

The official journal of the NSW SES Volunteers Association

the

Volunteer

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Contents

REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 From the President
- 5 From the Minister
- 6 From the Commissioner

FEATURES

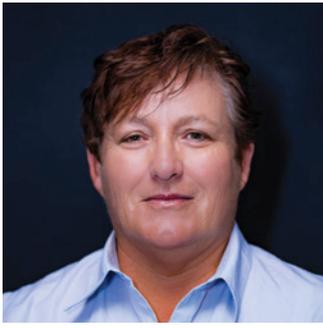
- 7 Welcome to New Members
- 9 The Association is changing!
- 10 Behind The Seen
- 11 Mardi Gras
- 12 Bald Hill
- 14 Clean Up Australia Day and the SES
- 18 Drought Support Program- SOCK it to the Drought
- 19 Flu Vaccination
- 20 NSW SES Finance
- 20 Volunteer Joint Consultative Council
- 21 Fire Exit door project Dapto Unit
- 21 Member Vales
- 22 The NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund

GRANTS

- 17 QWERTE 2018 Report



On the cover:
Photograph credit
to Blue Mountains
SES Unit



KIM DAVIS ESM
PRESIDENT NSW SES
VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the first edition of the magazine for the year! A year that we have already seen intense operation activity, across a wide array of roles; something that again shows our versatility as an emergency service as well as the ability of our volunteers to continue business as usual.

The year so far, not only has been busy operational, but also with the resignation of former Commissioner, Mark Smethurst.

We have received a large number of comments and enquiries from members following Mr Smethurst's resignation, and as an Association we are disappointed that again our Service is facing a period of uncertainty and instability.

I had the opportunity to meet with A/Commissioner Kyle Stewart prior to the Volunteer Joint Consultative Council, and I am hopeful that he will be able to provide the stability the Service needs in the interim before a new Commissioner can be recruited.

We also met with the outgoing Minister for Emergency Service, Hon. Troy Grant just prior to his departure and we look forward to working as closely with the new Minister, who at the time of writing this was not yet known due to the recent State election.

----- “
We are continuing with the Drought Support Program as well as our other support programs for members and working towards the completion of our new structure.
----- ”

We have also been in discussions with the SES regarding membership information, and the best way we can work around privacy issues. This was highlighted as part of an ongoing review into the NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund- most specifically around the governance of the fund.

There is a catch-22 situation where we need to be able to establish that any applicant is a current member of the SES, but the confidentiality of the fund means the Committee is not at liberty to speak with the SES to gain this information. We have liaised with the membership section of the SES to try and find a way that old data can be shared without impacting privacy, but in the interim it may mean that the Welfare Fund will only be available to Volunteers Association members. If this will be the case, applicants will be prompted when accessing the application form that they will need to apply for membership. There is additional information on other changes to the Welfare Fund further in the magazine.

We have also included the roles of the new Volunteers Association positions later in the magazine. This is so you will know what roles fulfil each function, and who you can go to if you need assistance or information.

Our Mental Health Programs have continued, and we are working with Behind The Seen Australia- A Proactive Program incorporating face to face training to educate emergency service personnel to identify and deal with the stressors experienced by our co-workers.

In February, our Member Services team put out a request for any unit who wanted a 'Stress Less' Pack to be sent out to them. We were amazed, and excited by the amount of responses we received- particularly as this is a resource that is aimed at starting a conversation about mental health amongst colleagues.

These packs are currently being distributed and we ask that any of the units who are receiving them assist in providing feedback via the Survey Monkey link provided in the article later in the magazine.

For the Association, it remains business as usual. We are continuing with the Drought Support Program as well as our other support programs for members and working towards the completion of our new structure.

As always, we encourage feedback on the Association, as well as any issues that you are being faced with in your units or broader SES community. You can contact the office, drop us an email, send us a DM through social networks or give us a call.

NSW Volunteers Association Members Database

If you need to update your details please contact the office at office@nswsesva.org.au or call on **1300 073 782**.

“
We took the opportunity to thank Mr Grant for his support of volunteers of the NSW SES, particularly in a period that has faced a number of unstable conditions.
 ”



TROY GRANT MP
MINISTER FOR
EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Hon. Troy Grant declined to provide a message for this edition as at the time of going to print, the State Election was underway.

Mr Grant met with the Volunteers Association in his final days as our Minister, and expressed his

pleasure at having filled the role as our Minister for his last term in politics.

We took the opportunity to thank Mr Grant for his support of volunteers of the NSW SES, particularly in a period that has faced a number of unstable conditions.

We also flagged our concerns at the possibility of amalgamation,

and that we wanted the NSW SES to remain a separate entity from other Emergency Services.

We will be meeting with the new Minister for Emergency Services as soon as possible after the election and the new Minister has been announced.

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 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 families. 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.

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

1800 626 800



KYLE STEWART APM
ACTING COMMISSIONER

It was recently announced that I would be joining you as the interim Commissioner of the NSW SES.

Although the change of Commissioner was unexpected, the NSW SES priorities have not changed nor has our volunteers' commitment to serving the people of NSW.

Our mission of saving lives and protecting communities remains at the centre of everything we do.

It is truly humbling to be given the opportunity to lead this organisation. My first priority is the dedicated teams of volunteers and staff, who relentlessly give of themselves and their time to the NSW SES.

I have seen first-hand that NSW SES volunteers know what needs to be done. When the NSW community needs help, we put on our orange overalls and get on with the task. I maintain the greatest respect for the NSW SES members and appreciate your support moving forward in serving our communities.

I am privileged to have worked with the NSW SES on major emergency events over many years including the Hay Flood (2012) and Northern NSW Flood (2017). Over several decades I have also been actively involved in cross-agency collaboration in emergency management.

I am working with senior management and other key stakeholders to ensure continuity until the new Commissioner is appointed. It is not clear how long this will take but in the meantime I am committed

“
I am looking forward to moving through the state to meet with and get to know as many members as possible.
”



to providing all NSW SES members with sound, stable leadership and supporting your valuable contribution to the people of this State.

I am focussed on continuing to support our volunteers while growing the agency's capabilities through training, equipment and resources. I am committed to doing all I can to ensure we are well equipped, comprehensively trained and operationally ready. Recently, we have redirected more than \$2 million towards providing greater support to our volunteers. There will be more desk tops and monitors, more fleet vehicles and more focus on our Workplace Health & Safety initiatives. Simply, the more

resourcing we give you, our members, the better placed we are in terms of operational capability and service to the community.

On a more personal note, I am looking forward to moving through the state to meet with and get to know as many members as possible. I've started to visit local units to speak with and learn from, the many volunteers who continue the vision of being the best volunteer emergency service in Australia.

In the coming days and weeks, please be safe as you go about your business. As always, look after yourself and above all, be proud to be a part this amazing organisation.

Welcome to New Members

NSW SES VA would like to welcome all New Members that have joined us in the New Year! Our Membership is continuously growing and it is great to see the applications coming in from all our Zones.

In today's challenging times you need to stay informed and on top of your game. The NSW SES VA provides you with up to date information and connects you with the people and programs / education that will help you achieve your objectives.

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE!

The NSW SES Volunteers Association is pleased to announce the launch of our New Website!

Being a progressive Association and continuously striving to develop and improve, this was one of the things that we set out to complete to meet the demands and interest of our Members.

Our new website has been created to suit our members – it is interactive, easier to navigate and gives better access to Members. We have worked hard to make sure it contains valuable and relevant information with a fresh new look.

Amongst the new features, the site contains integrated social media buttons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, to foster improved

communication with our members and prospective members.

We will be constantly updating our content with helpful information, articles, & newsletters and are now using a responsive design which means you'll find the same information and essentially the same look whether you're using your desktop, tablet or smart phone!

The website also is a great portal for Donors to validate information, make donations online and view current raffles and campaigns.

For any questions, suggestions, feedback or comments, please E-mail us at office@nswsesva.org.au



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The Association is changing!

New volunteer positions within the Association are designed to help meet the needs of our members better, and to provide experience in different, more corporate-style roles.

In 2017, the Board and Area Representatives voted on a number of changes in the way the Volunteers Association was structured. This included a change to the Representative structure.

We waited for the Transformation to occur within the NSW SES because any structure we had, needed to accurately represent our membership. The transition from 17 Regions to 5 Zones has also meant that the old way of having one person as the representative is not physically reasonable- given the size of the Zones.

Instead, we have Ambassadors, who can operate at a Unit level, and who will communicate with the Volunteers Association office directly to help speed up the transfer of information to members.

AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors are not expected to be the single point of contact for the members, and instead there are a number of other roles that will have a more focused approach to other areas of support. We understand that the Association is volunteering on top of volunteering, so we want to reduce workloads to reasonable amounts while still maintaining communication to members and feeding member concerns through so the members can be represented at different levels including the VJCC and the Minister where appropriate.

The other roles are:

MAGAZINE COORDINATOR

The Magazine Coordinator/s will be able to gain experience in writing,

compiling and helping publish our quarterly magazine.

We would love to develop a more contemporary look and feel for the magazine, and feel this role would be great for anyone who would like real world experience in producing publications.

There is also the opportunity to work with a small team of volunteers to create and collate magazine content, liaise with contributors to source and/or write articles and edit submissions from around the state and work with the graphic designer in preparing content for publication.

FLOWER COORDINATOR

This role sits within our benefits program and is the point of contact for the ordering of floral arrangements that are requested through the 'General 'Welfare' tab on the website.

Time commitment on this role is minimal, but does require record keeping and basic skills around keeping to a set budget. It's a nice way to give back to others, but also provides experience in maintaining a simple database.

MEMBER BENEFITS COORDINATOR

A completely new position for the Association, the Member Benefit Coordinators are grassroots volunteers who work remotely to help identify and onboard local businesses and service providers who would like to provide a benefit to NSW SES Volunteers Association members.

Their local relationships and passion for helping others will help achieve our mission of supporting our volunteers.

There have been a lot of members who have provided great ideas for benefits programs, this role would suit go-getters who want to make that a

reality with the support of the office and the Board.

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Do you enjoy developing ways to communicate the importance of mental health for emergency responders and researching training and learning opportunities in this area for fellow members?

We are seeking members to help coordinate the mental health programs in the Association. You will also be able to provide the Association and its members with current and up-to-date information on mental health training and support options.

RECOGNITION COORDINATOR

This role is all about identifying recognition opportunities for volunteers and supporting them in gaining recognition. You will also be able to provide the Association and its members with current and up-to-date information on recognition options.

There is also a project on the horizon for this role to create a recognition portal for our members.

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

This role will be pivotal in helping to maintain records for the Volunteers Association.

This role will focus on developing and implementing database management processing which is great opportunity for anyone who would like real world experience if they are job seeker.

All of the roles are advertised on our website, with a full position description and anticipated time commitment per month. We would love to see new members getting involved in their Association!!

Behind The Seen



In a world where there seems to be an increasing amount of pressures, and a steadily decreasing amount of time to commit to them, there is also less and less time and effort devoting to looking after ourselves.

For me personally, I find that working 60+ hours a week, combined with family and social commitments as well as the hum-drum of everyday life, at times something has to give and I simply can't get it all done. The thing that tends to give, is the time set aside to just be.

From the perspective of a nine to fiver, I have found this time out is important; but as a first responder- it's critical.

I spoke to a number of other first responders- both current and retired- and noticed that most of us don't talk about work with those who aren't in a similar role. We talk about the generalities of our shift or the jobs we have been to, but if there is a particularly bad job or one that affects us a little more than another- for whatever reason- they are the jobs

that we don't tend to talk about with our family and friends.

Whether it is through an inbuilt need to 'protect' them, or a self-preservation technique by not talking about it, reliving it or acknowledging that it has affected us is different between individuals. But there does need to be an environment where we can talk about these things, and we can decompress.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Ross Beckley and Veronique Moseley from Behind The Seen. This is a program developed in response to a way to start conversations amongst emergency responders about their mental health.

It was such an open and honest conversation about mental health, PTSD and the implications on family life- and none of it was awkward. It was such a relaxed and easy atmosphere, with a cup of coffee on a wet evening, sitting on the lounge shooting the breeze.

We talked about our history in emergency services- Ross (Rossco)

was a firefighter with FRNSW and Veronique (Ronnie) is a social worker- mental health in general and Ross and Ronnie both talked candidly about the personal effects of emergency responder work.

More specifically though, we talked about how different each individual's response is to different incidents- whether they are single incidents or as often happens, multiple incidents that the same crew members get exposed to.

I think that this is where some of the stigma around mental health for emergency responders stems from. If one member of the crew feels they are responding differently to the others. Traditionally, there has been the image of the strong and unflappable rescuer, but we now know that this is simply not the case. Yes, they may be strong but that by no means makes them any less vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress and nor should it.

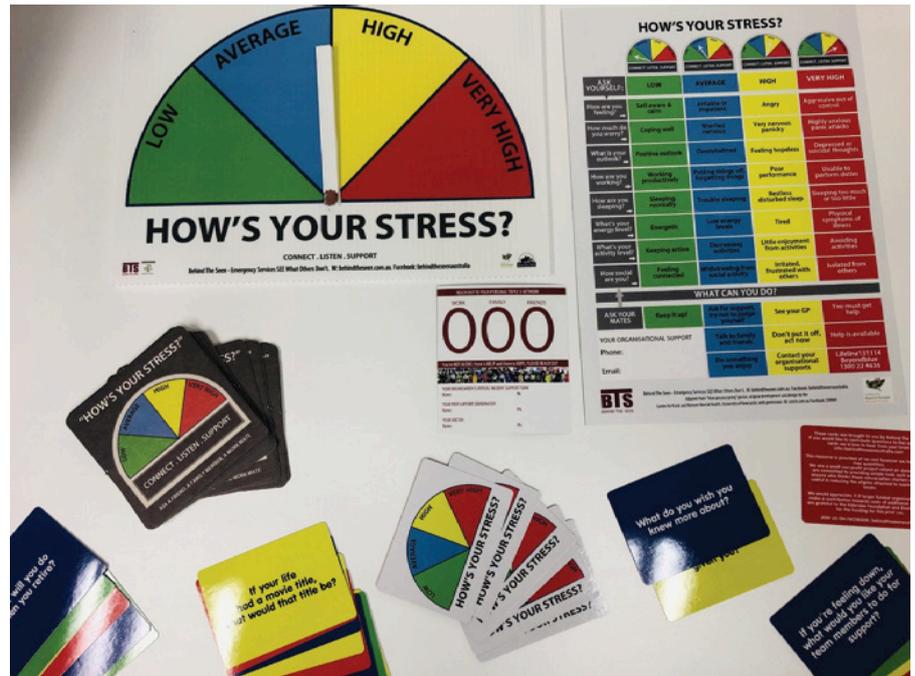
The starting point for the 'Stress Less' packs that Rossco and Ronnie

have developed is to try and start the conversations between colleagues to overcome some of these issues.

The packs contain a number of different resources that are part of an overall strategy to increase conversations about mental health. These are:

- » coasters prompting awareness of stress levels
- » a wallet card with key phone numbers for assistance
- » 'How's Your Stress' flow chart posters and;
- » Rossco's stress metre- based off the fire danger rating chart

We are really excited to be able to send the Behind the Seen packs out to some units, and we ask that you send any feedback on them to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stresspack>



Mardi Gras

It might seem like all glitter and rainbows but the true sense of our participation in diverse community events demonstrates our support of equality and inclusiveness in our workplace and communities.

When we participate in diverse community festivals, events and activities like the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras it demonstrates to our members that we are inclusive of their diversity and proudly support them as individuals. The message to our members is “there is a place for you with us, without judgement”.

This year, City of Sydney unit took part in the Mardi Gras Festival Fair day with an interactive community engagement display. We sent 60 members to the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to march in the parade and we also took part in the inaugural regional NSW Mardi Gras parade in Wagga Wagga. Post the parade, South Eastern Zone sponsored the Mardi Gras after party morning tea



where volunteers and staff came together to celebrate diversity in our workplace.

For our communities, we convey that our service is always there for them when they need us, to build resilience, respond when they are overwhelmed and recover from natural hazards without prejudice.

A healthy emergency service that is responsive, agile, flexible and proactive with their community is one which reflects that community. Our communities, from all genders, abilities, identities, cultures, beliefs and backgrounds are the strength of the NSW SES and are our proud members.

“As we marched in the parade, you could feel the power



and energy of community, commitment, participation and pride to be a NSW SES member”.

Our sixty members truly reflected the diversity within our service of age, gender, sexuality, nationality and ability. AND the crowds loved us!

#SESORANGEPRIDE

A special thank you to Deputy Commissioner and LGBTIQ+ Network champion Fatima Abbas, NSW SES Members Michael Singer - Goulburn unit (Event Coordinator), Samantha Cantwell - Canterbury unit (Photography), Matt Kirby – Kogarah unit (Driver) and all the members and staff who made our participation in this year's Mardi Gras possible.



Bald Hill

Bald Hill is a popular location at the Southern end of the Royal National Park for Hanggliders and Paragliders, and the Wollongong Unit gets called to jobs there in a Vertical Rescue (VR) capacity a couple of times a year when they don't land where or how they should. Such was the case just after 5pm on Wednesday 20th March: "SEZWOL VR at LAWRENCE HARGRAVE DRIVE, STANWELL TOPS NSW 2508. BALD HILL LOOKOUT, PARAGLIDER

CRASHED INTO ROCKS 20M FROM THE TOP."

The Unit responded with 8 VR operators, and on arrival our first challenge was locating the Paraglider.

Fortunately one of his mates saw where he went down so we headed off into the bush with two Ambulance paramedics. It took around 40 minutes to reach him involving bashing through thick bush and scrambling around rocks. By this time the Ambulance Rescue helicopter was overhead and winched down another paramedic.

Whilst the patient was being assessed we commenced setting up some ropes to aid in access and preparing for extrication as the helicopter paramedic advised that the narrow ledge they were on was too dangerous to winch from. Additional equipment including a stretcher was brought to the scene which took

around an hour due to the difficult location and terrain.

With light fading we commenced lifting the casualty around 20m up to a larger, clearer rock platform where the helicopter would be able to winch from. At the same time a FRNSW team arrived setting up lighting.

With the casualty up he was transferred into the helicopters stretcher whilst the big job of packing up and making our way back to the staging area commenced. After a debrief at the staging area we finally got home around 10pm.

It was a physically demanding and challenging multi-agency effort and

I'm extremely proud of my team - for two of them it was their first VR job.





Clean Up Australia Day and the SES

A Good News Story!

On Sunday the 3rd of March, members from the Blue Mountains SES Unit participated in Clean Up Australia Day at one of Australia's most iconic locations- Echo Point at Katoomba.

The members combined their Vertical Rescue skills with the well-known community event.

The Blue Mountains volunteers qualified in Vertical Rescue used their ropes to scale down the cliff face immediately below Echo Point where they collected 10 large bags of rubbish including two iPhones, a portable stereo, a drone and a shopping trolley.

Once the cliff line was safe, a team of 22 volunteers worked at the base of Echo Point where they filled 22 large bags which is estimated to be at approximately 3 tonne of rubbish. This includes a washing machine, a number of shopping trolleys, street signs and two beer keg (empty of course!).

Whilst the rubbish on the cliff face was retrieved and taken to Katoomba



Waste Depot, the bags of rubbish were packed and will be airlifted by National Parks later this year.

The Blue Mountains volunteers could not have made this possible without the cooperation of Blue Mountains City Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service to allow this operation to be a success.

The SES also had support from local business including Mitre 10 Katoomba

and Mitre 10 Blackheath are who provided some valuable equipment to make the job easier. Tunks Landscape Supplies also provided a large amount of shade cloth to cover the bags at the base until NPWS can remove the rubbish later this year.

But this story didn't end here. Logistics Co-ordinator Keith Roberts decided to do little sleuthing to see



if some of the electronics could be returned to their owners, believing that these type of items would have ended up over the cliff edge as a result of being accidentally dropped.

Both phones charged up to 100% when plugged into power- a good start!

The first one was an overseas visitors phone but it was very badly damaged and a complete write off. The second iPhone came to life and had a message on the screen:

"Lost iPhone. This iPhone has been lost. Please call me" and a phone number.

Keith called the number which was registered to a family member, and he was put on to the owner of the phone, a young lady from Sydney. She was so excited and could not believe that not only her was her phone found and recovered from the cliff face but that it had survived the fall and was still working. She explained that when she bought it just over seven months ago, it cost her a bit over a \$1,000.00 and that

--- " **...a team of 22 volunteers worked at the base of Echo Point where they filled 22 large bags which is estimated to be at approximately 3 tonne of rubbish.** "

she had only had it for one week before it fell out of her hand as she was taking photos at the Echo Point Look Out.

She further explained how upset and distraught she was that her new phone was seemingly gone forever.

The digital camera was also a total write off, luckily the SD card was not compromised as it had a total of 14 folders containing over 900 photographs.

With a bit of luck, some more detective work and a clue on one of the

photographs, the owner was able to be located, contacted and the SD card returned to the family in Queensland- another happy ending courtesy of the NSW SES Volunteers.

The camera had been lost over the edge just over 4.5 years ago by a family visiting the Blue Mountains from QLD.

Thanks to the efforts of the Blue Mountains VR team and all the SES volunteers that assisted on the day we have a whole lot less litter and refuse in our environment and a very happy



ending for two people who felt their belongings had been lost forever.

Blue Mountains were one of the many units who decided to take part in the Clean up Australia Day in 2019. Marrickville Unit also used some specialist skills to help clean up their local community.

They had 10 volunteers from the Unit, and focused on the Cooks River area. This is the second year that Marrickville has taken part in the Clean Up Australia event.

The members were split into two teams- one a land-based team who focussed on collecting the rubbish in the park and along the bank of the river while the other team used their flood boat skills to collect rubbish from the harder to reach places.

They collected 12 bags of rubbish in two hours and we were joined by the local Girl Guides Chapter (Earlwood). A few members of the public also joined in to help

“
They collected 12 bags of rubbish in two hours and we were joined by the local Girl Guides Chapter (Earlwood).
 ”

collect rubbish- a great example of spontaneous volunteering!

Never missing an opportunity, the members engaged with people in the park and handed out SES brochures on flood and storm preparedness. The Cooks River is one of the flood prone areas for the unit, with local inundation of recreational areas, parking lots, roadways and houses being affected.

The volunteers chose the Cooks River and park location for

their clean up efforts as many of the members use the area for recreational activities and for SES training activities.”

By cleaning up the river we are making it safer for us as well so that we reduce the risk of injury to volunteers and damage to equipment such as the flood rescue boat.” Marrickville Unit member Hasmukh Chand said.

Thanks to the Blue Mountains and Marrickville Unit for providing the information and images for this story.

NSW SES Volunteers Association Grants

QWERTE 2018 Report



On the weekend of October 13th and 14th 2018, a total of 28 members from Queanbeyan, Sutton, Harden, Randwick and Marrickville units participated in the seventh annual Queanbeyan Weekend Emergency Rescue Training Exercise, or QWERTE. As with the prior weekends, participants made the trip to the outback property near Bredbo on the Friday evening in time for some socialising around the campfire before turning in for the evening in anticipation of a weekend full of fun activities. Saturday began with breakfast and then as most prepared a packed lunch for the day, members who had nominated for the operations team were briefed by the exercise managers. Their job would be to create and then guide five teams around the large 700 hectare property navigating them to five skills activities where exercise staff would present the team with a

scenario and mentor them through it. The activities ranged from knot tying, to land search, to first aid; all core skills we utilise in our work with the SES. A visit and tour of some of the activity locations by Deputy Commissioner Greg Newton was also a nice surprise for our participants. As the day drew to a close and teams made their way back to home paddock it was clear that long lasting friendships had been formed between members who 24 hours prior didn't know each other from a bar of soap; a sign of a successful day. Saturday evening after dinner allowed time for some relaxed socialising and the awarding of prizes to the winning team from the day's exercise. After packing up on Sunday morning, participants were given the choice of activities between a 4WD adventure, bushfire awareness training and a chainsaw activity to replenish the firewood used over the previous days.



It was great to have members from a range of units attend QWERTE and we hope to see many more units represented this year and into the future – keep an eye out for this year's date, to be announced shortly. A huge thanks must go to the organising committee and exercise management team yet again for their tireless efforts in organising the weekend, the Southern Tablelands 4WD Club for generously allowing us to use their property and last but by no means least the SES Volunteers Association without who's ongoing support the activity could not be run. We look forward to seeing you at QWERTE 2019!

Drought Support Program- SOCK it to the Drought



We took the opportunity to have a chat with Helen Newbold, a Communications Officer with the NSW SES who works in the State Operations Centre (SOC).

Helen, who has been with the SES for 11 years, is the driving force behind the SOC initiatives that are contributing to the Volunteers Association Drought Support Program (VA DSP).

"SOC staff have direct contact with SES Members and over time we build friendships and rapport with our Volunteers. Our respect and appreciation for members can't be understated and when we heard about the VA DSP we embraced the opportunity to help Members who are doing it tough with the drought." Helen said.

Talking with Helen, she retells a conversation with her partner where she told him she was going to convert chocolates he had brought home into ten thousand dollars for the Drought Support Program.

"My husband Mark sourced a box of Darryl Lea (seconds) chocolates, way too much for us to eat! I donated 20 bags and sold them to SOC staff for \$2 a bag. They sold like umbrellas in a rain storm!

With that \$40 I purchased more chocolate, and when those sold I bought more, and so on. I told Mark that I was going to turn that 20 bags of chocolates into \$10,000. Mark said "no way" and I said "challenge accepted!". Helen recalls.

This was not without its own challenges. Helen kept detailed records of stock purchased, stock sold and the profit margins and she set up liaison meetings through the chain of command to ensure all the boxes were being checked for good governance, and that all parties were willing and happy to participate.

With the original proceeds either deposited into the Drought Support Program, or being used to reinvest in additional goods for sale, Helen decided it was time to expand. She arranged a lamington drive and advertised it through the Service's communication channels.

The saying of 'go big or go home' gets thrown about, but Helen is proving that she has what it takes.

"We have already raised and donated \$5,500 and we have a goal to raise \$10,000. At SHQ we are selling chocolates, recycling cans/bottles

and we held a Lamington Drive. Organisation wide, so far, we have sold SES Branded Bandanas and SOCKS. We have a couple more exiting ideas up our sleeve that we will launch in the coming months." Helen's enthusiasm for the fundraising efforts is contagious, and talking with her there is no doubt that she will reach her goal.

Looking at Helen's business model, we identified some really strong points, particularly around fundraising with little to no capital to start with.

1. Keep it small and targeted

The fundraising efforts have been wholly and solely for the Drought Support Program. This means that there is a single point of focus and the message about why she is raising funds has never been diluted

2. Pre-order, pre-order, pre-order

One of the major strengths we have witnessed with the SOC programs has been the pre-order model. Sounds simple, but it's so incredibly effective. Rather than committing funds up front, Helen sourced products and quotes based on different quantities. This meant that profit margins were identified at viable Vs ideal number



“ I told Mark that I was going to turn that 20 bags of chocolates into \$10,000. Mark said “no way” and I said “challenge accepted!” ”

of units sold, and an order wasn't committed to until minimum numbers were reached.

3. Don't reinvent the wheel

Helen used existing systems in place with the Volunteers Association online store to manage orders and process payments.

This meant she didn't need a separate ecommerce setup, bank accounts or spreadsheets for monitoring stock ordered, and payments processed. She then liaised with the Association to get exported data on sales totals, delivery addresses and payment status to process the orders.

BEHIND THE UNIFORM

Knowing what we now do about how

Helen has been raising funds for the Drought Support Program, let's get to know a bit more about Helen.

What do you like best about working in the State Operations Centre?

I'm a people person and genuinely like helping the community in times of need. I find it rewarding to go home at the end of a shift knowing that my team and I played an integral role in the activation and dispatch of appropriate resources for emergency and life threatening situations.

What is the most memorable shift you have worked?

Without a doubt the flood event from a few years ago when we had over

80 Flood Rescue during the shift. Crazy busy is how I would best describe it. I actually lost my voice for a few days afterwards.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

Mark and I love travelling and spend all our annual leave jet setting around the world. Our next trip is to Vietnam in May.

How would your colleagues describe you?

The Queen of one liners!
(aka Helenisms)

Thank you to Helen for taking the time to participate in this interview, and of course the amazing fundraising efforts!

Flu Vaccination

To all members of the SES NSW, it is that time of the year again where winter is around us.

WHAT IS THE FLU?

Influenza (or 'flu') is caused by a virus that can infect your nose, throat and sometimes lungs. It spreads easily from person to person through coughing, sneezing and close contact, such as kissing and sharing food and drink.

Flu symptoms can start suddenly like fever, headache, tiredness and muscle aches. Symptoms can last for a week or more.

WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU SHOT?

Vaccination experts recommend that everyone over six months of age get vaccinated to reduce their chance of getting the flu.

Every year the flu vaccine changes to match the flu virus that is most likely to be around during the flu

season. Getting vaccinated every year is the best way of preventing the flu and any associated illness.

There is emerging evidence that the flu vaccine gives the most protection within the first three to four months after it is given. It's important to make sure you are protected in time for when the flu is most common, from around June to September.

HOW TO GET YOUR FLU SHOT

There are two options available for the provision of the immunisations for flu vaccination.

1. Contact your geographically located nurse and arrange for a suitable time and date to attend your location
2. Where there is currently no immunisation nurse in your area please attend your local provider and submit your claim for reimbursement as per normal procedures.

NSW SES Finance

The following submission is provided from the NSW SES Finance, Asset & Business Services Directorate

The NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) recently updated their financial policies and procedures to align their processes, responsibilities and accountabilities to the new organisational structure which commenced on 2nd October, 2018. One of the significant policy changes which was made as a part of this review, was changes to the Donations, fundraising and Sponsorship Policy, which saw the introduction of a central pool of funds for fundraising activities undertaken by the service.

The NSW SES has received a number of queries with regards to the interpretation of the definitions for Donations and Fundraising. To assist our members, we have included further clarification below:

A Donation is the unsolicited provision of cash, goods or services to the NSW SES with no return benefits expected. Any persons, company or organisation is legally capable of making a donation to the NSW SES and

procedures are in place for accepting, keeping records and handling donations. Donations should be referred and received via our website www.ses.nsw.gov.au where donors can select specific units to receive funds and obtain automatic receipts and thankyou letters.

Tied Donations is where the donor has an expectation for funds and/or goods to be used for a specific purpose. The NSW SES will assess the fit of the donation/goods to ensure that this is in line with NSW SES principles, strategies and capability plans. Where the monies in the tied donation are approved, the NSW SES must ensure that the funding is used effectively within the service.

Fundraising includes all activities where the NSW SES approaches individuals, foundations or private and public organisations for financial and 'in-kind' support where there is no expectation of public acknowledgment. This also includes fundraising undertaken for or on behalf of NSW SES where NSW SES had prior knowledge of the fundraising event. Fundraising also includes

activities which take the form of a 'fee for service' arrangement, whereby tasks undertaken by Members are rewarded through monetary or non-cash contributions. When fundraising, all Members must wear appropriate official NSW SES uniform and identification.

Fundraising activities must be managed effectively to ensure that funds are properly accounted for and only used for purpose for which they are collected. To ensure this:

- » All fund raising activities must be approved before they occur.
 - » All funds raised by members in approved fundraising activities must be forwarded to SHQ and accounted for in a central pool within the SAP accounting system. The proceeds from the fundraising activities will be committed to SES projects throughout the state at the Commissioner's discretion.
- It is important to note that NSW SES is government-funded to meet its legislative obligations, and we do not need to undertake fundraising. We would prefer the focus to be on community engagement activities.

Volunteer Joint Consultative Council

The VJCC (Volunteer Joint Consultative Council) was embedded within the State Emergency Service Act (1989) after considerable lobbying by the NSWSESVA to ensure volunteers had a voice and an area to formally capture 'any matters relevant to volunteer members of SES units'. This Council ensures access by volunteers to senior leadership, the Commissioner and Ministerial levels.

Protections are now placed for volunteers to be heard and consulted under Part5B of this act. Commissioner

Murray Kear was instrumental in having the Act updated to include the Consultation Council. The Act outlines the establishment, membership, functions and reporting requirements.

Many functions are available to the Council, including 24ZB(2), 'The Consultative Council may give advice and make reports whether or not the advice or reports were requested'.

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/inforce/395a7aa2-5a12-e6cb-9c43-ff67727c9f7b/1989-164.pdf>

Volunteers can request any topic be placed on the agenda for these

meetings. Minutes of meetings are published on EOS and also go to the Emergency Services Minister.

The meeting held in March 2019 brought topics for discussion including safety (a standing item), units funds, Cert IV training, Stress Packs, Hot Weather Shirts, SES VA structure update, Sick/ Injury/Death notifications, and Volunteer Travel costs reimbursements.

To submit agenda items, you can email them to office@nswsesva.org.au or one of the Volunteer Representatives on the Committee- Louise Bertoni or Shannon Crofton

Fire Exit door project Dapto Unit



Do you have an WHS issue or concern in your unit? Dapto Unit (formerly Coniston) Management team and members took a proactive approach solving an issue with its HQ fire door access and egress. The end result was that it complied with safety regulations. This was an impressive and long term outcome for all stakeholders

What does Safety mean to you in your role with NSW SES?

What do you do to contribute to safety when volunteering with NSW SES?

Safety begins with attitude and mindset and in our service we are given the tools and protocols to follow which help keep us safe.

My goal in becoming a Health and Safety Representative is to keep fellow volunteers safe while on the job and to be able to return home at the end of their shift safely.

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

I welcome others to put forward their perspectives and stories on safety

-After all knowledge is power.

From the South Eastern Zone Health and Safety Representative

Troy Smolenaars

19 years to date in NSW SES

troy.smolenaars@member.ses.nsw.gov.au

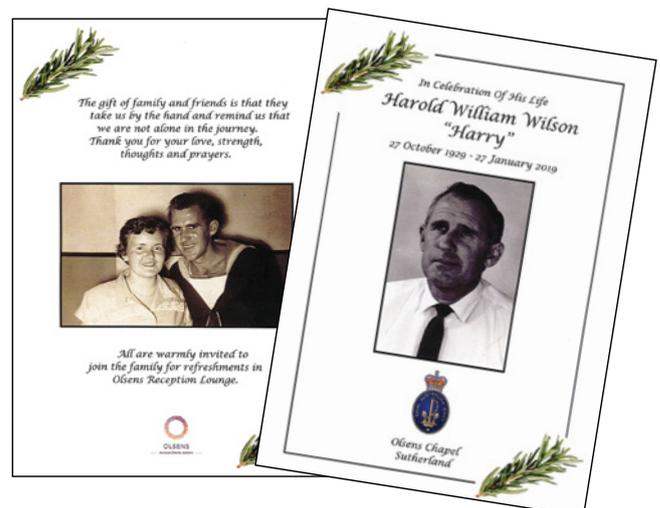
Member Vales

Harold Tug Wilson joined the Sutherland Shire Unit in 1 December 1959 until 23 May 2018. Total of 55 years and 5 months due to a few years on reserve.

Tug received Honorary Life Membership on the 30 November 2004.

50 years Long Service on the 17 May 2010.

- » Thomas Weibel (January 2019) – Goolgowi SES
- » Lindsay Matterson (December 2018) – Lismore SES
- » Billy Martin (November 2018) – Shellharbour City SES
- » Gavin Xavier (November 2018) - Holroyd SES
- » May Gill
- » Tug Wilson



The NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund

Each year the NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund provides thousands of dollars in Welfare Support to members of the NSW SES.

This is made possible through the generous donations of the general public, other volunteers and staff.

In the last nine months alone, the Volunteers Association has committed resources to Direct Mail Campaigns, online fundraising efforts and corporate donations as well as amazing support through the NSW SES State Operations Centre (SOC) Drought Support initiatives.

While these increased fundraising efforts have enabled the Association to continue to support members, we remain aware that fundraising is hard work. There are literally thousands of charities across NSW promoting a worthy cause, and it highlights the incredible value of each of our supporters.

It also highlights how many donors it takes to support one volunteer. If we work off an average donation of \$25, it means for every \$1000 in support we provide, 60 amazing community members have said "I'll support you".

Some examples of the support we have provided are:

- » Line of Duty Death financial assistance
 - » Essential medical care
 - » Transportation to essential medical care
 - » Funeral expenses
 - » Specialised medical equipment
 - » Drought support and relief
 - » Essential educational support
 - » Retraining and job ready support
- History of the Welfare Fund

On Friday 10th June 2012, the NSW SES Volunteers Association officially launched the Volunteers Association Welfare Fund.

The aim of the fund is to provide support to volunteers of the NSW SES in their time of need, in line with the NSW SES Volunteers Association motto "Volunteers supporting Volunteers".

An ever increasing number of volunteers of the NSW SES find themselves facing some form of financial hardship due to reasons including injury, sickness and/or hardship during active service for the NSW SES.

There are two objectives of the Welfare Fund. Firstly, to provide volunteer members of the NSW SES and their dependents with short-term financial support during times of prolonged illness and/or extreme hardship, as well as to cover expenses incurred as a result of death, illness or injury as a result of unpaid service with the NSW SES or NSW SES Volunteers Association.

Since the establishment of the NSW SES there has not been a non-government organisation that has taken on the responsibility for the provision of financial assistance during times of need. This support will give the NSW SES volunteer members and immediate family a sense of security while working through the issues arising from the disruption to their daily lives.

For more details about the NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund volunteers should contact Volunteers Association Ambassadors or through office@nswsesva.org.au

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is the Welfare Fund in place of insurance?

A: No. We are a charitable organisation that raises funds through the community to assist members in times of hardship. Members are encouraged

to seek insurance products that meet their personal needs.

Q: Do I have to be an SES volunteer to benefit?

A: Yes. In order to submit an application to the Welfare Fund, you have to be an active member of an SES Unit. At this time, spontaneous, corporate and community action team volunteers are not eligible.

Q: Are funeral costs covered for SES members?

Next of kin applications are accepted for funeral assistance however access to this require the family to show that they are unable to pay for the funeral costs. Other avenues for support can be found at <https://www.gatheredhere.com.au/assistance-funeral-costs-australia/>

Q: Is the Welfare Fund a legally recognised organisation?

A: Yes. The NSW SES Volunteers Association Welfare Fund is a registered charity, bound by New South Wales laws.

Q: What assistance does the Welfare Fund provide?

A: The Welfare Fund can assist with immediate relief of financial hardship by providing financial support for essential services.

The Welfare Fund will not provide cash payments, and instead make payments on approved expenses on the applicant's behalf, direct to a supplier. All documentation will need to be provided in order for an application to be considered.

Q: When someone ceases their volunteering with the NSW SES, can they still remain a member of the Volunteers Association and have access to the Welfare Fund?

A: No. Once a person ceases volunteering with the NSW SES, their ability to access the fund is terminated.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
CASE #	DATE RECEIVED / /

Application for Assistance

All information supplied is confidential

SEND APPLICATION TO: welfare@nswsesva.org.au

PLEASE PRINT

Family Name _____ Given Name (s) _____

Address _____ Suburb _____ State _____

Postcode _____

Contact Phone Number(s) _____ Contact Email Address _____

SES ID Number _____ Length of Service _____ Unit _____ VA Member Y/N

Dependants: Y/N	Marital Status: Married Single Partner Divorced Widowed	
Wholly maintained (Number)	Adult(s):	Children:
Partially maintained (number)	Adult(s):	Children:

F= Fortnight M= Monthly

<u>Income</u>			<u>Expenses</u>		
	\$	F/M		\$	F/M
SELF			RENT/MORTGAGE		
DEPENDANTS			RATES		
SOCIAL SECURITY			ELECTRICITY		
COMMUNITY RAISED e.g. GoFundMe			GAS		
OTHER (PLEASE STATE)			PHONE & INTERNET		
			OTHER (PLEASE STATE)		
<u>TOTAL</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>		

PLEASE COMPLETE PAGE 2 OF THIS FORM

Vehicle Safety Tool Product Launch

(comes with set of Cut 3 gloves)

Description

Compact multi-function metal safety tool for vehicles. It has a hammer for breaking glass, a seat belt cutter, a powerful COB warning light and a strong magnet for attaching it to the top of a disabled vehicle. The light uses radical COB (Chips on Board) technology which produces much more light intensity than conventional lights yet draws a lot less current which dramatically increases battery life. It is powered by five button cell batteries which are replaceable and has a handy woven wrist strap.



\$25.95

Details

- Knitted 13 gauge, seamless
- HDPE/Polyester/Spandex/PU
- Cut level 3 liner
- PU palm coating making glove more resilient
- CAT2: EN420 and EN388 rating 4,3,4,3
- Over locked cuff with band size identifier
- Suggested Applications:
 - Machining
 - Scrap Metal Handling
 - Cutting Fluids
 - Glass Handling
 - Automotive Industry
 - Construction





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