 responded to several addresses who requested sandbags dropped off to their location.

Team 2, which included newly arrived Maritime Rescue and DFES (SES) volunteers, who had replaced Mandurah Marine Rescue, were sent to inspect the levy banks around town, reporting any concerns such as low hanging vegetation, obstacles, damage to the levy bank, etc.

The afternoon involved a check on water levels around the edge of the town and following up on a request for assistance in the Lagoon area. With water slowly creeping

towards a remote house, it was decided to sandbag around the threatened residence.

The team worked like a well oiled machine laying plastic and sandbags from 3 pallets along the front of the property in quick time.

A plan has been put in place to complete the task first thing in the morning.

Day 6

First up was laying 12 pallets of sandbags around the home from the previous day. The owner and his son had transported 7 pallets of sandbags to his home ready for us.

Following this was a request to door knock homes along the river front to offer a small number of sandbags in case they were needed.

This was cut short by a call to rescue some stranded sheep marooned on an



island in the middle of rising floodwater. After initially getting bogged while trying to launch off Renmark Rd, the boat was successfully launched off Lagoon Rd.

With the local vets and team Foxtrot on board, the sheep were soon located. Catching them proved to be a challenge. Although a ewe was caught on the island, she was waterlogged and very heavy to carry. The younger one decided to make an escape by swimming off the island a considerable distance, but the boat finally turned it around and herded him back to the island. The vet and small team caught it and loaded him on board the boat.

All sheep were boated back to the owner's property and offloaded onto his ute.

That was the final job for Foxtrot team.

Golf team landed at Mildura airport in the evening and took over first thing in the morning.



Kalkarindji Floods

By David Pribanic

With the wet season coming through the Top End in full force, a Standby Notice was issued on Thursday the 23rd of February for a potential flood assistance in the Daly Waters region.



BAGS WERE PACKED AND

employers informed. As it so often happens, we ended up going in the opposite direction and arrived in Kalkarindji, on Tuesday the 28th of February.

As a team of two Northern Territory Emergency Service (NTES) volunteers, we were flown from Katherine to Kalkarindji via Police Air Wing. On arrival, Wattie Creek was raging and had cut off the Daguragu community. Closer to Kalkarindji, the mighty Victoria River had risen, however was not a concern at this point. First up we needed to assess what assistance we could provide with the resources that were

stationed at this outpost. We had access to the flood boat ESV305, rescue trailer, police vehicle and for anything else we would have to beg, borrow or steal from the local council/community (well maybe not steal).

On launching the boat (rated for 6 PAX) into Wattie Creek, we soon discovered the raging waters would limit us to a small crew of 1 x Police, and our NTES crew of 2. We navigated our way upstream to Daguragu where we engaged with the community. Returning to the launch site, now in the direction of the raging current, we were very much put to the test with our flood boat skills.

From this initial assessment we determined that we could potentially carry out evacuations from Daguragu, however would be limited to 2 PAX per trip to be manageable and within our risk threshold. Mother nature would have different plans for us as the rains continued coming overnight and Wattie Creek became beyond our capabilities. The Victoria River had now risen rapidly to Major Flood levels endangering Kalkarindji. Both the Daguragu and Pigeon Hole communities were urgently evacuated to Kalkarindji via helicopter as most of the housing was about to go under water. Half of the housing in Kalkarindji also went under and the decision was made to evacuate

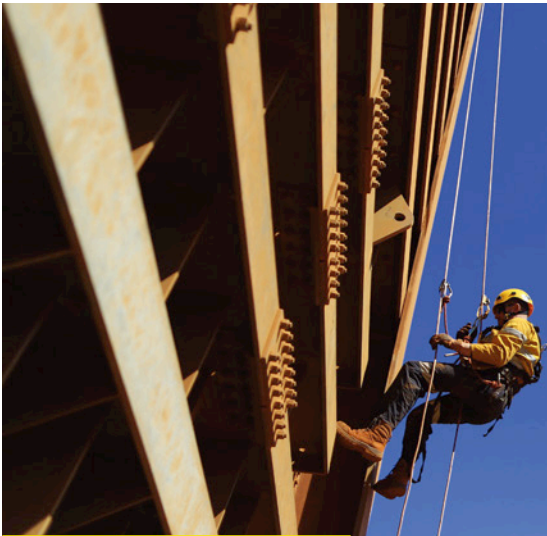
the entire area to either Katherine or Darwin. This was initially via contracted aircraft however was followed up with RAAF C-130J Hercules and C-27J Spartan providing transportation for the bulk of the people.

Through this very fluid deployment (pardon the pun), our assistance turned from flood boat operators to assisting the local community evacuate in any way that we could. This included setting up marquees, tents and generators, directing and transferring personnel, transportation of food and equipment and generally being an information source and supporting presence for the local community.

Finally at the conclusion of this deployment, all residents had been safely evacuated, water inundation through the communities was very significant and Rapid Assessment teams were being organised to fly down as soon as practical.



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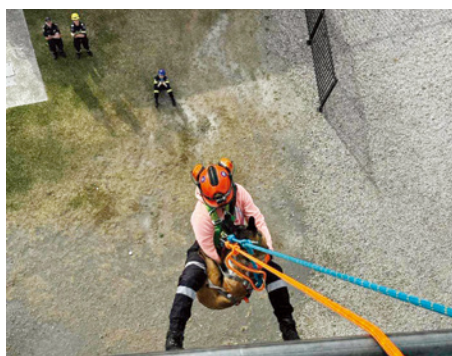
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Anita Tredrea: One Member's Story

When people ask me why I joined the SES, my honest answer is simply "I had time".

I PLAYED HIGH LEVEL ROLLER DERBY

for years, trained 16 hours a week and you come to a point in your 30s when you realise you need your knees to work in your 50s. So I investigated volunteering. The SES seemed like a great fit for me as I love hiking and, despite being a 'Ginger', I love being outdoors.


Today I am in my 4th year as a member of the organisation and I have been challenged, gifted with new friends and added so many new skills to my resume of life. Chainsaw, Heights Safety, SAR, and so much more. Most people you ask would say that my passion within the SES is land search. I will throw myself into a search for multiple days at a time because, if the missing person were my friend or loved one, I would want as many people

out there looking for the answers as possible. This is what led me to USAR (Urban Search and Rescue).

After countless hours trudging through swamps, crawling through lantana, and navigating grass over my head, I started to ask why we don't use dogs as a search capability. That is how I discovered the K9 DART team (AUS-1) through QFES. I turned up with my 5-month-old Golden Retriever 'Cheddar' and was ready to do a crash course in finding missing people with my dog. Turned out, it doesn't work like that. Cheddar was too young, but I was invited to join the team without my dog until he was old enough to be assessed as a good fit for the program. 12 months later, 8 plus hours a week, I have abseiled off the fire tower with a very high energy Belgian Malinois named Bourke, spent many hours as a victim playing the best games of hide

and seek, and still, we aren't on the team. So, not so suddenly, I understand why we don't have dogs as a search capability within the SES here in Queensland.

One day I hope that changes. I don't know what that looks like right now but if you were to ask me what I want my legacy to be, as deep as that is, it will be to have been the crazy dog loving redhead who annoyed enough people to, at least, start them thinking about a Queensland SES K-9 SAR team.

I started this SES journey learning how to use a ladder and tie a knot, perhaps one day, I end it with my dog wearing orange alongside me. Whatever happens in the future, I love being part of this orange family and will continue to lace up my boots, climb that ladder and tie those knots oh, and one more thing, don't forget to clock off Memberhub! 



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Queensland SES Reform

The only certainty in life is change.

THE SES IN QUEENSLAND

is changing, The Queensland SES Volunteers Association has been actively involved in the process and has provided submissions to Government as well as the Reform Implementation Taskforce. Once transition is complete the Queensland Police Service will develop and mature the SES organisation where it will have the capacity in the future to manage itself.

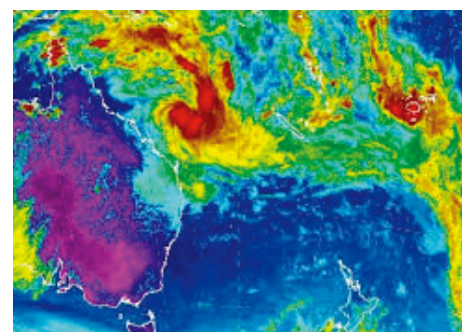
The State Emergency Service has a long-standing and proud history of commitment and service to community safety, especially during times of crisis. As disasters evolve, so too should the way we prepare, prevent, respond to, and recover from them.

In July 2021, the Queensland Government commissioned an independent review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and its associated volunteer services. The goal of the review was to ensure the long-term sustainability of emergency services delivery for Queenslanders. This included assessing the existing scope, functions and suitability of the QFES structure and its funding arrangements.

Multiple recommendations made by the review have been accepted in principle by the Government and address function and structure, culture, efficiency and funding and sustainability.

With Queensland experiencing more natural disasters than any other state in the country, the SES arrangements in our state have become extremely robust through activation, exercise and lessons management.

However, we must be responsive to ensure the state's emergency service providers, are equipped with the resources and organisational structures you need to keep Queenslanders safe in



times of disaster or emergencies, now and in the future. To do this, we must also prepare, building knowledge and capability on a day-to-day basis.

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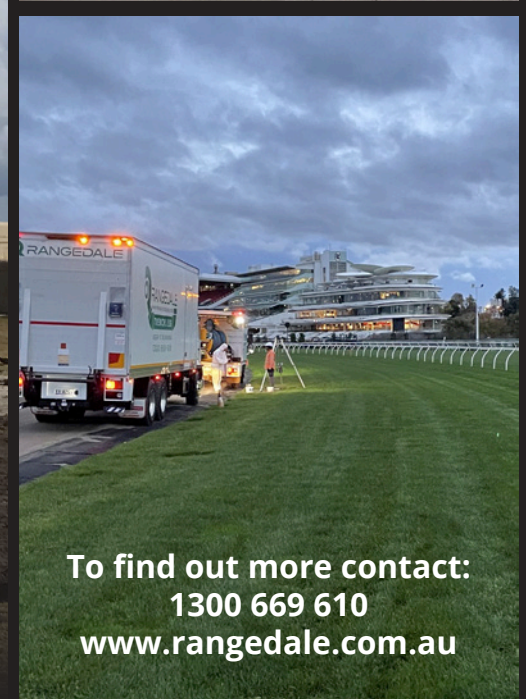
Since 2011, Queenslanders have faced 100 disaster events including storms, fires, cyclones, storm tides and floods. These disasters have impacted almost every corner of the State and cost more than \$20 billion in insurance claims.

Queensland's sub-tropical and tropical climate means that people's experiences of natural disasters are

very different to other parts of the country. Visitors or new residents can find Queensland's weather patterns confusing. For example, in southern states the winters tend to be wetter than in summer, with dryer periods leading to fire risk. In contrast, Queensland's wet season tends to occur in the summer months, which is why fire risk is greater in winter through to spring. The coastal areas north from Bundaberg are the most susceptible to cyclones. However, the accompanying wind and rain from weakening cyclones can affect communities throughout all parts of Queensland. 



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SASES Defencell Flood Mitigation

In 2022-23 the South Australian State Emergency Service was tasked with coordinating and responding to one of the most significant natural disasters in South Australia's history.

RECORD AMOUNTS OF RAIN WHICH had fallen in Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) had filled catchments to the brim and water-logged soil across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Sodden landscapes and catchments already filled to the brim were unable to cope with the torrential rain which fell across NSW and Victoria in the middle of 2022. As a result a large, slow moving body of water travelled down through the Murray and Darling River systems and into South Australia.

During its journey from the eastern states it impacted townships, destroyed homes and devastated communities, a stark reminder of the destructive power of a natural disaster and the incredible impact it can have on people's lives.

At the peak of SA's flood emergency around 200 gigalitres of water a day was flowing across the border.

Before it could reach its inevitable destination of the Murray Mouth and release into the sea, the floodwater would impact eleven South Australian townships and inundate three thousand homes, businesses and properties.

As the Control Agency for flooding in South Australia, the SA State Emergency Service (SA SES) had been formulating plans for a coordinated emergency response and public awareness campaign well in advance of the arrival of the floodwater.

Flood mitigation supplies, namely sandbags, were becoming increasingly challenging to source following flood impacts in Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

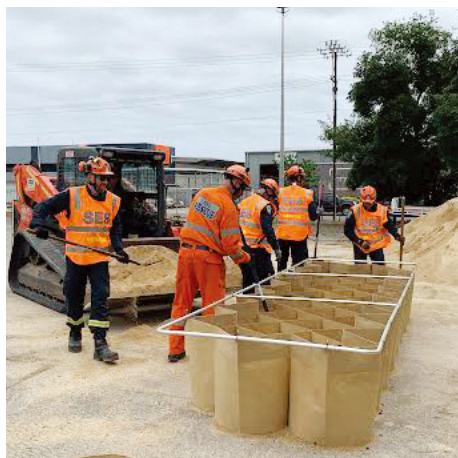
Faced with the herculean task of protecting thousands of homes, hectares of farming land, entire townships, commercial properties and essential community assets

and infrastructure, the SA SES went looking outside the box.

As part of his responsibilities as SA SES Operations Manager, Graeme Wynwood was responsible for sourcing much of the organisations assets, including sandbags.

"Just months before the flood arrived in SA, we had deployed over a hundred SA SES volunteers to NSW to assist in their response to the flooding in the Northern Rivers and Lismore areas," he said.

"We knew full well that same water was coming to SA, but how much would arrive, when it would arrive and for how long the river would stay in flood remained the \$64 dollar question. Even with our best modelling, much of what was going to happen would be influenced by a number of undetermined factors, including how much more rainfall we should expect and the paths the water would take.



"The mass of water was already gouging new paths in the earth and also changing the physical state of the River Murray itself. It wasn't going to arrive as expected."

What the organisation did know was the supply of sandbags was going to play a critical part in protecting communities.

The SA SES had already supplied almost 200,000 sandbags to Victoria and NSW in their emergency flood response. Future sandbag supply needed to be managed responsibly and strategically.

The SA SES had been on the front foot placing orders for hundreds of thousands of sandbags with overseas suppliers but the same suppliers were already struggling to keep pace with back orders from other states across Australia.

Flood barriers needed to be built - higher and faster than ever before, and that would require constant manual labour over a number of months, an unsustainable reality.

A potential solution came in the form of DefenCell. A relatively new flood mitigation product that had been used primarily by defence forces around the world, in particular the United States of America.

Australian company Spearpoint Solutions & Technology was the local provider for this product and had reached out previously to SA SES about its potential application in a flood scenario.

The 'built-to-order' product came in two types, gabions - a galvanised box shaped steel mesh cage and geotextiles - a flatpack concertina design with individual cells. Each has significantly different physical attributes but share the common characteristics of portability, durability, stackability and speed to construct.

Manufactured in India and Italy, average delivery time was around six to eight weeks following the placement of an order.

"We thought this product could be a game changer," Mr Wynwood said.

"Using plant machinery we could shift sand and fill DefenCell product by the tonne, instead of by the shovelful. Compared to traditional sandbagging techniques, it would be 10 times faster and require far less personnel."

TRAINING THE TRAINERS

By November 2022, the DefenCell product landed in South Australia.

A 'just in time' training approach was undertaken at the facility, resulting in six senior SES personnel undertaking a two-day training course provided by a former British Army Engineer, who had provided the same training to the US Army Corps of Engineers, in support of the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Training covered the different types of DefenCell products, ranging from small LITE and Ranger units to the larger T2 units, filling techniques, joining sections, repairs and stacking the units. The filling with sand is conducted



using plant machinery, which required additional safety considerations.

It soon became apparent installing the DefenCell was much quicker, more effective and required far less people than creating a comparable, traditional sandbag wall.

The six trained SA SES personnel were then able to oversee and direct dozens of SES and Country Fire Service volunteers, staff and external contractors in the deployment of the DefenCell product.

The SA SES had been liaising regularly with local governments to identify and prioritise areas requiring flood protection including high value community assets such as hospitals, sporting facilities, tourism destinations and essential infrastructure, including water and power supply.

Time frames, geographical and topographical restrictions which may preclude other flood mitigation options such as earthen levees, were taken into account.

Within two weeks the flood mitigation product was being deployed at key sites in a number of River Murray communities. A total of 16 installations were completed during the River Murray flood.

From a Work Health and Safety perspective, volunteers had fewer reports of injury – both soft tissue and strains – compared to sandbag handling.

In the township of Mannum, home to about 4000 permanent residents, a 5km long DefenCell wall was created in the main street to protect homes and businesses.

EFFECTIVENESS

Prior to purchasing the DefenCell product the SA SES requested and reviewed technical documentation and evaluation reports on the product, including testing by the US Army Corps of Engineers in support of the US FEMA at their Engineer Research and Development Centre.

The research indicated DefenCell was an effective, easily transportable

flood mitigation tool that could provide extended flood protection.

The product was deployed in several areas – some quite small, others, such as the main street of Mannum, were extensive.

On each occasion the product provided a positive flood mitigation result, taking into account expected seepage, in some cases the product was left in situ for more than two months.

POST FLOOD

Following an in-depth review of the successful emergency response to the flooding, the South Australian State Government announced a \$1.3m investment, to be spent over four years, to buy a stockpile of DefenCell and establish a strategic flood barrier reserve to assist in future responses to flooding events in the state.

The SA SES will create a cache of 10km of DefenCell to be stored in different sites around the state to allow for rapid deployment. ❏

King Island Dog Rescue

Tasmanian SES has assisted with numerous rescues the past twelve months.



Cataraqui shipwreck, 400 lives lost.



King Island.

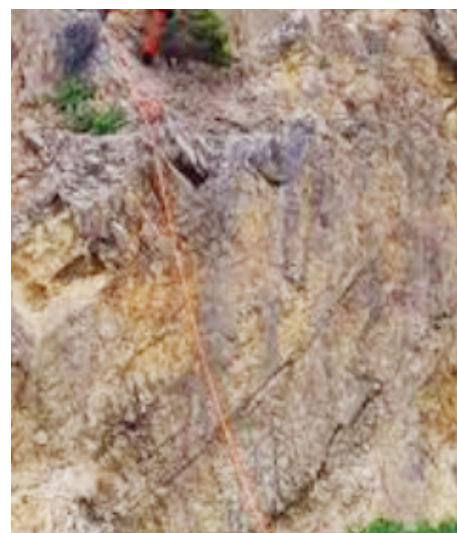
WHETHER IT BE IN ALPINE AREAS

in thick snow, along coastal beaches, dense bushland, or suburbia, we are familiar with whatever environment we are tasked to assist. Unfortunately, some searches haven't had a positive result.

Our King Island Unit, located on the treacherous Bass Strait island half way between mainland Tasmania and Victoria, doesn't have many calls for a assistance. Despite the island being the centre of numerous historical shipwrecks, including the Cataraqui – Australia's worst shipwreck- which resulted in the lost of 400 lives in 1845, and the Neva with 225 lives in 1835, today's population of under 2,000 are very resilient and self sufficient. However, the story of Brush the King Island canine is one story with a happy ending.

The adventurous dog took off from his home for an excursion in January. When he didn't come home, and two days passed, Brush's owner went in search of him. Little Brush had his own brush with death, as the 6 year old doggo had fallen down a cliff, only stopped by a small tree that broke has fall.

The local SES team come to the rescue, making their way down to small slippery drop and safely returning him to higher ground. As brushing himself off, he returned to his owners unhurt, to a much needed feed and rest. 🍌



SES State Skills Workshop


Volunteers and staff from across the state come together in March for the annual SES State Skills Workshop at Carrick.

THE EVENT SAW MEMBERS PUT their skills to the test in several activities, including search & rescue, four wheel drive operations, stress management at critical incidents, first aid, and an introduction to Tasmania's whole of government radio network.

The Minister opened proceedings with a chat to everyone present, followed by a demonstration of the activities we were participating in, providing valuable insight to several of the many skills our volunteers train in.

The two-day event enabled volunteers to get to know others they may not necessarily have the chance to meet, creating valuable friendships

beneficial to our communities when they are called to assist outside of their local area. Furthermore, away from official activities, volunteers and staff were able to let their hair down around the camp fire, having a sing along together thanks to the live entertainment provided to a staff member on guitar.

And a get together of units from across the state wouldn't be the same without the usual banter, staff vs vollies, region vs region, unit vs unit. The team from Sorrel SES unit, Tasmania's newest unit within the SES, without doubt, took out the title for Tasmania's SES Got Talent, with a variety of songs, truly showing the bond they have as a close-knit team. 





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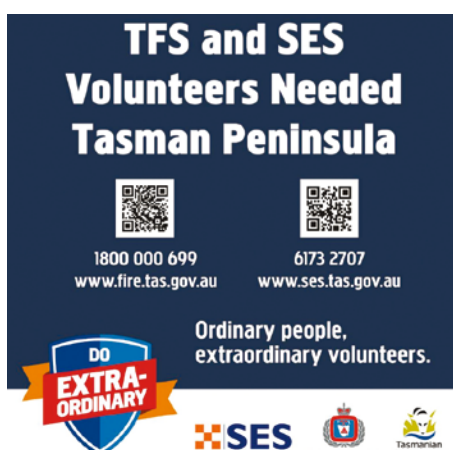
Support Workers and support coordinators for plan managed and self managed participants in South East Melbourne and West Gippsland.

Service for NDIS Plan Managed participants to access Support Workers.

Proud Supporter of Local SES Volunteers

Volunteer Strategy and Support Unit

Tasmania SES has seen a small, but important increase in volunteers over the past year.



WHETHER DUE TO THE SCENES

witnessed across our screens or media sources locally and interstate, or through greater opportunities to be an integral part of their communities, our volunteers remain committed to being there when the call comes.


The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Services (DPFES), through the commitment from the State Government, established the Volunteer Strategy and Support Unit (VSSU) in 2022. With the aim of developing and implementing a strategy to sustain and grow Tasmania's emergency management volunteer workforce,

the team has been extremely active across the state over the past twelve months. It is encouraging to see our volunteers, and the VSSU team, provide essential community education across the state, highlighting the tireless work our State Emergency Service and Fire Service volunteers provide, while actively promoting volunteering.

As many regional units across the country experience a decline in volunteering, and unit numbers affects all communities in the long run. The VSSU has achieved great results turning the tide, providing strategies and advice to units, resulting in numerous public

displays and open days, contributing to an increase in membership.

The VSSU's support has resulted in an increased membership across the Tasmanian SES to 687, effectively a 10% increase from the previous year. And importantly, female membership contributes to one third of overall participation.

As the Tasmania SES continues to work closer with our friends at Tasmania Fire Service, this collaborative approach has also assisted in the recruitment of many 'duel hatters', providing added coverage to a variety of emergencies our volunteers attend. 



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Denis Brain: 50 years service

At the recent SES Awards night, Denis Brain from Footscray Unit received his 50 years service award.

THIS IS A WONDERFUL achievement and an example of dedication and tenacity.

Denis has held many positions over the years, including assistant training officer, staff officer training, staff officer operations, deputy controller three times, boat section leader and boat coxswain, EVS truck driver, as well as an operational member and duty officer.

He has been honoured with various awards and medals:

The Australian Defence Medal, the Australian National Medal for time spent in the CMF, CDO and SES, Maribyrnong Council Community Services Individual Award and SES life member medal.

Denis reflects on his early years training in Civil Defence: "Our training manual in those days was the 'little red book', and to this day I believe it to be the best training manual used by the service, ever. It was very comprehensive and included activities such as rescue from heights (or depths) by means of ladder slides, ladder derricks, ladder hinges, leaning ladders, knots and lashings, hydraulic equipment, cut quicks, Tirfor hauling equipment, searching collapsed buildings, tunnelling into collapsed buildings, improvised equipment, and much much more. We also had lectures and films on what to do in case of a nuclear war and in the use of personal radiation monitors".

Denis' motivation started at an early age, while growing up in rural Tasmania Denis recalls:


"I am often asked why I volunteer. I guess it started with my father who was an ex WW2 soldier. Among other positions he volunteered in, he was the local Rural Fires Board unit captain and the local SES unit controller. As a farming



family we were all involved in attending fires in our local area as soon as we were a old enough to understand fire and be able to carry a 20 litre fire fighting knapsack and fire beaters. This I did at the age of 12 years.

I can remember my first official fire. As a family we had just finished our main course of Christmas lunch on Christmas Day 1957 when the call came through by

landline phone. So off we go, my dad, my two elder brothers and I. It was quite an extensive fire started by a firebug. We ended up having our Christmas lunch dessert at around 6pm!"

Denis' life has been dedicated to serving the community and mentoring new SES members; he is respected and admired by his colleagues and has made an outstanding contribution to the Service. 



Ice Plunge BBQ Fundraising: Mark Weir (former Controller), Debbie Howie, David Hetherton (Controller), Phil Rookes.

Falls Creek: A high plains specialised unit

✦ By Debbie Howie, Vice President, Falls Creek Chamber of Commerce, Snonuts - snonutsdonuts.com

The Falls Creek SES unit has a unique role in the alpine environment, both summer and winter.

WINTER PRESENTS A UNIQUE SET OF demands for our unit. The winter environment can be harsh and ever changing, the weather being unforgiving and brutal. We need to be skilled and prepared for any event.

The weather dramatically changes the alpine area regularly. Our weekly winter training exercises on the high plains via snowmobiles, allow members to understand where snow conditions change such as crevices developing, creeks becoming either snow covered or exposed, cracks in the surface changing, potential avalanche sites developing

and snowdrifts also developing along normally flat surfaces.

The High Plains are vast, thus understanding how to navigate the area safely, and without getting lost or injured, takes a lot of training, experience, time and use of appropriate equipment.

The challenges are endless and can be life threatening without the proper skills, knowledge, training, and regular inspections of the high plains. Knowledge and skillsets build with each weekly exercise. The unit is highly specialised.

Because of our extensive training and skill sets, the Unit assists Police and Ambulance with searching and rescues of lost parties, and retrieval of injured persons. This usually occurs in blizzards, and other extreme weather events but some days we are lucky enough to experience blue bird days making rescues and retrieval easier. The weather and conditions are never the same.

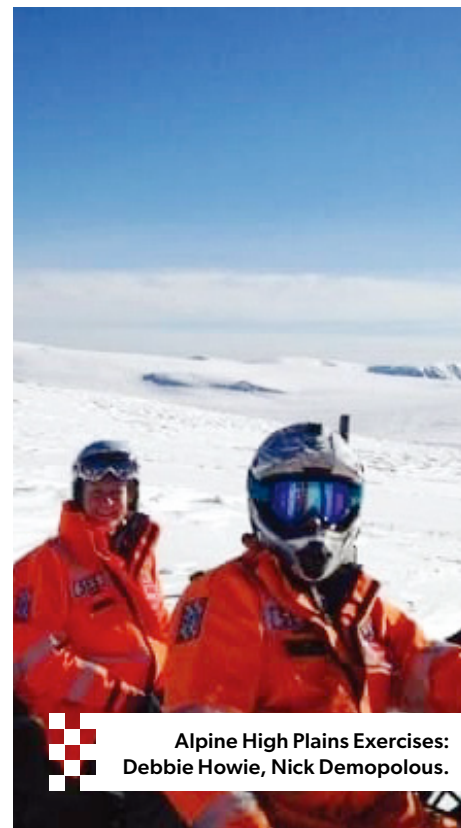
The unit also supports the Kangaroo Hoppet, a major international event conducted in the High Plains.



Alpine High Plains Exercises:
Debbie Howie, Myra Rist.



Support for Kangaroo Hoppet:
Matt O'Keefe, Glen Whitford,
Simon Allen, Brett Williams.



Alpine High Plains Exercises:
Debbie Howie, Nick Demopolous.



Crew: Damo, Zorren, Brett and Ajay, after a recent 'summer' retrieval when visitors got caught out in snowfalls.

Specialised alpine training occurs year-round to ensure a high level of alpine skills are developed and maintained for both summer and winter responses. Safety is paramount.

In summer, the unit utilises 4WDs to access the high plains. Members must be trained and experienced in alpine retrieval. The summer landscape is vastly different to winter. Once again, navigation takes on a new role during this period with a high level of local knowledge of the fire tracks, walking trails and how to access remote areas swiftly and safely.

In the Alpine environment, specialised equipment is required to conduct search and rescue operations. Equipment includes snowmobiles, adapted trailers for pickups, crampons for ice rescues, 4wds, specific communication equipment and protective clothing.

Specialised equipment is expensive. Falls Creek SES conducts regular fundraising events such as the Annual SES BBQ with an auction of donated products from local Falls Creek businesses. This event attracts hundreds of attendees raising

substantial funds to help support the needs of the unit. We attend the Ice Plunge selling BBQ items for further fund raising as well as other community events. People find our displays interesting given the specialised equipment required to conduct our rescues and retrievals.

Falls Creek SES plays a vital role in the safety of Alpine High Plains' visitors. Its members are dedicated to providing a highly specialised group of individuals bringing specific skills and experience which allow visitors access to our Alpine National Parks areas. ❏

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Sarah Brennan-Dunn: Celebrating Diversity

Pride March 2023

‘You can’t be what you can’t see’ is a mantra often used to advocate for greater diversity and inclusion.

SES VOLUNTEERS HAVE

participated in Pride March for many years now, supporting the great diversity of our community.

Sarah Brennan-Dunn was the first transgender SES volunteer in 2003. Many volunteers have admired her courage and commitment to living her own identity, and she has set an example that makes it easier for others coming after. Sarah was interviewed about Pride March:

When did SES volunteers first participate? Who initiated this, staff or volunteers?

The first time SES marched in Pride March was in 2007 and it started with one person: “me”, with the approval from my Unit Controller at the time, but then Central Region didn’t feel comfortable in doing it the year later. Two years on, Chris Smith-Welsh (with the support from Brimbank SES Unit) co-ordinated the march and got other SES Units involved. It was the year later that I joined the VicSES contingent for Pride March, and have continued since then.

Does it make it easier for people who identify as part of LGBTIQ+ groups to see the range of emergency services participating in Pride March?

Every time I march at Pride March and hear the crowd cheer louder when they see the VicSES members (not all members who march are LGBTIQ+) march past and say “Thank you” to us.

Just having our presence at the march gives the knowledge that anyone who



wants to join VicSES is always welcome, and that we come from all different backgrounds but willing to help support the community in time of despair or need.

Where to from here? Is there room for greater participation in leadership roles (in the EM sector) for LGBTIQ+ people?

As they say, the sky is the limit. I’ve been blessed to serve my community for over 19 years and been able to help mentor new members in the unit. Leadership takes on many roles and being able to listen to your fellow colleagues and to achieve the best outcome. I do hope with my experience and with support from within the service, to extend my leadership role, not just within the Unit I serve, but to assist other units and work closer with our fellow Emergency Service Organisations.

How has your experience been as coming from a diverse background? Have you faced any discrimination or unconscious bias?

Being the first openly out transgender SES member in 2003, there has been a few roadblocks not just for me, but the Unit had to face as well, and it wasn’t easy. But as

I have said from the beginning that this journey I’m going through, I am not going through this alone. Everyone who I work with and meet are part of this journey, we will hit rough seas but we always find our way out and sail to shore. The hardest part has been dealing with the pronouns and misconception being made by others. But, I do correct my pronoun to the member and chat to them. Making them feel valued and welcome and I know that there was no malice in their action.

The biggest hill that I face at this moment is the limitation of being able to be deployed to assist other services (floods or fire deployments). I have the required accreditations and training, but people go on about the facilities at the staging area (overnight sleeping facilities). I’m an ex-Scout, I’ve been in tents and limited resources before and know how to adapt to the conditions. All I want to do is help serve the community within, and abroad as well to achieve our goal to keep everyone safe.

Anything else you would like to add?

Being part of Pride March and meeting up with other SES members from around Victoria, it would be great to see many more Unit members and families joining in next year. 🏳️‍🌈



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Sarge Serves with the SES for 35 Years

Sergio Bottacin, known to all as Sarge, was presented with his 2nd Clasp to the National Medal for his service to the SES by DFES Assistant Commissioner—Country, Gary Gifford on 12 July in Northam, which is 100 km east of Perth in the wheatbelt.



SARGE HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE Northam District SES since 1987 and more recently a member in Merredin. During his time in the SES, Sarge was a Team Leader, Trainer, and Local Manager.

Sarge was passionate about imparting his knowledge to other SES Volunteers and making the community more prepared. He attended many incidents including the floods of Moora in 1999 after ex Tropical Cyclone Elaine dropped flooding rain in the Moore River catchment, in 2017 during the York/Northam Storms, more Flooding in

Nungarin and Northam and a major tornado in Kellerberrin. Sarge also assisted in many major metro storms over more than 35 years.

In 2002 Sarge was awarded the National Medal with his first clasp being presented in 2014. In 2009 Sarge was awarded the Peter Keillor Award by his peers; the highest honour to be bestowed by the SES in WA.

Sarge was active with the SESVA from December 2017 when he was appointed as a sub-committee member. He was appointed as the Goldfields-Midlands Management Committee

member in November 2019, serving in the role until his resignation in January 2023. Sarge brought with him extensive training knowledge and a relentless commitment to improving exercise management, along with his desire to capture the history of the SES and the Civil Defence organisation in WA, including building up a collection of information, images and equipment that could be accessed by volunteers and the public in the years ahead.

Congratulations to Sarge.....for 35 years of reliable, trusted and determined service to the community. ✂



SES Volunteers Camaraderie and Generosity of Spirit

By Anita Kirkbright, Geraldton-Greenough SES Media Officer

Camaraderie and generosity of spirit make SES volunteers a resource to be treasured.

HANDS SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY and tears streaming down her face the young woman steps over the safety rail, the harness she wears attached to twin safety lines and secured to bomb-proof anchors on the roof of Queens Park Theatre. Some Geraldton-Greenough SES members offer encouragement from the balcony she's just stepped off, others call while dangling from nearby ropes or cheer from two stories below. This is no rookie on her first abseil but a long-time valued member, fully qualified in vertical rescue, a whizz at building rope rescue systems and a warm-hearted mentor to new members. She's abseiled many times but it doesn't get any easier for her, she just does not like heights.

"Why do you put yourself through this?" asks District Officer Tim Dalwood who is supervising the evening abseiling training, which is doubling as a photo opportunity to promote the 2023 WOW Day. The Department of

Fire and Emergency Services endorsed vertical rescue instructor knows many people walking backwards off a ledge, albeit attached to safety lines, need some reassurance before they can commit to the abseil, while others he will help back from the edge to try again another day.

"Well, you know, you're supposed to face your fears, and all that!" says the member with a wobbly laugh. And then off she goes, leaning back, one foot down then the other until she's fully committed to the abseil. After a few deep breaths to take control of her emotions, and with calls of encouragement from the team, she loosens her white-knuckled grip on rope and descender letting go with both hands and allowing the safety devices to hold her securely on the rope. There's a chorus of cheers and smiles all around. A win for one is a win for all.

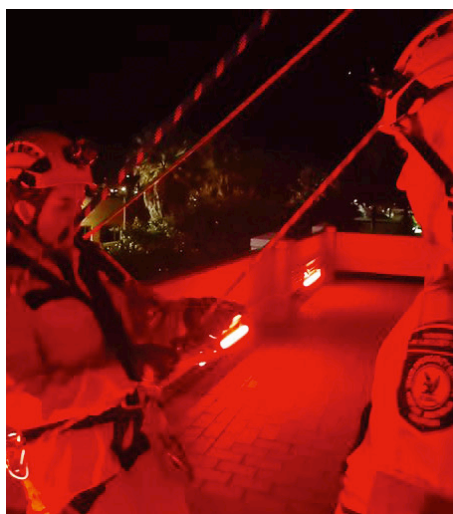
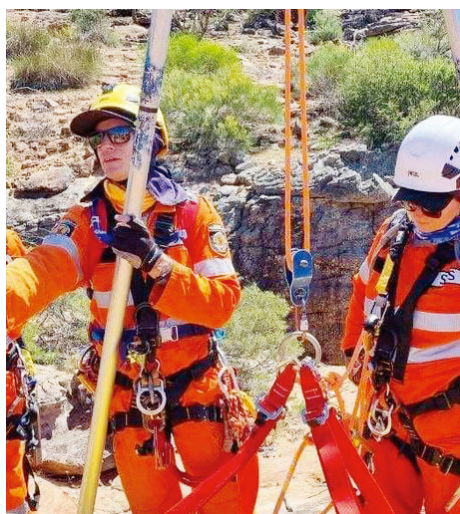
Team Leader Justin Larkin obtained permission from the City of

Greater Geraldton to have the City's theatre lit with an orange glow and the SES logo and Wear Orange Wednesday promotional signage. He and DO Dalwood supervised a large contingent from the unit as they practiced climbing and descending using specialised ropes and devices, demonstrating the skills SES volunteers use in vertical cliff rescue.

Geraldton-Greenough SES Local Manager Ross Jones said WOW Day showcased the amazing work SES volunteers undertake for their communities.

"Since the early 1980's orange has been the signature colour of SES volunteers' overalls across Australia. WOW Day is about showing support and saying thanks to SES volunteers for their contribution to the community," he said.

Geraldton-Greenough SES was born in August 1984 after Shire of Greenough Deputy Mayor Jim Gould and newly appointed WA SES Mid-West Gascoyne



Regional Manager Ross Holmes advertised in *The Geraldton Guardian* for members to join the newly-formed SES unit. The previous Civil Defence unit was then reorienting from post-war to natural disaster profiles, with Jim Gould its first Local Coordinator.

The GGSES unit had several homes over the years, including sharing the Regional Manager's office on Chapman Road between 1984 and 1990. The former Geraldton Prison, located a short distance away, was renovated by the members and officially became the home of GGSES in 1990 until 2004, then after a few more moves between then and 2019, GGSES got its forever home, a purpose-built facility at Geraldton Airport.

This modern complex came into its own, becoming the main incident control centre in 2021 when Cyclone Seroja impacted an area of Western Australia unaccustomed to

experiencing such weather events. The severe category 3 tropical cyclone affected more than 16 local government authorities including the City of Greater Geraldton and the neighbouring shires of Northampton (including the towns of Kalbarri and Northampton), Chapman Valley (Nabawa, Nanson and Yuna), Irwin (Dongara) and Mingenew.

The GGSES unit was among the massive response that attracted emergency services workers and volunteers from across Australia. The local unit's profile includes storm, cyclone, flood, earthquake and tsunami, with combat roles in land search and vertical rescue, as well as the support role for water bomber refilling.

Members respond to requests for assistance after storms and strong wind events but are often called to search for missing people. Two recent large-scale events in which GGSES members have been involved were the successful land

searches for four-year-old Cleo Smith near Carnarvon in 2021 and 73-year old prospector Brian Brady at Cue in 2023.

SES volunteers come from various backgrounds, ages, occupations and skill levels. They sign up for different reasons but through training and working alongside each other there comes a shared sense of achievement which helps them become an efficient emergency service team. Whether it be participating in a search that reunites a small child with her frantic parents, putting a tarp on a storm damaged roof while being buffeted by wind or rain, or watching a member overcome their fear to abseil from a great height on a training night, the camaraderie and generosity of spirit and a desire to serve each other and our communities makes State Emergency Service volunteers a very special resource which should be treasured by every community, State and Territory of Australia. ❏

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Bayswater SES 200 Years of Service

On 10th May 2023, long service awards recognising 100 years of diligent service to the SES were presented to Bayswater SES members, in metropolitan Perth, by DFES Acting Deputy Commissioner Jon Broomhall AFSM.



L-R: Erik Pavlik, Robin Grieff, Martin Hale, A/Deputy Commissioner Jon Broomhall AFSM, Brett O'Leary, and District Officer Glen Hall. Jane Campbell attended via video link (top left) while Claire chose not to be in the photo.

MEDALS, CLASPS AND MEDALLIONS

presented on the night to SES volunteers were:

- Five-year SES medallion to Robin Grieff.
- 10-year SES medal to Erik Pavlik.
- Clasp to the SES medal to Clare for 15 years of service.
- National Medal and clasp to SES Medal to Jane Campbell for 15 years of service.
- Clasp to the SES medal to Martin Hale for 20 years of service.
- Clasp to the SES medal to Brett O'Leary recognising 35 years of service.

Past Bayswater SES Local Managers also gathered

Also in attendance were all previous volunteer Local Managers dating back to 1994, that is 29 years of successive Local Managers.



Past Local Managers L-R: Ray Mahony (1994-2000), Glen Hall (2000-2005), Tracy Barker (2005-2007), Ash Smith 2007-2012), Andrea Moore (2012-2014), Nic Wilkinson (2014-2019), Alan Hawke (2019-2021) and Mic Dunn (2021-present).



1970 West Gate Bridge Disaster

❖ From the VicSES Footscray Archive

On October 15 1970, Australia's worst industrial accident occurred when the West Gate Bridge collapsed, killing 35 people.

AT 11.50AM, A 112-METRE SPAN between two piers, weighing 2,000 tonnes, plummeted 50 metres into the mud of the Yarra River. Some workers 'rode' the bridge down and, miraculously, survived. All those who survived were traumatised, as were many people living in the working-class suburbs surrounding it.

Ambulances rushed to the site from all over the city and volunteers soon arrived to assist. Members of Footscray Civil Defence, the forerunner of VicSES Footscray, were among the first on scene and commenced rescue operations. Mr Jack Smith, Administration Officer, who quickly dispatched 6 of the Footscray Civil Defence's most experienced members, with an additional 15 joining later, was quoted in *The Mail*: "We had been training for years to cope with such a disaster. I dreaded the day for it to come. When it did hit us I never in my wildest dreams thought it could be so horrible".

Survivors with injuries had to be restrained from trying to locate their fallen co-workers.

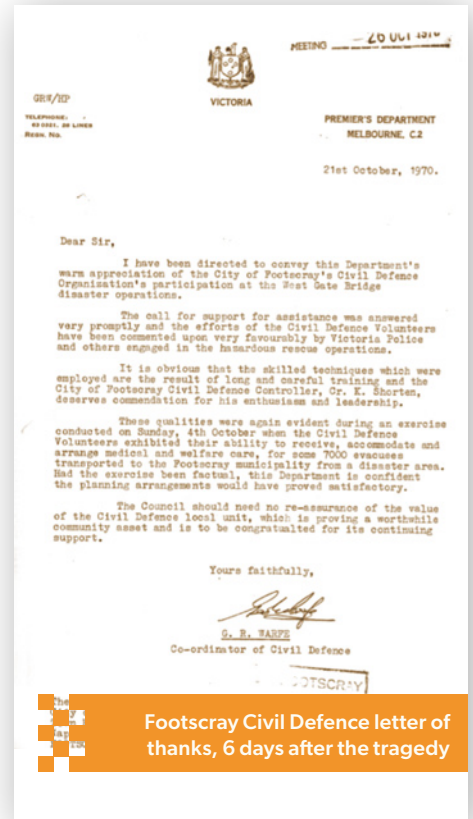
In total, 35 construction workers were killed and 18 injured. Many who died were on their lunch break underneath the bridge in workers' huts, which were crushed by the falling span. Others were working on the span when it fell. The noise of the impact was heard 20 kilometres away and buildings hundreds of metres from the disaster were shaken and sprayed with mud.

Jack Smith described the CD work: "When our civil defence squad arrived at the scene of the disaster they began an immediate search for the men imprisoned in the tangled mass of crumpled steel. Working sometimes over their knees in mud and slush, they burrowed at great personal risk into the massive pile of wreckage and recovered five bodies. The work was such a strain on body and nerves that the men worked in groups of three or four at a time and then pulled out for a spell while others took their places.

They began the rescue work about 12.30pm and it was not until 9.30pm that they temporarily abandoned the search".

The Civil Defence volunteers were coordinated by their Controller Kevin Shorten, who set up radio communications from a radio control site at the base of the bridge. Two other radio control points were established; at the Footscray and District Hospital and at the Civil Defence LHQ in Buckley St. The resources available to them in 1970 were far from what we are used to today, and the Civil Defence received invaluable assistance from local electricians G. J. Pearce and Sons of Hopkins St., who offered the Civil Defence three radio-equipped vehicles. Jack Smith said "The highly efficient radio control set up would not have been possible but for their praiseworthy action".

Controller Kevin Shorten's log entry for the October 15th reads: "Lower Yarra Bridge collapse. Footscray CD organisation rallied its members to the



tragic scene. 21 members dug with pick and shovels to release bodies of dead workmen. (Williamstown City Electric Supply). Toilets from MMTB, Bruntan Steel, offices, phones, women's toilets, also tea room and the assistance of ACI in use of their canteen". October 16th his entry is "Remained all day at site office in case assistance required. Able to advise Police that bridge over Stoney Creek unable to sustain the weight of the cranes being brought into the disaster area. Mobile cranes re-routed around through Williamstown Road. Another disaster prevented".

The disaster also led to changes in training and use of technology. A later diary entry of Kevin Shorten's includes "Re-think on training, having learned from the bridge disaster... Training continued but with added classes in use of radio for time of disaster. We now have our first radio, we are very excited".

The Footscray CD volunteers were praised for their work by G.R Warfe, Coordinator for Civil Defence in

the Premier's Department: "It is obvious that the skilled techniques which were employed are the result of long and careful training and the City of Footscray Civil Defence Controller Cr K. Shorten deserves commendation for his enthusiasm and leadership". Media headlines included: "Civil Defence Was Prepared" and "Defence Body Praised by Footscray Council" and Footscray Civil Defence was reported as being a "model example" at a federal level.

As is common with major events, interest in and awareness of Civil Defence was increased. VicSES Footscray has a direct link back to the disaster as member Denis Brain was motivated to join because of the bridge collapse. Denis is still an active member of the Unit, having dedicated the greater part of his life to community service, including almost half a century in various leadership positions with Civil Defence and SES. Denis still trains new recruits and sets an example for others to follow.

The West Gate bridge tragedy was widely reported overseas and bridges of similar design in Europe were closed temporarily and tested for safety.

A royal commission was held and concluded in 1971. Its findings paved the way for strengthening occupational health and safety laws in Australian workplaces.

Work recommenced on the bridge project in 1972, and many of the surviving workers returned to finish the job. The West Gate Bridge opened in 1978.

Today, six fragments of the collapsed bridge are located in Monash University's Clayton campus engineering faculty grounds to remind students of the potentially tragic consequences that can result from errors in engineering.

A West Gate Bridge Memorial Park, dedicated to the victims of the disaster, opened at Spotswood in 2004 and a memorial website is found at www.westgatebridge.org



Vale Christine Bethwaite

August 1947 – September 2022.

CHRISTINE SPENT THE FIRST 12

years of her life in Torbay, just north of Auckland. She attended Murrays Bay Primary School, and was a good student. Moving to Australia with the family in 1959, she attended SCEGS Redlands in Cremorne, graduating with the Leaving Certificate in 1963.

During the first 4 years in Australia, the family established itself in Northbridge and Christine's parents, Frank and Nel, became a vital part of the local sailing club. The family's involvement was further enabled by Dad being very hands on with building boats for the family in the garage downstairs.

In the mid-70s she moved to Canberra to start working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It was here she was given her first taste of rallying thanks to Jon Waterhouse. The rallying had a far greater impact than anything else. She purchased her first rally car and started competing in the local rallies, forming the friendships that have lasted her a lifetime.

Christine married & divorced 3 times and had two other significant relationships. As was Christine's style, she remained in touch with her previous spouses, not holding a grudge but genuinely trying to move forward.

The next 20 years were a definite golden age for Christine, full of cars and rallying, getting involved in the administrative side of the sport, meeting significant others – John Large among them – living in Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, due to both work and her love life. There is no question that motorsport was the overriding passion of her life and in typical Christine style, she tried to give back as much as she derived out of the sport. To this



end, she joined the Board of CAMS, becoming Chair in 1982 but also was a state Steward, CRO, Zero Car, training presenter, officials mentor, event assessor, Chief Safety Officer and so on. She purchased her 1974 Andrew Cowan-replica LA Lancer in 1994 and it was in this car that she competed in the 1995 Mobil 1 Round Australia (18,500 km in 20 days) with Jocelyn Vettoretti – they came 15th overall, 3rd in class and were the first All-Woman crew. The major achievement was to finish.

As a result of Christine's voluntary roles within motorsport, in 2000 she was awarded the Australian Sports Medal.

Her involvement with the SES started in 2012.

Christine was a member of the ACTSES Pialligo Unit where once again Christine gave her everything. She rapidly grew to understand and admire the people involved in the service, and the complexities around the tasks that the SES were required to perform.

She went from Team Member to Team Leader, Admin Officer & Treasurer. As a retiree Christine was able to attend most of the Community Events where she would interact with the Community showing them features of the ACTSES as it related to Pialligo Unit. She was also a very competent user of a computer and kept up with technology as it applied to



Christine's beloved lancer.

the ACTSES IMT (Incident Management Team). You would find Christine would be one of the first Pialligo members to volunteer when an IMT was stood up. Christine was very knowledgeable on the technology side which included Sales Force, ICON, CRM & BOSS. She knew these databases very well and was generous in helping any inexperienced operators who came in to assist her in the IMT. Christine was a valuable asset in an IMT due to her knowledge using CRM which is now Salesforce. Her particular contribution was to create training manuals (Cheat Sheets) for the new trainees, something she was proud of.

Christine was more than just a member of the Service, she was a mentor and a friend, a kind and loving person as well as a valued and cherished member of the Pialligo SES Unit.

In May 2022, Christine was awarded the ACT Emergency Medal and the National Emergency Medal for service during the dreadful NSW bushfires 2019 - 2020. In the end, her heart gave out, but not before receiving the ACT SES Long Service Medal the very night before she died.

We know that her passing will not only leave a void in our lives, but also in the heart of everyone who knew her.

Vale Christine Bethwaite 🏁

Vale Gordon Thornton

GOSNELLS SES.

ON 22ND JUNE 2023, GORDON Thornton passed away after a short time in hospital.

Gordon was a member of the Gosnells SES Unit in metropolitan Perth for over 20 years and was awarded a Life Membership for his work and efforts promoting a healthy SES unit.

Gordon was always the joker making everyone laugh. To know him was to like him.

Gordon will be sadly missed by his fellow volunteers and the community he served for so many years. ❧



Vale Bob White

❧ By Bill Roffey

Robert Allan White, aged 79 years, died peacefully at Bellingen Hospital on the 19th January 2023.


BOB WHITE WAS THE LOCAL

Controller at Coffs Harbour for many years as well as being on the VA Executive. Our thoughts are with Bob's family. ❧

DEATH NOTICE

Robert (Bob) Allan White


19th January 2023



Peacefully at Bellingen Hospital. Late of Marian Grove. Beloved husband of Nola.
Loved father of Nicole and Craig. Proud Pop of Alexandra, Macondo, Riley and Darcy.

Aged 79 Years
Forever in our hearts.

Bob was privately cremated as per his wishes.



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L To R Ross Tout , Joe Bond , Lizzie Britt at Rotary Awards Dinner.

Vale Lizzie Britt

I vividly remember the moment I met Lizzie Britt.

BUT A BIT ABOUT ME FIRST... I WAS

in a rollover when I was 17 years old, they said the Landcruiser rolled 5 times but I only remember two of the five. My mother and friend were critically injured. Though thankfully are now living full lives. Thinking back to that moment it's not the ambos or Police that I remember, it was the SES. That always stuck. The memories are long faded but I had always thought fondly about the SES since that time. It must be something about volunteers or maybe it's just the colour orange but the SES offer sanctuary and comfort when you're at your most vulnerable. I now know it's not a job to us, we want to be there in that moment by your side. Maybe that's what it is.

Back to Lizzie... so here I am, 15 years later, walking into the Gundagai shed. I'd seen an add on Facebook inviting interested people to come down on training night. I was tentative, I didn't think it was something us girls really did. But the thought of being

involved was enough to override any fear of rejection.

So I arrive and there's Lizzie. It's hard to find the right words to describe such a person but she has a way of making you feel instantly at ease. In that moment I could sense her warmth and her gentle but strong and determined energy. I don't remember who else was there on my first night but I remember Lizzie. She eagerly took me on the Grande Royale tour of our shed starting with the truck, explaining the difference between the thingy-ma-jig and the thingy-ma-bob, showing off our pride and joy (the e-hydraulics), next the boats and finally the crew (the best bit).

With the tour done Lizzie was quick to ask when I was signing up. Straight away of course! I was quietly stoked. And I was completely in awe of Lizzie.

Over the short time I was privileged to know Lizzie she never ceased to amaze me. I learned her remarkable story, witnessed incredible moments and was constantly in awe by the selfless


things she did for others inside of SES and out. Lizzie was and is my mentor and hero.

Lizzie was only 8 years old when she lost her own mother in a motor vehicle accident. The SES were there to help her brother who was also involved and ensure her mother was comforted and given all the dignity afforded. When the time was right Lizzie joined the SES and was taken under the wing of Joe Bond. The same Joe Bond that attended her mother's accident many years before. Joe was Lizzie's mentor and hero and she set about learning as much as she could. Whether it was operating the big tools, driving the truck or offering comfort and dignity to road crash victims – Lizzie wanted to be the best she could be.

Despite her own hardships in life, Lizzie went about her life always giving to others. Even when she was sick, she was still giving so much to so many.

SES was just one part of Lizzie. If she wasn't helping cut people out



 L To R Joe Bond , Megan King Lizzie Britt at WOW day covering the Dog on the Tuckerbox in Orange.




 Liz getting her commander Pips.

of cars, sitting with a patient offering comfort, or helping stranded drivers figure out how to get home she was sure to be volunteering down at the footy on a weekend (even after her own boys had long grown out of it), giving local kids a start at Hungry Jacks (even the hard ones) or maybe helping out with the CWA, RUOK, Can Assist or perhaps she'd be checking in on someone who was going through a time. But she didn't stop there, together with her soulmate Cas, she opened up her own home to numerous kids and young adults (and their babies and pets) over the years. There was always a comfortable bed, hot shower and hearty meal at Lizzie's and Cas's and a little subtle therapy offered by Sid dog. Lizzie would give these kids (and all us grown ups) one of the best gifts there is, the ability to see that anything is possible and that dreams can come true. And of course to 'put your big girl/ boy pants on' and just get it done!

Lizzie was a master of time. She had time for everyone and everything. Whether it was volunteering her time, running a busy business, spending time with her boys and family, mentoring others (me included) and checking in on people in our community. And she'd make you feel like she had all the time in the world for you. I still don't know how she found the time for everyone. And no matter what, if a job came through she wouldn't miss it for the world. Lizzie was usually the first at the shed and already had the truck started and unplugged ready to go. Lizzie's compassion and ability to comfort road trauma victims was awe inspiring. Lizzie was also the organiser, Ross's right hand (wo)man. Keeping everyone in line and making sure any job ran seamlessly.

It's some twisted irony that Lizzie was given so little time despite giving out so much. While it'll never sit right that she's gone there's some sort of weird comfort knowing she's lived a life worth ten of any other.

Lizzie passed away in October 2022 following a relatively short battle with cancer. Hundreds attended her funeral. Honouring her wishes we attended proudly in oranges and blues and were closely supported by all our local emergency services teams, Furies, Police and Ambos - all who had worked closely with Lizzie at many an accident. Lizzie was sent off with lights and sirens through Gundagai.

Lizzie, we take comfort in that you will always inspire us to do more, help more and be more. We wish you were here. But with you gone we must all be a little more like you. We will do this and we will do our best to fill the holes that you've left. Even in death you keep giving to this town as you brought so many of us together. We find comfort in each other and we'll look out for each other. We love you always and will never forget all that you were, all that you are and all that you continue to be for you will live on until all that have known you have passed. 



Vale Paul "Paddy" O'Brien

✘ By Craig (Alo) Allerton

18 June 1964 - 30 April 2023

PADDY STARTED HIS SERVICE WITH SES in Wagga on 10 August 1993.

Upon moving to Sydney, he transferred to the Kogarah unit around the 2000s where he became a Team Leader and Trainer of the Unit in disaster, rescue, storm damage, chainsaw operations and roof safety systems.

During this time, he was involved with the New South Wales volunteers memorial at Lady Macquarie's Chair Medals and Regalia of Service - together with Warrick Carey his Unit controller at the time. He also took part in the Reserve Forces parades.

In the mid 2000s, Paddy began training in a wider area as trainer assessor for the Sydney southern region,

& eastern suburbs (west to Wollondilly Shire and south to Sutherland shire) During this time, he conducted training workshops for trainers and assessed trainees. Paddy helped implement changes to training and gave feedback to region and state as to the strengths and shortfalls within units training and assessment criteria.

Being a trainer assessor didn't stop Paddy being operational, quite the opposite - He would attend many operations state-wide to lead teams to assist and mentor leaders in the field and to assess operational requirements, equipment and training shortfalls.

To that end, Paddy received the following awards: the Director- Generals

Award for Service, the SES State Medallion for Hunter Region Storms, the SES Commissioners Certificate of Appreciation and Queensland Citation for Cyclone Yasi.

For his time in service, he received the National Medal with clasps & the SES Long Service award with clasps.

Paddy Served the NSW SES during such operations as the Thredbo landslide, Cyclone Yasi, 1999 Hail storms in Sydney and numerous storm, flood, searches and support to fire events across the state.

In short, while Paddy attended countless requests for assistance on operations, the Legacy he left within the service was to ensure that capable



people were in place to provide assistance to their communities when most needed in times of crisis and for that experience and knowledge to be forwarded to volunteers moving forward..

While Paddy was at the Kogarah Unit, I was at the Sutherland unit where we went undefeated in the Division Rescue Competition. When he moved to the Sydney southern region and became a Judge - "We still won" But the level of judging was raised.

In-service, we gained a family - through common goals ,difficulties and experiences together.

So goodbye, my brother in service.
I'll see you at the debrief





Vale Tony Graham

Anthony Graham (Tony) joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Junior recruit in 1974 and served for 21 years retiring as a Warrant Officers.

WHILE POSTED TO CANBERRA

joined the ACT Emergency Service (ACTES-now ACTSES) in 1989 as a volunteer in the Phillip Depot.

He was instrumental over the years in establishing a number of significant improvements including;

- A quality training system within a Unit of sixty members, including developing and delivering the first Team Leader training to volunteers;
- Establishing a professional culture within the service that saw an improvement in operations and volunteer retention;
- An improved relationship with other emergency services, thus improving community safety; and
- Developed and delivered the first Incident Command training to all emergency services in the ACT.

During his volunteer career Tony held the positions of Team Leader, Deputy Unit Controller and the Unit Controller. In 1997 a Whole of Government change in the organisational structure of emergency services took place and he was appointed as the first ACTES Unit Commander at the new combined Bushfire/ES Rivers Brigade. He held this position until gaining full time employment within the then Emergency Service Bureau as the first Operations Manager of Bushfire and Emergency Services in 1997 where he brought a depth of SES operational and technical expertise to the role. During this time there were many large-scale emergency's he was involved in including the Thredbo land slide (1997), Canberra Hospital explosion (1999), Sydney hail storm (2001) and Canberra fires (2003).



In 2004 the ACT State Emergency Service was formally established, and Tony was appointed as the first Chief Officer of the new ACTS ES. During his tenure he brought a holistic approach to the wider Emergency Services Agency where he fundamentally lead and mentored many of his colleagues and staff. His expertise and knowledge were also recognised nationally as a member of Australian Council of State Emergency Service as the deputy chair and a member of AFAC.

Tony was universally respected by the volunteers of the ACTSES and the wider ACT Government community. He represented the ACT on many National forums and undertook presentations on emergency service issues.

Tony was a leader of exceptional quality, and highly regarded as a trainer. He willingly imparted these skills to volunteers.

During his time as ACTSES Chief Officer the Service has gone through many changes which Tony managed with the utmost professionalism to ensure effective change management strategies were implemented.

In recognition of his efforts across the ACTSES the Tony Graham leadership was established to be awarded to the ACTSES member displaying the leadership skills and dedication to the Service.

Tony Graham retired on medical grounds in 2015 and passed away in January 2023. 🍷

Being online has made meeting and interacting with others easier than ever before, but it's important to know how to stay safe.

Here are ThinkUKnow's top tips for safer online interactions:

- Question suspicious accounts, and trust your instincts if something doesn't seem right - not everyone is who they say they are.
- Avoid meeting someone in person that you have only ever spoken to online. However, if you do meet, choose a public place and take someone with you.
- If something goes wrong, know how to block or un-match and report.
- Your safety should always come first!

Sometimes things don't go to plan but there is always help available.

For more information, visit www.thinkuknow.org.au

ThinkUKnow is a national online child safety program led by the Australian Federal Police, delivered in schools through educational presentations and resources for young people and their parents and carers.





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