The official journal of the NSW SES Volunteers Association



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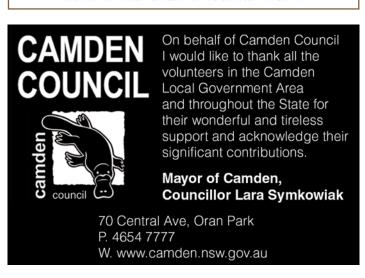


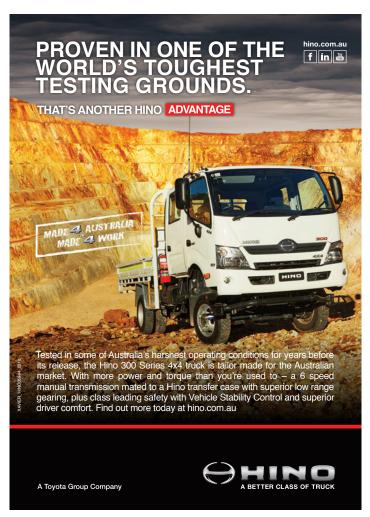
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KIM DAVIS ESM PRESIDENT NSW SES **VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION**

hey say a change is as good as

because we have a lot of big

changes happening in the Association

a holiday, which is a good thing

Association has been a long-time sponsor of the Wombats program, held in Wellington on the weekend of the 29th April.

Dubbo mini-conference - we held our mini-conference in Dubbo on the 17th March 2018. Members elected to have sessions on mental health as well as a run down on what has been happening in the Association.

Eden Thank You BBQ - as part of our 'out and about' board program, the May Board meeting of the Association was held in Eden with a thank you BBQ for the local members. Eden, a part of the Bega Valley Shire, was active in the Tathra Bushfire response and is also the RCR response for the area.

NSW SES Cadets and Young Volunteer of the Year Awards - another long-standing program we have been involved in is the sponsorship of the NSW SES Young Cadet of the Year and the Andy Roberts Award. This year the award ceremony was held on the 24th May at Parliament

House, with the SES recipients being NSW SES Young Volunteer of the Year Alice (Ally) Steen, NSW SES Cadet of the Year Holly Hughes and the NSW SES Andy Roberts Award recipient Rachella Biviano.

The Association has partnered with a

Registered Training Organisation to trial

a mental health program with the SES.

Interflora Partnership - an analysis of our General Welfare Program was undertaken, and a partnership with Interflora has been entered into. Interflora are able to deliver to the majority of the state, and without incurring additional delivery fees we are able to provide this service to more members. Please see our 'General Welfare' tab on the website to apply or for further information.

All in all, it is a busy time for the Association, and we are moving into some exciting areas. We will continue to move about the state, to touch base with members and get a feel for how things are going on the ground in different areas - particularly with the Transformation information being distributed.

Keep each other safe.



at the moment. The Association has partnered with a Registered Training Organisation to trial a mental health program with the SES. The course will be run from our office in Rockdale and an evaluation will be completed to see how we can tweak it across a number of

Andrew Edwards has also made the decision to leave the Association. He will be pursuing his studies and we wish him all the best.

We will also be having a Volunteers Association Representatives workshop in June to finalise changes to the Constitution that were voted in by the Representatives at the last AGM.

Looking back, we have had a number of events that we are really proud of, and happy to support: Wellington Wombats - the

Association's Update For This Quarter

different skills.

Sponsorship by the Volunteers

Cadet of the Year personal

Five funding applications

Coffs Harbour

Meeting with Premier's Advisor Welfare Support

JUNE

Sponsorship by the Volunteers Association

Behaviour course

Volunteers Association Workshopregarding Constitutional Change Thank you BBQ for the bushfire

submitted to the Board at time of printing



he NSW Liberals & Nationals
Government has a proud record
of investing in the NSW SES and
as your Minister it was an honour to
visit the Hurstville unit with the NSW
Treasurer to announce \$54.6 million for
first-class new vehicles, marine vessels
and trailers.

The NSW SES Operational Fleet Replacement Program will continue to replace NSW SES vehicles and also fund the purchase of equipment inventory, marine vessels and trailers. This means nearly 500 new vehicles, marine vessels and trailers will be delivered to units in all corners of the state. In 2018-19, 78 vehicles, 37 marine vessels, 30 trailers and 5 snowmobiles will be rolled out.

The NSW Government has already invested \$46 million for the procurement, maintenance and control of the NSW SES operational vehicle fleet and I thank everyone involved in the major five-year program to refresh the fleet. Prior to undertaking this important work the total number of assets in the NSW SES fleet was unknown, was predominantly owned by local councils and varied vastly in age and condition.

Since being assigned the Emergency Services portfolio last year I've worked with Commissioner Smethurst, NSW Treasury, Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Justice to examine funding requirements for the ongoing

replacement and further expansion of your fleet. I'm very pleased NSW SES members have also had the opportunity to provide input into the design to ensure the equipment effectively meets operational requirements. I will continue to work closely with the NSW SES to ensure you have the best equipment available to help you perform your lifesaving work.

I'm proud the NSW Liberals & Nationals will have invested more than \$100 million in the NSW SES operational fleet in ten years from 2012. I know from my travels to units across the state how much of a difference new vehicles makes to your work on the land and I'm proud we're now making this record investment to assist with water rescues too.

Importantly, it's the volunteers themselves who are the beating heart of the NSW SES. It was wonderful to join with so many of you in Bankstown as the spotlight shone on emergency services at the 2018 Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards. The NSW SES nominees: Naomi Leviton (Manly); Bill Atchison (Grenfell); Keith Dawe (Condobolin); William Dodd (Forster Tuncurry) represent the type of selfless community service performed daily by emergency service agencies. I also had the privilege of hosting the NSW SES Cadet of the Year and Young Volunteers of the Year at a special ceremony at Parliament



TROY GRANT MP
MINISTER FOR
EMERGENCY SERVICES

House. Congratulations to Holly Hughes (NSW SES – Northern Beaches Secondary College, Manly Campus); Rachella Biviano (NSW SES – Georges River Grammar School); and Ally Sheen (NSW SES Liverpool Unit) who all won awards. We are lucky to have a strong culture of volunteerism embedded in our social fabric. It is also exciting to see the next generation continue with values of service above self.

It's impossible to place a value on the work our volunteers and personnel contribute to the emergency services space, but we do know that each and every day your actions change lives for the better. Thank you for your outstanding contribution to the NSW SES. Once again, I pledge to you to continue to do my job as your Minister to support your tremendous efforts.

Volunteer's Members Update

The office has been working on updating the Member Data base to ensure that we have all the correct contact details for our Members. If you need to update your details please either email the office at office@nswsesva.org.au or call on 1300 073 782.

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

1800 626 800





MARK SMETHURST DSC, AM COMMISSIONER

ear All. As the first half of 2018 is almost behind us, I would like to reflect on what has been achieved so far, and what we plan to accomplish by the end of 2018. Our Organisational Transformation is progressing at pace, with the new structure targeted for mid-September. The Organisational Transformation team have visited all 16 Regions, equipping volunteers and staff with greater context and messaging regarding our proposed structure. A three week consultation period concluded in May, allowing staff to provide input to help improve the organisational design, which collectively shapes our future direction. Many volunteers have also provided valuable feedback, addressing various processes and systems in our Service that need further enhancements. As we undertake these improvements, we need to realise that the proposed structure, while a key enabler of our mission and vision, will not solve everything. One of the main benefits of the structure is to reestablish accountability across the organisation from our Executives to our front line clusters and Units. The proposed structure with five Zones is not just about improving reporting relationships and span of control issues, but about new ways of working to better support our volunteers and communities.

A series of Zone Information and Transition Workshops is currently occurring with the focus on team alignment, mindset and behavioural shift – moving from the past and into the future. The purpose of these workshops is to build the volunteer leaders' understanding of the transformation and its impact at

The purpose of these workshops is to build the volunteer leaders' understanding of the transformation and its impact at Unit level, so that it produces more effective outcomes for volunteers and communities.

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Unit level, so that it produces more effective outcomes for volunteers and communities. These workshops bring together Region staff, Local and Unit Controllers, Deputy Unit Controllers and the Executives, to work on solutions that help us grow, mature professionally as an emergency service leader, and improve our assistance to the community. As I'm attending these workshops, I see how critical these forums are for building understanding of the new structure and creating strategic direction for all Zones and Units.

The new structure, however, is only one part of the Organisational Transformation, which is a holistic process that will enable us to function more efficiently. It has been going for the last 12 months and encompasses many areas of our Organisation. The launch of Volunteering Reimagined, implementation of the Availability App, streamlined PPE ordering process via the TAMStore, and the development of the Training Assessment Tool are just a few other milestones achieved in the transformation process. Improved budgeting, stock-take at Units and better management of fleet, radio terminal replacement installations as a part of OCES program, form the foundations of our transformation. State Operations has transitioned to the new Operational Response Directorate and continues to deliver exemplary services to our members and the communities of NSW, while the refreshed Mission and Vision Statements, followed by the formal establishment of our Incident Management Operating Model (IMOM), provides a solid framework around our core business.

In May, I welcomed Fatima Abbas as the new Deputy Commissioner,

Strategy and Support. Fatima joined NSW SES with a wealth of experience in human resources, corporate planning, strategy, and organisational change management, and is now leading the transformation process. Greg Newton has also transitioned to his new role as Deputy Commissioner, Operational Service Delivery, and the new Strategic Leadership Team was appointed to lead the revised Directorates.

The Volunteering Reimagined Project has now transitioned to business as usual, delivering its key objective to establish a new flexible volunteering framework for the NSW SES. It is now an integral part of NSW SES, and the number of Community Action Teams and Corporate Volunteers is constantly growing. While some Units have expressed concerns about the changes that have come with the introduction of Volunteering Reimagined, many others see the new volunteering categories as an opportunity to better help their community, become more resilient, build greater capability to respond to severe weather events and improve their overall experience as a volunteers. As I travel around the State, it's great to see new initiatives, but we need to do more to get the message out there. Volunteering Reimagined is about better supporting our communities, and we all need to think differently in terms of recruitment and building our volunteer workforce capacity. It's time to show leadership and work with members to embrace our new volunteer framework. Everyone in the Regions and at State Headquarters has a role to play to enable our volunteers to support communities in a more flexible way.

As we look into our plans for the rest of 2018, there are many



exciting developments ahead of us. The implementation phase of our move towards the five- Zone model will start through a planned transitional process commencing not before mid-September 2018. Within the Training area, Phase 1 of Job Ready program is underway with the objective of getting new members 'Team Ready' within as short a time as possible, so that they can safely go out on a job, in a group, under supervision. This will now be possible after completion of an online induction and a face-to-face workshop held in a Unit, helping us engage and retain our new members, who in the past have often needed to wait for months before being an active member of the team. The technical build of the Mobile Assessment App continues, and the assessment documentation that enables practical application by assessors is being finalised. A streamlined process for Recognition of Prior Learning is also underway, with a simple user handbook and training webinars available.

In addition to our existing Remote Area Land Search teams, Bush Search and Rescue (BSAR) has partnered with the NSW SES and is now known as NSW SES Bush Search and Rescue Unit with over 140 members. This has greatly enhanced our ability to provide specialist search and rescue capability across NSW, as BSAR has a proud 82 year history and an excellent reputation in the area of specialised remote search. Further developments in the Planning and Preparedness Directorate include the extensively reviewed NSW State Flood Plan, and the NSW State

development of resources including marketing materials, training packages and continued visits to units across NSW. Finance, Asset & Business Services Directorate, Fleet will continue managing our vehicle and vessel



Bush Search and Rescue (BSAR) has partnered with the NSW SES and is now known as NSW SES Bush Search and Rescue Unit with over 140 members.

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Storm Plan. Over the next two years we will also progress the development of a Canine Search and Rescue Capability to assist our teams in land search operations.

People and Culture Directorate will shortly be releasing the report from the NSW SES Volunteer Voice online Survey 2018 summarising findings from the 1,973 responses received our volunteers. This survey sought feedback in relation to the general volunteer experience with NSW SES, and exposure to and perceptions of bullying and harassment and how it is managed. The Volunteering Reimagined team will continue to support Units through the

assets, by validating the vehicle/vessel requirements nominated in the 2016 Regional Capability Plans, while the Logistics team's focus remains on the Procurement Release and Materials Scheduling Project to all of NSW SES SHQ and RHQ.

I'm looking forward to see us all working collectively together as we implement the new structure. We are changing for the right reasons, so let's all embrace this change to help us serve better the communities of NSW and make NSW SES the best volunteer emergency service in Australia. If you are uncertain about the changes and require further information or you have questions, ask.

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

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.



From the Editor

PAT JOHNSON ESM

EDITOR





The Three Dorothy Henessey Emergency Services Young Scholarship finalists.

n Friday night (1/6/18) I attended the NSW and ACT Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards . Four of our members namely Bill Atchison (Grenfell Unit) Greg Dodd (Foster-Pacific Palms Unit) Keith Dawe (Lachlan Shire Local Unit) and Naomi Leviton (Manly Unit) were the finalists. Naomi being named as the NSW SES winner.

Also our Young Volunteer for the inaugural Dorothy Henessey Emergency Services Youth Scholarship was Tess Wicks (Manly Unit) Congratulations to all.

I want to thank all of you who gave me stories for this edition, please keep them coming

In the previous Editor's foreword, it was incorrectly stated that Josephine Jones and Robbie (sorry should have been Jamie) Newman were finalists in the State Awards. Both Josephine and Jamie were winners in the Western Harbour Emergency Services Community Awards.



Our NSW SES Finalists with the ACT SES Finalists.



Naomi Leviton the NSW SES winner.

SAFETY MESSAGE

Our April edition of The Volunteer Magazine included some images of a flood rescue being conducted on a flooded roadway.

This magazine wishes to reinforce

the following safety messages regarding flood rescue;

Never tie a rope around your waist and enter floodwater Use only approved SES Flood Rescue Equipment Only use recognised flood rescue techniques

Wear an approved life jacket when standing within 3m of the waters edge Safety is everyone's respinsibility. The Editor





Chaplain Steve Hall with SSR Chaplain Susan Phalen.

It's All About the Locals

had the privilege of attending the opening of the new Menai shed last weekend. I recounted to those present the story of putting together the funeral for Jack Jones with the family. As we sat around the dining table the stories flowed about the operations that were ran from that very table, the meals for the volunteers were prepared in the kitchen where they had just made me a cuppa, the spare room that was converted to the radio room and the fact that everyone, kids and all were involved. It's that spirit, of local people with local knowledge looking after their local community, which still drives us.

We have come a long way with the equipment we now have to respond to our communities but it's always us,

the members, that go out to help and we dare not lose sight of that. Our new Commissioner is focused on this and is committed to making sure that the experience of being an SES volunteer is the best that it can be.

We all know that we need to grow in an ever changing world. And we know that growth, especially when it is necessary, is often painful. We are willing to grow because we are the local people looking after our local communities. That is what drives us to be better. That is what brings out the best in us. It's why we go home satisfied after a tough job done well.

If we are going to be the best volunteer emergency service in the country, it will require all of us to put in. None of us are sure what the future holds or what the SES will need to look like, but I am confident that together we will get there. We will have to think outside the box, we will have to be more collaborative, and we will have to be more flexible. We need to do this because our community needs this of us.

I am sure that this will be a bumpy ride, heading into an unknown future always is. However we have been doing this for the last 60 years and we keep emerging stronger and better than before. I want to be able to tell my great-grandkids that I was part of this chapter of the growth of the SES when we became the best volunteer emergency service in the nation. Hope that's true for you too.

The Padre





SES members make safe a fire damaged tree that has been felled.



SES resources from multiple SSR units staging at Menai unit following operations in the Alfords Point area.

opes of a relaxing Saturday afternoon off were quickly dashed for SES volunteers in the Sutherland Shire back in April when the area experienced it's worst bushfires in over fifteen years. After a busy morning training their new induction group in Traffic Safety and Flood Rescue Awareness, coupled with eight storm jobs, members were just about ready to head home when word came through of a fire coming through the local army range.

SES crews immediately set about assisting their brothers and sisters in yellow and were quickly tasked

to establish a boat link with several townships on the Georges River that had been isolated by the bushfire, as well as with providing logistics and incident management support from the Fire Control Centres in Heathcote and Minto.

As the fire jumped Heathcote Road and made a run for the west of Menai SES resources were then quickly requested by police to support doorknocking efforts. Working through challenging conditions, including thick smoke, SES crews managed to doorknock over nearly a hundred homes as suburban areas sustained heavy ember showers.

Over the next four days members from the four Sutherland Shire units, aptly supported by members from Bankstown, Bayside, Canterbury, Campbelltown, Hurstville, Kogarah and Marrickville units continued to work tirelessly to support the ongoing fire efforts as well as manage an influx of storm jobs caused by the same 70kph winds that were driving the fire.

During the course of the bushfire operation SES crews demonstrated their skills across a wide range of the specialist capabilities offered by the service, including;





Cronulla 35 conducting road clearing operations on Heathcote Rd.



Heathcote 36 supporting RMS traffic control operations.



SES members out door knocking in Menai area.

- » Chainsaw Operations clearing access to fire trails and assisting RMS with reopening roads.
- » Flood boat Operations assisting with transportation of personnel and equipment to isolated river communities.
- » Aviation Operations providing qualified operators at airbase and air desk level.
- » Incident Management providing personnel to the EOC and FCC.
- » Public Information establishing and manning

- community information points and supporting community meetings.
- » Logistics support assisting with transportation, catering and communications support.
 Throughout this SES members

Throughout this SES members continually represented the best attributes of the service in delivering our core mission of saving lives and protecting communities. Their efforts were highly appreciated by the Rural Fire Service, LEOCON and other members of the EOC who gave high praise for the capabilities offered.



SES and Illawong RFS members who were clearing downed trees from a fire trail.



Ballina Unit receives grant for 20 lockers



he Ballina unit has received a grant from the NSWSESVA for the purchase of 20 personal lockers for their Road Crash/General Land Rescue Team and Flood Technicians.

The lockers will allow members to store PPC and PPE safely at the unit rather than in their vehicles. Many members constantly shuffle PPE between vehicles and the lockers will avoid not having it with them when called upon at short notice.



When out on storm jobs and other incidents, members often come back wet and uncomfortable and having a dry set of clothes to change into will be a great help.

The Ballina Unit would like to thank the NSWSESVA for their ongoing support which has enabled them to purchase much needed equipment for our members

Gerry Burnage ESM JP

Local Controller NSW SES Ballina Unit



Thank you to the SES Volunteers Association from the Tamworth Unit

amworth Unit often provides lighting for other emergency services as well as building our own operational capabilities. Through a donation from a member of the public the Tamworth Unit was able to turn a box trailer into a lighting trailer using our previous lighting equipment. Through the kind donation

from the SESVA the Tamworth Unit is now capable of providing the best working environment possible for our volunteers and the community. As we work in remote area where there is little or no other light source, the new upgraded lighting system increases our members safety whilst promoting greater inter agency relationships.





The Queanbeyan Unit Thanks the NSW SES Volunteers Association for their Continuous Support of QWERTE



he Queanbeyan Unit has been running an annual training exercise called QWERTE (Queanbeyan Weekend Emergency Rescue Training Exercise) for the past five years. The weekend long activity gives members opportunities to train and socialise with members from other units and put skills relating to both our core roles (storm and flood response, communications, etc.) and non-core roles (land search, navigation, etc.) into practice. Members benefit with opportunities to learn in small group activities with an expert trainer in addition to bringing their personal experiences and working together putting those skills into use as a large team in an exercise typically run on the Saturday. Last year we had invited members from the whole of the Southern Highlands and Illawarra South Coast Regions as well as from the ACT SES to attend.

The organising committee (Andrew Brightman, Alan Jones, Marj Jones,



Glen Jorgensen, Andrew Daniels and Zakia Patel) would like to extend their thanks personally, and on behalf of the Queanbeyan Unit and all members who attended QWERTE to the NSW SES Volunteers Association for their financial backing of QWERTE and to the Southern Tablelands 4WD Club for the generous loan of their property for QWERTE each year. We could not put on such a fantastic activity without the kind and generous support of both organisations. QWERTE is held annually in October – members from SHR and ISR should keep an eye out for the call for nominations to be released in the next couple of months for QWERTE 2018 which (as always) we promise to be bigger and better than ever! And, if there are any members from other regions interested in making the journey to attend, please contact the Queanbeyan Unit (qbn.ops@ses.nsw.gov.au) and we will ensure you are included.







Young People in Emergency Service Awards 2018

he NSW SES and NSW RFS Young People in Emergency Services Awards were held on the 24 May, 2018 at NSW Parliament House with the Minister for Emergency Services, The Hon. Troy Grant presenting three young volunteers from each service with awards. The NSW SES awards recognize the achievement of 2 categories of Secondary School Cadets as well as the NSW SES Young Volunteer of the Year.

The NSW SES Volunteers
Association is a proud sponsor of

the awards and provides a grant for continuing education for each of the NSW SES award winners.

Turn to page 20 to learn more about the YPIES Awards 2018.

Wellington Wombats



Left to right: Gavin Arnold, Trish Orchard, Megan Hamblin and Benita Adam.



Once again I would like to thank the NSW SES Volunteers Association for their continuous support each year.



Turn to page 28 to learn more about the Wellington Wombats program.



Water Rescue Manikin for Gloucester Unit



Member Names from Left to right; Bruce Sun, Robert Seale, Allen Cairns, Sid Johnston, Robert McNeice(Unit Controller).

loucester SES Unit is very pleased to welcome the latest addition to its team with a BIG THANK YOU to the Volunteers Association. Gloucester Unit received a grant from the Volunteers Association for the

purchase of the Water Rescue Manikin which is specifically designed for water rescue training. The Manikin weighs 40kg dry but doubles in weight to 80kg when wet and with the use of adjustable flotation aids allows the Manikin to

simulate casualties in various situations. Gloucester Unit has four, Level 3 Swift Water Rescue Tech's who will find the Manikin an invaluable training aid in maintaining their skills and competency. Thank you Volunteers Association.



Sea Rescue off the coast of Libya

ince 2016, almost 8,000 refugees and migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean or are still missing according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The number of unreported cases can only be guessed.

In May 2017, I volunteered as a crew member on a Search & Rescue ship run by the German NGO Sea Eye. Sea-Eye's goal is to save the lives of refugees in distress during their dangerous escape to Europe. Since 2016, Sea-Eye volunteers have saved over 13,000 people from drowning off the coast of Africa.

My first few days in Malta are spent preparing rescue equipment, learning about the ship (those SES knots, PIARO and Radio Comms skills definitely come in handy!), getting to know the crew, discussing everyone's role (I am part of the RHIB crew), practicing rescue scenarios, and generally converting the 60 year-old, 26 meter long former fishing cutter into a rescue ship. We, a group of 9 volunteers from all walks of life and covering an age range from early 20s to mid-60s, is the first crew to take the Seefuchs (Sea Fox), Sea-Eye's second ship, on a SAR (Search & Rescue) mission.





For a few days it looks like we won't be going anywhere as things on board keep breaking (the highest respect for our machinists who worked day and night to get everything fixed!) and supplies and parts don't arrive as planned. Looking at the other SAR

NGOs in the harbour, it quickly becomes clear that we're quite different from them regarding funding, crewing, ship size and resources on board.

I spend a lot of time with our doctor in the improvised 'clinic' discussing CPR, First Aid, rescue techniques and body bags - we joke a lot but don't really want to think about the fact that we might have to use these things.

We get reminded what we signed up for when we receive a message from our sister ship in the SAR zone which, that same day, provided first response to





approximately 600 refugees on 4 rubber boats in distress and reported 3 deaths (Am I really tough enough for this?)

Things are getting real when after 7 days in Malta, lots of improvisation and with a 4 day delay we're finally off!

26 hours and 190 nautical miles later, we arrive in the SAR zone in international waters off the coast of Libya.

The events that follow over the next 3 days have become blurry in my mind... but I'm trying to recount them in order as much as possible.

I remember arriving at our first rescue location after just having finished a 3-6am watch shift – it looked like a war scene: a huge European warship, a military helicopter, a big Italian Coast Guard ship, another private SAR ship, several RHIBs and about 10 rubber boats full of refugees (120+ people each). The On-Scene Coordinator instructs us to 'just pick a

refugee boat', provide life jackets and then start evacuating people onto our ship for a later transfer to a larger ship. So that's what we do and everything we had just practiced a few times all of a sudden becomes very real: 132 people on 'our' refugee boat, including pregnant women and a tiny baby.

After handing out life jackets and shuttling the refugees to the Seefuchs (this takes hours as we can only take 8 people at a time on our RHIB), we do a quick triage, distribute water and rescue blankets and literally 'pile' people into every corner and onto every deck, before heading to our meeting point with a big Coast Guard ship that will take the refugees to Italy.

By the time we get there, it is dark and windy and the waves are big. One by one we transfer our guests onto the massive Coast Guard RHIB. I remember people's faces, tears, fear in their eyes, some wearing nothing but their underwear, some look no older than 15 and I wonder what they've already been through on their journey...





Before I go to bed, I hear that we're now the ONLY SAR ship in the whole SAR zone (covering an area of almost 1200 square nautical miles in total) and the weather forecast looks like there will be more boats in distress the next morning. So before sunrise and after only 5 hours of sleep, the whole crew is back on deck with binoculars and on the lookout for boats. Just after 6am







the MRCC Rome (Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre) sends through coordinates of a reported refugee boat in distress. Shortly after that, we spot a rubber boat full of people... but wait, there is another boat - a wooden boat!

The wind is picking up and the sea is choppy and the two boats are quickly drifting further away from each other (and closer to the 12nm zone which is a no-go zone for NGO ships as it is Libyan territory). We get the RHIB ready and get closer to inspect both boats. As the wooden boat is small and already full of water, we provide the wooden boat with life jackets first. The sea is getting worse and safely manoeuvring the





RHIB becomes harder every minute. Since the rubber boat has been drifting at sea for 30 hours (!!!) the people are quite keen to get off the boat and keep trying to jump onto our RHIB when it's already challenging and dangerous enough to safely 'nose' onto their boat (we accidentally puncture our RHIB in the process). It feels awful to have to yell at people and give orders - I can understand how desperate they are to get off that boat after being stuck in the same position for so long- but we all want to get out of here alive!

I later wonder what people were thinking while out there for 30 hours, in total darkness, wind and waves, no room to move (you move – you die), no water, no food, no toilet, randomly mixed together...when do you give up hope?

I imagine one of these boats just never being found – what would have happened if we weren't there that day...121 people including a young child just vanishing without anyone knowing about their fate...

I'm exhausted, thirsty, soaking wet and cold but only feel it after about the 12th shuttle run - we keep going. When we're finally all back on board, I find out from our doctor that we've got two serious medical cases that need to be transferred to a 'proper' hospital or they will die.

Our ship is so crowded now (168 refugees) that we can barely move around. Nevertheless, we're not too worried at this stage as we expect the rescue to go as the previous one (meeting point - transfer to a bigger ship - done). As the Seefuchs starts moving, we have to usher people off the foredeck as the waves keep crashing over it and we're afraid people might get washed off the ship. We hand out water, rescue blankets and keep checking on everyone regularly – which proves to be quite hard in heavy seas and with people practically sitting on top of each other now.





When we finally arrive at our meeting point with a big oil tanker (about 10 times our size) who will take the refugees to Lampedusa, we attempt to dock onto the tanker to transfer our guests. Due to nightfall, massive waves and increasing wind, our attempt fails, our ship sustains significant damage and we have to abort the transfer as it becomes

too dangerous. The MRCC Rome orders us to proceed to Lampedusa in the tanker's lee. Wait a minute, LAMPEDUSA???!!! Our ship is too small and not equipped for transporting large amounts of people (lack of food, shelter, toilets etc.) and now we're looking at a 30 hour trip with over 100 people on board in heavy seas with NO ONE left in the SAR zone??!!! We're speechless...





We try to make hot sweet tea for the dehydrated and seasick refugees. This is harder than it sounds as the ship's kitchen isn't made for cooking for more than 10 people (the crew) and the boat is rolling with an angle of about 40 degrees (we lovingly call the instrument on the bridge that measures the roll 'puke-o-meter'). So we improvise and improvise some more people need to eat, drink and stay warm and dry, which just seems impossible! Everything takes hours, we can barely move as there are people everywhere, we have to keep waking everyone up several times just to make sure they're still alive and that they're eating and drinking. We hand out everything that can be used to stay warm/dry including blankets, tarps, bin bags (why did the full body suits not *get delivered in time!?*). We forget to eat and rest ourselves, we barely speak, we simply move from one task to another like robots, everyone giving their all, exhausted beyond words... Our doctor keeps telling the MRCC in Rome that our two medical cases won't make it through the night if they aren't treated in a 'proper' hospital, so we finally receive the order to transfer them onto a nearby military vessel – another big challenge in rough seas.



After about 3 hours of sleep I go back on deck and initially think it's raining heavily. I then realise that it's sea spray all over the main deck, every few seconds, and about 60 people getting soaked with every wave. While I have been sleeping they've been wet and shaking for hours. I feel terrible. As I try to work my way through the 'bodies' on deck (are they still alive?) I hear people moaning, retching, crying. The whole ship smells like human excrement and like suffering - a smell that I won't forget for the rest of my life! I make tea with lots of sugar again and put all cookies, biscuits, bread and crackers I can find in a bag to give out as 'breakfast' (ah yes, the 1000 muesli bars we were supposed to have on board also didn't get delivered before we left Malta!). I feel like crying but pull myself together as I have to tell people they're only allowed 3 cookies each as there are another 100+ people who haven't eaten yet. All of a sudden, sea-sickness gets the better of me and for a few hours I have to stay away from the suffering on deck. The next few hours are just a blur in my mind but we eventually decide to put the 'worst' cases downstairs into our crew's sleeping area to make sure they make it to Italy alive there's no time for us to sleep anyway.





As we finally approach Lampedusa (it's almost sunset again), the waves get smaller, the mood lightens and we find some time to talk to a few people. They've now been at sea for a total of 60 hours; barely anyone knows how to swim and the smugglers told them it would take 5 hours until they would reach Europe; they gave them a compass, told them 'just keep going North' and the

boat had just enough fuel to make it into international waters, where the refugees are often left to die! I hear the story of Mustafa, a 22 year old guy from Gambia whose journey had already taken him 5 months (What was I doing when I was 22?!) who ended up in a Libyan jail, simply for





being 'black'. Mustafa left Gambia to find work after his father passed away and the family was left with no income. In jail he was tortured and his tormentors called Mustafa's family and requested they 'pay' for his freedom as Mustafa screamed in pain – I 'feel' again for the first time in 3 days and tears are running down my face, not just because of what he's already





been through but mainly because of what's to come - Mustafa has no idea that his journey has only just begun and that he probably won't be granted asylum in Europe and that after all the suffering and almost dying at sea, he will probably be sent back to his home country in the end. I will never forget his face and his smile so full of hope. I wish to think that someone in Italy gave him a phone so he could at least tell his mother that he's still alive...

Upon our arrival in Lampedusa, we aren't given permission to enter the harbour so an Italian Coast Guard RHIB picks up the refugees from our ship. After our final scan of the ship, we are finally certain that everyone made it to Europe alive – today! We later find out that after we left the SAR zone and another

NGO ship arrived and got shot at by the "Libyan Coast Guard" and that several refugees drowned during another rescue – guilt creeps in as we're not there to help! For us it's back to Malta for now, to stock up on supplies, clean the ship and make some improvements for the next mission – after all we were the 'maiden crew' for the Seefuchs.

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat! And in September I went back on the Seefuchs for a second mission but that's another story...

The situation in the Mediterranean Sea is highly political, unpredictable and increasingly hindering the life-saving work of private SAR NGOs.



What can you do?

- » Donate to my fundraising campaign for Sea-Eye https://www.gofundme. com/help-save-the-lives-of-refugees
- » Donate directly to the following Search and Rescue NGOs: Sea-Eye, LIFELINE, Jugend Rettet e.V., Sea-Watch, SOS MEDITERRANEE, Proactiva Open Arms, RESQSHIP
- » Get informed and help raise awareness for the situation in the Mediterranean by liking and sharing the work of the organisations mentioned above, i.e. on social media) I would like to thank the Volunteers

Association for making this lifechanging experience possible.

Sabrina Fuechsle
Photo Credit: Christian Marquardt
http://christianmarquardt.de/



Shots from WOW Day

hether its tarping roofs in howling winds, rescuing people and animals from floods, attending serious road accidents, or searching for missing people, not an hour goes by where an SES volunteer is not helping someone in times of emergency.

The NSW State Emergency Service has over 9000 volunteers who give up their time to train for and respond to emergencies and natural disasters - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are the lifeblood of communities across NSW and indeed Australia, and last year responded to over 32,000 requests for assistance.

"We are proud to partner with the NSW SES to support volunteers and empower local communities to build resilience and protect themselves from severe weather. WOW Day is a fantastic initiative to recognise SES volunteers and we encourage everyone to wear something orange to show their appreciation," said Ms Cobley of NRMA Insurance.

"The mission of our Service is Saving Lives and Protecting Communities and we live and breathe that mission every day of the year" said Commissioner Smethurst.



Minister Troy Grant visit to Parramatta Unit on WOW Day.









NSW SES Life Membership Awarded to Robert Philpott

Molong Unit of NSWSES as a volunteer on 24 October 1993.
Bob undertook the required training to qualify as a General Rescue Operator and additionally undertook further training and qualified as a Flood Rescue Boat Operator and also as a

Chainsaw Trainer/Assessor.

obert (Bob) Philpott joined the

Bob's life experience and maturity was recognised and he soon became a member of the Molong Unit SES Leadership Team. As a life-long resident of Molong, an employee with the Cabonne Shire and a member of the NSW SES, Bob was ideally placed to be an advocate for his community and the NSW SES.

Bob has been on several OOAA deployments: assisting with fodder and livestock after floods in the Western Region; assisting with temporary repairs to houses and buildings damaged in the Sydney hailstorm of 1999.

Bob was pivotal in the design and construction of the facility which jointly houses NSW SES and NSW RFS in Molong. He was also involved in the subsequent extension to the NSW SES section of the facility which was designed to increase the operational capability of the Molong Unit.

In his role as a Trainer/Assessor of chainsaw operators Bob established a reputation as an instructor of formidable talent. The combination of years of experience in his civilian life coupled with an instructional approach which emphasised safety and technique within a relaxed inclusive atmosphere resulted in chainsaw operators with skill sets far above the minimum required for the competency.

While no longer training or assessing chainsaw courses, Bob is still mentoring and advising all levels of operators, encouraging, questioning and promoting the continuing improvement in skills.

As a life-long resident of Molong, Bob has always had a deep commitment to the community, long before the term Community Engagement became commonplace. On 5 November 2005, the Molong Creek delivered a crushing



Robert (Bob) Philpott with Director Regions West, Assistant Commissioner Greg Lynch.



Bob has always had a deep commitment to the community, long before the term Community Engagement became commonplace.



blow to the town with a major flash flood which inundated the CBD and surrounding residential streets. The physical and commercial damage to the town was enormous and the psychological toll on many of the residents is still apparent.

The onset and speed of the flooding negated any possible action by the NSW SES and other emergency services. Recovery was long and costly. Bob became very active in promoting the idea that planning and works at all levels of community and government needed to be implemented to mitigate against another flood event.

Bob attended many community and local government meetings representing Molong Unit and following his appointment as the Unit Controller for the Molong Unit NSW SES on 11 May 2005 he truly became the local face of NSWSES. Bob

stood down as Unit Controller on 31 July 2011.

Bob implemented a Unit training regime heavily weighted towards flood operations within and around Molong. Members were made familiar with the initial and subsequent flood entry points for the town, the first buildings to be impacted and the most appropriate actions available to NSW SES members and owner/occupiers. A programme of regular contact detail updating and the consequent engagement with business houses and residents likely to be impacted by flooding was improved and is ongoing.

Liaison with Cabonne Council on all matters pertaining to flood mitigation works, sand supplies for sand bag construction, notifications of Flood Watch and Alerts and the many other details involved have all been integral to Bob's plan to minimise the impact of any future flooding on the town. In spite of his



no longer being Unit Controller, Bob's experience, knowledge and advice is still sought after by members of the community, Local Council and NSW SES.

Within the ranks of the Molong Unit NSW SES, Bob is regarded as an institution. While he has officially stepped down from any roles he is mentor to Unit Management, an advisor on the local Community and the networks that operate within it and to all members a gentleman with a vast source of information.

As an indication of the regard the community has for Bob Philpott the following is a list of some of his achievements:

- » Foundation Director Calare Credit Union 1970 – 1999.
- » Chairman of Clare Credit Union 1998 – 1999. Now known as First Choice Credit Union.
- » Life Membership Molong Pony Club 1991.
- Volunteer Rural Bushfire Service
 45 Year Medal.

- » Cabonne Council 'Citizen of the Year' announced on Australia Day 2008.
- » Life Membership Award For Molong Member

Congratulations Bob on your award and thank you for your dedicated commitment and service to your community as a volunteer member of the NSW SES.

Craig Ronan ESM

Region Controller Central West Region



Lugarno Lions Donation To the Hurstville Unit

he Hurstville Unit in Sydney
Southern Region has enjoyed
a long working relationship of
almost 14 years with local volunteer
community group Lugarno Lions Club.
Volunteers from the Hurstville Unit
assist Lugarno Lions each year with
logistics, traffic control and crowd
control during the Lugarno Lions Club

annual Spring Festival held at Gannons Park in Peakhurst.

Months of planning and preparation ensures the festival runs efficiently and effectively. The Lugarno Lions and Australian Lions Foundation donated close to \$8000 to the Hurstville Unit in December, to say thank you to the Hurstville SES volunteers for the work contributed to the

Lions Spring Festival. The donation enabled the Hurstville Unit to purchase a number of items and equipment for its members.

Pictured L-R with some of the items purchased with the Lions donation are Lugarno Lions Club President Doug Smith, Hurstville Local Controller Cherie Smith and Lugarno Lions Club 1st Vice President John Clark.

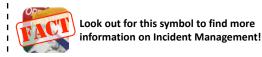


INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FACTS

What is the Incident Management Project?

The NSW SES **Incident Management Project** has delivered a suite of Incident Management doctrine, accreditation and currency pathways, and the following AIIMS principle officer training modules; Planning, Operations, Public Information, Intelligence and Incident Control.

This is underpinned by foundational training such as Introduction to AIIMS, AIIMS Principles and Functions, Incident Management Awareness, Work in an Incident Control Centre and Leadership Fundamentals.







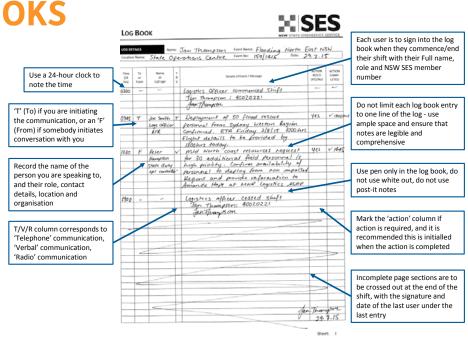
What is a Log Book?

Personnel within an Incident Management Team (IMT) are required to ensure a formal log is kept of communications including directions, decision points and other relevant information from the IMT and other stakeholders.

Log Books used within an Incident Control Centre are assigned to each IMT position.

More information can be found in the Information Management Documentation – Recording & Storage SOI available via the KDI on EOS

SES







EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

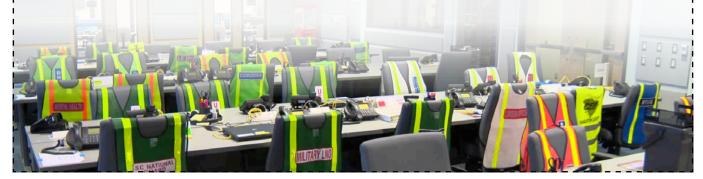


What is an EOC?

An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is a facility established at a State, Regional or Local level required as a centre for supporting operational coordination and communications during an emergency.

During NSW SES combat agency response operations the EOC is established at the request of a NSW SES Controller to the Emergency Management Officer. The multiagency team staffing the EOC is referred to as an Emergency Management Team (EMT).

The EMT is responsible for coordinating and organizing support as requested by the combat agency (NSW SES) in line with the relevant strategies within the Incident Action Plan.





INCIDENT CONTROL CENTRE



What is an Incident Control Centre (ICC)?

An Incident Control Centre (ICC) is the facility where the Incident Controller and their team undertake their duties in providing overall direction of response activities to resolve an incident.

An ICC should be located as close as is safely possible to the incident area in order to assist with communications and situational awareness. The NSW SES predominately utilise established NSW SES headquarters facilities as pre-identified ICCs.

It is important to note that not all NSW SES facilities are equipped and/or large enough to manage all levels of incident. An early decision should be made as to which facility is the most appropriate to manage the incident.





Young People in Emergency Service Awards 2018



he NSW SES and NSW RFS Young People in Emergency Services presentations were held on the 24 May, 2018 at NSW Parliament House with the Minister for Emergency Services, The Hon. Troy Grant presenting 3 young volunteer from each service with awards. The NSW SES awards recognize the achievement of 2 categories of Secondary School Cadets as well as the NSW SES Young Volunteer of the Year.

The NSW SES Volunteers
Association is a proud sponsor of
the awards and provides a grant for
continuing education for each of the
NSW SES award winners.

NSW SES CADET OF THE YEAR

Holly Hughes Northern Beaches Secondary College (Manly Campus)

Holly, who is now in Year 10 at Northern Beaches Secondary College, Manly Campus, participated in an advanced level NSW SES Secondary School Cadet Program in term 1 of 2017. During the program Holly offered to lead a team of cadets and demonstrated a high level of skill in coordinating, mediating and managing personality conflicts in the group. Showing both initiative and high level problem solving skills, Holly has effectively managed teams to achieve the outcomes of groups of cadets. Following the program, Holly coordinated the production of an article for the school's end of year magazine that expounded the benefits of the cadet program.

Holly is a committed volunteer and community contributor. In addition to her notable personal assistance to other cadets, she has since taken on the role of Peer support leader at her school, which involves mentoring and guiding new, junior students through their transition to high school.

Holly, demonstrates a further willingness to share her skills through her role as an unpaid Karate tutor, by participation in the Schools music tours that are held each year to provide musical performances to schools with less musical resources and by her involvement in the 'Wraps for Love' program, that involves knitting blanket for the homeless.

NSW SES ANDY ROBERTS MEMORIAL CADET AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Rachella Biviano Georges River Grammar School

Rachella, who is now in Year 11 at Georges River Grammar School, participated in a NSW SES Secondary School cadet program held at in term 3 of 2017. As Rachella progressed through the program, her leadership skills increased significantly and she became proactive in organizing other cadets to work safely as a team to achieve goals, whilst making them feel valued and capable.

Rachella, who was shy and reserved at the start of the program, has now become confident with public speaking and is able to talk in front of her school assembly. Teamwork has become her new strategy and by working in cooperation with other students, she has brought about a change in culture with her peers, where knowledge is now shared rather than protected. Over a short period of time, Rachella has grown to become a confident



leader who displays humility and willingness to listen, learn and act on advice given to her.

Since completing the Cadet program, Rachella has applied for a leadership position at School, has commenced part-time employment and has adjusted her goals for life to include a community service focus. Rachella volunteers to help with School events such as Information and Technology training for Senior Citizens and approaches everything she does with enthusiasm and a professional attitude.

NSW SES YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Alice (Ally) Steen NSW SES Liverpool Unit

Ally, who is now 25 years of age, is the Logistics Officer at Liverpool Unit and is very thorough in her role and always a pleasure to deal with. She ensures that all volunteers have the resources they require and manages the relationship with Region to ensure correct processes are followed

Ally often contributes at a region level as well as at her local unit. She has been involved in training workshops and supported the SSR RLDO's with a variety of projects and training. Ally has always been reliable and follows through with commitments she has made. She was recently selected along with eight other volunteers to undertake a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as she was identified as one of the leaders who contributes to training programs at both a unit and region level. She has a long list of emergency service qualifications with a speciality in Map Reading and has often taken the lead in running multi-unit courses.

One of the highlights of Ally's success was when she was part of the

Planning team for the Sydney Southern Region's Rescue Competition in 2017 and which ultimately resulted in her being offered the role of Incident Controller for the whole event. This was a hugely successful event run at Allianz stadium where Ally took on a high level leadership role and showed her ability to lead and coordinate large groups of people.

Ally is also a Level 3 Flood Rescue Technician and is actively involved in flood rescue training and makes herself available to go on the flood rescue roster to protect the Sydney Southern Region. She was also enacted a very difficult flood rescue a couple of years ago where a man had been swept out of his vehicle and was found 70 metres downstream clinging to a tree. She kept calm and with the assistance of her team mate, she managed to save this man.



The Australian Red Cross Blood Service is uniting with organisations like yours to form a powerful movement. Together, we can reach 25% of Australia's blood donations.

Call 1300 886 524 for more information or visit donateblood.com.au/red25

ORED25 UNITE TO SAVE LIVES







Left to right: Kaylene Jones, Andrew Harvey, Cat Sweeny, Tyler Johnson, Sione Havea, Vlad De Cunha and Britt Hendriks.

Operation Orange

Check Point Challenge 2018





beautiful sunny Saturday on the 5th of May saw 14 teams and a flood of orange converged on the Sydney City Centre for the 5th Operation Orange.

The event this year drew more than 140 people from across the state with volunteers from as far as Newcastle, Shellharbour, Tamworth, Narrabri, Port Macquarie and Tweed Heads as well as members from the metro area.

The day is designed not just to learn new skills and practice those we have but to have some fun in the process. There were 7 check points during the day spread between the City and Garden Island, with teams catching the ferry to the historic site.

The main check point in the city was a Flood Rescue stand with teams getting a chance to learn about the reach and rescue pole and flood rescue

hose, get a chance to practice their target throws (or misses) and refresh on basic flood rescue signals.

Other city check points saw teams on a treasure hunt around Observatory Hill and solving an ethical dilemma as a team.

At Garden Island we were joined by RFS members who put teams through their paces on bushfire awareness and what actions to take if caught in the fire zone.



















The event is not possible without the work of many people.

We can't say thank you enough to the volunteers of which there are too many to list here, who gave up their time, before, during and after the event to help make the day possible.

Thanks also to all the teams who participated; it was fabulous to see people learning, mentoring and working together. A particular mention

goes to the teams who, while on a tight schedule, stopped to help a member of the public they found in trouble, only realising after a significant length of time it was a role well played by our sneaky casualties.

Awards were presented this year with the assistance of SSR Region Controller Sam Colwell and Assistant Commissioner Kaylene Jones.

Congratulations to the winners!

TEAM SPIRIT AWARD - CITY OF NEWCASTLE

3rd place – Marrickville 2nd place – Liverpool 1st place – City of Sydney

Hope to see you all in 2020

Ann, Anthia, Mara Operation Orange





Multi-agency Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) exercise













n Saturday the 12th of May the NSW SES Sydney Southern Region Learning & Development team hosted a Multiagency Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) exercise utilising the break wall at Port Botany along Prince of Wales Drive. The exercise was aimed at building relationships between organisations and gaining experience specifically around how our USAR Category 1 first responders are expected to work in with USAR Category 2 operators.

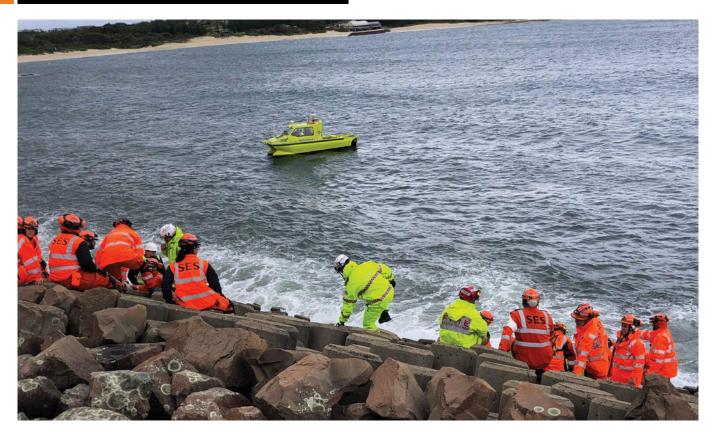
The exercise was based on a Tsunami wave hitting a beachside suburb resulting in complete devastation with a second wave on its way and 35

Our members put their best foot forward in representing the service with other organisations impressed with our skills, knowledge and professionalism.

victims putting a real need for a sense of urgency on the exercise scenario. SES members ran the operations, planning & logistics side of the day as well as putting more operators into the field than all other agencies combined.

Eighteen trainee paramedics from Charles Sturt University attended the activity and acted as primary first aiders in some cases and filled the role of victims in others while Aviation Rescue Fire Fighters from nearby









Sydney Airport and Marine Rescue NSW had boats on the water providing intel to the operations team. NSW Police Dog unit, Fire and rescue NSW & NSW Ambulance Special operations team members worked closely with overseeing technical skills and providing guidance as the Category 2 operators on scene, it was great having these experts on scene to work with and learn from. NSW Police Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit discussed the use of explosives in a USAR situation with the group and particularly how they could be used to blast towards a buried victim.

The Local Emergency Management Officer was very supportive of the ethos of the exercise and outlined the dangers associated with the area that we were working in. He supports future activities like this as does NSW Ports who closed the site to the public allowing us sole rights to the area on the day.

Our members put their best foot forward in representing the service. Other organisations were impressed with our skills, knowledge and professionalism. Everyone involved had a great day and would like to see similar activities in future. We have already confirmed some agencies for upcoming training activities in the Sydney Metropolitan area.

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED AND QUOTES FROM THE DAY:

Police Rescue (RBDU) – "It was a great day and well worth doing again"

FRNSW – "Really impressed, just really impressed"

ASNSW SOT – "Best exercise I have ever been involved in"

Police dog unit – "We would love to be involved in similar activities in future"

Aviation Rescue Fire Fighters -

"A pleasure to be involved"

LEMO – "Thank you for testing your skills in our area"

CSU Trainee Paramedics – "We learned so much, it was hugely beneficial"

NSW Ports – "Happy that we could support such an activity"

Marine Rescue NSW – "We would love to be involved next time"

Paul McQueen

Exercise Director





Volunteers Association BBQ

- Far South Coast

n Saturday, 19th May, NSWSES Volunteers Association Board members Kim Davis, Shannon Crofton, Erin Pogmore and Andrew Edwards travelled to Eden on the Far South Coast of NSW to the Southernmost Unit.

The Board held a BBQ for the Bega, Bermagui and Eden Units to thank them for their efforts assisting the RFS and Tathra community with Tathra fires in March

NSW SES volunteers helped in the evacuation centre, in the EOC, on road blocks, catering and many other jobs to assist all emergency services who were working together to evacuate a whole town safely and then ensure the residents were catered for in whatever they required.







Wellington Wombats





his year's annual Wellington
Wombats Caves Rescue Exercise
at the Wellington Caves
Complex was a huge success. Once
again Wellington Unit hosted the
event ensuring its smooth running and
keeping members happy.

This years exercise was the largest ever run with 170 NSW SES members from all over the State, descending on the Wellington Caves Complex, 118 participants, 29 trainers and 30 helpers, photographers and other behind the scenes workers. The Wellington Unit, Head Chef Brett Gaie and all the workers provided 885 on time, hot and plentiful meals over the course of the weekend. This in itself is no mean feat. The meals were able to be enjoyed in comfort due to the generous support of the NSW SES Volunteers Association, as they provided a dining marquee with tables and chairs. Not only did the NSW SES Volunteers Association provide the marquee but also continued their support in the donation of the greatly coveted Wellington Wombats

Trainers Jackets. These Jackets are given to the Wellington Wombats Trainers who dedicated not one but two weekends a year to ensuring the participants of Wellington Wombats get nothing but the best experience and training possible.

The members who attend get to enhance their rescue skills in environments they do not usually get exposed to. Whilst the Wellington Unit is the primary rescue agency for the area, most members across the state do not have access to caves.









The largest number of attendees come from the Sydney Metropolitan area. Saturday morning all members get rotated through a number of skills stands before they head up the hill and out into the paddocks to start putting those skills to use. Not only do we use the Wellington Caves Complex but two property owners kindly give us access to their property where we continue to find new caves and training sites.

As members come from right across the state, this exercise gives them an opportunity to not only learn

and practice skills but together with other members who they may only normally see in times of emergency. The Saturday night bonfire is part of the camaraderie felt were members meet friends from old and make new ones for years to come as they swap stories. It is always good to see old friends come together once again and remind us of the Orange Family that we are a part of.

Members put in a huge effort getting up at nearly dawn on Saturday before kicking off at 7:30am and not finishing until around 6:00pm, only to do it all again on Sunday before travelling home to go to work on Monday. There is also an opportunity for members to partake in limited evening recreational caving and cave tours, which a large number seem to enjoy every year.

If you are interested in enhancing your rescue skills, meeting new people, having fun maybe give Wellington Wombats a try in 2019.

Gavin Arnold

Region Learning & Development Officer Macquarie Region



WELLINGTON WOMBATS















Menai Unit Opening







n May 12th 2018 Unit Controller Peter Carrigan and the members of NSW State Emergency Service's newly formed Menai Unit hosted the Official Opening of their recently refurbished building at 295 Menai Road, Menai.

Distinguished guests included: Mark Smethurst, Commissioner of NSW SES.

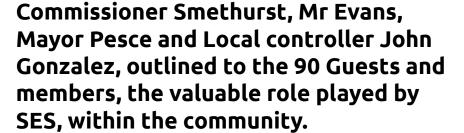
Mr. Lee Evans, M.P. representing Mr Troy Grant, Minister for NSW Police & Emergency Services.

Carmelo Pesce, the Mayor Sutherland Shire.

Melanie Gibbons, M.P. for Holsworthy.

Eleni Petinos, M.P. for Miranda. Kim Davis President of the NSWSES Volunteers Association.

Samantha Colwell, Regional Controller (SSR).



John Gonzalez, Sutherland Shire Local Controller.

During the Opening Ceremony, Commissioner Smethurst, Mr Evans, Mayor Pesce and Local controller John Gonzalez, outlined to the 90 Guests and members, the valuable role played by SES, within the community. Mayor Pesce made special mention of the volume of work undertaken by SES members, during the recent bushfires in the Shire.

A plaque was unveiled by The Commissioner and the Mayor. The building was then dedicated by NSWSES Chaplains Steve Hall and Susan Phalen to mark the occasion.



Scent to Search





Photo credits: WA SES Canine Unit.

ecently the Service has announced that we will be developing a search and rescue dog capability to complement our land search operational response. This is a great step forward to improve the way we search to help missing people and their families.

Search dogs are utilised for missing person searches worldwide. In fact the UK recently celebrated 50 years of their National Search and Rescue Dog Association (NSARDA) and of course we have all heard about the famous St Bernard dogs in Switzerland (complete with brandy refreshments!).

When I undertook a Churchill Fellowship in 2016 to research the integration of volunteer search dog groups with emergency services, the people I visited in NZ, UK, US, Ireland, Switzerland and even Iceland, were surprised (read gobsmacked) we did not have search dogs as part of our volunteer search teams. They couldn't believe we only used people.

Some emergency services in Australia however, have moved ahead. Search and rescue dog units currently exist within the WA SES and SA SES. The WA SES capability in particular has consistently helped the WA Police, with many successful 'finds' under their collars. They have blazed the trail nationally and we will be working closely with their

experienced handlers. Private search and rescue dog groups have also emerged, however many are struggling to gain recognition and utilisation by Police.

As we all know, missing person searches are a frequent occurrence, and although not a core role, we support NSW Police operationally with them on a daily basis across the state. On average we undertake around 250 searches a year, each lasting from an hour to a couple of weeks. They are our third largest operational response after storms and floods.

Search dogs will be an invaluable tool to add to our increasingly enhanced search capability development. Here's some of the reasons why:

- » Superior sense of smell and hearing
- Can be quickly activated and deployed, plus utilised on nearly every search scenario (except perhaps a downed plane!)
- » Can work amongst search teams
- » Work at night
- » Faster and more efficient in steep and impenetrable terrain
- » Excellent for dementia, self-harm and autism searches where the person can hide from search teams
- » Can 'clear' areas of interest quickly We still have some way to go before the capability is fully developed and functional. It is important that it is developed properly and professionally

and to relevant standards. The people in the capability are as important as the dogs and there will be many roles available to those interested once recruitment takes place.

We have learned lessons from our previous foray into the USAR Canine Unit, and are determined to improve the experience for the members of the team, and also to ensure that we meet the needs of the NSW Police. We will be the only search and rescue dog capability in NSW to be utilised by the Police.

It's great to see that research informed by best practice is being valued by the Service. Stay tuned to Member Connect, EOS, and the Member's Communication group for updates on this exciting capability.

For more information please read the FAQs that have been provided here:

NSW SES CANINE CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT FAQS

WHY DO WE NEED DOGS FOR SEARCH?

- Land search is the 3rd largest operational response after storm and flood.
- » NSW SES search capability is currently dependent solely on volunteer availability and training and does not operate to national or



- international best practice with the utilisation of search dogs. WA SES and SA SES currently both utilise canine capabilities.
- Search dogs are the most effective search tool for passive/active evasive searches including dementia, despondent and autism searches, which are the highest search categories for our organisation.

WE HAD A CANINE UNIT, WHY ARE WE DOING THIS AGAIN?

- » The NSW SES USAR Canine Unit was established from 2010 - 2016 to support FRNSW in order to establish a NSW USAR International Taskforce (which requires a canine search capability).
- The Unit was disbanded in early 2016 when FRNSW decided to use Police dogs that were trained in USAR to provide to the taskforce.
- The proposed NSW SES Canine Capability will be established to support our volunteers undertaking land and water search operations that occur on a daily basis across the state.
- » NSW SES has learned considerable lessons from the previous USAR Canine Unit and will develop the Unit with improved knowledge based on international best practice, dedicated resourcing, plus a strict code of conduct.

WHY DO WE NEED DOGS WHEN THE POLICE ALREADY HAVE THEM?

- » NSW SES will be training dogs in a variety of search methods which will complement the NSW Police capability.
- » These include air scenting and scent specific search dogs with the ability to operate by day or night on or off lead.

WILL THE NSW POLICE SUPPORT THE NSW SES USING DOGS?

- » Discussions have been undertaken with NSW Police Rescue and NSW Police Dog Unit who are both supportive of the development of this NSW SES capability
- The National Search and Rescue (NATSAR) Council has recently amended the Land Search Operations Manual to recognise and provide understanding on the variety of search dog capabilities developed in Australia and how they can be utilised in search operations.

- These amendments were accepted at the annual NATSAR Council meeting and the Police SAR Coordinators (from around Australia) present acknowledged that volunteer search dog teams have a role to play in search operations.
- » Presentations have been made at the national Police SAR Coordinator training course in Brisbane and the SAR and AFAC conferences to provide further information and education.
- » NSW SES will work with NSW Police to develop and integrate a canine capability effectively

WHAT MIGHT A NSW SES CANINE CAPABILITY LOOK LIKE?

- » Potentially 5 volunteer search dog training teams established across NSW in key high search areas, and supporting statewide
- » 4-6 teams per training team to ensure operational availability and maintain capability
- » Initially dogs will be trained in air scent and scent specific tracking.
- » Future development may include water search (human remains detection/ cadaver) and possibly avalanche.
- » USAR training components will also be incorporated for their development, although no USAR requirement has been established for this capability
- » Weekly training will be required and quarterly statewide training and assessment conducted, with trainers and assessors sourced internally and externally

HOW WILL THE CAPABILITY BE FUNDED AND RESOURCED?

- » Budget will be funded by external sponsorship/grant funding for a minimum of 2 years. After this period of establishment it will be incorporated into the budget, just as capabilities such as Alpine Search and Rescue
- » Within the budget will be a Canine Capability Coordinator position to manage from SHQ
- » A Canine Capability Development Group (CCDG) will be established to provide direction, ongoing development and management advice. This group would have a representative member on the General Land Search Capability Development Group (GLSCDG)
- » The Canine Capability Coordinator will report to the Manager Operational



- Capability and the General Land Search Capability Coordinator (GLSCC) to coordinate capability development and integration
- » The Canine Capability Coordinator will work closely with other emergency services, and private search dog groups to support and develop national capability standards

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE CANINE CAPABILITY

- » In recent months NSW SES has been working closely with Department of Primary Industries on improving the way animals are managed and supported during operations.
- » In addition to the primary role of search, the Canine Search and Rescue Capability will have secondary functions including:
- » Support to operations including teams of volunteers and equipment that are trained to support with evacuation assistance with animals alongside DPI
- » Training and availability as a statewide community engagement and recruitment tool
- A Get Ready Grant has been provided to promote animals in emergencies and will include engagement activities at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Dogs NSW Show and Dog Lovers Show.

CANINE UNIT MEMBERSHIP

- » The NSW SES Canine Unit will be established as a State Headquarters Capability and will include membership from around the state
- » NSW SES members can volunteer in the Unit exclusively or as a dual volunteer with their existing Unit
- » An application and approval process will be established for the Unit and a strict code of conduct applied.



NSW SES Life Membership Awarded to Craig Elliott



Greg Aplin M.P. Craig Elliott and Commissioner Mark Smethurst.

ulcairn is a small rural community located on the Olympic Highway approximately halfway between Albury and Wagga Wagga. The NSW SES Culcairn Unit is the accredited General Land Rescue unit for the western part of the Greater Hume Shire. The Olympic Highway provides a major thoroughfare from Melbourne and Eastern Victoria to the middle and west of NSW carrying a significant volume of traffic on a 2-lane highway. The township exists on the inter-city train route between Sydney and Melbourne and sees multiple passenger and freight trains along the route daily.

Over the years the Culcairn Unit has been called to many road crash incidents along the Olympic Highway and local roads, some of which could be described as very nasty. The unit also responds to General Rescue callouts including industrial and farming incidents. Some of these have involved people known to Craig who

has maintained professional conduct while performing his role.

Craig has responded to countless rescue activations, most notably including the 5 Mates Crossing Train accident near Gerogery, 27 January, 2001 and the 1997 Threadbo Landslide as one of the earliest units on scene.

The Culcairn SES Unit began with hand tools in a trailer towed behind the personal vehicles of its members.

Fund-raising to purchase new equipment was a regular feature of Unit activities.

The Unit's first vehicle was a 'handme-down' ambulance rescue truck. This was followed by the development and building of a custom-designed rescue truck.

Now, as a 'fully-funded' volunteer government service, we have powered hydraulic tools in our rescue trucks and the benefit of a well-maintained fleet.

Throughout his service with the NSW SES, Craig has fostered new

members in the Culcairn Unit and neighbouring units to develop their skills and qualifications to ensure continued coverage by the NSW SES Culcairn Unit to the community and to travellers through the region.

Craig has become a go to expert in the area of Road Crash Rescue in the region, assisting with inter service training with nearby rescue units including the FRNSW Culcairn (Secondary for this area) by sharing the experience and knowledge he has learnt over his long and prestigious career.

Craig is the only founding member of the NSW SES Culcairn unit still to be a member to this day some 30+ years later. He is not one to seek recognition for his service to the community. However, I feel that his contribution to the community of New South Wales is significant and that the award of life membership is a fitting recognition for his service.





Pictured in the back row, left to right Craig Ronan, Central West Region Controller, John Anthes, Robert O'Neill, Greg Agustin, Unit Controller Eugowra Unit NSW SES, George Pile, Peter Barnes, Sue Condon, Cabonne Local Controller NSW SES, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor of Cabonne Council. Front row, left to right. Joy Anthes, Elizabeth O'Neill, Mareea Agustin and Karen Clarke.

NSW SES Long Service Awards Presentation the Eugowra Unit

olunteer members from the Eugowra Unit NSW SES were recognised for 115 years' service to the community as members of the NSW SES. Members were presented with NSW SES Long Service Awards including Certificates, Long Service Medals and the National Medal by Central West Region Controller NSW SES, Craig Ronan and the Mayor of Cabonne, Cr Kevin Beatty.

Each was volunteer member was also presented with a special Certificate of Appreciation from Mr Philip Donato MP, the Member for Orange.

Congratulations to all the members from the Eugowra Unit NSW SES for what you do to assist the community during floods, storms and other emergencies.

NSW SES LONG SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED (LISTED BELOW)

John Anthes – NSW SES 10 Year Long Service Medal and Certificate and National Medal

Robert O'Neill – NSW SES 25 Year Long Service Certificate

Greg Agustin – NSW SES 25 Year Long Service Certificate

George Pile – NSW SES 5 Year Long Service Certificate

Peter Barnes – NSW SES 5 Year Long Service Certificate and 10 Year Long Service Medal and Certificate

Joy Anthes – NSW SES 10 Year Long Service Medal and Certificate

Elizabeth O'Neill – NSW SES 10 Year Long Service Medal and Certificate

Mareea Agustin – NSW SES 10 Year Long Service Medal and Certificate

Karen Clarke – NSW SES 5 Year Long Service Certificate



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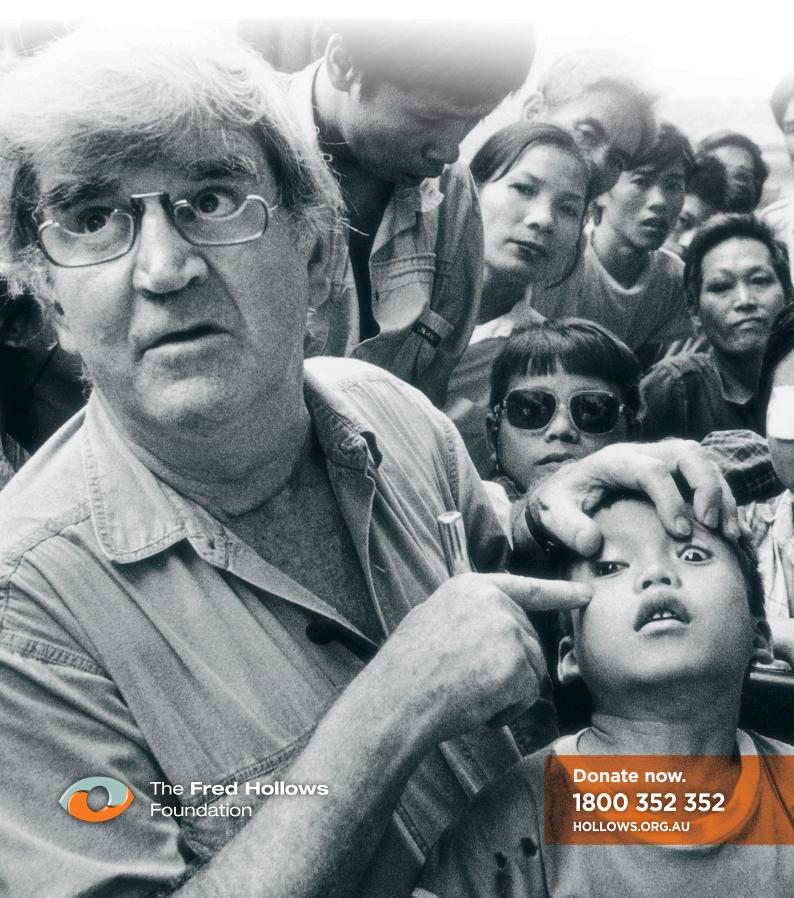
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