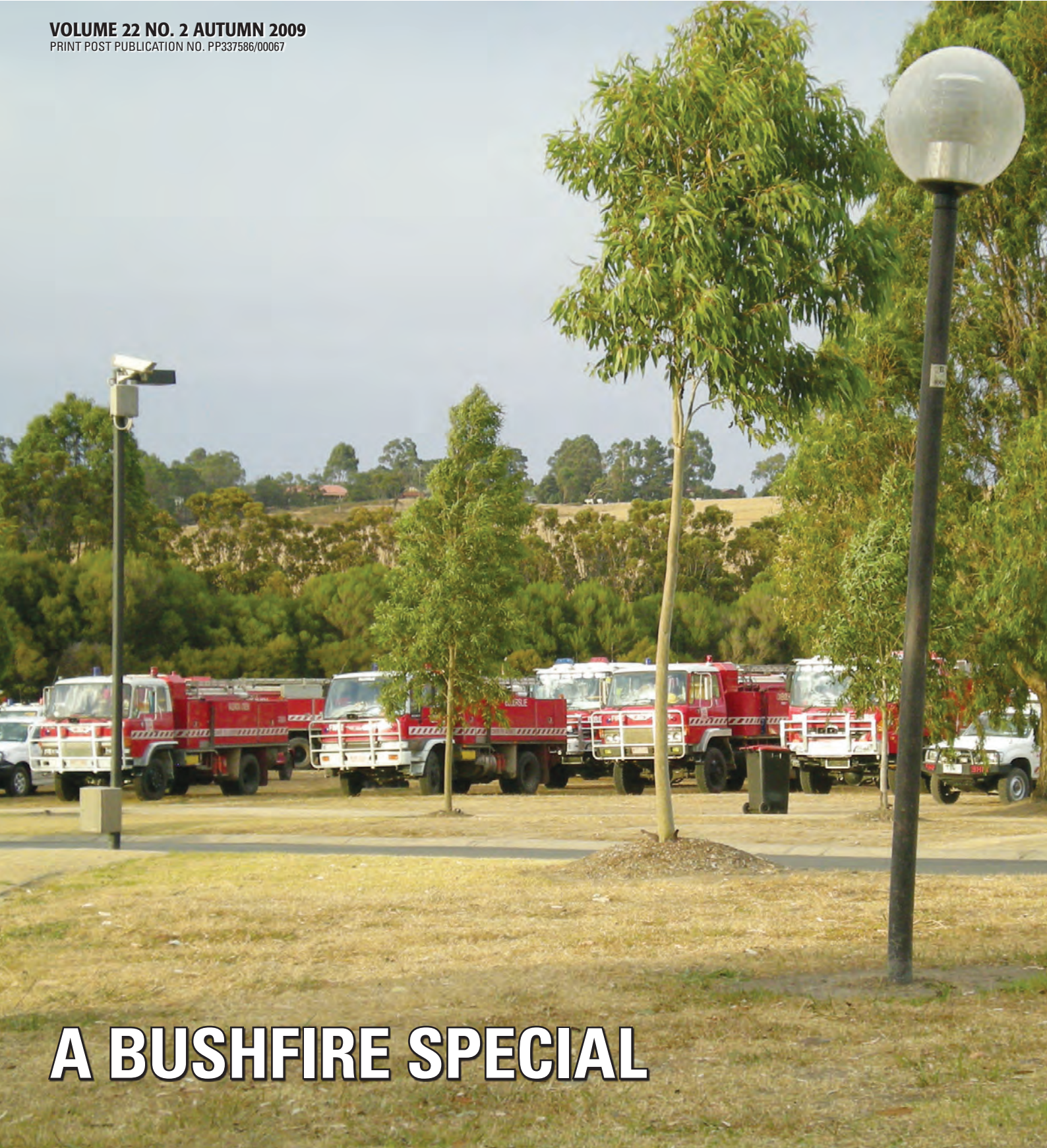




NATIONAL EMERGENCY *R e s p o n s e*

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

VOLUME 22 NO. 2 AUTUMN 2009
PRINT POST PUBLICATION NO. PP337586/00067



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WEB REGISTRATION

The new Website has been registered and is <http://www.aies.net.au>

WEBSITE CONTENT

The new Website has sections for each State as well as National Areas. If you have ideas for State Division content, please contact your State registrar, for National content, email web@aies.net.au. Please be aware that all content must go past the National Registrar prior to web publication to ensure it meets required guidelines.



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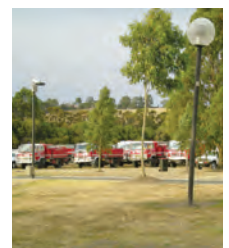
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FRONT COVER

CFA Trucks ready to respond at the University near Morwell. Provided by R Mitchell (Bellarine SES Unit.)
See our bushfire special, starting on page 12.



Notice the difference



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Maurice Massie, OPM, LFAIES

National President

NER MAGAZINE AND CALENDAR

Members would by now have received copies of the Summer Edition of our magazine, together with our 2009 Calendar.

Unfortunately, the email addresses of National Contacts contained therein, were incorrect. This is unfortunate and members will need to be aware of it when distributing the additional copies of the magazine and calendars to other parties.

The purpose of having additional calendars provided was to raise the profile of the Institute and foster the recruitment of new members, so to this end, it would assist if appropriate work places could be identified and calendars placed where they are likely to achieve a positive result.

Once again, I would like to thank those who took the time to prepare and provide the articles that were published.



EXTREME CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has experienced extreme weather conditions which has resulted in fire, flood, heat waves and cyclonic conditions.

In Victoria, major loss of life and property has resulted from bush fires that ravaged that State, mainly on Black Saturday 7 February 2009. As a result of these fires, 173 lives were lost and more than 2,000 properties were destroyed.

Both Victoria and South Australia have been affected by heat waves which in terms of prolonged high temperatures, have broken all records. Major disruption to electricity supply and public transport has resulted.

This has provided major headaches for the authorities involved. Because of the extremely hot conditions, there have been a number of deaths in both States, mainly affecting the elderly and this is a tragic situation.

At the same time that this was happening, parts of Queensland were inundated with heavy rains causing major flooding and disruption with the isolation of some communities.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN VICTORIA

Alan Alder, Registrar of the Victorian Division, has decided to relinquish his position as National Delegate for the Victorian Division on the General Council of the Institute.

In Victoria, major loss of life and property has resulted from bush fires that ravaged that State, mainly on Black Saturday 7 February 2009. As a result of these fires, 173 lives were lost and more than 2,000 properties were destroyed.

Alan has been a member of General Council for over 26 years and during that time, served as National President for a number of years. As National President, he oversaw the incorporation of the Institute. His wise counsel and happy disposition will be missed at our Annual meetings. I personally have appreciated Alan's support in my time as President.

Alan has decided to stay on as Registrar of the Victorian Division and this is appreciated by the Council and by members of the Victorian Division. We wish Alan and his wife Sally, all the best for the future.

We welcome Alan Marshall, President of the Victorian Division to the Council, in place of Alan and look forward to his contribution at the next Council meeting and beyond.



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PRESIDENT'S POSITION

This will be the last time that I will be producing the article 'From the President's Desk' for the NER magazine.

As I indicated at the last General Council Meeting in Brisbane in April of last year, I will not be standing for re-election in this position at this year's meeting to be conducted on 20 April in Sydney.

Having served on General Council for just on 20 years and National President for the last 10 years, I feel that in the interests of continuity and renewal, it is time for me to stand aside and make way for new and younger blood.

I have enjoyed my involvement as President and have appreciated the support given to me during my time in that position, in particular, I would like to site the assistance provided to me by Robert (Bob) Maul, Company Secretary/General Registrar. Bob has been ever available to provide prompt and able help when required and has served in his current position for as long as I have been President. Such help and assistance has been vital in order to enable me to properly function as National President. Thank you Bob.

Having served on General Council for just on 20 years and National President for the last 10 years, I feel that in the interests of continuity and renewal, it is time for me to stand aside and make way for new and younger blood.

GENERAL COUNCIL AND AGM OF INSTITUTE

I would once again remind members that the next General Council and Annual General Meeting of the Institute was conducted in Sydney, NSW on 20 April 2009. ●

NOTICE OF THE 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, SYDNEY NSW

All members of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services are hereby notified in accordance with the Articles of Association that the

2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

was held at:

**Burwood RSL Club, Shadforth Street,
Burwood (Sydney) NSW at
7 PM on Monday 20 April 2009**

All members of the Institute throughout Australia were cordially invited to attend the above meeting.

The order of business was to be: Welcome, Apologies, Confirmation of 2008 AGM Minutes, Business arising therefrom, President's Report, General Secretary/Registrar's Report & Financial Statements, General Business, Guest Speaker.

By Order of the General Council, National Board

Robert A Maul

General Secretary/Registrar, National (General) Council

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AIES CHANGES TO EMAIL PROCESSING

John Rice, MAIES

President, ACT Division

There have been changes to the way we handle the AIES mail accounts. Mail accounts at the Australian Institute of Emergency Services are held by all office holders i.e.

National President - president@aies.net.au
National Vice President - vice.president@aies.net.au
National Registrar - registrar@aies.net.au
President ACT - president.act@aies.net.au
President Qld - president.qld@aies.net.au
President NSW - president.nsw@aies.net.au
President Vic - president.vic@aies.net.au
President Tas - president.tas@aies.net.au
President SA - president.sa@aies.net.au
Vice President ACT - vpresident.act@aies.net.au
Vice President Qld - vpresident.qld@aies.net.au
Vice President NSW - vpresident.nsw@aies.net.au
Vice President Vic - vpresident.vic@aies.net.au
Vice President Tas - vpresident.tas@aies.net.au
Vice President SA - vpresident.sa@aies.net.au
Registrar ACT - registrar.act@aies.net.au
Registrar Qld - registrar.qld@aies.net.au
Registrar NSW - registrar.nsw@aies.net.au
Registrar Vic - registrar.vic@aies.net.au
Registrar Tas - registrar.tas@aies.net.au
Registrar SA - registrar.sa@aies.net.au
Treasurer ACT - treasurer.act@aies.net.au
Treasurer Qld - treasurer.qld@aies.net.au
Treasurer NSW - treasurer.nsw@aies.net.au
Treasurer Vic - treasurer.vic@aies.net.au
Treasurer Tas - treasurer.tas@aies.net.au
Treasurer SA - treasurer.sa@aies.net.au

email accounts also exist for:

webmaster - webmaster@aies.net.au
enquiries - enquiries@aies.net.au
 (redirected to National Registrar)

These email addresses should be used by all members when addressing official correspondence as auto replies (when you hit the reply button) to each email address is auto forwarded to a nominated work or private email address of the relevant office holder. So if the office holder changes them (as long as the Divisions advise the web manager) then the email will go to the relevant person.

EMAIL PROCESSING CHANGES

Due to the large number of email accounts operated by the AIES it has been necessary to make changes to the way mail is handled in the background because redirected mail was filling up the server space and had to be continually deleted manually. You will still receive your email as long as your current work or private email address has been kept current with the web manager.

As a result of the email changes the only people who will notice are those of you who may have set up their email account using the AIES server. I am not aware if there is anyone in this category; however, the following is an explanation of how to change if you did.

Should you have set up an account with the Incoming Mail Server pointed to the Institute's server (mail.aies.net.au) then you will have to change it to your own settings e.g. (mail.your servers address). The outgoing mail server should also be (mail.your server) address. If you have only received and sent email through your private account then you will still receive mail normally.

However, in using your private email for Institute business, it is a good idea to establish a separate account in your mail program. Call it AIES Mail for want of a better name, although any name that you can identify with the Institute would do. In the set-up where it asks for "Your Name " use your AIES Position e.g. Registrar State (Registrar NSW/ACT/Tas etc, etc) and "Your Email Address" use - registrar.xxx@aies.net.au (where xxx is your State 3 letter prefix). Use your mail server addresses as indicated above - mail.your server.com.au etc. for Incoming and outgoing mail servers.

Then to send email, compile your email as usual and then send it (in Outlook by clicking on the down arrow next to the send button) and select your AIES Mail account. The addressee of the email will then receive an email from you with your Institute Position Title (e.g. Registrar xxx) at email address registrar.xxx@aies.net.au (where xxx is your State 3 letter prefix).

As far as the addressee will know, the header of the email will show that the email came directly from the AIES mail server and from you as Registrar xxx. If they hit the reply button then it will be sent to registrar.xxx@aies.net.au and you will get it back via your private email account.

It is usually not possible to do this with business email as IT departments normally prohibit you making another email account.

I hope this hasn't been too confusing. If you need help or have any questions please email me. ●





TASMANIA DIVISION NEWS

Darrell Johnson

President, Tasmania Division

Presented at the AGM on 21 Feb 2009 by President, Tasmania Division

Welcome to all the members and guests, in particular, visitors from the North West Coast. The last year for the Tasmanian Division has been relatively quiet on the social front. We have had only one major event, a dinner meeting at Archers Manor in Launceston. The guest speaker for this was Inspector Paul Reynolds, Officer in Charge of the George Town Police District, and involved with the Beaconsfield Mine disaster. His account of this catastrophic event was very interesting and enlightening from an emergency management point of view. The issues that had to be dealt with, and the different ways from the norm and how they were overcome, were many.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Board members and thank them for their input to the matters that arose in dealing with the Division.

The Tasmanian Division Board met regularly throughout the year. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Board members and thank them for their input to the matters that arose in dealing with the Division. One of the more notable items was the discussions surrounding the increase of the Institute fees. The motion to increase fees was put to the General Council and it came to Tasmania Division for comment and input. A census of the Division members was taken and the majority of members did not want an increase. This was conveyed to the General Council via the Tasmanian Delegate but the motion to increase was carried. The fees were subsequently increased.

Principally as a consequence of this fee increase, the number of members this year has decreased dramatically, by almost 50 per cent. This leaves the Division in an almost untenable position. It is now up to the remaining members to be proactive in recruiting new members. I ask all of you to participate in this drive.

The Division Registrar now has access to the NER journal distribution database. Therefore, if there is someone not receiving a copy of the magazine, please let a member of the Board know and it can be rectified. Alternatively, if you know of someone who should not be receiving the magazine, their name can be removed. The Registrar can now also change your address details if you have moved.

The current Registrar has indicated her wish to resign after this AGM. I would like to sincerely thank Jannene Geard for all the work she has put in over the past two years in this position. I know, having been in the position myself for several years, that there is quite a lot to do. This will leave us without a Registrar. If you feel you can fill this role and would like to have the kudos on your CV, then please speak to any member of the Board.

Looking to the future, I anticipate the Division should aim to have a minimum of four dinner meetings in the coming year. As is the custom, one of these will be "not in Hobart". The Board would like to hear from any member who would like to organise the out of Hobart dinner either in Launceston or the North West Coast, but it is not just restricted to there – anywhere in the State will be considered. It would be good if all the meetings had a notable guest speaker. If you know of someone in the emergency management field, please speak to the Board so we can invite them along. ●



NSW DIVISION NEWS

Alan Holley, FAIES

President, New South Wales Division

President's report to Annual General Meeting 5 March 2009 – Burwood RSL

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2008/2009 New South Wales Divisional Report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NSW Divisional Board members who gave up a great deal of their own time for the Institute often travelling great distances to attend meetings.

A special thanks must go to Greg James who managed to get the books on the straight and narrow and the membership registered. His persistence and determination has brought our records up to date and it gives us a true indication of the membership. Membership over the past twelve months in New South Wales has remained steady. Whilst some members have moved on, we have gained new members. Fresh blood with new ideas is always refreshing.

I believe our old fashion values hold true in today's 'mixed bag of turmoil'. Whilst our values hold true we must examine our strategic direction to remain focused on the issues that confront our members and our industry.

The number of dinner meetings conducted over the last year was reduced in an effort to improve attendance. Whilst we had excellent speakers, it is a shame that we did not have better support from our members. My sincere thanks to those members who made the effort to attend. We are in competition for the valuable time of our members many of whom give a great deal to their own organisations.

During the 12 months I have represented the Institute on the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum where we retain full voting membership.

In the past month we have witnessed the passing of EMA. Not only has the name changed but the concept has had significant refinement. I am pleased that the many good folk who were employed by the former EMA are now doing similar duties under a different banner. The future of emergency management in Australia holds exciting prospects and we as the peak national membership body must move with these changes.

The State Board has initiated several strategies to give the management of the institute greater depth to help ensure our future. We have introduced a program that places members in 'shadow positions' where they can observe the activities of the Board and the management of the Institute. We have sought greater involvement of our members in the management and direction of our state activities. We have been successful in obtaining a grant that will reimburse board members for out of pocket expenses when carrying out Institute duties. And we have led the national activities in the review of our Articles of Association.

We must ask ourselves what relevance the Institute has in modern emergency management. I believe our old fashion values hold true in today's 'mixed bag of turmoil'. Whilst our values hold true we must examine our strategic direction to remain focused on the issues that confront our members and our industry.

We must look to the future to ensure we preserve the values of the past. ●



NSW DIVISION NEWS (CONT)

Greg James, FAIES

Registrar, New South Wales Division

Registrar's report to Annual General Meeting 5 March 2009 – Burwood RSL

The NSW Division Board for 2008/9 were Alan Holley, Graham Pretty, Stephen Anderson, Robert Maul and Greg James. At the commencement of the period Kathleen Lamoureux kindly accepted the invitation to fill the casual vacancy on the Board.

The Division Board met on five occasions through the year and also transacted much business electronically by e-mail between these meetings.

Office holders:

President	Alan Holley
Vice-President	Graham Pretty
Registrar	Greg James
Minute Secretary	Steve Anderson
Dinner Convenor	Steve Anderson

Appreciation is extended to all these members for their assistance in carrying out these important functions.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, three members of the Board stand down at this AGM, being Greg James, Kathleen Lamoureux and Robert Maul and may offer themselves for re-election.

Nomination notices have been sent to all members. The number of nominations were such that an election was not required.

MEMBERSHIP

Through the year, six new members were admitted.

Classification	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Member	118	151	138
Fellow	3	5	5
Life Fellow	3	3	3
TOTAL	125	159	147

The year has been one of consolidating the Division's records and establishing procedures to ensure the sustainability of the membership records, the financial arrangements, records systems and the secretarial functions.

Although the membership numbers appear to be down, these figures are factual and represent accurate details of our currently financial membership as at 31 December 2008. Through the updating process several long standing members, but also some long term un-financial members, ceased membership as we found that address records were not current and all attempts to locate them were in vain.

Throughout the year, two dinner meetings were held

with excellent speakers providing informative material for our members. Unfortunately, attendance figures at these meetings were not as high as could be hoped for. It was proposed to conduct two dinner meetings in Regional locations but these did not eventuate.

FINANCE

The Division's accounts for the year 2007, which were presented to the last AGM, were Audited through the year and found to be satisfactory and this was subsequently reported to the members.

Following the difficulties encountered in re-creating the accounts for that year, this year has been one of consolidating the financial records and putting accounting systems in place to ensure that we satisfy all accounting requirements.

The accounts for the year 2008 were finalised and presented to the Auditor in January 2009.

The Auditor has verbally favourably commented on the completeness of the presentation of the documentation of our records for his audit, as well as satisfaction with the steps that the Division had taken to overcome previous deficiencies in the record keeping.

The attached 2008 Audit report indicates the current satisfactory position of our finances and satisfaction with the financial management arrangements of the Division.

Because of the manner in which Membership Fees had not been collected and accurately recorded over the past few years it was not been possible to include provision of a Capitation fee liability in the 2007 accounts, with the liability eventually amounting to \$1,435.00 in addition to the part payment made towards the end of 2007 covering the previous two years. Despite the 2007 Audit report indicating a small surplus, in effect we finished 2007 with a deficit of \$991.66. The liability for 2007 was paid in early 2008 and whilst our audited report for 2008 shows a deficit of \$991.68, when taking the liability payment for 2007 into account, we actually finished the year with a surplus of \$443.31, having also fully paid the capitation fees for 2008 in December 2008. This permits us to enter 2009 with no liabilities and provided the accounts are properly kept and fees collected at the correct times and Capitation fees remitted to General Council at the appropriate time we should be able to accurately reflect our true financial picture in future years.



During the previous year the investment bank account that was taken by our then bank to unclaimed funds was eventually returned and the Board have been able to open a term deposit and make an additional deposit through the year, so providing the Institute with a small income stream. The term deposit is regularly reviewed and is only invested for short periods at the most advantageous rate to ensure the availability of funds when required.

Also at the commencement of the year The Division changed the Bank utilised to St George Bank, which resulted in reduced costs and a much better relationship. A Credit Card Facility was maintained for the convenience of members, however, new requirements and fees implemented by the card providers (not the Banks) in January 2009 have resulted in additional requirements by way of a need for the Division to carry out additional work and provide systems that were beyond its resources and when combined with the ongoing costs of the facility the Board agreed to reluctantly cancel the facility.

Whilst membership fees were increased this year for only the second time in the 30 plus years of the Institute, the increase has enabled the Division to maintain its current favourable position. With ongoing increases of services required to be paid for so that the Institute can continue to exist we need to be very mindful of our expenditure.

STOCK ON HAND

Currently we hold a range of merchandise available for purchase by the members including polo shirts, ties and Institute plaques.

GRANT

During the year we became aware of the availability of a Federally funded small grants program for volunteer organisations. An application was made for a grant of \$1,500.00 to provide reimbursement of fuel and petrol costs for our Board members in attending Institute meetings and functions. The application was on the basis that having such funds available might attract members from regional areas to consider standing for election to the Board. In recent weeks we have been advised that the grant application has been successful but must be fully expended by September 2009.

CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

All members were advised that the Board was prepared to sponsor the attendance fees at the National Disaster Management Conference in Canberra in February 2009. Members were asked to lodge submissions for consideration. The sponsorship was in the vicinity of \$800 with the member having to pay their own transport and accommodation costs. At the closing date unfortunately no nominations had been received. The conference was subsequently cancelled to the Victorian Fires and the Queensland Floods.

The year has been one of consolidating the Division's records and establishing procedures to ensure the sustainability of the membership records, the financial arrangements, records systems and the secretarial functions.

NATIONAL MEETING GENERAL

Council facilitated a meeting of all Registrars in association with the April General Council meeting in Brisbane. The meeting was most worthwhile and a good opportunity to exchange ideas and see the level of development of the other Divisions. It was also of worth that the Registrars were present and provided some input into the General Council meeting, providing an additional perspective for consideration of the various items.

As part of those discussions, the matter of the suitability of the existing Articles of Association came under discussion. These are now almost 20 years old and are not in accord with the current Corporations Law and not necessarily serving the Institute to the greatest advantage. NSW Division took responsibility for preparing possible amendments for consideration. After gaining input from other Divisions (most did not comment) it became very apparent that the necessary amendments were so great in number that it would virtually require a total re-write of the Articles to ensure compliance with current Corporations Law. This is a major task.

At the same time we became aware that whilst Incorporation as a Company was the only way to protect our members and create an entity at the time when we became an Incorporated Company, legislation had changed and many small Associations such as ours were changing to utilise more recent legislation by changing to being incorporated under one of the States Associations Incorporation Acts which provided the same protection but not the compliance issues of the Federal Companies Laws.

NSW Division has listed the matter for discussion at the forthcoming General Council meeting and as a motion on the Agenda for the Institute Annual General Meeting to be held here on 20th April 2009. Most other Divisions are not fully supporting the proposal or ambivalent, just seeking things to go on as they are, however, for the Institute to be sustainable we must look to the future and this change to more easily comply with requirements and opportunity to develop a Constitution that is more in step with current practice and more suitable for the current and future needs of the Institute is too good to miss. We need to ensure a good attendance of members at that meeting. ●

SATURDAY FEB 09

Pager goes off – Tree limb down, partly blocking road, and tangled in power lines, we respond to the depot and get a crew on scene. Making safe until the power company arrives a few cars start coming down the road with scared people in them which is a problem because the branch is fairly large and blocking most of the road. The trickle of cars rapidly turns into a major deluge and we are notified by some of the people fleeing Chum Creek that the area is on fire.

Dale Dikker

Healesville SES

After a quick phone call to the local CFA we start directing the fleeing people to the local sporting complex in Don Road. The pager goes off again this time with a Person trapped in a dam in Steels Creek and almost immediately a third time with a road rescue in Narbethong which the team was unable to get to due to the fire but were tasked with getting a severely burnt lady to the Healesville hospital where she was transferred to an ambulance (the road rescue turned out to be a non event luckily). Crews are dispatched to these and a passerby tells us about some family members she is worried about who are hiding in a cellar under a house directly in the fire line. 2300 hrs we received a page to Kinglake for a bus crash with four dead and multiple entrapments that saw units from Healesville Eltham and Lilydale put at great risk due to the location of the still burning fires and numerous road closures and it turned out to be a hoax call. Just to make the day that little bit more interesting, our controller was in Warrigal setting up and running a staging area there.

Sunday onwards sees us clearing roads for the CFA and Police so they have easy access to all the burnt areas and assisting at the local Emergency centre to help and reassure our local community.

After 9 days of continuous operations with over 800 man hours by a team of 9 to 11 members we get to take a small break. The enclosed photos are some of the things we have seen and dealt with during this event. ●





When Minutes Count... and lives are at stake

Across all emergency services there is agreement on the importance of accurate identification of patients and the availability of key medical data in providing prompt and appropriate primary care. As Britain's *Emergency Medicine Journal* has stated, "Millions of people worldwide may have a hidden medical condition that could endanger their life in an emergency."

But it is not only those with hidden medical conditions and allergies that can benefit from prompt and accurate identification. Anybody who becomes incapacitated through illness or trauma can be identified quickly and positively by use of this simple, inexpensive and reliable emergency identification system that has been developed in Australia.

The patented flashID Emergency Identification System is a new concept in which an individual's key personal and medical information is contained in a simple MS Word document stored on a USB flash key which is carried on the person. Thus flashID has the potential to save lives, as this vital information is as close as the nearest Windows computer.

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NER091



Scenes from the Command Centre at Traralgon South. Provided by R Mitchell (Bellarine SES Unit.)





Shots of devastation from the Churchill area. Provided by R Mitchell (Bellarine SES Unit.)



REPORT TO AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEER FORUM 18 MARCH 2009

The summer period brought its usual spat of fires, especially in South East Australia.

Bruce Conroy

President, Australasian Assembly of Volunteer Fire Brigade Associations Inc



**The Australasian Assembly
of Volunteer Fire Brigade
Associations Inc.**

It was Victoria which suffered so badly with the highest loss of lives and property ever. The fires raged for about 6 weeks and stretched all agencies trying to extinguish fires in a very brittle dry environment. Victoria is in the 12th year of below average rainfall, or simply a long drought. The last decent rain in Victoria was before Christmas.

Several of the fires have been deliberately lit with others with suspicious origins. Fires occurred in many parts of the state requiring fire services to maintain local services in addition to contributing resources to larger fires.

Fires started in late January at Delburn in the Strzelecki ranges of South Gippsland. And efforts were made to contain this complex of fires before the approaching extreme fire weather.

Saturday 7 February was predicted to be the most extreme day ever and the strongest message was given to Victorians by the Chief Officer of CFA and his counterpart at DSE with support by the Emergency Services Commissioner.

Apart from Fire fighters and a few others, most residents ignored the warning.

Fires started dearly in the morning against the normal occurrence of afternoon starts. Fires in the west of the state broke out in private farms and CFA crews worked furiously to contain these fires, with no loss of life but some property losses.

A fire broke out in a residential suburb of Bendigo, a large provincial city, burning many homes and with the loss of one wheelchair-bound man; it was fortunate that the fire was controlled before more houses were consumed.

A fire started near Kilmore East near the Hume Freeway and took off up hill and swept through Kinglake, which is a hilly heavily treed area. The loss of life and property in this area was horrific. This fire then joined up with a fire at Murrindini and burnt through most of the heavily timbered hilly country. It then

suddenly swept across and wiped out Marysville very quickly and continued on its way, later threatening Healesville and Warburton.

A fire at Redesdale south of Bendigo caused concerns after the Bendigo blaze, as it took days to contain.

To add to the scene, fires in hilly country around Beechworth really stretched the fire agencies, and it was the arrival of RFS crews that saved this part of the state but only after several days of difficult work.

The fire at Bunyip Ridge is not far beyond Melbourne's metropolitan sprawl and many people with alternate lifestyles live in the area. Below the forests, the fire burnt in one direction then another with wind changes.

Crews had to wait for it to come out to fight it.

Then horror of horror, a deliberately lit fire south of the LaTrobe Valley burnt out small towns with high loss of life and property.

Fires further south then added to the work load.

All this time there was a forest fire in the high country near Dargo which was let burn for many days as there were no resources available to suppress it.

Crews from interstate and overseas were brought in as containment lines were constructed and back-burning undertaken.

A fire broke out at Musk near Daylesford on a further day of extreme fire weather requiring local crews to work hard to contain it.

One CFA tanker was lost when it got bogged in the fire's path. Crews got out safely.

A fire in the Dandenongs at Belgrave threatened many homes in this section of the Dandenong Ranges which is hilly and heavily treed. Crews battled all night to bring this fire under control.

Two CFA tankers were destroyed with the crew of one using all the safety devices to get out alive.

A fire on Wilson's Promontory has burnt much of the park and was still running today (10 March.)



The fires were fought from an integrated approach with a state control centre at DSE offices in Melbourne. Staff from CFA and DSE worked in a seamless manner to manage the fire.

The agencies undertook a huge number of communities meeting to inform and advise residents. Awareness and threat messages were issued continually. ABC Radio played a major role in getting information out to residents. Normal programs were suspended to broadcast messages and warnings with accurate and up-to-date advice from incident controllers; this includes fire updates, road closures and the relief centres set up as the fire burnt. The role of ABC radio was instrumental in informing the community.

Recovery and support agencies sprang into action very early and were supported by many people. Community support is unbelievable. Volunteers of all agencies worked so well together, with most becoming so exhausted they had to leave to rest.

The table on the right shows the details as recorded for one day on the fire ground in the Kilmore East Murrindini complex fires.

The fire could not have been put out without the help of the interstate and international crews thanks to other agencies such as SES which worked on staging areas and other locations. The recovery and support agencies have done and are still doing a mighty job. Recovery and support agencies have a hard job to continue their work as community support and spirit falls off.

The army has been called in starting with reservists who have cleaned up much of Kinglake and are now moving to Marysville.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria has its own appeal to assist its volunteers who lost property whilst fighting fires.

There is to be a Royal Commission to probe the fire and all its related aspects. The State Government has decided to restrict all its agencies and departments to one legal team to curtail costs. It will probably sanitise differences between departments which should be aired.

VFBV is to prepare its own submission and hopes to engage senior counsel. Previous inquiries have had brutal outcomes on volunteers.

The Royal Commission will be costly due to the costs to use legal practitioners. It is hoped that like previous enquiries and commissions, some good initiatives arise. Unfortunately, other issues have been put on hold. ●

BUSHFIRE STATISTICS

Resources	Personnel	Equipment
DSE & networked Emergency Agencies	1131	286 tankers & slip-ons 112 dozers 33 aircraft
CFA	980	245 appliances
Interstate crews	791	
International Crews (USA, Canada, New Zealand)	100	
Other	92	
Total	3094	

Interstate and international support

NSW RFS, Parks and Wildlife, Forests, Ambulance	523	95 appliances
Tasmania TFS, Parks, Forests	144	44 appliances
WA	?	WA people were seen
NT	4	
ACT	90	17 Appliances
USA	43	
Canada	5	
New Zealand	52	

Losses

Fatalities	173	
State/Community Infrastructure	31	
Commercial	59	
Private dwellings	2029	
Agricultural buildings and facilities	2385	
Stock	11210	
Timber plantations	7051 hectares	
Total fire area	Almost 400,000 hectares	

This article has been kindly written and provided by Mr B Conroy for inclusion in this journal. Mr Conroy represents the Australian Assembly of Volunteer Bush Fire Fighters Association on the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum.

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SHOULD I STAY AND DEFEND OR SHOULD I LEAVE EARLY?

A guide to help you take action this bushfire season.

NSW Rural Fire Services Association



To assist you in making an informed decision, it is important that you read the information in this guide prior to completing the following checklist.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you understand the nature of bushfires and the level of risk to you and your family? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Are you committed to undertake and maintain the required level of preparation before the bushfire season? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Are you physically fit to defend your property during a bushfire? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you think that all members of your household would be mentally prepared for the stress and uncertainty of coping with a bushfire? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Have you made any arrangements for your pets and livestock in the event of a bushfire? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have equipment such as hoses, buckets, rakes, protective clothing and an alternate water source – for example a pool or water tank, or filled bath that could be used to defend your home in a bushfire? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Will your house offer you and your family adequate protection from a bushfire after all the preparation activities have been completed? |

If you have answered YES to all of these questions you have a greater chance of safely staying to defend your home. Proceed to the "Stay and Defend Guide."

If you answered NO to any of these questions, you are not yet in a position to safely stay and defend your home. You should make plans to go in the event of a bushfire or leave early. Proceed to the "Leave Early Guide".

PREPARE... STAY AND DEFEND, OR LEAVE EARLY

Living in or close to bushland areas provides a unique way of life. For much of the year, these surroundings provide a sense of tranquillity. This lifestyle does, however, come with an increased risk of bushfire.

Losses experienced through bushfire can be devastating. Fire Services do everything in their capacity to manage bushfire incidents, but you also have an active role to play in protecting your home against damage from bushfires.

These guides are designed to step you through a process that will assist you to:

- Understand the threat of bushfire
- Prepare yourself and your property
- Make the decision now that, in the event of a bushfire, you and your family will *stay and defend* or *leave early*, and
- Become FireWise – knowing what to do when a bushfire threatens.

How to use these guides:

- Think about yourself, your household and your particular situation.
- Discuss your options and decisions with your family or other household members.
- Plan the actions you and your household will take when there is a bushfire nearby.

FIRE SERVICES DURING A FIRE

During a major bushfire, firefighters will be working to stop the fire from spreading. A fire truck will not be available to defend every home. Home owners are therefore encouraged to manage the risk around them.

HAVE YOU PREPARED YOUR HOME?

A minimum radius of 20 metres around your home and other buildings should be cleared of all rubbish and materials that can catch alight. Removing material that can burn easily from around the home means falling embers will have less opportunity to start a fire when they hit the ground, and the embers will be easier to put out. This will also significantly reduce the intensity of the approaching fire.

Have you made arrangements for your pets and livestock? During a bushfire, animals will need water, shade and a safe refuge from the fire.

DO YOU HAVE ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVER?

Residents living in bushfire-prone areas need to ensure they have adequate home and contents insurance and that they review their insurance regularly to ensure



their cover is adequate in the event of a bushfire or other damage.

Research has shown that as many as one in six homes are not covered by an insurance policy. Those who do have insurance often have adequate cover. Make sure you update your insurance cover to include the value of any renovations or new items you have purchased.

Contact your insurance provider for more information.

DO YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO STAY AND DEFEND?

Basic equipment will help you defend your home during a bushfire. You should have the following equipment handy at the start of the fire season:

- **Hoses** long enough to reach all parts of your home. Use metal tap fittings if possible as these are less likely to melt.
- **Buckets and mops** – cotton mops hold a lot of water and can be used to put out embers. Buckets allow you to move water quickly and easily.
- **Ladders** – both inside and outside the house. These need to be long enough to allow you to check the roof cavity and eaves.
- **Rake and shovel** – use these to break up piles of burning materials and for covering embers with sand or dirt.
- **Wet towels** – use these under doors and windows to seal gaps and stop embers and smoke from entering the house.

DO YOU HAVE AN ALTERNATE WATER SUPPLY?

During a bushfire, you should expect that mains water and power supplies will be interrupted. It is important to have an alternative water supply on hand. Think of all the storage options around the home that you could fill with water and use to defend your home during a bushfire. These can include:

- Rubbish bins (wheelie bins), storage bins.
- Bath, laundry tub, sinks, basins and buckets.
- Troughs or garden ponds.
- Swimming pool, water tanks and dams if available. (to draw water from a tank, pool or dam you will need to use a petrol or diesel pump).

DO YOU HAVE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING?

It is important to wear protective clothing to avoid injury from sparks and embers and the extreme heat radiating from the fire. Cover as much of your skin as you can with loose-fitting clothing made from pure wool, cotton or denim. Avoid tight-fitting, heavy clothing as the heat will be intense. Clothing made of synthetic fibres is not suitable as it can melt onto your skin.

Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long trousers such as jeans, closed shoes or boots, and wool or cotton socks.

While outdoors wear a hat; goggles or glasses to protect your eyes from embers and ash; gloves; and a moistened mask (use a cotton cloth or face mask) to filter ash and other particles.

Drink water regularly to avoid dehydration.

BASIC BUSHFIRE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

The following information will help you understand what to expect when a bushfire threatens your home.

Bushfires are dangerous. Bushfires are a natural part of the Australian environment. They can also be extremely dangerous and pose a great threat to lives and property. To help you protect your family and home against a bushfire, it is important to understand some basic facts.

FUEL

During the hot bushfire season, bushland is covered with vegetation that provides fuel for fires – long dry grass, parched native shrubs, dead leaves and twigs. Around the home, dry grasses, leaves, twigs and bark provide fuel for a fire. This fuel contributes to how hot the fire becomes (its intensity) and how fast it spreads.

WIND

Generally, strong winds accompany bushfires. As the wind increases, so does the fire's intensity. Embers and other burning materials carried by the wind have a damaging effect on homes several hundred metres from the fire front.

EMBERS

Ember attack is the main reason houses catch fire during a bushfire. Ember attack usually occurs up to 30 minutes prior to the arrival of the fire front and for several hours afterwards.

RADIANT HEAT

Bushfires generate extreme heat, which can kill people and animals. Radiant heat arrives just before the fire front and lasts for 10-15 minutes.

DIRECT FLAME CONTACT

Direct flame contact can occur when materials and vegetation close to the house ignite. The length of time this lasts depends on the amount of fuel to be burnt.

Some bushfires start and finish within a day. These can severely test your preparedness as there may be no notice prior to the arrival of a fire.

Other bushfires can go for weeks and you may be on alert for days at a time, or several times during the fire.



During these events, more information is available, however you may experience the stress of not being in control of your life.

Houses typically burn down up to two hours after the fire front has passed. It is essential to keep checking, patrol your property and put out spot fires for several hours after the main fire has passed.

Bushfires can go for weeks and you may be on alert for days at a time, or several times during the fire.

DURING A BUSHFIRE IT IS COMMON FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS TO OCCUR:

- Before the main fire front approaches, your home will be surrounded by showers of sparks and embers – this may continue for several hours. Embers will collect in corners and will need to be extinguished immediately.
- It is likely there will be strong winds. As the fire gets close, burning leaves and bark will begin to land around you.
- Thick, heavy smoke will make it dark and visibility will be poor; breathing may also be difficult. Your eyes may redden and become sore.
- It will be very hot and you will need to wear protective clothing.
- Noise generated by the fire will be very loud. You will hear the burning, crackling and roaring of the fire combined with the roaring of the wind.
- Services such as electricity, telephone and water may not be available.
- The fire front passing your home will normally only last 5-15 minutes and that is when radiant heat will be at its highest. During this time it will be necessary to be indoors and monitor the inside of your home for spot fires.

BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN

A bushfire action plan helps you to consider and plan for all the tasks you will need to carry out to help protect your family and home, whether you choose to stay and defend or to leave early.

Your action plan should be written before the start of the bushfire season. In the event of a fire, this will allow you to take timely action and may help avoid last-minute decisions which could lead to unsafe actions being made at a stressful time.

Every household is different and you will need to develop a plan that is workable for you. Your plan should consider alternatives in case your situation changes on the day. Use the information, templates and checklists provided to help you create a plan that is suitable for your situation.

One of the key features of an Action Plan is the trigger points. These represent the phases of the fire in relation to your property. You should consider these carefully, for both making your decision and developing the different stages of your plan.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The following questions and information will help you prepare your Bushfire Action Plan. Any questions that are difficult to answer will indicate the aspects you need to focus on or identify issues about which you should seek additional information.

LATE EVACUATION – A DEADLY DECISION

During bushfires, lives are most often lost when people make a last minute decision to flee their homes on foot or in a vehicle - don't!

Our natural instinct is to "wait and see", and then "go" – **this is not a safe option.**

Late evacuation exposes people to smoke, embers, radiant heat and falling debris. Risk of motor vehicle accidents also increases significantly.

If you decide that you will go, go early. This is much safer than trying to make a dash by car through the fire-front on roads blocked by emergency vehicles, traffic, falling trees or covered in thick smoke.

ARE YOU PHYSICALLY FIT?

The process of defending your home during a bushfire can take several hours. This includes the time needed to carry out strenuous tasks (see **Stay and Defend** Action Checklist) before the fire front arrives and then watching for spot fires following the passing of the fire.

You will need to be in good physical health with the mobility (and ability) to maintain a constant watch on your property and areas surrounding the home before, during and after the fire.

Many people find it difficult to cope with the stress and trauma of being in this type of situation. Give consideration to any medical conditions that might be impacted by stress (for example asthma, other respiratory conditions and heart conditions). These may affect your ability to defend your home.

ARE YOU MENTALLY PREPARED?

The task of defending your property from bushfire can be a stressful and traumatic experience. Give careful consideration to your own and your family's ability to deal with the stress of such a situation.

Picture yourself in a bushfire situation. Ask yourself: "Would I be able to cope with this environment? Would my family cope through this situation? What if friends or relatives are visiting at the time, how would they deal with this?" ●

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BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN PLANNING TO LEAVE EARLY™

A guide to help you take action this bushfire season.

NSW Rural Fire Services Association



PREPARE YOUR BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN

Write a plan to relocate. Ensure the whole family understands and has agreed to the Action Plan. In planning your safe relocation, you will need to ask yourself the following questions:

LEAVE EARLY: WHEN WILL I GO?

On high fire risk days, you need to remain alert and informed about any fires in the area. Regular updates are broadcast on ABC Radio. In the event of a bushfire, it is important to go before the fire reduces visibility and roads are closed. Leaving in smoky conditions is leaving too late: driving through thick smoke is dangerous. Decide what your trigger will be. Don't wait until it's too late.

WHERE WILL I GO?

Determine well in advance where you will go. Contact your local council to find out if there is a designated public evacuation centre in your community. Alternatively, you may decide to stay with a well-prepared neighbour or relocate to family or friends who are away from the fire.

WHAT WILL I TAKE?

Take a prepared "Relocation Kit", your family and your pets. You may also want to take special photos, keepsakes or memorabilia that are easy to carry and will fit into your vehicle. You may be away from your home for an extended period of time, so take spare clothes and personal items with you.

HOW WILL I GET THERE?

If you are using your own vehicle, make sure it has enough fuel and is mechanically sound to ensure a safe journey. Become familiar with the best route to your chosen location, as well as an alternative route should roads be closed. Plan who will collect you if you do not have your own means of transport. Plan to go early to avoid getting trapped in your vehicle by the bushfire.

WHAT WILL I DO WITH PETS/LIVESTOCK?

If you have livestock that can be moved out of the area, allow yourself plenty of time to do so. Evacuating late is a deadly option as visibility is reduced and travel becomes hazardous. If possible, move larger animals to a paddock with little vegetation - before the bushfire season,

you may consider slashing and then maintaining a paddock to create a "safe" area. Never turn animals out onto the road to run free. This is dangerous for fire trucks and vehicles on the road and you may be legally responsible if they are the cause of an accident.

You should plan to take domestic pets with you if possible. Have cat baskets, cages and leads ready to safely transport your pets. You cannot take them into a public evacuation centre, so appropriate arrangements will need to be made for them.

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ARE SEPARATED?

A bushfire may occur while your children are at school or family members are at work. Plan what each person will do in these circumstances - find out what the school's policy is if bushfire threatens.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Leave before fire threatens your immediate area
- Leaving your home when thick smoke and flames are visible is a deadly option
- Even if it is your intention to leave early, you should still prepare a backup plan in case your circumstances change and you have to take shelter in your own home.

THE PLAN:

- Should consider every member of the household.
- Should include decisions and actions that will allow you and your household to relocate safely.

RETURNING HOME AFTER THE FIRE

Following a bushfire, it may take several hours to clear roads of fallen trees, power poles and wires. Listen to your radio or check with the Fire Services or Police to determine when it is safe to return home.

ON THE DAY A BUSHFIRE THREATENS KEEP UP TO DATE WITH INFORMATION

You should listen to the radio for regular updates.

MOVE LIVESTOCK/LOCATE PETS

Move large animals as planned in your Bushfire Action Plan. Locate and secure pets early in readiness to go with you.



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RELOCATION KIT

Load your relocation kit into your car in preparation for your early departure.

PERSONAL ITEMS

It may not be possible to return home for some time. Take with you personal items such as a change of clothing, toiletries, towels, pillows, blankets, cash, credit cards, medication, mobile phone and charger, some food and toys for children.

WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Ensure all family members are wearing protective clothing - long pants (jeans), long-sleeved shirt and sturdy footwear. Clothing made from synthetic fibres is not suitable as it may melt.

REMOVE FLAMMABLE MATERIALS FROM AROUND YOUR HOME

If there is time before you leave, remove material that is likely to burn from around your house - items such as mats, outdoor furniture, hanging baskets, paper and boxes. Place them inside your house or shed.

SECURE YOUR HOME

Before you leave, make sure all windows and doors are closed to reduce the risk of embers getting into your home. Don't forget to lock your home (including garage and sheds) securely before you go.

KEEP IN TOUCH AND INFORMED

Before you go, let someone know of your intention to relocate, where you will be going and how you plan to get there. You may also wish to inform them of your safe arrival once you have reached your chosen destination. Take your mobile phone with emergency numbers and keep informed by listening to your radio. ●

CHECK LIST

PLANNING AND PREPARATION	
Prominent House Number	
Identify safe refuge	
Protective clothing and firefighting kit	
Prepare home as a safe refuge	
Spark proof house (wire screens)	
Clear ground litter	
Clear around house and sheds	
Clear around fences and gates	
Access for firefighters	
Buckets and containers (for water)	
Independent water supplies	
Pump (diesel or petrol, if installed)	
Sprinkler system (on roof and gardens)	
Relocation kit list	
Practise your bushfire action plan	

EXTREME FIRE DANGER DAYS

Implement Stay and Defend or Leave Early	
Monitor fire information (radio, websites, TV)	
Check protective clothing and firefighting kit	
Check and pack relocation kit	
Check First Aid kit and medications	
Check safe refuge	
Check firefighting equipment	
Check water supplies	
Test pump and sprinklers (if installed)	
Prepare relocation kit and place in car	
Prepare car and park in safe area	





SES members from the South-West Region. Provided by R Mitchell (Ballarine SES Unit.)





CFA Trucks ready to respond at the University near Morwell. Provided by R Mitchell (Bellarine SES Unit.)



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AUSTRALASIAN FIRE AUTHORITIES COUNCIL GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE IN CARS DURING BUSHFIRES

Revised guidelines as presented to committee of management on 12 December 2007

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

AIM

To provide consistent key messages that fire agencies and other associated emergency services and relevant public bodies can promote as guidance for people who inadvertently become caught in a car during a bushfire.

BACKGROUND

It is with extreme caution that people should be advised to take refuge in their car. Whilst a car offers a higher chance of survival than being caught in the open, existing stay or go strategies are much safer options to follow and it is essential that all people likely to be exposed to bushfire risk realise this. It has been widely established that staying within a well prepared home or evacuating/relocating well in advance of the fire threat are the best survival options during a bushfire.

History has shown that many of the fatalities which have occurred have done so when people have been caught on the road, either on foot or in vehicles. The Tasmanian Bushfire (1967), Lara Bushfire (1969), Ash Wednesday (1983) and most recently the Eyre Peninsula Fire in January 2005 have all illustrated this. Eight of the nine fatalities on the Eyre Peninsula were found in or near their vehicles. Reinforcement of the message that last minute evacuation can potentially be a deadly option is clearly a part of the ongoing education of communities.

There are however, some people who may be in a car during a bushfire and who may be confronted with the dilemma of what they should do under those circumstances.

PEOPLE AT RISK

There will inevitably be residents who have not heeded the advice to have a bushfire plan in place and decide to evacuate at the last minute, or who have made a plan but change their mind when confronted with the situation and decide to flee. In addition, there may be people unfamiliar with an area, such as tourists and visitors, who inadvertently expose themselves to the dangers of a bushfire. Further, there are those who may be more at risk of being caught on the road during a bushfire due the nature of their work.

Research and investigations into fatalities in grass and wildfires have shown that many occur when people

have been caught on the road in their vehicles (e.g. Krusel & Petris, 1992). People have either fled their vehicle on foot, or tried to drive through the thick smoke and flames which has resulted in accidents and vehicles getting stuck and the occupants entrapped.

However, it is also true that many of those who have survived being caught out on the road during a bushfire have sheltered inside their vehicle until the fire front passed and it was safe to get out. This was well illustrated by the Lara bushfire when motorists on the Melbourne-Geelong Freeway were confronted with a fast moving grassfire. Seventeen people abandoned their vehicles and died whilst at least six people sheltered in their cars and survived.

SHELTERING INSIDE A CAR

It must be emphasised that research and scientific testing into car survivability has shown that sheltering inside a car is a high risk strategy. There are many factors which come into play which can make survival very difficult in certain situations. Not least of these is the increased use of plastic in car manufacture, which appears to reduce the level of protection afforded by many new model cars.

KEY MESSAGES FOR SHELTERING IN A CAR

Recognising that there are groups, as previously identified, who may find themselves in a car during a bushfire necessitates the development of key messages. These key messages were derived from a refinement of the best existing advice, research and ongoing CSIRO work into technical aspects of car survivability.

The suggested key messages attempt to dispel any misconceptions that the public may have about the safety or otherwise of sheltering in a car. For example, fears of fuel tanks exploding which prompt car abandonment are not well founded in reality, despite what may be reported in the media. However, there are sizeable risks involved in sheltering in a car during a bushfire that mean survival is by no means guaranteed, especially in moderate to high-intensity bushfires. As such the public need to understand the inherent dangers of being out on the road in a bushfire.

The requirements for utility companies and their contractors are different from that of the general public. Under the instruction of and accompanied by the fire service, they are often the second people on the scene

of a bushfire to reconnect communications and carry out other essential work. As such there is a greater risk of them being caught by a fire whilst responding to an incident and therefore the employees need additional skills and training for such eventualities. The key messages outlined in this paper focus on information for the general public.

SECTION TWO: GUIDANCE

There are a multiplicity of factors and scenarios that impact on the chances of survival in a car during a bushfire. These include the size of the surrounding fuel load, topography, type of fire (low intensity grass fire through to high intensity forest fire), the type of car (its exterior and interior design and materials) and the amount of time there is to prepare. However, the following general advice may help to minimise the level of risk.

TRAVELLING DURING THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

During the bushfire season carrying a supply of water on journeys and keeping woollen blankets in the car (at least one for each passenger) is recommended. These items ought to be readily accessible so that they can be utilised immediately if the need arises. Dressing in suitable non-synthetic clothing and shoes is also advisable.

People should reconsider journeys into areas where the fire danger is high to extreme. They should pay attention to fire danger warnings, postponing journeys or finding alternative safe routes if necessary.

People should avoid journeys in areas where bushfires are burning. People need to know who the local emergency services broadcaster is and keep up-to-date with the information being provided.

ENCOUNTERING SMOKE OR FLAME

If smoke is in the distance, or can only be smelt in the air it is best to u-turn and drive away from the danger.

If confronted with smoke or flames whilst on the road a driver should stop as soon as it is safe to do so and immediately turn on the car's headlights and hazard warning lights. The likelihood of having an accident or running off the road is high if continuing to drive through smoke or flames.

Taking a few moments to assess the situation and make a rational decision about the safest course of action can make all the difference. Whenever possible and safe to do so, driving away from the danger area is preferable.

However, there may be occasions where the fire front is getting too close and in this situation it is better to look for the safest place to park the car.

POSITIONING THE CAR

Scientific testing has demonstrated that a car should not be parked over dry fine fuels as the low level flame contact from these fuels can quickly cause

conditions inside the car cabin to become untenable. It is essential to park away from high ground fuel loads, overhanging branches and dense vegetation. Ideally, a non-combustible surface such as gravel or a dirt track in a clearing offers the best location. Care should be taken not to leave the car on the roadway as it increases the risk of collisions with other vehicles.

Use could also be made of local features such as natural or man-made barriers. For example, parking behind a solid brick object or a natural feature (e.g. a rocky outcrop) will shield the car from the radiant heat. If there are other vehicles nearby it is best not to park too close to them in case any catch fire. This additional flame contact and radiant heat exposure could hasten the demise of nearby vehicles. Trailers, horse floats and so on may also make it more difficult to locate the car in the most suitable place and may need to be disconnected from the car and parked away from the car.

In general, a car orientated towards the oncoming fire front will remain tenable at higher heat radiation levels. Positioning the car towards the oncoming fire front offers possible advantages. Firstly, if the fuel tank vents then the vapours will be blown away from the car. Secondly, it reduces the amount of window surface exposed to the oncoming fire, thus reducing heat soak into the car and the possibility of glass breaking (the windscreen is tougher than the side windows).

ACTIONS TO TAKE INSIDE THE CAR

Once a location to park has been found it is necessary to prepare for the approaching fire front.

Windows and doors should be tightly shut. Whilst entry of smoke into the car is inevitable, the rate at which it occurs is reduced by ensuring all windows and doors are secured. Furthermore, it helps to prevent embers entering the car and setting alight to the interior of the car which could force people to leave the car.

The car vents should be closed. Vents are another avenue for smoke ingress into the car and therefore need to be shut.

Some existing advice recommends leaving air-conditioning in the recirculate mode to keep the interior of the car as cool as possible. Research has found an air-conditioner set on re-circulation did not significantly influence under blanket temperature. Also, toxic gas exposure for car occupants sheltering below blankets was not significantly affected by air circulation. However, as radiant heat passes through windows and the car body, it will be recirculated inside the car negating the beneficial effect of lower temperatures at floor level where occupants need to shelter. Therefore, it is best to switch air-conditioning off completely.

Drivers should also turn their engine off. In all probability a car will not be in a suitable state to drive away after the fire front has passed. There may be other dangers associated such as trees blocking roads,



other parked cars and emergency services vehicles responding to the incident. In addition, leaving the engine running in order to be able to move the car to avoid flaring vegetation could pose additional risks to the occupants. These include increased radiant heat exposure, embers entering the engine compartment and igniting the engine and a higher risk of an accident in the poor visibility.

Passengers need to get down as low as possible below the window level. It is essential to minimise exposure to intense levels of radiant heat. Therefore, people need to remain below the window level and as low as possible while covering their bodies with a woollen blanket to put a shield between themselves and the radiant heat. Using a woollen blanket to shelter under also reduces exposure to toxic gases (Sargeant et al., 2007). Extra care needs to be taken if there are multiple occupants in the car which may make it harder to shelter safely. There may be additional protection from the radiant heat by using any spare woollen blankets to cover the windows on the side facing the oncoming fire front. However, the benefit of this could be negated by the effect of re-radiation on the window making the window more likely to break. Likewise, further investigation of the re-radiation effect of silver heat shields and the toxicity of fumes given off by them is required before the true benefits or dangers can be determined.

Water should be drunk if possible to avoid dehydration. The high temperatures people would be exposed to in a car during a bushfire make them susceptible to dehydration. Therefore, keeping fluid intake up is very important.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS THE FIRE FRONT PASSES

Conditions in the car will be uncomfortable as the fire front nears. The heat level will rise and the strong winds may rock the car violently. The time it takes for the fire front to pass varies depending on the intensity of the fire and the amount of fuel surrounding the car. It might be considerably longer in the case of a high intensity forest fire.

During this time, entry of smoke into the car will occur, plus interior components may begin to give off fumes due to the intense heat. The windows may break either from the heat or from flying debris. It is also possible that the tyres and parts of the bodywork may catch alight.

The fuel tank is very unlikely to explode in the time needed to shelter in the car although it may vent (particularly LPG tanks). As the car fills with smoke and fumes, people may need to breath through a moistened cloth to avoid excessive inhalation. However, it is essential to stay inside the car until the temperature has subsided outside.

When the heat level has dropped it is possible to leave the car. Whilst remaining low in the car, cautiously

raise a hand to determine whether the heat level has dropped sufficiently. As an indicator, anything hotter than the heat sensed when skin is badly sunburnt is too hot. When the heat is at a bearable level and people leave the car, it is important to be aware that door handles and internal parts will be extremely hot. Once outside people need to stay covered up in the woollen blankets and make their way to a safe place to await assistance, an already burnt piece of land in a clearing is the best option.

SECTION THREE: RELATIVE LEVELS OF RISK

In relative terms, a well prepared property offers a far higher degree of shelter from radiant heat and other dangers than being in a car during a bushfire.

However, anyone who does find themselves on the road during a bushfire stands a better chance of survival sheltering inside their car than fleeing on foot. Driving through thick smoke or flame is extremely risky due to the likelihood of having an accident. Therefore, stopping the car and following the guidance as laid out in this paper is a safer course of action than fleeing on foot but not without inherent risks. There are a wide range of permutations that may inhibit survival chances in a car, some of which are considered in the proceeding paragraphs.

FIRE INTENSITY AND FUEL LOADS

Levels of radiant heat have been found to become unbearable and force people to leave their cars in medium and high intensity forest fires. There is a far higher chance of successfully sheltering in a car during a grass fire or low intensity forest fire where flame heights are relatively small (Cheney & Budd, 1984: 4). This is provided that the car is not surrounded by large fuel loads. High fuel loads will result in more intense radiant heat levels that persist for a longer period of time and fuel the combustion of the car (Cheney & Sullivan, 1997: 87). The net result can be that people cannot safely leave the car for a considerable period of time after the fire front has passed. This prolongs their exposure to radiant heat, high levels of smoke inhalation and toxic gases from synthetic materials in the car. The fire is also more likely to take a hold of the car, with tyres and door seals igniting first, and the persistence of the flame contact leading to destruction of the car. Fire fighting vehicles do not provide survivable conditions in all high intensity bushfire burnover situations (Nichols et al., 2005). Therefore cars, that do not have any of the added safety features of fire fighting vehicles, are even less likely to provide shelter in high intensity fires.

Topography can have a large influence on the survivability of a car. Stopping on a steep slope or in a gully adds to the risks and may not be avoidable in

some areas (Rogers, 1985: 19). As such, there are scenarios where the topography and volume of fuel may make survival virtually impossible (Cheney & Budd, 1984: 4), even if the guidance provided by this document is followed. The small likelihood of finding an adequate clearing to situate a car in a densely forested area can also make survival very difficult.

DIFFERENT CAR TYPES

Car manufacture increasingly substitutes plastic for steel on the cars bodywork. Plastic bumpers, grills, wing mirrors and other exterior components are likely to ignite more easily than the steel parts used on older model cars. The flammability of synthetic materials utilised inside the car may also limit the time a person can shelter inside the car (Sargeant et al., 2007). In addition, the use of synthetic materials such as polyurethanes in automotive manufacture brings an increased risk of exposure to toxic fumes inside the car which may render it uninhabitable before it is safe to leave (Mangan, 1997: 21).

Other materials that are replacing steel in the manufacture of cars include aluminium, fibreglass and composite materials. All three provide less protection from the intense radiant heat and flame contact than older steel chassis cars. These materials are particularly used in high performance cars and may well contribute to their destruction by fire. Two further categories of vehicles that do not provide adequate protection in a fire are soft top vehicles and motorcycles.

A further trend in some newer models of car is the increased size of windows. The danger this presents is that a larger surface area of glass in the car increases the radiant heat exposure to the passengers (Paix, 1999: 1). It also makes it harder to shelter safely when there are multiple occupants in the car or the car is heavily loaded with luggage as may be the case with tourists or people evacuating late.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the relative level of risk depends on a whole range of factors which are often impossible to mitigate. Therefore, whilst a car can provide shelter in certain conditions, particularly low intensity bushfires, and is preferable to being caught outside, there can be no guarantee of survival given the range and complexity of the scenarios and circumstances that can eventuate.

People should reconsider journeys into areas where the fire danger is high to extreme. They should pay attention to fire danger warnings, postponing journeys or finding alternative safe routes if necessary.

People should avoid journeys in areas where bushfires are burning. People need to know who the local emergency services broadcaster is and keep up-to-date with the information being provided.

SECTION FOUR: SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Being out on the road during a bushfire is extremely dangerous – last minute evacuations are a deadly option.

A well thought-out bushfire plan¹ is vital for all residents in bushfire-prone areas. Plan to remain with your home and defend it, or relocate to a safe area well before the fire is expected to arrive.

Travel in the country during the bushfire season needs to be done with extreme caution and vigilance.

Always carry woollen blankets and a supply of water in the vehicle. Dress in suitable non-synthetic clothing and shoes.

Know the local bushfire information system² and tune in accordingly when travelling.

If you become aware of a bushfire or see a bushfire in the distance, carefully pull over to the side of the road to assess the situation. If it is safe to do so, turn around and drive away from the danger area.

If you have been trapped by the fire it will be necessary to find a suitable place to park the vehicle and shelter from the intense radiant heat³.

There are a whole range of factors that may impact on survival chances; the following may help to minimise the level of risk:

POSITIONING YOUR VEHICLE

- Find a clearing away from dense bush and high ground fuel loads.
- If possible minimise exposure to radiant heat by parking behind a natural barrier such as a rocky outcrop.
- Position vehicle facing towards oncoming fire front.
- Park vehicle off the roadway to avoid collisions in poor visibility.
- Don't park too close to other vehicles.

ACTIONS TO TAKE INSIDE YOUR VEHICLE

- Stay inside your vehicle – it offers the best level of protection from the radiant heat as the fire front passes.
- Turn headlights and hazard warning lights on to make the vehicle as visible as possible.
- Tightly close all windows and doors.
- Shut all the air vents and turn air conditioning off.
- Turn engine off.
- Get down below the window level and as close to the floor as possible.
- Shelter under woollen blankets.
- Drink water to minimise the risks of dehydration.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Stay in the vehicle until the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped outside.
- Fuel tanks are very unlikely to explode.
- As the fire front approaches, the intensity of the



heat will increase along with the amount of smoke and embers.

- Smoke gradually gets inside the vehicle and fumes will be released from the interior of the car. Stay as close to the floor as possible to minimise inhalation and cover mouth with a moist cloth.
- Tyres and external plastic body parts may catch alight. In more extreme cases the vehicle interior may catch on fire.
- Once the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped cautiously exit the vehicle. (Be careful - internal parts will be extremely hot.)
- Move to a safe area e.g. a strip of land that has already burnt.
- Stay covered in woollen blankets, continue to drink water and await assistance. ●

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¹ Link to relevant agency information regarding stay or go.

² Link to relevant agency information about emergency services broadcaster, e.g. ABC local radio.

³ Link to agency information about the dangers of radiant heat.

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Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Our Ref MC09-006171

Mr Warren Kelly
zforce@optusnet.com.au

Dear Mr Kelly

Thank you for your email of 24 February 2009 to the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, concerning job protection for volunteers. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Government greatly appreciates the work of those volunteers who provide essential emergency management services to the community. These volunteers give up their time and risk their safety to assist communities in times of great hardship and need.

As you may be aware, the Government is currently undertaking a process to reform the federal workplace relations system. Through the Government's workplace relations reforms, a new legislated safety net of 10 National Employment Standards (NES) for all employees in the federal system will be put in place, complemented by a modern, simple award system. The NES form part of the Fair Work Bill 2008, which was passed by the Parliament on 20 March 2009. The NES will commence on 1 January 2010.

The NES provide an entitlement to community service leave for an employee in certain circumstances. The community service leave NES allows an employee to be absent from work for jury service or voluntary emergency management activities, including reasonable travelling and rest time. Voluntary emergency management activity is defined in the Fair Work Bill to mean engaging in an activity that involves dealing with an emergency or natural disaster, on a voluntary basis, where the employee is a member of a recognised emergency management body.

For an absence to be covered under the community service leave NES, the employee must give the employer notice of the absence as soon as practicable and must provide reasonable evidence if required by the employer. Community service leave for the purposes of emergency management activity will be unpaid leave.

The NES are minimum entitlements for all employees. It is always possible for employers and employees to agree to terms and conditions greater than the NES. Accordingly, the community service leave NES is not intended to discourage employers who currently elect to pay their employees while absent from work attending to emergency services duties.

You can be assured that it is unlawful for an employer to dismiss an employee on the grounds of absence due to volunteer emergency management commitments. The current *Workplace Relations Act 1996* provides that an employee's employment may not be terminated for the reason of, or for reasons including, temporary absence from work because of the carrying out of a voluntary emergency management activity, where the absence is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances. This provision is replicated in the Fair Work Bill.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mark Roddam
Branch Manager
Safety Net and Wages Branch
Workplace Relations Policy Group

26 March 2009

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We are pleased to announce that the following persons have become members of our Institute since the last edition of NER was published.

NAME	AFFILIATION	STATE
Victoria Walters	SES	QLD
Jeanette Pickworth	Health Services	QLD
Andrew Sander	SES	QLD
Leanne Simmons	SES	QLD
Jill Gollard	Fire Services	TAS
David Hull	Fire Services	NSW
Roger Benson	Fire Services	NSW
Colin Priest	Emergency Services	ACT
Michael Maria	Emergency Services	ACT

AIES ANNUAL RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2009

Members of the Institute are reminded that annual subscriptions to the Institute for the year 2008/2009 became payable from 1 August 2008, even though the Institute's financial year is now from 1 January to 31 December each calendar year. Any outstanding subscriptions should be paid to the relevant State Registrars of the Institute as shown on page 39 of this edition of our journal NER.

Subscriptions are as follows:

Member	\$50 Annually
Fellows	\$60 Annually
Corporations	\$250 Annually

Subscriptions are tax-deductible

Persons or organisations who are not members but wish to obtain our quarterly magazine can obtain the journal at a cost of \$30 annually. This is to defray the cost of publishing and posting the journal. Payment should in this case be forwarded to "the General Secretary/Registrar of the AIES" at No 14/159 Middle Head Road, Mosman, NSW 2088.

In cases where members may not be receiving our AIES NER Journal or Calendar due to change of residential address etc., they should inform the Division Registrar in their respective States.

By order of General Council
R A Maul
General Secretary/Registrar



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National Web Site: www.aies.net.au

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- To raise the status and advance the interests of the profession of emergency management and counter disaster services administration.
- To represent generally the views and interests of the profession and to promote a high standard of integrity and efficiency in the skills of emergency and counter disaster administration.
- To provide opportunities for association among members and students to promote and protect their mutual interest.
- To facilitate full interchange of concepts and techniques amongst members.
- To bring to the notice of the public such matters that are deemed to be important for safety and protection of the community and to promote research and development of emergency services generally.
- To establish a national organisation to foster international co-operation in counter-disaster services administration.

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- Reduced fees for members at Institute Seminars and Conferences and an information service supplied by professional experienced officers.
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- The opportunity to use the initials of the particular membership status after your name.

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• Honorary Member • Honorary Fellow

WHO CAN JOIN:

Applications for membership will be considered from persons who are at least twenty-one years of age and who:

- Are members of a permanent emergency service or associated service with at least two years experience, or
- Are volunteer members of emergency or associated services with a minimum of four years experience as an emergency services member.

Admission as a member may be granted if in the opinion of the General Council the applicant meets all other conditions of membership and passes such examinations and/or other tests as may be required by General Council.

WHERE DO MEMBERS COME FROM:

- Ambulance Service • Community Services • Emergency Equipment Industry • Emergency Management Organisations • Fire Services • Health, Medical and Nursing Services • Mines Rescue • Police Service • Safety Officers • SES • Transport Services • Volunteer Marine Rescue • Volunteer Rescue Associations



AIES NATIONAL CONTACTS

NATIONAL (GENERAL) COUNCIL

National President Maurice Massie, QPM, LFAIES	Phone: (03) 6248 6373 Email: president.national@aies.net.au	
National Vice President Brian Lancaster, ESM, LFAIES	Phone: (08) 8381 2825 Email: vpresident.national@aies.net.au	
National Registrar Bob Maul, LFAIES, JP	Phone: (02) 9968 1226 Email: general.secretary@aies.net.au	210 Spit Road MOSMAN NSW 2088

NEW SOUTH WALES & NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

President Alan Holley, MAIES	Phone: 0414 542 175 Email: president.nsw@aies.net.au	Contact NZ through the NSW AIES President/Registrar
Registrar Greg James, FAIES	Phone: (02) 4329 0614 0418 614 813 Email: registrar.nsw@aies.net.au	7 Cranbrook Street WYOMING NSW 2250

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY DIVISION

President John Rice, MAIES	Phone: (02) 6238 3791 Email: president.act@aies.net.au	
Registrar Philip Gaden, MAIES	Phone: (02) 6236 8985 0413 137 761 Email: registrar.act@aies.net.au	5 Morning Street GUNDAROO NSW 2620

NORTHERN TERRITORY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA & WESTERN AUSTRALIA DIVISION

President Barry Presgrave, OAM, FAIES	Phone: (08) 8278 8530 Email: president.sa@aies.net.au	Contact NT/WA through the SA AIES President/Registrar
Registrar Jan Burgess, MAIES	Phone: 0411 446 656 Email: registrar.sa@aies.net.au	Unit 21/17 Fourth Avenue EVERARD PARK SA 5035

QUEENSLAND DIVISION

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President Alan Marshall, O.St.J	Email: president.vic@aies.net.au	
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NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE JOURNAL (NER) & AIES WEBSITE

Editor - NER Geoff Webb	Phone: (03) 5775 1233 0408 592 073 Email: vesaphoenix@dodo.com.au	
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bluelight

www.bluelight.com.au

www.bluelight.com.au is the official website of the various Blue Light State Councils. Its purpose is to provide our **youth with information** about **Blue Light events, activities** and other **Police Youth initiatives**. The web site also enables the user the opportunity to **give feedback** for further enhancement of the Blue Light organisation. Within the site are links to other affiliated web sites, which have specialised information concerning **drugs** and **alcohol, sexual abuse, suicide prevention** and **crisis help** from appropriate professional organisations, which they can access in privacy, at school or home.

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