

NATIONAL EMERGENCY



RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

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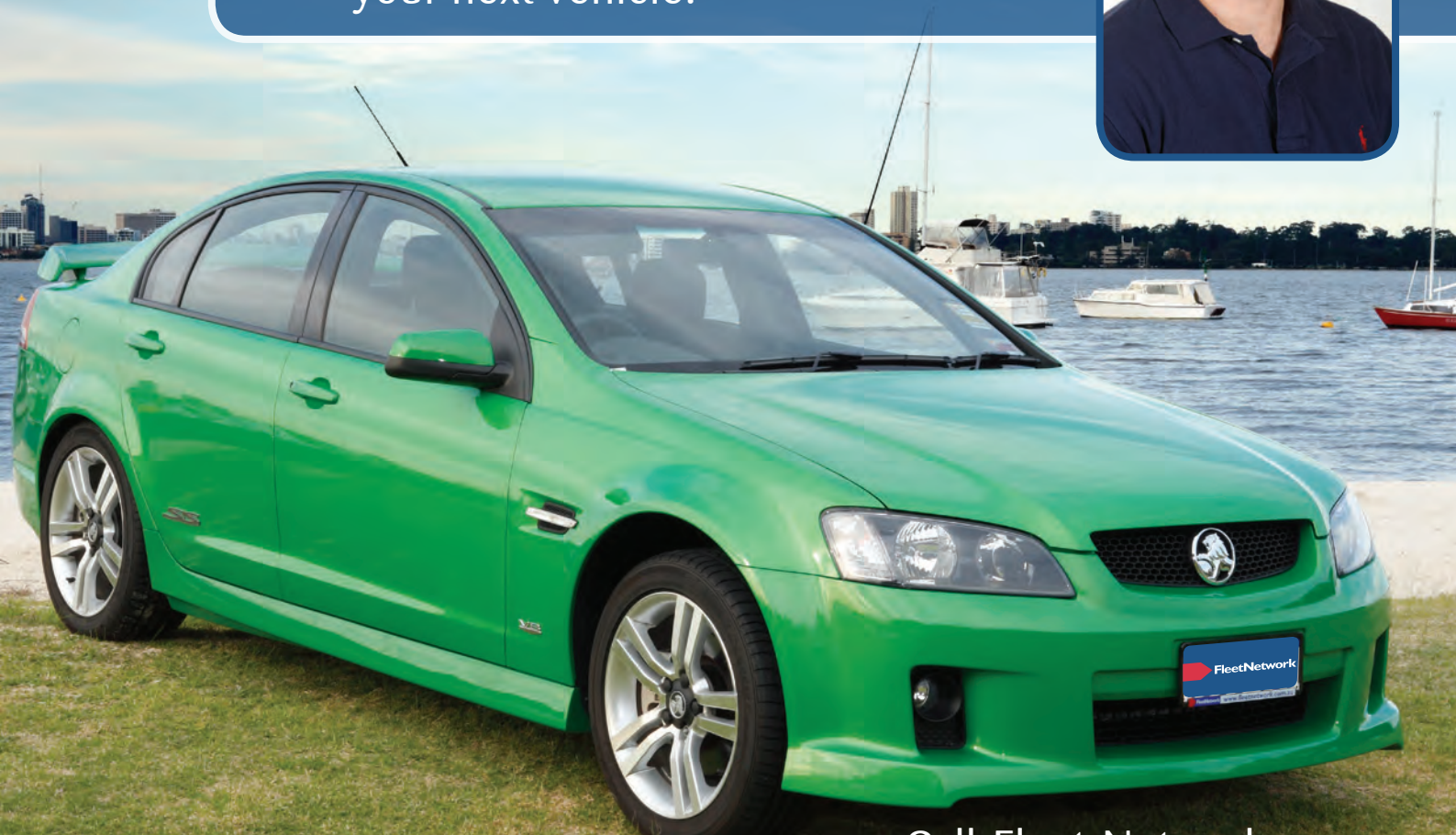
VOLUME 24 NO. 2 AUTUMN 2011
PRINT POST PUBLICATION NO. PP337586/00067

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Official Publication of
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

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PUBLISHER

National Emergency Response is published by
Countrywide Austral

countrywideaustral

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NATIONAL

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Autumn 2011 • National Emergency Response

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FRONTCOVER

A Fire and Rescue Service of WA officer from Roleystone station attends the February 6/7 fires that destroyed homes and property in the south-east of Perth.

Photo: *The West Australian* ©



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Bob Maul, FAIES

General Secretary/Registrar

AIES is pleased to announce the following emergency service people became members of the Institute between December 2010 and February 2011.

Aust Red Cross OHS Unit	Corporate Affiliate	VIC
Peter Bavington	RFS	ACT
Rhian Blackwell	Health	ACT
Gary Cooper	RFS	QLD
Stephen Girard	SES	QLD
Brendan Greenhill	RFS	ACT
Alex Hughes	RFS	QLD
Phil Martin	Ambulance Service	SA
Kenneth Miller	Sea Rescue	SA
Vincent Scotland	Police	SA
Brian Soall	Aust Red Cross	VIC
Martin Taylor	CFA	SA
Lloyd Tonkin	Health	SA
Alastair Wilson	AEMI	ACT
Bede Wilson	RFS/SES	QLD

PROFILE

David Hull, MAIES

Registrar NSW Division



AIES member David Hull was appointed NSW Registrar in January 2010, after two years as an Institute member.

He has been part of the SES NSW for over nine years at Ashfield Leichhardt Unit. Having roles in

administration and general rescue, David is currently one of the unit's Level 2 swiftwater technicians and floodboat operator. Recent activity includes deployment in December 2010 to Coonamble as member of a flood boat team.

Under the Sydney CBD DISPLAN, David is part of a team of area marshal volunteers from SES and Rural Fire Service for designated evacuation points to assist in coordinating the sites. The DISPLAN is a multi agency response crossing police, fire, health, NGO and emergency response agencies to various degrees

depending on the nature of the incident.

By day, David is Director Asset Management and Procurement at the NSW Department of Human Services Juvenile Justice.

He has many other interests and has volunteered at a number of sporting events including protocol volunteer at the hockey venue during the 2000 Olympics, and at the Boxing/Badminton/Fencing competitions at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. David is married to Rachel. He is Scout Leader at the 3rd Summer Hill (Trinity Grammar), where son James attends. ●

EDITOR'S REPORT

Kristi High

The headlines of summer 2010/2011 were dogged by stories of disaster – floods, fires and cyclones. There is not a state in Australia that hasn't been touched, albeit at varying degrees, by one of these events over the past few months. They have challenged our emergency services professionals, devastated communities, strained our politicians. Now as the long road to recovery effort begins in Queensland, the most affected state hit by floods only to

then be rocked by a Category 5 cyclone, the true spirit of Australia comes out. In the next edition of NER we will look at how the emergency services agencies and organisations, and individuals, are contributing to that recovery effort. If you have a story, please send it in. I would like to thank the media organisations who provided photographs for this edition's cover story – *The West Australian* and *The Mercury* - and to the *Courier Mail* for compiling the town-by-town description on the effects of the Queensland floods. A number of individuals also provided

photos – thank you to E'vette Levette and Greg Noakes. Members, Fellows and Corporate Associates of the Institute are reminded that annual subscriptions are due. Fees should be remitted to the Division Registrars in each state. For details see page 31 of this journal or visit the website. Members are also encouraged to attend the 2011 AGM in Adelaide in April. Further details are on page 11. The Divisions have started holding their AGMs also, kicked off by Canberra. Keep an eye on the website for details in your state. ●

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Alan Marshall, FAIES

National President

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In the last quarter we have seen what nature can throw at communities, the emergency service organisations and the government. We have seen the coming together of organisations and resources to ensure effective management from across Australia in response to large emergencies, floods, cyclone and the occasional fires.

The contribution of individuals and communities towards their own safety before and during emergencies is enhanced by effective programs, early warnings, community education, practices awareness, engagement, and the provision of the all important feedback. All of these are essentials to effective emergency management.

There is not, and could not be, a single organisation solely and totally responsible for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. It is a coordinated approach bringing together organisations and resources to ensure effective management. Management and planning all involved, using the knowledge, the learning experience and the feedback from the community, through collective community participation. The multi agency framework for emergency management enables the management of roles and responsibilities with support in place through the Natural Disaster Resilience Program provided by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department in support of State and Territory initiatives to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

NATIONAL LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

Under cooperative arrangements with the states and territories, the Commonwealth Government and the State of Queensland, in the case of cyclone Yasi, identified early that the coordinated function through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Committee (AGDRC) was

on the table for consideration to be implemented.

The state was clearly going to require support in developing their capacity to deal with this emergency on top of the flood crises that they already had, and that this was an all hazards disaster. The national coordination function was going to be needed along with cost sharing arrangements for response and recovery expenditure. Whilst the Commonwealth Government has no constitutional responsibility for local safety and emergencies services, it is responsible for the military and the civil defence of the Australian community.

EARLY WARNING AND PLANNING DYNAMICS

In the case of cyclone Yasi, the Premier of Queensland Anna Bligh was on television and radio talking about evacuation and relocation more than 48 hours before the impact of this emergency.

Experience and feedback from cyclone Larry (also in this same area of the impact zone) provided information to the planning process for this State's response through the planning dynamics. It reduced the uncertainty through a continuing process and improved the reactions to the unexpected. The planning cycle had already involved a review of the plans used for Larry and according to the plan it had provided the continuously improved plan and its execution.

An all hazards approach to emergency risk keeps the focus on emergency preparedness, training, the people and the team dynamics exercising the plans, not just a reaction to one larger disaster.

NATIONAL DISASTER PRINCIPLES

Nationally recognised disaster recovery principles that are fundamental for a successful recovery are: understand the context and focus on the consequences of the emergency recognise the



complexity, be community focused. Using community-led approaches ensure coordination of all activities; employ effective communication, acknowledging involvement and building capacity.

A state level controller will be required to provide strategic leadership for the resolution of the emergencies at the highest level, and where there may be significant political and economic impact. The control agency is to be nominated to control the various emergencies and the control agencies are to appoint the incident controllers at the incident sites.

THE MANAGEMENT TASK

The management task is to bring together in an integrated organised network, the resources of many agencies and individuals who can take appropriate and timely action to prevent or mitigate the emergency, leading to a response and recovery using an all hazards approach.

JOURNAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Keeping to the theme of our Journal, each year the General Council awards a contribution of a published article in the *National Emergency Response*. I encourage you all to continue the delivery of your excellent articles to your magazine. ●



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AGENCIES PREPARE FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE



Avalias CEO Harold Wolpert

Significant disasters across Australia in the past weeks have further emphasised the need for effective preparedness strategies - for everyone from emergency services to businesses and the general public.

Major disasters have recently presented significant challenges to large parts of the Australian population. In the aftermath of events of this magnitude, we look back at the lessons learned, and aim to improve the outcomes should they happen again.

The ability for people to effectively communicate, collaborate, share information, use available information technology and follow operational procedures during a major crisis can mean the difference between a disaster well handled, and a Royal Commission.

In any organisation, getting people to manage situations efficiently while using increasingly complex technologies is a significant challenge. But when dealing with emergencies, lives depend on people getting it right first time. If you add complex time sensitive processes, and interagency co-operation into the mix, then complexity and risk rises exponentially.

Often the people making critical decisions during a response may not have experienced the situation before. Sometimes a process or plan has not been used before.

Organisations provide training to address these issues, but being trained is only part of the equation. Regular exercising is an important additional element that closes the gap between basic skills and level of experience, increasing confidence and providing a level of stress inoculation.

Is there a way to accelerate this? Is it possible to develop experienced emergency services personnel in less time?

Simulators that exercise a specific role or function have been around for decades. Airline pilots depend on them to ensure that they can handle any possible scenario effectively. However there are now solutions available that can be used to exercise any role, allowing organisation to easily create their own scenarios so that building simulations and exercises becomes as easy as using a word processor. This is allowing agencies to keep their people challenged with realistic scenarios that are current, meaningful and that include learnings from real events.

By allowing teams to regularly and proactively rehearse communication and other role-specific requirements while actively using incident management systems, both in multi-role scenarios and individually, people can improve their level of experience while leading to better preparedness across the entire community.

When all roles have regularly rehearsed these situations in similar pressure conditions to those that would occur during an actual event, handling similar real situations in the future can become easier and less stressful on the people involved.

Uncertainty and risk is a constant factor for emergency services. The only certainty you can control is how well you and your teams will be prepared. ●

About Avalias

Avalias help organisations to be more effectively prepared for managing critical situations through exercising, training and simulation technologies. The Avalias approach is centred on revolutionising the integration of people, processes and technology – with a focus on ‘the human factors’. This is especially important for effectively dealing with security and emergency management situations where time critical responses to low frequency, high impact events require accuracy and effective communication. Avalias bring extensive experience across a wide spectrum of government and industry sectors.



ROAD CRASH RESCUE



Emergency services personnel know that attending motor vehicle accidents is part of their job. But it is something none of them ever get used to. Arriving at a crash scene, police, fire and ambulance officers find themselves immediately connected. Not just to the scenario in front of them, but to the lives directly and indirectly affected. This moving story is a woven mesh of the 100-odd motor vehicle accidents that occur in the Northern Territory each year. In a Territory with a population of just 200,000, that figure gives the NT the highest number of road accidents per capita in Australia.

Northern Territory Fire Rescue Services – Operations – Watch Commander Nick **Bell**



The horror of road accidents shatters the lives of those involved, their families, and even the fire, police and ambulance officers who attend the scene.

THE FAMILY

It was the week before Christmas. The mini-van and its three passengers travelled at the speed limit on Tiger Brennan Drive (Darwin) on its way home. The grandparents of the little girl in the back glanced at each other and smiled as yet another squeal of delight came from the backseat. The six year old was playing Tinkerbell on her Nintendo and loved every minute of it. The elderly lady and her husband had taken their son's daughter to the waterslide for the afternoon to give the parents a break. They went on an outing like this at least once a month. "Gives us time to connect with our grandchild," she would tell her son. Her son and daughter-in-law were so happy that the grandparents took the time and encouraged their precious daughter to go each time an outing was suggested. It was a close and loving family.

It had been a long, hot afternoon, perfect for a day at the waterslide but the heat had taken its toll on the driver. The grandfather was tired and shifted in his seat as he gripped the steering wheel. His face and arms were sunburned and the muscles in his shoulders ached. The little girl had insisted that he join in the fun in the water and inevitably he'd been the one to have to throw her around as she shrieked with laughter. He was paying for that now as he tried to roll his shoulders. He had also forgotten his sunglasses that day and was paying for that too. His tired eyes squinting in the bright sun directly in front of him, he fought to concentrate on the road ahead. "Home soon," he thought.

THE CRASH

Jack, his wife Estelle and their grandchild never knew what hit them. A four-wheel drive vehicle travelling in the opposite direction ploughed into the front right side of the mini van. As it went it tore the van open like a sardine can, crushing the front of the van against the two elderly passengers. The four-wheel drive vehicle had hit with such force that the van had concertinaed at the front pushing the front of the van against the driver and passenger, crushing them into their seats too, trapping them exactly where they had been the moment of impact. The sound was enormous, deafening and terrifying. Two vehicles, nearly two tonnes each, travelling at a hundred kilometres per hour at each other in the opposite direction had met with devastating results. The sheer energy of the impact had produced a chilling sound of tearing metal, exploding glass and shattering plastic but they could be replaced. The torn and smashed limbs could not. Metal, glass and plastic can, to some extent, absorb impact but soft human flesh and fragile bone involved in violent smashes cannot. The sound of bodies being literally ripped apart was a sickening and unnatural one. Bones splintered and flesh was torn from its victims as the vehicles met, each trying to absorb the other's inertia but failing to do so. The four wheel drive vehicle speared off and away from the mini van, out of control, coming to rest on its side 50 meters from where the horror had started. Its driver was dead. The mini van with the damaged family spun around twice with enormous violence and stopped, facing the direction from which it had come. Silence.

THE HORROR

Barely conscious, Estelle tried to open her eyes. She didn't know it but one of her eyes would never open again. It had been penetrated by multiple shards of glass as her head had hit the windscreen shattering it and spraying pieces of it everywhere. She couldn't move her body at all and she could scarcely breathe. The dashboard of the van was sitting on her chest, pushing hard and the firewall was crushed against everything on her body below that. She started to cry, her one good eye allowing her to see her loving husband of 42 years bleeding out all over the wrecked mini vans' floor. The blood was a thick, deep, rich red colour of blood that told of a broken human body that could never be repaired. Jack, her wonderful man, was dying and he wasn't awake to say goodbye to her. Her one good eye filled with tears of desperate sadness. She was in terminal shock herself and her brain only registered what she saw in front of her but she could just make out the wail of the distant sirens. Help was coming but it would be too late she knew as her mind drifted off into the terrible darkness.

Despite the seatbelts they had been wearing, the beautiful little girl had been ejected from the mini van during the two violent pirouettes it had done after impacting with the four-wheel drive. Her fragile little body had been ripped from her seat and hurled through the side window, head impacting with glass, little neck snapping as bone met safety glass that simply could not withstand the magnitude of the physical forces that come with high-speed crashes. Crumpled and silent the child now lay in her own spreading pool of blood, dying quietly on the road.

THE FIRE FIGHTERS

The sight in front of him sickened the fire officer as the truck pulled up in front of the crash site.

"VZ8AP, this is Darwin 63," said the officer over the radio, voice tight with emotion and high anxiety.

"This is Control, go ahead 63," was the reply. The girl in the control room knew that the situation report from the fire commander was not going to be good news. She had already received numerous emergency calls to the accident from horrified motorists who had come across the devastation.



Northern Territory has the highest number of road accidents per capital each year, many requiring the Jaws of Life to free injured drivers and passengers.

No two accident scenes are the same. Each has its own set of challenges, hazards and dangers.

"Control, we have arrived on scene," the officer said. "Two vehicles involved. Three persons trapped, major injuries sustained, children involved, Ambulance crews required as soon as possible.

"We will be on scene for an extended period. I want Police to block off the road at both ends and divert traffic for the duration of this call."

"Roger Command, Ambulance already notified and will be there shortly, Police informed of your request," The girl from Control answered.

The fire officer hated motor vehicle accidents, the worst kind of jobs the Fire

Service had to respond to - because of the human wreckage. The officer moved quickly around the scene sizing up the situation. He hated seeing people in distress. The blood and gore was one thing but the victims' screams were what he really struggled with. But they weren't screaming at this one. The cars had hit at great speed, that was obvious, but the area looked as if a bomb had hit it. To the untrained eye it would have been impossible to tell just what the hell had happened but to the fire fighters frantically setting up the rescue equipment it was obvious.

The skid marks, the point of impact, the positioning of the vehicles and the spread of debris told the whole terrifying story. The driver of the four-wheel drive had obviously lost control and crossed over to the wrong side of the road. In a split second he had realized his fatal blunder and stood on the brake pedal sending the heavy vehicle further out of control as he over corrected. The mini van and its innocent victims were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Given that there were no skid marks from the minivan, the fire officer knew that the family probably did not even know that the finger of death had pointed them out for execution leaving the driver no time for evasive action. Twisted, distorted, barely recognizable pieces of metal lay everywhere, every window of the two vehicles had exploded out covering the bitumen road in a blanket of glass. A head light here, a bumper there, plastic, rubber, glass and twisted metal all around.

While the crew set up the rescue equipment the officer briskly walked around the scene sizing up the problem and the challenge that lay ahead. In a few quick strides he reached the closer of the two vehicles, the four-wheel drive. The vehicle was on its side and the officer crouched down to look in the smashed windscreen to inspect the victim inside closer. It was not the fire fighters job to pronounce a victim dead, that was for the paramedics to decide but the officer could see that this man had breathed his last. There was not a drop of blood to be seen but the crazy angle of the man's head in relation to his body told of the massive force inflicted on the fragile neck. The bruising at the base was sickening and black, the head twisted almost full circle, dead eyes looking straight at the would be rescuer, body still strapped into its seat, the stench of alcohol strong. Empty beer cans lay strewn around as if to decorate the macabre scene. His hands were shaking and he felt sick as he sprinted the short distance to where his crews were tending to the child.

The minivan was half the length the manufacturer had intended. Pushed in at the front with such vicious force that the two elderly people were stuck fast and their extrication would take a lot of time and care. It would be a delicate operation to free them. That was not his priority now however – the child was.

Each and every motor vehicle accident presents a unique set of problems that the rescuers must overcome. No two accident scenes are the same. Each has its own set of challenges, hazards and dangers. The fire crews knew that for the van's occupants, time had just about run out. The ambulance officers had arrived and, with the fire fighters, were frantically working on the broken and dying little girl as she lay silently on the bitumen road. They were trying to get saline drips into the victim to counteract the deep shock from blood loss and were bandaging, trying desperately to stop the thick, dark, rich red coloured blood leaking out from her little body. The fire fighters working over the child were frantic. With first aid kits and respiratory equipment desperate to find a sign of life, desperate to hear a little cry, anything that would tell them that this beautiful little girl might just make it.

A race against the clock had begun for the ambulance and fire crews to stabilise the three victims and get them to the hospital giving them the greatest chance for life.

The Jaws of Life, as the general public called them, was in fact a combination of two distinct pieces of equipment. The cutters looked very much like a pair of giant scissors. They are hydraulically operated giving them enormous cutting power and could, in fact, sever almost any part of a smashed car.

With two firemen, the fire officer and an ambulance officer looking over her she opened her eyes, looked at them and whispered, "Mummy, please help me. Please mummy, where are you?" And then she died.

The spreaders, an oversized pair of pliers, could open and close with similar strength, designed to pry open squashed and twisted metal. There was plenty of that to go around here as the crews took up their positions and got to work.

Two fire fighters were at the front of the mini van working on freeing the grandparents and things were not going well. Not well if you were watching the clock because although the seasoned firemen were working fast, it was too slow for the critically injured couple. Both firemen had been to plenty of MVAs but they felt especially sick this time. Having to work in so close to the horrifically injured couple, covered in their blood and hearing their ragged breathing was giving rise to enormous stress. Those throwaway comments that people made about 'getting used to it' and being 'desensitized' were so very wrong. If anything, it brought on more stress and anxiety with each and every response to a motor vehicle accident. You can never get desensitised to the sounds of someone dying and these three family members were a close-knit unit that had now been blown apart.

The fire fighters working at freeing the couple from the mini van wrestled with the incredibly heavy cutters and spreaders trying bit-by-bit to chop pieces of the car away. With their faces so close to the dying couple, the firemen could not help but look at them. It was horrific. The old man was smashed badly. It looked like his right leg had almost been torn completely off and was hanging by only a few sinews. There was blood absolutely everywhere and the two firemen could not help but be covered in it. The more senior one looked at his partner and he thought they looked like two surgeons in an Emergency Room up to their armpits in gore. The elderly man was drifting in and out of consciousness and his damaged head was being supported by one of the Ambulance officers. A very large pool of blood had formed on the floor of the van where his feet were and it was starting to set and congeal. It looked like soft jelly and it smelled like death. The man had lost too much of it. He was so drenched in his own blood that it was impossible to tell what the rest of his injuries were. A quick glance at the woman told the fire fighter that she was trapped fast and only her right arm was free. Her arm, despite the splintered bones poking through, was trying to reach for her husbands' hand and her good eye, through its tears, was searching for him. The other eye was a mess. Blood, ooze and clear fluid leaked from a massive penetrating wound. It ran down her cheek and onto the bright floral dress she had worn for the fun day that they had planned.

Crush victims rarely live when freed from a wreck. As the dashboard of a car smashes against their chest, stomach and legs, blood and normal fluid flow in the body is severely restricted. In most cases it simply stops flowing and the person dies on the spot. If they are lucky, they get to live for a few more minutes, just until the rescuers can get the crushing weight off them. The paramedics were trying to get out of the way of the firemen as they cut, pushed and twisted the metal, fighting for the victim's lives. The more senior of the two firemen had tears running down his face as he worked. He looked at his mate. So did he.



Motor Vehicle Accidents are a collaborative rescue operation usually attended by Fire, Police and Ambulance Services.



Attending a motor vehicle accident is part of the job most emergency services officers dread.

The fire officer watched the two men as they fought to free the elderly couple. He knew they were doing it tough and walked over to them, reaching out, putting a hand on each of their shoulders.

He spoke quietly to them as he bent low, close to their ears, offering words of encouragement but knowing that they were empty words. Time was running out for all of them.

He wheeled around and went to back to the little girl. The fire fighters working on her were in deep distress, their actions frantic, hands pushing down on the small chest, trying to get the life back into her, taking turns for compressions and then breaths. Her injuries were terrible and the impact of the four-wheel drive had ripped the life from her leaving her almost unrecognisable as the bright young girl she was a few minutes ago. Like all people who work on the frontline with road crash rescue, the firemen working on that girl that day were deeply committed to the fight for life on behalf of the daughter and granddaughter they now sweated over.

The fight for her life was on and it was furious with drips, tubes, oxygen and bandages all being applied. She wasn't moving and deep down the officer knew she never would.

He squatted down next to his crew members to help. He was astonished to see that the little girl was starting to stir. She was gaining consciousness and he felt a small leap of joy in his heart amongst the complete carnage of the horror he was witnessing. Amazingly the team working on her had managed

to get her back and her blue eyes were fluttering open.

Her little moans were the sign of life that the crew wanted to hear. With two firemen, the fire officer and an ambulance officer looking over her she opened her eyes, looked at them and whispered, "Mummy, please help me. Please mummy, where are you?" And then she died. Her massive internal injuries had conspired against the rescue team's best efforts and she could not be saved. The powerful sight of her blonde hair, her perfect skin, her pretty face covered with blood and eyes glazed over was an image instantly and irrevocably seared into the memories of the team as they looked at each other in complete shock. They started to work on her again but the fight was lost.

THE FUNERAL

One week after the crash and a day after Christmas, the funeral for the two grandparents and the little girl was held. The Cathedral was packed. The immediate and extended family sat in the front rows, heads down, sobbing with the pain and loss they felt. The family was broken and could never be fixed. For them it was over and they were destroyed, destined to go through the rest of their lives on automatic, never really taking any sort of joy from life because their parents and daughter were gone.

The three coffins were lined up at the front. There was a picture in a frame atop each of the coffins. The photos were of the three victims that each coffin contained with the frames positioned

so that they were looking back at the congregation of sobbing relatives. Throughout the service the priest talked of healing and forgiveness but there was to be none of that on this day.

The fire officer quietly slipped into the back of the church and took a seat. He was looking for closure, something that would assuage the deep sense of sadness, sorrow and loss he too felt after the accident. Although he only known the three people in the coffins for a very short time, the connection had been deep and had impacted him like no other. He felt broken inside and wanted desperately to be fixed somehow. As he lifted his head to look forward, his eyes caught the sight of a little boy with a single flower leave his seat in a pew at the front of the church.

The boy went to the smallest of the three coffins, paused and then placed the flower on the top of the coffin in exactly the place the little girl's heart would have been. As the little boy turned around to go back to his seat, the fire officer could clearly see the tears streaming down the face of the boy.

The fireman started crying too. The scene had ripped the officer's heart out and his head had fallen into his hands for the rest of the service. He didn't stop crying for three days after that.

Please don't drink and drive. Our families love and need us. ●

About Nick Bell

Nick Bell has served in the capacity of Fireman, Senior Fireman and Station Officer at the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS) based in Darwin. He is currently the Watch Commander of C Shift and is the Operational Incident Commander of NTFRS operations at various emergency incidents in the Darwin Metropolitan and Rural districts. Nick has operational command and leadership experience at incidents as diverse as structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous chemical spills, cliff rescues, major grassfires, gas leaks, bomb threats and all other related emergencies that the NTFRS responds to. It is Nick's responsibility to co-ordinate the efforts of the NTFRS's resources at any given emergency bringing it to a successful conclusion.

NOTICE OF 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



All Members of the Institute are cordially invited to attend the 2011 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services to be held at the **Adelaide Sailing Club, Barcoo Road West Beach, Adelaide** on **Monday 18 April 2011** commencing at 7.30pm

Order of Business:

Welcome
Apologies
Confirmation of Minutes of 2010 Meeting and Matters Arising
President's Report
General Secretary/Registrar's Report
Notices of Motion –see attachment one
General Business

By order of the Board of Directors

Robert A Maul

General Registrar/Company Secretary, AIES

MOTIONS:

1. Repeal Clause 8 part 1(a) and replace with new Part 1(a) to read: "be at least 18 years of age".
2. Repeal Clause 8 part 1(c) sub parts (i) and (ii) and replace with new Part 1(c) sub parts (i) and (ii) to read: "Clause 8 Part 1 (c) Satisfy at least the following conditions:
 - (i) be a professional emergency or a voluntary emergency officer;
 - (ii) shall be an assistant to an emergency officer, and shall if the applicant is an employee, produce with the application for admission a certificate or such other reference of his employment as may from time to time be required by the General Council.
3. Repeal Clause 8 Part (2) in its entirety.

REASONS FOR CHANGE:

Motion 1

The Board of Directors is of the opinion that there are a lot of emergency officers who are below the age of 21 years who have performed duties with an emergency management or associated agency either in a professional or voluntary capacity

AIES NSW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the NSW Division of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services will be held at **Burwood RSL Club, Shaftsbury Road Burwood NSW** on **Monday 28 March 2011** at 7.15pm.

Order of Business:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting
3. President's report
4. Registrar's report
5. Declare the election of the NSW Divisional Committee for 2011/12
6. Other business

Autumn2011 • National Emergency Response



for a period of years below the age of 21 years. Additionally, many have attained professional qualifications below the age of 21 in emergency management. It is also discriminatory as 18 year olds (and those older) serve in the armed services and have legal status at 18 years of age.

Motion 2

The Board of Directors is of the opinion that the two sub parts (i) and (ii) as they currently stand are too restrictive in terms of eligibility to join the Institute. The Board considers that the wording as it now stands precludes many eligible emergency officers from joining the Institute, and has been an inhibiting factor for the past decade in officers not applying for membership. Other clauses in the Articles of Association are flexible enough for Sub Division Committees and General Council to determine the suitability or non suitability of the applicant, and their qualifications, for admission to the Institute.

Motion 3

The Board considers that if Motion 2 is passed this Part becomes superfluous as the new motion 2 covers professional emergency officers.

Dinner will be held after the official business component of the AGM, followed by a **presentation** by AIES Vice President John Rice on the Australian Search and Rescue Coordination Centre.

An open member's forum will be conducted after the official business. At this forum members can provide input into the management and operation of the Division and the Institute.

Dinner is included and will be followed by a Members Forum regarding: *What do you see as the issues for effective emergency management and emergency response.*

Cost: Members \$20

Non-financial Members and Guest: \$30

Annual membership fees must be paid prior to commencement of the AGM.



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Your Sincerely,

Craig Walden
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Public Service Benevolent Society Limited

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NSW SES FLOOD RESPONSE

Phil Campbell

The current strong La Nina has made this summer one to remember for SES volunteers, with the Bureau of Meteorology designating it the strongest since 1917. La Nina weather patterns typically result in above average rainfall and the current La Nina has certainly delivered in that respect with record rain and flooding in some locations.

Although flooding in New South Wales has not been as severe as that experienced in Queensland or western Victoria, flooding has been notable for several reasons. In particular the inland nature of much of the flooding, with several floods affecting the Murray Darling river system, has been noteworthy. After a decade of low rainfall, this summer's succession of floods along the Murrumbidgee, Macquarie, Murray and Darling rivers has been the most significant in twenty years and while replenishing water storages and wetlands it has provided major challenges for SES volunteers.

The usual pattern of inland flooding has been for an intense rainfall event during which the focus of the SES has been on the protection of life and property with local flash flooding and fast stream rises requiring the sandbagging

of properties threatened by floodwaters, the evacuation of properties under threat and the rescue of those trapped by floodwater. SES volunteers trained in swift water rescue techniques have rescued literally hundreds of people, some in the most perilous of circumstances trapped on roofs or in flood-bound vehicles.

Once the heavy rain has past the long length of inland rivers and their low gradients has meant the slow progression downstream of the flood peak, with floodwaters taking in some cases many weeks after the initial rain event to reach downstream communities such as Hay, Warren, Bourke and Tilpa. In these so called 'sunny day floods', the focus of the SES shifts to resupply, with the use of high clearance four wheel drives, helicopters and floodboats to ensure that communities are kept supplied and people are able to receive medical attention.

Many areas have been affected by flooding but several areas are of particular note.

During Easter last year, the small, largely indigenous community of Goodooga in the far north of the state



The NSW SES has provided over 300 volunteers to assist in Queensland in the response to cyclone Yasi as well as volunteers to assist in the response to the Victorian floods.

was isolated by floodwaters for several weeks. In December flooding rains returned, with floodwaters from Queensland from the Bokhara and Birrie Rivers isolating the community during mid-January. To help the 300 residents cope with their isolation, a temporary SES presence was established in Goodooga to assist in the communities' resupply via helicopter.

In November Wagga Wagga experienced its first major flood in nearly 20 years, with considerable isolation of rural properties and the evacuation of residents in North Wagga Wagga, East Wagga and Gumly Gumly. During the initial heavy rain event, SES volunteers were kept busy with flash flooding around Wagga and upstream. At Adelong the largest flood for a century swamped businesses and some homes. In nearby Tumberumba a dam threatened to fail and required the evacuation using the emergency alert system of over 30 downstream properties. While the dam did fail, fortunately no properties were inundated. Billabong Creek, the longest in Australia, reached the major flood level with extensive rural isolation. Flooding of properties occurred in many areas including The Rock, Lockhart, Tarcutta and Holbrook where the SES facilitated evacuations and rescues.

In early December, flooding along the Macquarie River in the State's central west was the most significant for nearly 20 years, with the SES undertaking evacuations of properties in Dubbo. Downstream there was lengthy isolation of rural properties especially around the town of Warren, with use of helicopters and other means to resupply scores of isolated properties. The nearby town of Coonamble had over 1,000 residents in the east of the town on standby for possible evacuation as floodwater from the Castlereagh River threatened to breach the town's levee. Fortunately the levee held, and all residents were able to return to their homes.

To the north of Walgett, along the Narran River the village of New Angledool experienced record flooding, with several homes flooded and the town isolated for many weeks. On the Namoi River Wee Waa also became isolated with an extensive flooding downstream requiring the resupply of isolated rural properties.

In January flooding in Brisbane caused by a low pressure system spilled into NSW, resulting in major flooding along the Macintyre River that required the evacuation of the 800 residents of Boggabilla and Toomelah and the dramatic rooftop rescue of several farming families near Tenterfield. In the Tenterfield area the flooding was amongst the worst recorded, with the SES undertaking many rescues, evacuations and other tasks.

Flooding on the Clarence River resulted in over 10,000 people being isolated and the evacuation of several small communities such as Brushgrove and Ulmarra. On the Bellingen River the 1,500 residents of Darkwood were isolated for several days and there were many other small communities and farms isolated such as Bonalbo and Ewingar.

The succession of flooding from November through to February provided several challenges for the service and its volunteers. The service has been fortunate that the training undertaken by volunteers is nationally consistent, permitting volunteers to be moved from areas not affected to bolster resources in areas where local volunteers require additional assistance. This has meant that despite the lengthy operational responses and the number of responses, the service has been able to ensure adequate resourcing of those SES units who required assistance without over-taxing volunteers.

As at mid-February, the NSW SES has provided over 300 volunteers to assist in Queensland in the response to cyclone Yasi as well as volunteers to assist in the response to the Victorian floods. This is despite having ongoing flooding in parts of New South Wales. The fact that the NSW SES is able to do this, as well as to undertake assistance to residents in New South Wales, is a tribute to the professionalism and good management of the NSW SES. ●

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IN BRIEF



MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

Now recruiting – The Municipal Association of Victoria is coordinating the recruitment of 25 full time Emergency Management (Fire) Support Officers to support local government’s implementation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations. Officers will be employed by councils in identified high fire risk areas across the State for an initial 15-month period (to be reviewed after 12 months). Subject to a further allocation of State Government funding, positions may be extended for a two-year period.

Successful applicants will need to demonstrate experience in risk management and/or emergency workers management, excellent written communication skills, confident verbal communication skills, ability to work independently, strong risk analysis skills and strong interpersonal skills.

For more information contact James Holman on 03 9667 5595 or email recruitment@mav.asn.au.



MFB has launched a hi-tech, remote controlled aerial camera platform capable of hovering above fires, detecting hotspots and sending real-time vision back to a central control. Known as CyberQuad, the MFB’s newest firefighter has huge potential for delivering information from difficult incidents where an aerial perspective would greatly help manage and coordinate the emergency effort. Two of the flying eye-in-the-sky fan-driven aircraft have been purchased; one equipped with a high definition camera, the other with a standard definition camera as well as a thermal imaging camera. MFB is working with staff to train CyberQuad pilots. See CyberQuad in action at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBL2d59vOFY>



The 30th Victorian Police Emergency Services Games (VPESG) will be held from 25 March to 3 April 2011. Among the long list of 42 sports offered are swimming, shooting, archery, cross country, ten pin bowling and rowing. Games Patron Chief Commissioner of Police, and 2010 indoor rowing participant, Simon Overland said the games enabled “Emergency Services agencies to provide their workers with improved health and motivation to meet the physical, emotional and psychological demands of their jobs.” More than 20 emergency services agencies are expected to participate. For information about the games, along with registration details log on to www.emergencyservicesgames.org.au

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14 January - Heavy rain caused roads to be cut-off in Tasmania and many homes were isolated, forcing many people to be evacuated. Photo The Mercury ©

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: NATURAL DISAST



Attorney General The Hon.
Robert McClelland

On 8 February 2011, Attorney General The Hon. Robert McClelland delivered this speech to the House of Representatives in Canberra. He recapped the spate of natural disasters this country endured over a period of just less than two months – floods, fires and a devastating cyclone. During his speech he spoke about the relationships between Commonwealth agencies including Emergency Management, Geoscience Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, ADF and Human Services for state emergency responders, and acknowledged the countless volunteers and professional and committed emergency response teams who provided assistance.



Above: Durham Ox in Victoria. Photo: E'vette Levett.

Below: One of the devastating sites, which followed Cyclone Yasi, in Queensland. Photo: VICSES



ERS

I commend previous speakers for their contributions and for their regaling of local stories which very much give an outline of the Australian character.

These events have been a national tragedy. They are very much part and parcel of our natural environment, but we lost 22 lives in the recent floods in Queensland and there are still, as has been noted, nine people unaccounted for. In fact, since 30 November last year, we have lost 35 Australians in floods. Each of those is a personal tragedy for families, friends and communities. Many will never fully recover from that hurt and our thoughts are with each and every one of them.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated that these events crept up on us. In part that is the case, but as a result of advice that was provided by the Bureau of Meteorology on 25 November—indeed the last time I was on my feet in this House—

I noted that we were coming into a festive season which was going to be an intense cyclone season and intense period for bushfires along eastern Australia extending over to south western Australia. We have seen as a result the Queensland floods, which originally came from a cyclone belt. We have seen Cyclone Yasi, we have seen the floods in central and northern New South Wales, and also extensive flooding in Victoria and even in Tasmania, and we have seen fire in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

In a radio broadcast today (8 February 2011) the West Australian fire brigade did a rollcall for people evacuated from their homes that indicated those properties that had been destroyed or damaged according to address and the emotion of that was intense - 68 properties were destroyed in and around Perth and another 32 were seriously damaged.

These disasters have had widespread repercussions all around Australia. They are very much, as has been noted, part of our natural environmental history but, nonetheless, devastating and distressing.

As I have indicated, when I was on my feet in this House in November, I noted that we were approaching a very torrid time such as we have suffered in this last summer season. As a result of those warnings and of recommendations arising from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Emergency Management Australia coordinated briefings by Commonwealth agencies including Emergency Management, Geoscience Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, ADF and Human Services for state emergency responders. Arising from those briefings we arranged for liaison officers from Emergency Management Australia to be with state emergency responders to coordinate emergency responses.



6-7 February 2011 - Firefighters worked throughout the night to contain two massive fires on the outskirts of Perth. At least 40 structures, 35 of which were homes, were destroyed in the Roleystone area south east of the WA capital. Photo: The West Australian ©

Those relationships have been extremely effective during the period that we have just gone through.

What we could not account for—at least fully—was the extent of the courage of Australian people, the local leadership and the spirit and resilience of local communities. There is no doubt that, as a result of those factors that are inherent in the Australian people, we have suffered fewer losses of lives, we have suffered less destruction and communities, as we have heard, are bouncing back.

Members mentioned acts of heroism most notably of course Jordan Rice who saved his young brother ahead of himself. We have heard of a mum who unfortunately had her young child ripped from her arms by the floodwaters. We have heard of emergency responders who were able to save most people, fortunately, whom they attempted to save, but regrettably some witnessed a loss as a result of the elements. We have heard of communities banding together. I want to mention a few from my experience.

On the night before Cyclone Yasi hit I was listening to local ABC radio in Queensland. Regrettably, I cannot remember the name of the radio host but he did an outstanding job. Communities were literally huddled in evacuation centres or in their own homes. He kept communication going despite the fact that power had been cut off. People were listening on their transistor radios or

phoning in on their mobile phones that were still working. There were people on their own in their homes, there were single mums in bathrooms with their kids and there were families in evacuation centres. He communicated expert advice including that from the military, he communicated well wishes, and he advised people how to keep their spirits up and what resources would be available to them when the cyclone had passed. That radio host was a true Australian and did an outstanding job.

I acknowledge the work of commercial radio. When I was in Townsville at a local radio station the young receptionist was active in communicating broadcasts to ensure that local pets, who had been lost during the previous evening, were able to be reunited with their owners—a great story, a young lady of her own initiative using the resources of the radio.

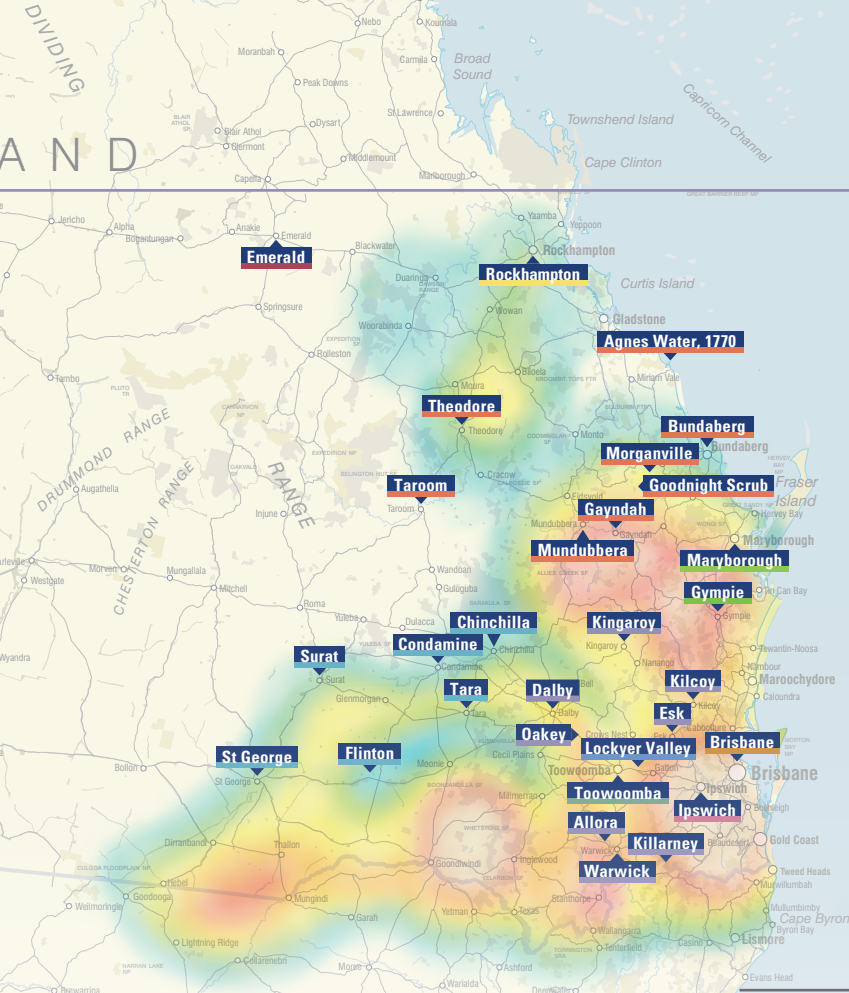
I acknowledge the Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul and other voluntary organisations that operated evacuation centres to keep people safe and to keep their morale up. One person I recall being interviewed made the call to remove people from the senior citizens hall to take them to another evacuation centre. That was the right call, the following morning the senior citizens hall was not standing. I acknowledge local shopping centres that allowed people into those centres for safety and churches. I acknowledge the work of local councillors and the leadership that they showed in bringing

together local expertise and communities and being part of the rebuilding efforts.

The work of local police was truly outstanding. I have no doubt that lives were saved because of the professionalism, the local knowledge, the courage and the forthrightness of local police who were prepared to insist on evacuations when they were necessary.

No other country in the world has so much of its emergency response capability based on volunteerism. Whether we are talking about bushfire fighters, state emergency services or marine rescue they are all based on volunteerism. That is very much something that we are entitled to be proud of, to nurture and to support.

The Minister for Defence will speak shortly, but 1,900 members of the Australian Defence Force are assisting in the Queensland floods and 4,000 are available to help in the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi and elsewhere around Australia. Their work has been truly outstanding. Mention has been made of utility workers; of health workers; of local government employees; of community service workers, including Centrelink staff and counsellors; indeed, of banks, who are perhaps not traditionally complimented in this chamber but have arranged for funds to be available through features such as bank-in-the-box initiatives to ensure local people have available resources. I also mention the support of the rugby league, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland, which I suppose is the heartland of rugby league.



FloodSpread

EXTREME MAJOR MODERATE MINOR

It was described as an inland Tsunami. On 23 December 2010 as families prepared for end of year celebrations and the festive season, heavy rains descended on Queensland and would not give up for more than three week. The sunshine state quickly turned into a deluge. Lives were lost, some have yet to be recovered. A mass of destruction to properties and livelihoods shattered communities. Some 30-odd towns and cities, as far north as Rockhampton and south of the state at Warwick were affected. This is a summary of how Queensland was affected and where the main recovery effort will be spent over the coming months, years.

*The Queensland Floods 23 December 2010-16 January 2011.
How the regions were affected.*

ROCKHAMPTON

- A revised flood forecast suggests up to 4000 properties could be at threat as the Fitzroy River heads towards a peak of above 9m.
- By January 2 the town is completely isolated with road and rail lines closed and the airport shut down.
- Thousands are estimated to have left their homes and 4400 homes and 150 businesses affected.

EMERALD

- Residents prepare to be moved with predictions of record breaking river heights.
- By December 29, the main bridge in to town is cut and at least 200 homes are expected to be inundated.
- The following day, evacuations begin and ultimately 1260 people leave as the Nagoa peaks at 16m and the Mackenzie reaches a height of 20.8m December 30.
- About 1000 homes are estimated to have water running through as floodwaters lap at the doors of a further 3000.

BURNETT REGION

- In Bundaberg 400 people fled their homes as the swollen Burnett River split the town in two, peaking at 7.9m on December 30, well above the 1954 record of 7.2m.
- Flooding forced 20 people in Mundubbera and 30 people in Gayndah from their homes.
- In Theodore the entire population of more than 404 people was evacuated by New Years Eve. Growers reported 100 per cent crop losses, and residents returned on January 14 to find 64 homes unliveable and 80 badly damaged.

MARYBOROUGH AND GYMPIE

- The Mary River burst its banks in Gympie after 300mm of rain fell in the region

on January 8. Nineteen people were eventually evacuated from their homes and 80 buildings were affected as the town became isolated on January 11.

- Further downstream in Maryborough several low-lying homes and up to 20 businesses in the CBD and marina areas were inundated as the Mary River peaked at 7.9m on January 12.

DARLING DOWNS REGION

- Dalby experienced two major flood peaks on December 27 and January 10 as Myall Creek cut the town in half and floodwaters caused hundreds to evacuate.
- Flooding in Warwick caused traffic jams to stretch back more than 10km on December 28.
- Allora saw 60 people evacuated from the township of 923 people as water levels reach 1.33m by January 1.
- In Esk, residents were told to evacuate after a wall of water rushed through the Lockyer Valley on January 10.

BRISBANE

- After earlier modelling that showed it could go higher, the Brisbane River peaks at 4.46m at 2.57am on January 13, below the 1974 record of 5.45m.
- At the river's highest point, 25,000 homes are flooded in 57 suburbs, around 1500 people are in evacuation centres and 25,000 people are isolated in Brisbane's west.
- Electricity is cut to 70,000 homes.
- More than 14000 volunteers register to help with the clean-up effort.

SOUTH WEST REGION

- In Chinchilla, 93 homes were affected and 73 people evacuated as boats began using the Warrego Highway as a canal.

- In Condamine all 131 residents were airlifted out of the town ahead of the town being completely submerged by a record 15.2m flood on December 31. On January 12, the town was completely evacuated for a second time.
- In St George 35 people were ultimately evacuated and 50 homes affected, and in Surat two people were evacuated and 14 homes affected.

IPSWICH

- On January 12, 1100 people are forced in to evacuation centres as the Bremer River peaks at 19.5m about 4pm, slightly below the 1974 level.
- A predicted 100,000 homes are set to be without power in Brisbane and Ipswich and 3000 homes and businesses are flooded.

LOCKYER VALLEY

- On January 10 a massive "inland tsunami" swept through the townships of Grantham, Withcott, Helidon, Murphy's Creek and Postman's Ridge, all but annihilating the settlements.
- The entire population of Forest Hill – more than 300 people – is evacuated by black hawk helicopters on January 11.
- One day after the devastation, 78 people are still missing.
- Of the 22 people killed by the floods, most hailed from the Lockyer-Toowoomba region. The search for missing people continues.

TOOWOOMBA

- Cars are swept from the road and motorists killed when an "inland tsunami" sweeps through the town's main street and on to the Lockyer Valley on January 10.

Text: The Courier Mail ©





The debris in the tree above Sergeant Peter Wardell and Leading Senior Constable Stephen Dempsey shows the height of the flood water at the Campaspe River, Victoria. Photo: The Police Association Victoria/gregnoakes.com

When we were in Ipswich, there were Parramatta, Penrith and some other teams, who had been visiting the evacuation centres. We met them with the local member, Shayne Neumann.

Finally, I turn to a matter mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—that is, that it is now appropriate to reflect in a professional way on the events. This Friday (11 February 2011), there will be a meeting of emergency management ministers to conduct a debriefing on these events, and next week the Council of Australian Governments will discuss planning for a national resilience strategy involving all arms of government and the private sector. I note that relief is important. We have, as members are aware, the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, which are essentially a partnership between Commonwealth and state governments providing personal hardship payments, business support and ultimately, of course, assisting in the rebuilding of infrastructure. At a federal level, we have the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment. In respect of those, we have paid out some \$450 million to 430,000 Australians as a result of these recent events.

While focusing on relief is important, we must continue to focus on prevention and mitigation. As part of that rebuilding effort,

we must have constantly in mind the need for the betterment and improving that infrastructure so it is less susceptible to these natural events in the future. There is no doubt that resilience works, that building in mitigation and prevention techniques works, and I think the aftermath and consequences of Cyclone Yasi are testament to that. Lessons were learned from Cyclone Larry and it is a remarkable achievement that, although there were losses of life in the aftermath, as a result of the impact of the cyclone, it seems, there was no loss of life. That is a remarkable achievement by all the local responders who I have referred to, and I give note to a very mild mannered fellow, the leader of Emergency Management Queensland, Minister Neil Roberts. His leadership, in a low-key, unsung, but very effective way, I have no doubt was very much part of that successful response. Measures such as the National Emergency Warning System, which came online last February and has now issued literally hundreds of thousands of messages on SMS and telephone, have been responsible for keeping people safe.

Also, what is clearly evident when you look at the buildings that have survived in these areas is that local planning decisions are so tremendously important in ensuring that areas are developed

where they should be developed and are not where they should not and, of course, the enforcement of building codes is tremendously important as to whether those buildings survive and that ultimately the people are safe. Community awareness, the fact that people in the path of the cyclone actually cleaned up their own properties to prevent missiles affecting their neighbours' properties, was itself a source of minimising damages. Things such as levees, firebreaks, evacuation plans and, indeed, even public advice about local, private and family emergency kits are all part and parcel of developing resilience as part of our community.

We have an extremely professional and committed emergency response team that works well together at a local, state and federal level. We have strong and resilient communities, but it is important, as others have mentioned, that we do maintain that focus on mitigation on prevention. It is through properly resourcing, thinking through, planning and working together at all levels of government and with the private sector that we further enhance the ability of local communities to cope with and bounce back from these natural environmental events that are very much part of our environmental history but are, as we have seen, so tremendously destructive and distressing. ●

COOLING PATIENTS MAY REDUCE BRAIN INJURY

Intensive care paramedics will use an intravenous injection of ice-cold saline to cool traumatic brain injury patients, and patients in cardiac arrest, as they are resuscitated.

Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) paramedics have teamed up with Monash University researchers to trial two new treatments aimed at reducing brain injury – known as POLAR and RINSE.

In the POLAR trial (Prophylactic HypOthermia to Lessen TrAumatic BRain Injury), MICA paramedics will inject cold saline solution into patients as part of their treatment at the trauma scene and en route to hospital. Hospitals involved in the study continue to cool the patient to a body temperature of 33 degrees (about four degrees below normal).

RINSE (Rapid Infusion of Cold Normal Saline) is the largest cardiac arrest trial ever undertaken in Australia. MICA paramedics will, for the first time, intravenously give cardiac arrest patients cold saline solution during resuscitation. Like the POLAR trial, it also aims to reduce brain injury – the most common cause of poor outcomes after cardiac arrest.

Both trials will compare the outcomes of patients who are randomly chosen for cooling to those treated by MICA paramedics following current protocols.

Ambulance Victoria Associate Professor Stephen Bernard said POLAR and RINSE built upon findings of previous trials undertaken by the organisation.

"The process of injecting cardiac arrest patients with cold fluids after resuscitation was first trialled by MICA paramedics from 2005-2007," he said.

"This new trial brings forward the cooling to try to improve outcomes further."

When a person's core temperature is lowered, metabolism inside the body is slowed down meaning that organs such as the brain can maximise the limited oxygen available.

The RINSE trial aims to see whether cardiac arrest sufferers have a better chance of survival and if survivors have a better quality of life if cooled as soon as possible during resuscitation rather than the standard treatment of being cooled on arrival to hospital.



MICA paramedics and Monash University researchers have commenced two new trials aimed at reducing brain injuries.

In regards to the POLAR trial, despite best efforts, current management of severe traumatic brain injury still results in poor outcomes with approximately 50 per cent of victims either dying or being unable to live independently afterwards. This is associated with huge socioeconomic costs with many of those affected by severe traumatic brain injury being young.

'Previous research in animal trials and also in some clinical trials in humans has shown benefit, however there is no definitive evidence to prove that cooling is beneficial,' Professor Bernard said.

"We now have the opportunity to perform a trial that will answer the question about the role of early cooling in the management of severe traumatic brain injury."

MICA Group Manager Mick Stephenson said Ambulance Victoria and the medical researchers had a long history of successful collaboration. In similar studies, MICA paramedics have sedated and taken over the breathing for patients with traumatic brain injuries and cardiac arrest patients have been cooled pre-hospital.

"We hope to be able to improve survival rates and create even better lives for people who have a cardiac arrest or suffer traumatic brain injuries

while also progressing the paramedic profession and expanding the skill set of MICA paramedics," Mr Stephenson said.

Victoria is a world leader in improving outcomes for patients who suffer a form of cardiac arrest that allows the heart to be shocked back into rhythm by a defibrillator.

In 2003-2004, 39 percent of cardiac arrest patients presenting with a shockable rhythm survived to hospital and 14 percent got to go home. In metropolitan Melbourne, that figure has now jumped to 60 percent of patients arriving at hospital with vital signs and almost one in three patients surviving to discharge.

POLAR will run over three years and involve 512 patients from across Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand. Victorian hospitals taking part in the trial include the Alfred and Royal Melbourne Hospital. The study is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Transport Accident Commission.

The two-and-a-half year RINSE study is also funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council and will analyse the outcomes of 2,512 adult patients who are in cardiac arrest on arrival of paramedics. It will also run in South Australia and Western Australia. ●



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COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO RESCUE WOMAN

NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services Pr and Recruitment Manager Rebecca **Forrest**

It's bad enough falling off a ladder in your own backyard, let alone down a mountain out in God's country.

While emergency services teams work collaboratively and cooperatively right around the country, in the vast and often harsh Northern Territory environment it is imperative for safety and rescue situations.

Recently, a 60 year old woman slipped and fractured her lower leg 200 meters from the top of a mountain located 20 minutes out from Alice Springs.

Unable to make it back down the Mount Gillen walking track without medical assistance, she was fortunate to find mobile reception.

Within an hour, two St John Ambulance staff had made the trek and found the woman, while ten Northern Territory Emergency Services (NTES) volunteers were dispatched with equipment for an expected vertical rescue.

NTES Southern Region Operator Rachael Molloy said it wasn't long before the danger of manoeuvring a stretcher down a mountain was realised, making it clear that the only way was via a helicopter.

"NTES staff worked with St John Ambulance officers to load the patient for transportation," Ms Molloy said.

"Everyone did an excellent job especially in the hot and humid temperatures.

"To some on the day, I am sure that mountain seemed twice as large and twice as high."

In such arid regions it is imperative for emergency service departments to work together. In this case, it was the NTES and St John Ambulance joining forces to recover the injured woman in what is often harsh and fatal environment in the outback of the Northern Territory.

St John's Ambulance Deputy Operations Manager Southern Region Peter Monks said the Sunday morning job on Mount Gillen was made more challenging with the exact location of the woman unknown at the time the call was received.

"Park rangers assisted in allowing access for our four-wheel drive vehicles at an enter point near the base of the range," he said.

The rescue took a team of two St John Ambulance officers and 10 NTES workers five hours and 14 minutes to rescue the woman from the point of call to arriving at hospital.



NTES and St John Ambulance work in hot temperatures and remote landscape to rescue a 60 year woman with a broken ankle on a mountain 20 minutes out of Alice Springs.

"The crew then proceeded to find the patient and eventually found her after walking up the trail for over an hour.

"The patient's fracture was stabilised and pain relief was administered."

Mr Monks was notified and the assistance of NTES was requested.

"Initially we were unsure if a vertical rescue was required, however, NTES responded with crew and rescue equipment," he said.

Mr Monks accompanied the NTES crew to the patient where she was packaged into a Stokes Litter.

"With the assistance of NTES volunteers we all commenced the decent," Mr Monks said.

"Due to the steep terrain, a safety line was deployed for the litter. The trail was very narrow and progress was slow."



St John Ambulance officers lead NTES staff to the woman, 200 metres from the top of Mount Gillen.

The helicopter landed on the only flat section of the trail and the patient was transferred and flown to a football oval and then transferred by ambulance to the Alice Springs Hospital.

The five hours and 14 minutes it took from the time the patient's call was received to arriving at hospital is testament to the vast Northern Territory landscape and challenges emergency services teams face day-to-day.

Mr Monks praised the teamwork and professionalism of the NTES Volunteers, stating his appreciation on behalf of the responding St John Ambulance crew, and the patient. ●



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ONE YEAR ON, TEXT MESSAGES OF HOPE HELP HAITIANS REBUILD THEIR LIVES

Twelve months on from the tragic earthquake which devastated Haiti, hope is emerging amid the rubble as people begin to rebuild their lives.

Using money from UK donations, the British Red Cross is using innovative technology to provide immediate cash grants and small-business training to thousands of families, helping them back on their feet.

Taking advantage of high-levels of mobile phone ownership in Haiti, the British Red Cross has cut through banking bureaucracy and paperwork to make sure people get money quickly and securely through text messages.

"It is virtually impossible to overstate the impact of the quake", said Alastair Burnett, recovery manager with the British Red Cross.

"The numbers of people killed is hard to even imagine, but there are millions more who survived but were robbed of their homes, jobs and livelihoods as well as their loved ones.

"Recovering from such a huge disaster will take years, and twelve months on is still just the beginning of that journey, but there are real positives which must not be overlooked."

One development has been the increasing use of mobile phone technology - seeing millions of targeted text messages sent to those at risk of cholera, tens-of-thousands of phoned-in enquiries fielded, and thousands of cash grants distributed.

British Red Cross teams have been providing sanitation and hygiene education to tens-of-thousands of people living in camps in Port-au-Prince, and, while that work continues, the society has also rolled out projects directly supporting the recovery of communities.

Four-thousand families in Port-au-Prince have already received texted cash grants of US\$250 to meet basic needs—including covering children's school fees and food costs.

Through the system, grant recipients are texted a code, which when presented along with identification at a bank entitles



This young Haiti survivor could be one of thousands to benefit from the British Cross UK's efforts in providing immediate cash grants through high level mobile technology.

them to withdraw a set amount of money.

A further 3,000 families will be supported with grants, along with training to develop small businesses.

In Les Cayes, an area outside Port-au-Prince which many families moved to after the earthquake, the British Red Cross is providing school fees for up to 4,000 children and will support up to 3,000 families with cash grants.

Fifty-one-year-old Jacquet Salnave worked in a bank, until the quake took his home and his job. He now shares a makeshift shelter with eight other members of his family, but is looking at a brighter future after receiving a Red Cross grant.

"I didn't have enough money to send my children to school," he said.

"This money has really helped us so much and it came just in time for the school year.

"It was very useful to receive cash rather than items from the Red Cross because this gave me more flexibility to spend the money on the things that we need the most.

"In the future, if I have the money, I would like to invest in my own small business so that I am self-sufficient.

Right now, I would do take any job that I can find."

Richard Casagrande, working on the British Red Cross livelihoods project in Haiti, has seen the difference the money has made to people and communities at first hand.

"Working with communities, real progress is being made, but that is not to pretend there have not been frustrations," he said.

"The work the Red Cross has been doing here has undoubtedly saved lives and is supporting communities as they recover, but we cannot rebuild whole cities or national economies.

"Supporting livelihoods helps communities start out on the road to recovery – if people have an income they can start to send their children to school, feed their families and rebuild their homes.

"That can kick-start an upward spiral of growth which will benefit the whole community."

The British Red Cross is part of a global voluntary network, responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies, helping people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. For more check out www.redcross.org.uk ●



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THE INSTITUTE'S AIMS

To provide a professional body for the study of the roles and functions of Emergency Services and Emergency Management Organisations throughout Australia, and the promotion and advancement of professional standards in these and associated services.

THE INSTITUTE'S OBJECTIVES

- 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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- An opportunity to be part of a progressive Australia-wide Institute dedicated to the progression and recognition of the Emergency Service role in the community.
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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.

- Corporate members receive a bronze plaque free of charge and can advertise on the AIES website, as well as provide articles for inclusion in the Institute's journal.

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NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE JOURNAL

Editor

Kristi High

Email: editor@aies.net.au

Phone: 0407 366 466



HAPPY NEW YEAR

The APY Lands are abuzz with the distribution of the 2011 AIES calendar, which pictured the 2009 Far North West Sports League Grand Final teams in action on the front cover.

During a recent drug and alcohol trafficking detection operation, a joint effort with WA Police from Blackstone, Detective Brevet Sergeant Matthew Buck took the opportunity to hand a copy of

the calendar to the pictured trio, which included one of the front cover stars - Lloyd Ajax (pictured left) who played for winning side Amata in the 2009 Grand Final against Mimili. His mates Gregory Baker (middle) and Jonathon Tunkin (right) were also happy to pose for a photo before being waved on - happy with their calendar, and some welcomed water. ●

Keeping time in a timeless country. Photo Matthew Buck





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