

# the Volunteer

Issue 36 | June 2016



REGULAR FEATURES ✕ From the Chairman ✕ From the Commissioner



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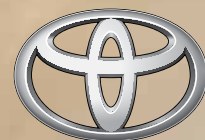
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*Oh what a feeling!*



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**On the cover:**  
Flood Rescue Challenge.  
Photo by  
John Brock.





**CHARLIE MOIR ESM**  
**PRESIDENT NSW SES VA**

**B**eing involved in something is one of the best forms of support. As volunteers we all support the NSW SES and in turn support our communities.

Outside of our volunteering, we often volunteer further, or support other causes and charities. The level of participation may vary, from a one off donation to a fully-fledged charity ambassador.

I am fortunate that I am surrounded by what I can call double volunteers. Those who volunteer for the NSW SES and then go one step further and volunteer for the Volunteers Association. These women and men actively participate in ways to 'make it better' and epitomize our motto: 'Volunteers Supporting Volunteers'.

Our level of commitment is like a game of football. Often when the team does well we all hear about a person's support, but when the team struggles the supporters may find reason to relegate to the stands and shout negatives.

**The SES and the VA are what we make them, these are your Service and your Association and your input and service is what makes them great organisations to belong to ...**

So I ask you when things are tough, do you actively get involved to make this a better service, a better association for the volunteers? Or do you relegate to the stands and comment discouragingly?

We have had some rough years, and many people have come and gone. I am constantly thankful for those volunteers who step up and work to make this a better place. Sure we are not perfect but we have many volunteers of the SES who volunteer further for roles in the VA such as our Directors, Area Representatives, District Coordinators and Unit Coordinators. These people have committed to actively participating and we must all support them.

Even if you cannot commit to one of these roles there are other ways to participate. You can provide simple constructive feedback to surveys and policy reviews or present options for solutions to issues we may face. Don't be that person that sits safely in the

stand and shouts negatives, or worse still, shout down those whom doubly volunteer and are getting involved to make this place better.

The SES and the VA are what we make of it, these are your Service and your Association and your input and service is what makes them great organisations to belong to and you are all greatly appreciated by both organisations and the communities we serve.

I am very proud of the association that has been built by our dedicated volunteers. We now sit in a financially stable and independent position which is growing yearly. This dedication constantly allows further return support in many ways which increase daily.

We need to participate to make things better. Each of us has something to offer and everyone is good at something. We can all make this service and our association better. I thank you for your support of our association, in whatever form that may be.

## NSW SES Peer Support

The Peer Support team is available to all SES members and their families.

- » Peers are volunteers who are active within their own units and regions
- » Peers have been trained to be a listening ear when you or your family members need that ear
- » Peers have varying degrees of talents, skills and years of service within the NSW SES
- » Some of us are young; some of us are older and come from diverse backgrounds, race, cultures and experience

We are there to listen to whatever

it is that is bothering you: it can be service related, family related or work related. We are a listening ear; there to talk to you and where you can be assured it will remain confidential. Sometimes by just talking to someone you will be surprised at the clarity and sense of relief you will find.

Our Duty Officers in Peer Support are there to take calls from our members and their family. Like any other DO within the service – they are on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week – no time is a bad time to call them. They are there to take calls at

those times when you just need to talk to someone straight away.

We have peers, Chaplains and access to a psychologist depending on your needs.

Please ensure you have the **1800 626 800** number saved in your phones and in the phones of the ones you care about.

Watch this space over the next few publications on more of what we do and who we are. An EOI will be announced later for those of you who would be interested in training to become a Peer Supporter.

I have been asked on a number of occasions what the vision for the Service is. Whilst I believe we need to build vision together, I have my own thoughts on what we need to be. I believe we need to be an organisation that through trained, equipped, and knowledgeable volunteers, works with communities to help them prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Not just Floods Storms and Tsunami but also General Land and Vertical Rescue and Community First Response where required.

To progress as a Service we need to understand the needs of the communities we serve and prepare local levels of capability to respond to those needs.

As a Service we need to know what Trust, Respect, Accountability, Professionalism, Safety and Service mean and look like, beyond just saying 'TARPS'.

In the past 5-10 years I feel we lost the balance between operational and corporate requirements and the centrality of volunteers to our Service. NSW SES needs to be a volunteer agency which manages emergencies – not an emergency management agency that has volunteers.

Our strategy covers off five key pillars of Strengthening Our Capability, Supporting Stronger Communities, Adapting to a Changing World, Developing and Supporting our People and Delivering Service Excellence. We cannot do these and everything they contain at the same time. We have to use our money and people to progress our strategy in the most effective way and clearly link our budget and resources to the areas we determine as strategic priorities. With that in mind the SLT recently met to identify the strategic priorities which would provide the greatest basis for the future development, sustainability and viability of the NSW SES, enabling us and the communities we serve to better prepare for and respond to emergencies.

These eight strategic priorities identified are:

- » The Dungog Inquest and subsequent recommendations
- » Training and Education
- » Information and Records Management
- » Safety
- » Capability
- » Policy and Doctrine



**GREG NEWTON**  
**ACTING COMMISSIONER**

- » Finalising 'Strengthening our Foundations' (Combined outcomes/ recommendations from PSC, ICAC and Audit Office Reports)
  - » Business Process Improvement
- These priorities are being used to focus the allocation of resources, both budget and human, so that we can continue to build the Service.

I am confident that these priorities put us on the right path to a bright, sustainable future where you, the volunteer, are central to the future direction and success of the Service. Stay safe.

## FROM THE **MINISTER**

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and are committed, caring and highly skilled people who give of their time in service to others. National Volunteer Week is the time we pay special tribute to them.

The Cadet of the Year award is presented to a High School student who has successfully completed the NSW SES or NSW RFS Secondary School Cadet Program.

The Secondary School cadet program aims to develop an interest in the Services and their traditions, and has proved a great success since its formal launch ten years ago.

SES and RFS cadets learn about the agencies roles relating to storm, flood and tsunami whilst RFS cadets gain a foundation in fire fighting knowledge and participate in practical exercises, team building and safety training.

Participation in the programs assists young people to develop qualities of leadership, self-discipline, self-reliance, initiative and teamwork and communication.

These qualities are not only crucial in emergency situations but are also a great asset in their daily lives.

The Cadet Programs encourage good citizenship and foster the volunteering spirit.

One benefit of the program is that it may inspire these fine young people to become volunteers for the SES, the RFS or other community service organisations.

I understand that more than 2,500 have now graduated from the SES cadet program, some of whom have gone on to become dedicated volunteers within the service.

It is my pleasure to advise that the NSW SES Cadet of the Year for 2015 is Rebekah Moussa from Georges River



**DAVID ELLIOTT MP**  
**MINISTER FOR**  
**EMERGENCY SERVICES**

High School and the NSW RFS Cadet of the Year is Sophie Cox from Hay War Memorial High School.

Awards were presented to Rebekah, Sophie and their schools in a ceremony at Parliament House on Wednesday, May 11.



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# From the Editor

**PAT JOHNSON ESM**  
EDITOR

**J**ust a short note from me this issue. I would like to thanks all who took time to contribute to the magazine and I hope you enjoy reading the articles and information.

As I did last year I would like to thank all the volunteers over the state who give up their time each year to support Anzac Day I know that the RSL and the veterans appreciate all the help we give them. I have included a few photos of the march in the CBD.

The magazine is for all members to enjoy and more stories from you will only help enrich it further and make it even better.

To include your stories for the September issue please send copy to me by August 20, 2016. Don't forget to include photos.

Have a great quarter and hope to hear from you.

Until next issue.





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# CareFlight

**O**n May 15, 2016, 13 volunteer members from Clarence Nambucca SES Region attended one of 43 national CareFlight MediSim Trauma Skills Courses. This most recent course was held in Coffs Harbour and was a multi agency training event with representation from NSW SES, the Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA), NSW Rural Fire Service and hosted at the Fire & Rescue NSW HQ.

CareFlight themselves deal in emergency health service delivery pre-hospital care, and want to enhance training in that sector. Because of the public's huge expectation of emergency service personnel providing this service, the course is offered to upskill any active member with current first aid with an interest in trauma management, not just rescue units who are already in training in this field. With pre-hospital care being the focus, CareFlight developed this free course with a view toward regional training. This course enhances the traditional First Aid Course with a focus on life threatening or life altering trauma. CareFlight's course is complimented by their very professional, field trained educators, who give you confidence, guidance and knowledge to overcome, what would be otherwise daunting emergencies.

Participants had the opportunity to practice with very sophisticated manikins and military grade trauma gear. I was so impressed with the Emergency Bandage, formerly known as an Israeli Bandage, I ordered several on ebay during our lunch break. I am so excited as it will halve the size of my own personal First Aid kit. I would urge all my family and friends to YouTube such an awesome piece of equipment. Also demonstrated was the correct use of life saving devices such as Tourniquet's, Pelvic binder stabilisation (T-POD) and several alternative options to these.

This course is offering cutting edge knowledge on the following topics:

- » Incident scene assessment
- » Patient assessment
- » Airway management



- » Haemorrhage control
- » Crush syndrome & injury
- » Extrication and managing the entrapped patient
- » Management of spinal injuries
- » Burns management
- » Fracture management
- » Triage in multiple casualty incidents
- » Documentation & handover
- » Helicopter familiarisation

In summary, the training was a message that we may be presented with unexpected trauma, anywhere anytime. It was great eye opening

workshop with such experienced trainers and it was really nice touch to train with the other volunteer emergency agencies. I feel I have been given skills that will better prepare me in an emergency situation. Thanks to CareFlight & NSW SES for the opportunity to attend this course, I highly recommend it particularly for those that have refreshed their First Aid several times.

**James Daniels**  
Corindi SES CNR





**E**xercise Bradbury Run was conducted in collaboration with Counter Terrorism NSW, NSW Police, NSW Health, Fire & Rescue NSW, HAZMAT, and Ambulance Service NSW. The intention of the exercise was to develop staff familiarisation with the Hospital's planned response to a large scale Chemical/ Biological/ Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) incident. This exercise presented an opportunity to practice in a supported training environment. Liverpool Hospital's integration with external Emergency Services was also evaluated.

The weather gods were looking down on us as it was perfect April weather. The exercise commenced at approximately 0800hrs and involved decontaminating 80 patients through Liverpool Hospital's mass decontamination tent and stretcher decontamination area. After the exercise lunch was provided and a debrief session was facilitated involving feedback from all participants involved.

South Western Sydney Local Health District would like to take this opportunity to thank all the SES volunteers who role played as patients for Exercise Bradbury Run. The feedback information we have received from you all was very valuable in improving our emergency management plans. We greatly appreciate the time and distance some SES volunteers travelled on the day to 'come and play'. The participation of your SES volunteers was invaluable in making the exercise a success.

**Theresa Isedale**







## *Volunteers Supporting Volunteers*

# The 2016 Volunteers Association Conference is fast approaching!

**T**his year's theme is Volunteers Supporting Volunteers – with a program dedicated to learning and sharing with other members.

A detailed program will be released in the upcoming weeks, but we are very excited to announce that our keynote speaker will be Robyn Moore – better known as the voice of Blinky Bill!

### **A BIT ABOUT ROBYN**

Robyn Moore is a highly entertaining, inspiring and thought provoking presenter, captivating audiences at national and international conferences. Robyn literally “sells people back to themselves” so they recognise old habits and behaviours and take responsibility for choices, which create the outcomes they want in their lives. Robyn's presentations are often described as “life changing”.

She doesn't describe herself as a ‘Motivational Speaker’ or as a ‘Personality Speaker.’ She is instead authentically Australian and is able to create a relationship with audiences (from every sector) allowing her to unfold distinctions and communication skills beyond those generally being

used in business or in education today. They're skills which help “clear the way” for the new thinking and communication required to create solutions and remarkable results in business, health, education, community, family and relationships!

Robyn has worked in Education, Advertising and the Communication/Entertainment Industry for over 40 years. Her voice has been heard in most homes in Australia and New Zealand, as well as internationally. She has provided voiceovers for ads including Mr Sheen, Snappy Tom and Kleenex, as well as the shows ‘Blinky Bill,’ ‘Flipper,’ ‘Skippy,’ ‘The Magic Pudding’ and ‘How Green was my Cactus?’ She's also an Ambassador for the Australia Day Council, the Australian Childhood Foundation and is the National Patron of Make-A-Wish Australia.

Robyn speaks nationally and internationally at conferences, special events and training workshops and creates remarkable results. When she speaks, people listen and take the action necessary to create the outcomes they want in their lives!

Robyn delivers Keynote, Breakfast and Luncheon Presentations, Client “Thankyou” Presentations and Staff Workshops. Her corporate clients often book her to open or close their conferences.

Through humour, powerful stories and life-altering distinctions, she opens the way for:

- » Self-motivation and integrity
- » Greater productivity/better results in less time
- » Clarity in choosing what's really important in life
- » Rediscovering passion
- » Deriving greater satisfaction at work and at home by getting the “balance right”
- » Dealing with difficult people and circumstances
- » Communications the spice of life, including the difference between men and women
- » Celebrating and honouring our accomplishments and magnificence
- » “Life-altering” Communication (Being bigger than our complaints in order to fulfil our desires)

Stay tuned to our Facebook page and website for more details about the conference!

# NSW SES Volunteers Association to support the Rotary Emergency Service Awards



**T**he NSW SES Volunteers Association is very proud to be a major sponsor of the 2016 Rotary Emergency Service Awards that celebrate the achievements of Emergency Services personnel.

These awards ensure all Emergency services personnel, both paid and volunteer, are recognised in a combined community service awards program.

These awards have been officially endorsed by all six emergency services.

Six officers will be announced—one for each Service with the highest honour being Overall Officers of the Year (paid and volunteer).

## THE NSW SES FINALISTS IN 2016 WERE,

- » **Peter Cinque**, Regional Controller, Sydney Western Region
- » **Shannon Crofton**, Flood Rescue Officer, Sydney Southern Region
- » **Louise De Marco**, Logistic Officer, North Sydney Unit
- » **Peta Luke**, Unit Controller, Merriwa

## CATEGORY WINNER (NSW SES)

- » Shannon Crofton, Flood Rescue Officer, Sydney Southern Region

## OVERALL OFFICER OF THE YEAR WINNER (VOLUNTEER)

- » Shannon Crofton, Flood Rescue Officer, Sydney Southern Region

The Volunteers Association recognises and supports the volunteers of the NSW SES and see this important sponsorship as another way that we can recognise the contributions of our members.





# About the Previous Winners

## Shannon Crofton

Congratulations Flood Rescue Officer **Shannon Crofton** from the Sydney South Region. Shannon has been a volunteer with the NSW SES since 1989. In that time he has become one of the world leading experts in floods and flood rescue.

Shannon's unrelenting drive to improve Australia's flood and rescue capability came from a personal experience when he was a young SES Volunteer. Taking part in the rescue of four youths from a flooded creek, Shannon risked his own safety in performing his duties. Since then he has devoted his life to the bettering of Australia's emergency services in the field of flood rescue, preparedness and education.

A recipient of a Churchill Fellowship recipient in 2011, he has studied theoretically and professionally worldwide. Shannon has invented, developed and built a flood rescue car to enable emergency services to better train in methods to rescue persons from flooded vehicles. He developed child PFD packs for all flood rescue vehicles in NSW, allowing children, infants and the elderly to be able to be fitted with life jackets whilst being rescued from homes and vehicles, massively increasing their chance of survival. He was also instrumental in instigating a virtual library so all volunteers state-wide could have access to learning information.

A long serving volunteer he recognises the stresses involved in the role and he actively takes part in promoting volunteer support within the NSW SES. He currently is serving as the volunteer's representative to the Minister and Commissioner on the Joint Volunteer Consultative Committee.

Last year when he was co-writing the 'Roadshow Report' he travelled over 14,000kms to listen to the views of NSW SES members; he has recently presented these findings in a report to assist the service. Shannon is most passionate about training volunteers in flood rescue, to keep them and the community safe. As well as to promote awareness of flooding. His record of service is testament to a life of **#ServiceAboveSelf**

## Louise de Marco

Congratulations **Louise de Marco** from the NSW SES North Sydney Unit. Louise thrives when working in busy and tumultuous environments.

A Logistics Officer at Northern Sydney, she is responsible for the readiness of SES NSY to assist with storms, floods and tsunamis.

Her commitment to serving the community was thoroughly demonstrated through her recent role combating the 'Storms of the Century'. At short notice she travelled out-of-area to assist the overstretched Wyong SES unit as a principal logistics officer. Louise embraced her duties during this time of crisis with enthusiasm and dedication, regularly working 12-14 hour shifts without complaint in the extreme storms environment. At all times she ensured there was a supply of goods, services, emergency relief workers, food, water and fuel to complete the task at hand. Without her input, the clean-up would still be going on! Her tireless work is just another example of **#ServiceAboveSelf**

## Peta Luke

Congratulations, Unit Controller, **Peta Luke**, from Merriwa. Peta began her volunteering career in 1996 first as a member of the NSW RFS, two years later she then joined the NSW SES. In 2006 Peta moved to Merriwa where she joined three local services including the SES, the RFS, and the Local Volunteer Rescue Association.

Ms Luke is now the Unit Controller for the Merriwa SES following the retirement of the previous Controller and has been the Captain of the Merriwa RFS since 2011.

In April 2015, an unprecedented storm event hit the Hunter Region and Peta was called on to work at the Region Headquarters based at Metford, several hours from her home, to assist the Incident Controller for a period of around 6 hours. She remained at the Incident Controller's side for 8 days and nights straight, ensuring needs were anticipated and met thereby allowing the Incident Controller to focus on the task at hand.

Peta has shown herself to be an exemplary member of every service she is attached to, somehow balancing her home life and her community work. She is a valued member of the emergency services and a deserving recipient of an award such as this. Her humility and care for others shows in her attitude that she is there to help others in anyway she can. Incredibly on top of all of this Peta is also a Rotarian!

## Peter Cinque

Regional Controller **Peter Cinque** of the Sydney Western Region, has been a member of the NSW SES for the last 45 years. Joining as a cadet in Blacktown, he has gone on to serve in a wide variety of positions.

Peter has been part of the NSW SES 'community engagement strategy' since the late eighties and was crucial in establishing a new sense of voice for the organisation, which has been crucial in the SES' work with ordering evacuations.

The driving force behind planning for extreme flooding on the Hawkesbury-Nepean Rivers, Peter's work ensures the safety of 40,000 properties.

Peter has also played a significant role in various other NSW SES operations including: the Thredbo Landslide, the 1999 Sydney Hailstorm, the 2007 Blacktown Hailstorm, and the recent evacuation of the Hay area during the 2012 flooding on the Murrumbidgee.

Showing no signs of slowing, Peter remains a guiding and mentoring influence on the NSW SES and an example of **#ServiceAboveSelf**

# Rotary SOOTY Award

**O**n the evening of Wednesday April 20, the Padstow Rotary Club recognised Tony Vanderzanden as SES "Services Officer of the Year" in an award ceremony and dinner held at Revesby Workers Club.

This ceremony recognised exemplary service above and beyond that which would normally be expected. Also recognised were members from NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Ambulance and St John Ambulance.

Tony was accompanied by his Partner Lee Howard, and was supported by some of the Officers from the Unit as well as Assistant Commissioner Kaylene Jones, SES Director Regions East.

**Graham Tomkinson**



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BLOOD SERVICE**





# SES Members' Fellowship going to the dogs

**N**SW SES Volunteer and staff member Sue Pritchard is currently undertaking a Churchill Fellowship, the second SES member in as many years to be accorded this prestigious honour.

Sue's Fellowship is focused on volunteer canine search capabilities, with these capabilities in Australia remaining largely unrecognised and under-utilised as a search tool by emergency services.

Sue's Fellowship involves travelling to New Zealand, the USA, the UK, Ireland and finally Switzerland, where she is meeting with volunteer search dog associations and emergency service organisations.

Sue hopes to gain valuable insights through attending training courses utilising search techniques including air scent, drowned victim search and urban search and rescue; as well as through formal and informal meetings and discussions.



On her Fellowship Sue will be investigating:

- » Current canine search utilisation methods and procedures
- » Barriers to capability recognition and engagement
- » Training and fit-for-task standards and requirements
- » Systems and protocols to register,

activate and deploy volunteer canine search teams

- » Cross training techniques for Urban Search and Rescue and area search operations.

On her return, Sue will be writing a Fellowship Report and speaking on her research at this year's AFAC Conference.

# Raffle Schedule



Raffle	SESVA47	SESVA48	SESVA49	SESVA50	SESVA51	SESVA52
<b>Start Calling:</b>	3 Jun 16	29 Jul 16	23 Sep 16	18 Nov 16	13 Jan 17	10 Mar 17
<b>Finish Calling:</b>	29 Jul 16	23 Sep 16	18 Nov 16	13 Jan 17	10 Mar 17	5 May 17
<b>Draw Date:</b>	23 Sep 16	18 Nov 16	13 Jan 17	10 Mar 17	5 May 17	30 Jun 17

## Marrickville SES

**T**he Marrickville SES Unit presented Ken Cullen, the Library Resources Coordinator at Marrickville Library, copies of *The Volunteer Magazine* as well as copies of *In Times of Crisis: The Story of the NSW SES* and *In Time of Need: Unit Histories of the NSW SES*.

Michael Carney hopes that “these books and magazines will help the NSW SES build a stronger relationship with their local community, as well as assist in informing the community about the amazing time and effort NSW SES volunteers invest in keeping their communities safe. We would like to thank the NSW SES VA for providing us with such wonderful resources”.

Ken Cullen, Coordinator of Library Resources at Marrickville Library said “there is a lot of interest around the volunteer services in the Marrickville LGA and it will be good for locals to have ready access not just to their history but to ongoing monthly news”.







## A 'new home' on the horizon for the NSW State Emergency Service

**T**his week the NSW SES received the keys to its new State Headquarters in Burelli Street Wollongong. This marks the official handover and an important landmark in our transition to our new home.

An invitation for all members to visit was extended for May 2 and it was great to see everyone visit and try to see the plans which are currently at the consultation and exhibition phase.

The new building will provide many modern and improved facilities for all including a re-designed Operations Centre which will help in the coordination of SES response to natural disasters and emergencies ensuring operations can continue well into the future.

The new facility will also be a hub for training and will provide volunteers more opportunity to be involved with operations at the State Headquarters.

We are expected to relocate to the new headquarters by mid-2017.



Acting Commissioner Greg Newtown and Quality Green Group Manager Daniel Grozdanov.





# Flood Rescue Challenge

Photos by John Brock and Steve Tyson

A traditional competition, made up of team events, is one where that team trains together, works together and learns each other's strengths and weaknesses. This practice creates a well-oiled machine that operates each task on an individual level, but delivers results as a unit.

With the competitions that the SES either runs or takes part in, be it Operation Orange, Region Rescue Competitions, State Rescue Competitions, National Rescue Competitions or the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation, our teams use this traditional approach- until now.

And that is part of what made the Sydney Southern Region Flood Rescue Competition such a breath of fresh air. 'Teams' were announced about three weeks prior to the event. Training or practice for the competition as a team was either severely limited or non-existent and the individual skill of each operator was laid bare for the judges, the community and their peers to see.

If you aren't so strong on roping techniques, but are strong as a Team Leader; it showed. Similarly, proficiency across the board in operators was Easy to spot.

And this proficiency is vitally important.

Flood Rescue is a bit of a funny beast compared to the SES response role for storm jobs. Warnings come out, pre-incident plans are drawn up and a request for flood rescue operators gets put out- both level two and three. Deployment follows and this is where the true beauty of the ideas behind the Sydney Southern Flood Rescue Competition comes in- yes; you get deployed as a part of a team, but there is no guarantee that it is 'your' team. You may be with others with whom you have never worked before. In fact, flood rescue teams in SSR are run at a



region level, so even locally you may get put with other operators who you have never worked with before, some who you may never have met.

The competition, to a degree, replicated the team conditions that our volunteers face when they are in the field, on real flood rescue tasks. Added to this was the assistance of the SES

moulage team, who provided realistic 'injuries' to the team of volunteers who assisted as casualties.

The event itself was the result of a 2015 Volunteers Association Unit Grant put in by SSR volunteer Carl Manning. We had a chat with Carl about the planning for the event, his role and things he would consider for future events ...





### Why did you want to do this type of event in the first place?

Paul (Region Learning and Development Officer) mentioned he would like a Flood Rescue exercise including all 3 levels\*. I agreed to take the project on board as I had run smaller scale exercises before and enjoyed it. I also have completed

an Exercise Management course at the advanced diploma level through the Australian Emergency Management Institute and was keen to see if I still had the ability to put this into practice. I felt this was a great opportunity to test the capability of our Flood Rescue operators.

### How did you come up with the ideas for the scenarios and what were you hoping people would get out of each one?

The scenarios were intended to be a good cross section of the real jobs Flood Rescue operators deal with regularly.

I really wanted to push realism and a good test of practical skills. Being a multi-level exercise I had to include elements that would test each level of Flood Rescue capability. There were originally 12 different ideas for stands but we were unable to include each on the final exercise.

### If you were doing it again, what would you change and why?

If I was to begin planning for the next one right now I would have a more rigid committee with more specific responsibilities and a better established time frame for completing various stages of the planning process. Due to a wonderful support crew we were able to accomplish most of what was needed before the day but a better division of workload and accountabilities would have been helpful.





Photo by Catherine Sweeny.



## What did you get out of it personally?

Personally I learnt a lot about the complexities of running a large-scale exercise and realised how many little details of planning I had never realised were necessary.

Logistics requirements were definitely an eye-opener for me. It felt so good seeing the composite teams work so well together. Hearing the positive feedback on the realism aspect made me feel as though I did a good job preparing these operators for the real world.

## Would you encourage others to apply for this type of funding in the future and what would your 'words of wisdom' be for them?

Absolutely I would recommend applying for the VA funding to give the opportunity for both yourselves and the members (in whatever sphere the focus is on) to grow learn and have a different training from the day-to-day.

My words of wisdom would be have faith in yourself to realise the vision you have for the training and make



it happen. Be cautious of those that want to upscale or downscale your dream exercise and target the pre-determined objectives you have.

## What are you going to do with the feedback from the participants?

In this particular case the scores,

feedback and other notes will be used for a formal evaluation report. This will be done against the aims and objectives of the exercise and published when completed. This will enable a clear training plan to be developed based on hard data of the strengths and weaknesses in the Flood Rescue sector.\*\*





### A bit about Carl

I have been a member of the SES for approximately 9 years.

I started out in Fairfield Unit before transferring to SS Region in late 2012. I have taken on a role at the region as a Flood Rescue Officer where I am regularly engaged running the flood rescue cell during operations.

I also have a training support team role assisting in training and assessment of various courses.

Overall it has been a wonderful learning opportunity for myself and the planning team as well as the members participating. I would like to thank the VA for the grant that allowed this event to go ahead and for the prizes given to the winning teams.

*\*The NSW SES has three level of Flood Rescue Operators. These levels denote the training completed by each operator and the roles that they can undertake i.e. land-based water rescue only, flood-boat operator and in-water flood rescue technician.*

*\*\*This report will be made available through the NSW SES Volunteers Association as a resource for future grants/scholarships/sponsorships recipients.*





Left to right: Todd Burns, Pat Johnson, Rebekah Moussa, Phil Potbury and Acting Commissioner Greg Newton.

# Cadet of the Year

The Volunteers Association is a proud sponsor of the NSW Cadet of the Year Award and this year it was great to be part of the ceremony at NSW Parliament House that saw Georges River Grammar School Student Rebekah Moussa presented with the award for 2015. Rebekah was chosen to receive the award out of 500 students from schools throughout NSW that took part in the Cadet Program in 2015.

Cadet trainer Phil Potbury, nominated Rebekah for her dedication, enthusiasm and support displayed to her peers throughout the 10 week program and for her positive friendly and encouraging attitude. Rebekah was also recommended for her strong commitment to volunteering in her community where she helps the senior citizens

from Bankstown Learning Centre learned how to use their smart phones. Rebekah also became a blood donor and supports her school's partnership with World Vision, to

provide a better future for students living in Lesotho, Africa.

In a combined ceremony with the NSW Rural Fire Service, The Honourable David Elliott MP, Minister for Corrections, Emergency Services and Veterans Affairs presented Rebekah and NSW RFS winner Sophie Cox from Hay, with their award certificates and trophies. Rebekah was joined at the award ceremony by her family, Ms Melanie Gibbons MP - Member for Bankstown, NSW SES Acting Commissioner Greg Newton; NSW RFS Commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons; NSW SES staff and Cadet Program volunteer Trainers, Phil Potbury and Kevan Harder and by NSW SESVA General Manager, Andrew Edwards and representative Pat Johnson.







Georges River Grammar School Teacher David Buckley spoke highly of the Cadet Program and noted that all of their School Captains had acquired skills in leadership through their participation as cadets. A perpetual trophy was presented to David Buckley and his colleague Christine Morrow to display at the School.

As part of the award, a NSW SES VA representative will present a sponsorship cheque to Rebekah at her School.

Each year NSW SES volunteers from across the state contribute to the conduct of over 30 Secondary School Programs which build resilience, teamwork and confidence in our younger generations. The program also attracts young people to volunteering and has had a major impact in significantly raising the number of volunteers joining the NSW SES in the 16 to 25 year age range.

NSW SES program partner Origin Energy is also a proud supporter of the



**Left to right: Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, Sophie Cox, The Hon. David Elliott MP, Rebekah Moussa and Acting Commissioner Greg Newton.**

Cadet Program and together we are working towards boosting the future of our great volunteer service and the young people who will ensure that we can deliver strong and effective

support to our communities well into the future.

**Todd Burns**  
Coordinator Youth Engagement



# Unmuddying the waters

## Understanding why people enter floodwater

**O**ver the past eight months, Dr Elspeth Rae has been working with the Media and Communications team as part of a national working group looking into the prevention of flood related deaths, with a focus on driving into floodwater.

The project was established in mid-September 2015 following recommendations from the (national) Law Crime and Community Safety Council (LCCSC) meeting in May 2015 prompted by number of flood fatalities in NSW and QLD and previous recommendations from the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry; with the

project reviewing current literature and interventions in Australia and internationally to change behaviour, attitudes and influence safer decisions, particularly relating to driving into floodwater.

Her research has identified a number of key findings and associated recommendations, with these going to the Community Engagement Sub-committee (CESC) of Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) for consideration.

The recommendations, if adopted, will work towards implementing nationally consistent best practice

principles to address the issue of people driving into floodwater.

Consultation included meetings and teleconferences with jurisdictional representatives from SES agencies and identified key stakeholders including research organisations, roads authorities, and floodplain management authorities.

There were a number of key findings from the research.

» NSW and Qld accounted for 74 per cent of all flood fatalities, while the Northern Territory had the highest risk per capita of all Australian jurisdictions.





- » Significant over-representation of males (78.9 per cent) among those who died, particularly associated with driving through water.
- » Well over half of all flood fatalities (58 per cent) occurred within 20 kilometres of home, demonstrating that locals can become complacent, believing they have the skill and knowledge to get to the other side, when in fact, there is no way of knowing what lies under floodwater or the depth or speed of the water.

Evidence shows that a holistic approach to changing risky behaviours, using multiple intervention techniques and targeting different audiences, is more effective than using an intervention in isolation. The goal is to make the decision *not* to drive through floodwater the easiest decision.

Message consistency is a critical component of successful education and engagement interventions. In the context of driving through floodwater, this may mean working with the

local level – for example, communicating alternative routes as well as road closures, or working with communities on flood preparedness so that they understand the need to re-schedule travel plans in case of a flood event. In addition, research shows that involving the public in the development of interventions (e.g. development of messaging) produces benefits including the fostering of trust, free will, social norms and capacity to act, as well as ownership of choices made and increased responsibility for one's own safety.

In summary, the evidence shows that media campaigns and community engagement are more effective when used together, and in conjunction with other types of interventions, and are most successful where they target a number of different audiences using a variety of methods. A gap clearly exists in Australia, as no consistent approach featuring a linked network of interventions exists in relation to driving through floodwater.

In addition, there are a number of other interventions with potential to reduce flood fatalities and risky behaviours that can be considered:

- » Engineering interventions
- » Enforcement
- » Encouragement
- » Emergency planning and response

The research undertaken by Dr Rae is already being used within the NSW SES to design more engaging and effective ways to work with communities around staying out of floodwater. The full report will be made available on EOS as soon as it is able to be released, providing a resource for all members.

## Trying to ensure safe behaviour in disasters is a challenging and long-term pursuit

- » People's willingness to drive through floodwater, even after receiving warnings not to, is the result of a complex web of factors including attitudinal belief, the pressure of social norms, past behaviour and risk perception. Trying to ensure safe behaviour in disasters is a challenging and long-term pursuit which, ultimately, is about minimisation rather than eradication of risky behaviours and there have been dramatic changes in attitudes and perceptions towards these kind of behaviours as a consequence of successful interventions.

media, vehicle manufacturers, schools, workplaces (including emergency service workplaces) and advertising bodies to ensure that the messages and imagery used by these different sources of information support the desired overall messaging, and work collaboratively towards the development of a safe social norm.

Also important is helping people to develop and adopt alternatives to driving into floodwater, rather than simply warning them against risky behaviour. This approach relies heavily on community engagement at the

# The Volunteer Experience Project



**A**ndrew McCullough has recently started in the Workforce Planning Coordinator role at State Headquarters and is looking forward to improving the volunteer experience for members.

People are the most important resource for the NSW SES and this role will ensure we recruit and retain the volunteers we need to meet our capability requirements for the future.

The Volunteer Experience project involves a range of smaller projects, looking at how we can effectively market and recruitment new members. Some of these will be outlined in the Volunteer Sustainability Strategy currently in development.

What we're looking at:

- » Improving the recruitment process with new marketing materials, encouraging collaboration between units and the online recruitment system.
- » Developing an online exit survey system to better gather data as to why people are leaving the Service.
- » Develop and retention and recruitment package to help units recruit and retain members
- » Introducing a flexible volunteering model to better allow a broad range of people to volunteer with us and increase our ability to respond to major operations
- » Working with our partners at NRMA to look at a corporate volunteering program

One of the clear messages from the recent Strategic Planning Day was the need for flexible volunteering.

There are plenty of great community

members that would love to join the NSW SES but just don't have the time - we need to find a way to utilise their skills.

## A BIT ABOUT ANDREW

Andrew McCullough joined the NSW SES as a volunteer at the start of 2010 while studying civil engineering at the University of Wollongong.

Over the last six years Andrew has been involved major storm and flood operations including the Kiama tornado and Tropic Cyclone Marcia.

In 2014 Andrew joined the Service as a staff member and inspired by a NSW SES VA sponsored trip on the Young Endeavour, he worked with units in the Illawarra South Coast Region to run retention and recruitment workshops and produce a package for units to improve their unit culture. Andrew continues to actively volunteer with Kiama Unit while working at SHQ.

## What inspired you to join the SES

I joined the NSW SES because I thought I could use my engineering skills to help the community.

One of the subjects I studied at university covered the design of buildings to withstand earthquakes and severe storms - and it was during one of these lectures when I first considered joining the Service.

Now, the main reason I volunteer today is the people - some of my closest mates are NSW SES volunteers.

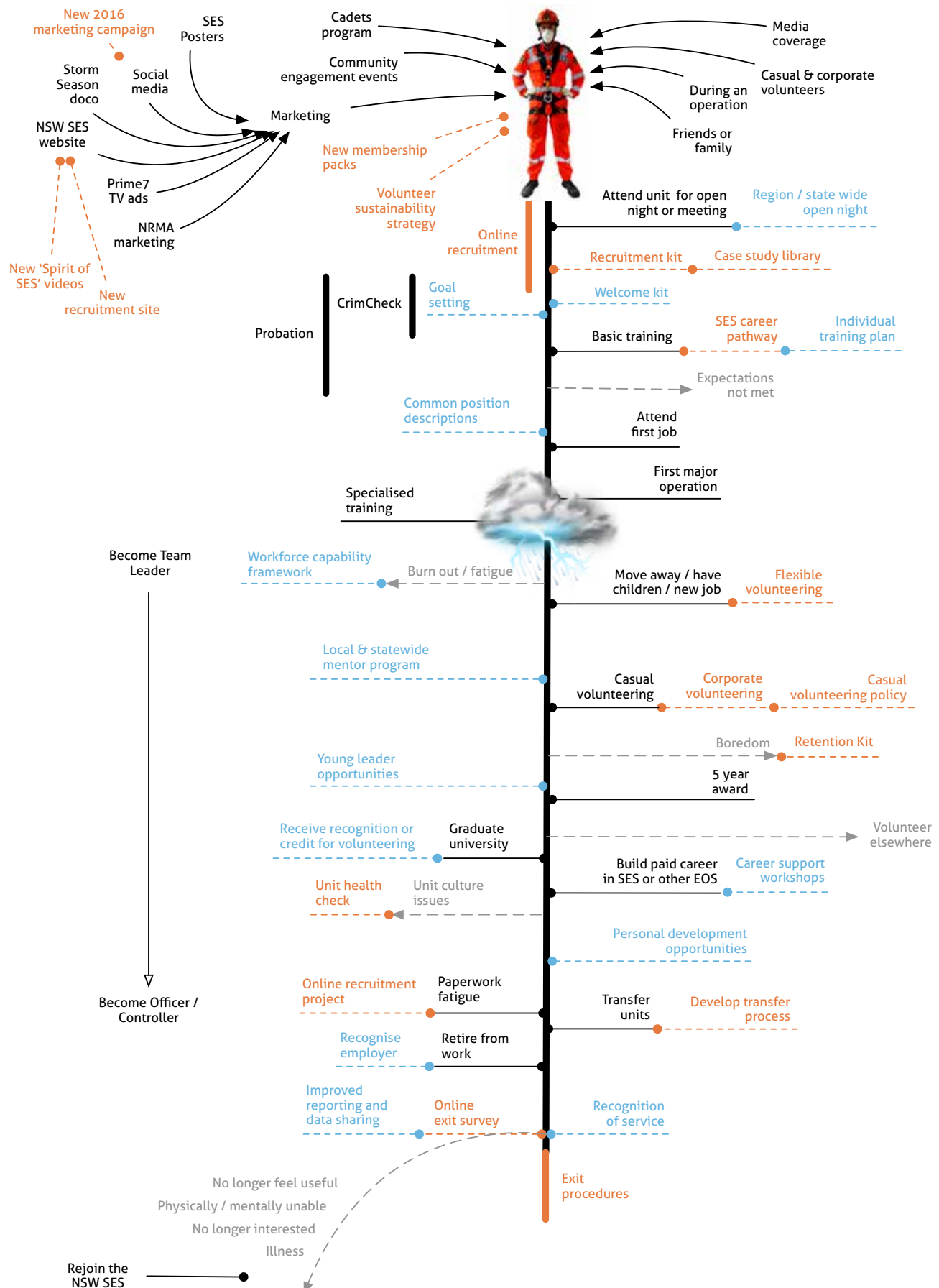
## What do you hope this project will achieve

As an agency we need to continue to adapt to our changing community needs. It's really exciting to work in the NSW SES during a time when we are becoming more flexible and recruiting a new generation of volunteers.

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*\*To provide feedback or learn more, contact [workforceplanning@ses.nsw.gov.au](mailto:workforceplanning@ses.nsw.gov.au) or join the 'NSW SES Volunteer Experience' group on Facebook.*



# NSW SES Volunteer Lifecycle



# Young Endeavour

In March, Sophie Attwater, Clancy Simpson and Charlotte Morrison set off on what would literally turn out to be an adventure of a lifetime.

We three young SES volunteers from across the state were selected by the NSW SES Volunteers Association to receive a sponsorship in partnership with Origin Energy to embark on an 11-day voyage with the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme.

On March 20 we met in Darling Harbour to board the Young Endeavour with the 24 other young crew members who were just as excited and nervous as we were.

After meeting Captain Mike and the rest of the staff crew (staffies) and having a quick tour of the ship, we sailed out from Darling Harbour, under the Sydney Harbour Bridge and to Watsons Bay where we would be spending our first night.

We were then split into our three watches for the voyage, Red Watch, White Watch and Blue Watch. These were the groups we would be in whilst doing different activities over the next 11 days and during the night watches that we would undertake whilst out at sea.

We spent the first afternoon and night getting to know the other people (youthies) on the voyage. We played lots of ice-breaker and getting to know each other games, which made it clear

to us we were lucky enough to have a great group of youthies between the ages of 16 and 23 on the trip.

It also became obvious to us that we were going to be eating delicious food during this voyage thanks to the ship's chef Jenko and not eating the rations we were expecting. Clancy took full advantage of this!

The following morning on board the ship we did our first climb up to the Topgallant Yard, and learnt the very basics of setting and furling the sails, which I think as SES volunteers being used to handling ropes and knots, we picked up fairly quickly.

That afternoon we sailed out through Sydney Heads and very quickly the majority of the youthies succumbed to the dreaded seasickness curse. Over the next 40 hours we survived on only water and Sao's. We were definitely



pushed to our limits by the staffies when we were woken up to do the 8:00pm-12:00am, 12:00am-4:00am or 4:00am-8:00am watch. During these two days whilst sailing from Sydney to Port Stephens we also experienced a lot more rain, which just added to the gloomy vibe of the youthies.

It was fantastic to arrive in Port Stephens on Day Four and be greeted by the sun shining and dolphins playing alongside the ship. All the youthies were also very grateful to spend a few hours on dry land at Nelson Bay allowing our stomachs to settle from the seasickness.

Once back on the ship Captain Mike opened the swimming pool (ocean) and we were given the

----- “ -----  
**All the youthies were also very grateful to spend a few hours on dry land at Nelson Bay allowing our stomachs to settle from the seasickness.**  
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Over these next few days we continued learning more about everything to do with sailing a tall ship including navigation, rules of the road at sea and sail theory.

On day seven we nominated our Command Team for Command Day when we would be taking over the control of the ship for a 24 hour period. During the Command Day we would

be set a number of tasks that we needed to complete, ranging from sailing the ship through a number of waypoints, gathering a group of 30 plus people from Patonga to sing the National Anthem with us, to creating a hammock out of ropes on the deck of the ship which needed to hold all 27 youthies!

The beginning of Command Day also fell on Easter Sunday so we were lucky enough to be awoken by the sweet smell of fresh Hot Cross Buns baked by Jenko. During that morning the Command Team spent the last few hours with the staffie whose role they would be taking on for the 24 hour period. The rest of the youthies were treated to an Easter Egg Hunt on a small secluded beach near Patonga in Broken Bay.

By midday the staffies had 'gone on holiday' and handed the ship over to our new Captain, Captain Morgan. The next 24 hours were a completely

backwards instead of sailing towards our destination. Luckily enough Captain Mike gave us permission to use the Iron Sails (Engines) to be able to arrive in Sydney on time.

Our last full day on board the ship was spent with 26 guests from the GRC Oatley Special Needs School, along with some Defence guests and friends of the staff crew.

This day gave us the opportunity to share our knowledge of the ship and sailing with youths that are not able to participate in a voyage due to their disabilities. We spent the day sailing around Sydney Harbour and viewed all of the most popular sites.

We enjoyed our last night by watching a slideshow of photos and listening to a speech and poem about the trip, all created by the youthies. Plenty of laughs and tears were shared during these few hours as we realised our trip was very quickly coming to an end.

On March 30 we sailed into Garden Island Navy Base with all the youthies sitting upon the yards, friends and family eagerly awaiting our arrival welcomed us all home. After quick tours of the ship with friends and family and a presentation of certificates it was then time for our final goodbyes with the other members of our Young Endeavour voyage. We experienced a lifetime of memories with these people in such a short amount of time so it was very difficult to say goodbye knowing it could be a while until we all see each other again.

During this voyage all three of us learnt more than we could have ever imagined, about sailing, about each other and about ourselves, that we feel we can apply to our futures in the SES and in our careers. We feel incredibly lucky to have been given this opportunity thanks to the NSW SES, NSW SES Volunteers Association and Origin Energy and strongly encourage everyone eligible to apply for the incredible chance of sailing on board the Young Endeavour.

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.



opportunity to have a refreshing swim, which included hilarious flips and falls off the rope swing that was rigged up from the lowest yard.

After spending the night at anchor we began the journey back down the coast towards Broken Bay.

new adventure where we learnt the importance of communication throughout the whole crew. We also developed a stronger appreciation for the wind that is required whilst sailing. Early in the morning of the following day we were actually floating



# NSW SES Fleet Project Update



**T**he NSW SES Fleet Project is progressing. Shortly, the first Light Storm Prototype vehicle will be completed. On May 7, members of the Vehicle Design Group inspected the progress of the first prototype. Construction of the structural frame and production of drawers, slides and panels is now complete for the first vehicle, with the body installed onto the cab chassis ahead of the final fitout. The manufacturing is of the highest quality and standards with safety and accessibility central to the design of the vehicles.

In total, 30 Light Storm vehicles will be provided to Units across the state. The base vehicle is a Mercedes Benz Sprinter 516CDI MWB AWD Cab Chassis 4.49T. The Mercedes Benz Sprinter AWD was chosen as the base vehicle, based on a report prepared by an independent vehicle engineer who examined the available vehicles on the market and took into account the operating requirements



of the NSW SES and the anticipated weights of equipment. The Mercedes Benz Sprinter features numerous

safety features such as Collision Prevention Assist, Lane Keeping Assist, Highbeam assist, Adaptive Electronic Stability Program (ESP) and Airbags (Driver, Passenger, Window and Thorax).

In addition to the delivery of Light Storm vehicles, the Fleet Project Team is delivering eight Medium Rescue vehicles. Based on either an Isuzu NPS65 4x4 or NPR75 4x2, vehicles have already been delivered to the Condobolin, Woodburn, Packsaddle and Holbrook Units, with the remaining to be delivered by June 30, 2016.



# Great savings on a wide range of member benefits!

NSW SES VA members enjoy exclusive savings on accommodation, airline lounge memberships, package tours, insurances and more.

These services are free to use at any time and can be accessed by phone or via the Member Advantage website. For further information, visit:

[www.memberadvantage.com.au/nswsesva](http://www.memberadvantage.com.au/nswsesva)

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For further details, contact NSW SESVA Member Advantage:  
Call 1300 853 352 or  
visit [www.memberadvantage.com.au/nswsesva](http://www.memberadvantage.com.au/nswsesva)

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