

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY



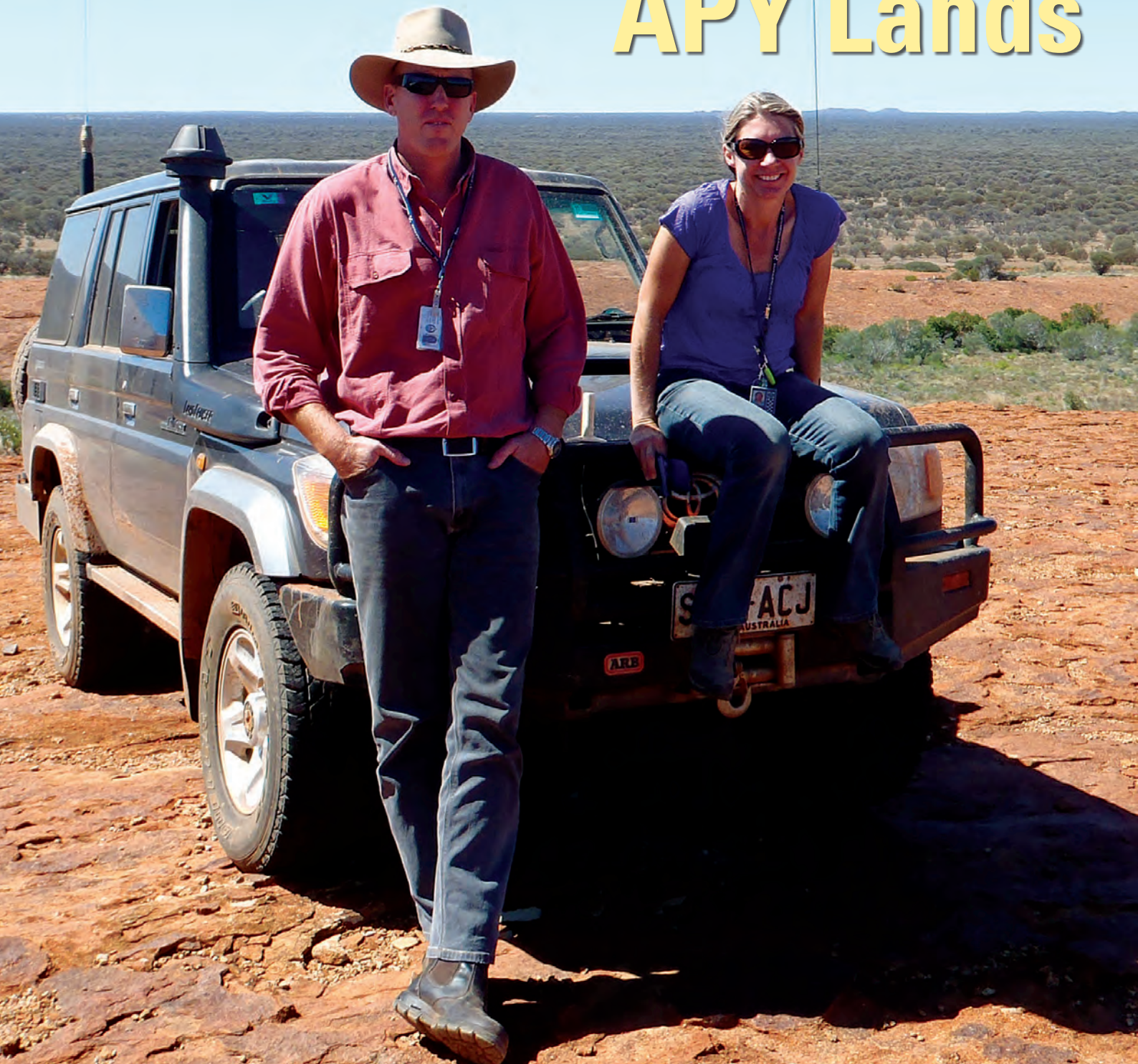
A.I.E.S.

## RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

VOLUME 25 NO. 2 AUTUMN 2012  
PRINT POST PUBLICATION NO. PP337586/00067

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Official Publication of  
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Print Post Approved  
PP 337586/00067

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www.aies.net.au

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The 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.

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY



## RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

Autumn 2012 • National Emergency Response

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Detective Brevet Sergeant Matthew Buck and Senior Constable First Class Amanda Francis stop for a break from police work in the APY Lands.



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**Bob Maul, LFAIES**

**General Secretary/Registrar**

AIES is pleased to announce the following emergency service people became members of the Institute between December 2011 and February 2012.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>State</b>
Ray Allen	Fortescue Metal (Ambulance & Rescue)	WA
Mark Ballin	Police	QLD
Michael Cooksley	Rural Fire Service	NSW
Thomas Dunbar	Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority	VIC
Dr Michael Eburn	SES	ACT
Philip Groom	St John Ambulance	WA
Kevin Harris	Mining/Emergency Management	WA
Sumedha Herath	Fortescue Metals (Rescue/Medical)	SA
Amber Hill	Queensland Health	QLD
Steve Jenkins	SES/Emergency Management	QLD
Glen Jones	SES	NSW
Bernard Kates	SES	NSW
Ian Mannix	ABC/Emergency Management	SA
Phil Martin	St John Ambulance	WA
Sharon Nunn	Melbourne Health	VIC
Benjamin Pickup	SES	NSW
Carl Reichelt	Disaster Management Australia	QLD
Alan Rollinson	SES	NSW
Konrad Sawczynski	Rural Fire Service	NSW
Mark Schulz	Rural Fire Service	QLD
Michael Symes	Police Service	QLD
Gregory Walsh	AMSA	ACT
Philip Wilkin	Health/Medical	SA
Kathryn Wright	Emergency Management QLD	QLD
Stephen Young	Corporate Affiliate/Emergency Management	QLD

## EDITOR'S REPORT

### Kristi High

One of the things about a journal is it is full of opinions. *National Emergency Response* is no different. Sometimes, these opinions cause debate. The AIES welcomes one of the country's leading police officers to the Autumn edition. NSW Assistant Commissioner Michael Corby has refuted many claims made by AIES member, policing student and SES volunteer Christopher Budd in an article that appeared in the Spring edition of *National Emergency Response* titled *Actors in Waiting*. We thank Mr Corby for his submission that puts forward

the views of the New South Wales Police Force on recruiting and training. While the AIES does not have to agree with comments made in every article submitted to the journal, we do stand by the purpose of this publication and that is to inform, discuss and encourage our members to put forth their opinion.

Apart from the publication of our quarterly journal, the AIES works around the year to attract members to take part in sharing opinions that will promote and advance professional standards within emergency services. In the last quarter, we certainly did that. There have not been many periods since the establishment of the institute, in 1977,

were there has been such an influx in members in one quarter. This is a credit to the tireless work of our National Executive, including Vice-President John Rice who has enabled our online registration function on the institute's website, and all of our state presidents, registrars and treasurers who are constantly recruiting.

In this issue, new AIES member Dr Michael Eburn has provided a legal Q&A for volunteers, we welcome back Alastair Wilson who has wrapped up last year's AEMV National Volunteer Summit perfectly and please enjoy Martin Boyle's final article, and amazing photographs, on Antarctica. Kristi. ●

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Alan Marshall, FAIES

*National President*

## REVIEW OF THE PAST

As we review the third anniversary of the firestorm that was Black Saturday, 7 February 2009, and reflect on the past, we are still learning. Emergency management principles do change and communities expand into areas of forest. The urban density continues to spread with the full support services in catch-up mode. The communities affected by the 1939 Victorian fires, known as Black Friday, were situated in the main in forests around saw mills, with workers employed at the end of poor transport with an almost non-existent emergency support network. Their isolation resulted in poor early warning of surrounding safety or firestorm activity. At some forestry mills they did, however, build refuse shelters in old mine tunnels. These shelters were used as some relief on hot days or as a place to go when the mills went about deliberate burn off of the bark.

Out of the Royal Commission of the 1939 fires came some interesting recommendations including better education for the community in fire and its nature, the establishment of more fire services (both forestry and rural) to support them, along with improved roads and communication networks. There was a serious consideration for fire shelters to be a permanent fixture at mills. Victoria was to be zoned for fire warnings on extreme days. There was a concern as to how the community could help itself given the isolation and poor communication regarding emergency support issues.

Moving forward to 2012, and many more emergencies later, as a community we have read recent reports on agencies acting in isolation and being stretched beyond their capacity, and that there must be changes as to how we manage. A lesson we have learned is that communities that take on a shared responsibility and know their capabilities are better prepared

for an emergency. We are moving towards changes in administration, legislation, and a clear focus on serving all within the community to achieve a genuine all-hazards, all agencies approach. Emergency services are heavily reliant on the efforts of thousands of volunteers. Volunteers and their community support are pivotal to successful emergency response and recovery. As a nation, we recognise that to build resilience in communities it must be shared by individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as governments. Recommendations need action, through a clear line of command acting in a timely manner, with assigned accountable outcomes including feedback and follow up, through to managed completion. A major lesson we are still learning in emergencies is that there must be a cohesive and unambiguous leadership structure that is accountable.

These historic fires were truly unstoppable. Black Friday (1939), Ash Wednesday (1983) and Black Saturday (2009) all resulted in large areas burnt and a high loss of life. Major changes to emergency management followed. The fire warning in Victoria for these fires in today's fire danger rating would be Code Red. These are the worst conditions for bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high-risk bushfire areas.

## NOTICES DISASTER MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE – BRISBANE

The Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference will be held in Brisbane in April. A joint initiative of three not-for-profit organisations – the Australian Institute of Emergency Services, the Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Organisation Inc, and the Association for Sustainability in



Business Inc – the conference will focus on Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (PPPR). See page 17 for more details.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE INSTITUTE

The AIES Annual Meeting of General Council will be held at the Brisbane Convention Centre on 16 April 2012, commencing at 9.15am.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF INSTITUTE

Members are invited to attend the AIES AGM to be held at the Riverside Hotel, Brisbane on 16 April 2012 commencing at 7pm. The Queensland Division of the AIES is coordinating the AGM. For more information please call Queensland Division Registrar Greg Eustace on 0417 437 585 or email registrar.qld@aies.net.au

## JOURNAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD

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

On behalf of the General Council of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services, stay safe and healthy and I hope to see you at our AGM in April. ●



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- 1 SelectingSuper, a company of Rainmaker Information Pty Limited ABN 86 095 610 996, describes the best overall fees payable for super funds open to the public where overall fees are calculated for a member earning around \$50,000 pa who has had \$50,000 in their super fund's default investment option. Research dated August 2011.
- 2 The funds in *Money* magazine's Best of the Best Lowest-Cost Super Funds were chosen from SuperRatings' platinum-, gold- and silver-rated balanced funds and ranked on their annual costs associated with a \$50,000 balance. First State Super was the winner in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- 3 In Rainmaker's Benchmarking Report, June 2011, First State Super was ranked 5th in the 'Top 50 Super funds by assets'.
- 4 Financial planning services are provided by Health Super Financial Services Pty Ltd (HSFS) (ABN 37 096 452 318, AFSL 240019) trading as FSS Financial Planning (FSSFP). FSSFP is wholly owned by the FSS Trustee Corporation (ABN 11 118 202 672, AFSL 293340), Trustee of the First State Superannuation Scheme (ABN 53 226 460 365). January 2012.

# PROTECTING THOSE WHO PROTECT US

## Legal questions answered for emergency management volunteers



In November 2011, lawyer and emergency service volunteer Dr Michael Eburn made a presentation to the ACT Division of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services. Based on that presentation, Dr Eburn prepared a paper for all AIES members that addresses a number of legal questions relevant to emergency service volunteers. While Dr Eburn refers to the law in ACT, he says the answers will be similar in other state jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Michael Eburn MAIES

### As an emergency volunteer, can I be sued?

We can never say never, but it is extremely unlikely. Despite rumors to the contrary, there is much legal protection in place. Civil liability legislation has been enacted to protect volunteers and provides that volunteers are not personally liable for acts or omissions made 'honestly and without recklessness' whilst carrying out community work.<sup>2</sup> If they are negligent or otherwise liable, the liability attaches not to the volunteer but to the organisation for which they are volunteering.

For emergency service volunteers, protection is also provided by specific emergency services legislation. In the ACT, an emergency services official, which includes a member of the emergency services, is not personally liable for anything that they do, or fail to do, provided they are acting 'honestly and without recklessness' when performing a function, or if they believe they are performing a function, under the relevant emergency management law.<sup>3</sup> Where the Act applies, it is the territory that will be liable for the actions of the members.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of providing the protection when the official believes that they are performing a function under the Act is that it extends protection to well-intentioned actions. If they are acting 'honestly', that is to trying to achieve the purposes of the Act, then they are protected even if it turns out that they were wrong and their actions were not justified or required by the law.

And one has to ask why would anyone want to sue a volunteer? The aim of suing someone is to receive money compensation to put the person who suffered the loss, whether physical injury or property loss, back in the position they would have been if they had not been wrongly injured. A volunteer is unlikely to have the resources to make good any damage whereas an action against the government will be funded through its insurance and self-insurance schemes and far better prospect for actually recovering damages.

Also, if you are insured, and you make a claim on your insurance, then your insurer is vested with your rights including the right to sue. Much litigation, including the litigation from the 2003 Canberra fires, was actually started by insurance companies seeking to recover money they had paid out, not by individuals. Insurance companies understand that there is no point suing a defendant who cannot pay and will have no interest in suing a volunteer when they could sue a territory or state government.

### What is the role of the coroner?

A coroner has the jurisdiction to enquire into deaths,<sup>5</sup> fires that have destroyed or damaged property<sup>6</sup> and disasters.<sup>7</sup> For the emergency services, in particular fire services, this means the coroner has jurisdiction to enquire into nearly all their responses.

When holding an inquest into a death,

a coroner is to confirm the identity of the deceased, when and where they died, and the cause of their death.<sup>8</sup> When holding an inquiry into a fire or disaster the coroner is to determine the cause and origin of the fire or disaster and the circumstances in which it happened.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the coroner 'may comment on any matter ... including public health or safety and the administration of justice'.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of 'cause and origin' of a fire that has been interpreted widely. In litigation to limit the coroner's inquiry into the 2003 Canberra fires, the Supreme Court said:

If the concept of 'the fire' were to be interpreted narrowly, the jurisdiction might be confined to determining whether the initial ignition was due to arson or was caused by some accident or natural phenomenon such as a lightning strike.<sup>11</sup>

The court accepted however that was not what was intended:

It would be quite unrealistic to regard a fire that had travelled long distances and/or burnt out vast areas of bushland as coextensive with a fire that had been smouldering on the end of a cigarette when negligently thrown from a car window and, then to dismiss from consideration any intervening or contributing events.<sup>12</sup>

They went onto say:

For these reasons, we are satisfied that the term, 'the fire', in s 18 of the Act should be construed to mean the fire that caused the damage to property

rather than merely the initial ignition from which that fire ultimately developed.<sup>13</sup>

The coroner can make adverse comments directed at individuals. Before making an adverse comment, the coroner must provide a copy to the person who is to be named and invite them to respond either in person or in writing. If the person responds in writing they can require the coroner to include their written response in the coroner's final report.<sup>14</sup>

The coroner cannot determine that anyone, or any organisation, was negligent or legally liable to pay compensation. The coroner cannot determine that any one is guilty of a criminal offence. If the coroner believes that the evidence suggests that someone is guilty of a serious criminal offence, he or she must notify the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and stop the inquest or inquiry. The DPP will then determine whether or not anyone should be charged. The inquest or inquiry may be resumed if the DPP rules that there are no charges to be laid or charges are brought, the accused is put on trial and either convicted or acquitted of the charges.

#### What about the new OHS Act?

New uniform work health and safety legislation is being introduced across Australia in 2012. Originally intended to come into force in all jurisdictions on 1 January, it is now being phased in at different times. In the ACT, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT) has replaced the *Work Safety Act 2008* (ACT).

The new law does not require that all workplaces are risk free. The duties imposed are duties to eliminate, or if that is not possible, then minimise risks only so far as that is reasonably practicable. In deciding what is reasonably practicable, regard must be had to the likelihood of the hazard or the risk occurring, the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk, the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, the cost associated with eliminating or minimising the risk and whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.<sup>15</sup> What is reasonable must take into account the nature of the task including the inherent risks to workers<sup>16</sup> and volunteers.<sup>17</sup> Where a residual risk remains, it is appropriate to ask 'is the objective worth the risk?' and often it is. Turning out to a house fire carries a residual risk to fire fighters but if it is a risk that has been minimised as far as is reasonably practical, it is worth turning



*State laws protect emergency service volunteers in the event an incident goes wrong.*

out to obtain the benefits of suppressing the fire rather than allowing it to spread.

Under the Act, volunteers are treated like employees. Volunteers are owed, and owe, health and safety duties. Volunteers may be prosecuted for failing to take reasonable care to protect the health of safety of themselves and others; however the inclusion of volunteers in work place health and safety is not new in the ACT.<sup>18</sup> The 2008 Act<sup>19</sup> also defined 'worker' to include volunteers and there have been no reported case where a volunteer has been prosecuted for breaching their own health and safety obligations.

Officers can also be prosecuted for failing to ensure an organisation has proper health and safety procedures in place, but 'officer' does not mean the same as it might in a uniformed organisation. An officer is a 'person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part' of the 'undertaking'.<sup>20</sup> An officer is therefore the commissioner and the chief officers of the various emergency services, and perhaps some of the senior executive. How far down

the chain of the command the concept goes remains to be seen but one thing is clear, a volunteer officer cannot be prosecuted for failing to perform an officers' health and safety duties.<sup>21</sup>

#### Can my boss refuse to let me respond?

The *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) applies across Australia. That Act says:

- (1) An employer must not terminate an employee's employment for ...
  - (h) temporary absence from work for the purpose of engaging in a voluntary emergency management activity, where the absence is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances.

Determining whether or not the absence is reasonable will depend on a myriad of factors including the work the person is employed to do, the terms of that employment, the nature of the emergency, the time away, whether or not they were able to give notice. The list of factors will vary with each job and each employee and employer. If a volunteer thinks that their absence was 'reasonable' they could seek





a remedy for unfair dismissal but that can be complex, time consuming, unpleasant and may not secure your job again.

The reality is that a volunteer needs permission from their employer if they are going to absent themselves from work and it will be up to each employer and employee to determine the circumstances in which absence for emergency services work will be acceptable.

#### How do lawyers and judges make judgments about emergency responses?

Of course some lawyers are emergency service volunteers but even if they are not, or never have been, judges are there to adjudicate disputes, assisted by lawyers. Because they are adjudicating between competing claims and interests, it should be remembered that just because a person or an organisation, including an emergency service organisation, is before a court or is subject to detailed cross examination, it does not mean that anything has gone wrong, or that you have done anything wrong. There is no filter to ensure that

only the negligent are sued or only the guilty are prosecuted. It is the role of a court, assisted by lawyers, to determine if there was negligence or other liability.

That may not make court a more pleasant place to be, but it may go some way to give some confidence that if you are asked a question, you really are being given an opportunity to answer it. A person may allege some neglect but a court is a place to answer those questions, rather than get offended that they have been asked.

#### Conclusion

This paper represents the type of questions I am often asked by volunteers. There are undoubtedly many more questions and the answers will vary at least in the detail, in each state and territory. Whether these answers will raise or lower volunteer's concerns about the law or how the law will treat them I cannot say. If anyone is looking for reassurance, the best that I can offer is that I have studied the law and the emergency services for many years, and I remain an emergency services volunteer.

#### References

- 1 The law does differ in the jurisdiction and the application of the law depends on the specific facts. Anyone with concerns about their legal position should seek advice from the service for which they volunteer, their volunteer's association or a lawyer in their state or territory.
- 2 *Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002* (ACT) s 8.
- 3 *Emergencies Act 2004* (ACT) s 198.
- 4 *Ibid* s 198(3).
- 5 *Coroners Act 1997* (ACT) s 13.
- 6 *Ibid* s 18.
- 7 *Ibid* s 19.
- 8 *Ibid* s 52(1).
- 9 *Ibid* s 52(2).
- 10 *Ibid* s 52(4).
- 11 *The Queen v Coroner Maria Doogan; Ex Parte Peter Lucas-Smith* [2005] ACTSC 74, [20].
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 *Ibid* [22].
- 14 *Coroners Act 1997* (ACT) s 55.
- 15 *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT) s 18.
- 16 *Ibid* s 18.
- 17 *Ibid* s 7.
- 18 Or in the Northern Territory or Queensland.
- 19 *Work Safety Act 2008* (ACT) s 9.
- 20 *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT) ss 247 and 252.
- 21 *Ibid* s 34.

#### About the author

Dr Michael Eburn is a Senior Research Fellow at the ANU College of Law and the Fenner School of Environment and Society in the Australian National University, Canberra where he is engaged in a Bushfire CRC research project of the impact of law and policy on emergency management. He is the author of *Emergency Law* (3rd ed, 2010, The Federation Press) and numerous articles and conference papers on issues to do with law and the emergency services. Michael has been a volunteer with St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) and an honorary ambulance officer with NSW Ambulance. He is currently a volunteer with both NSW and ACT State Emergency Services. Questions and comments can be directed to michael.eburn@anu.edu.au



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*The Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games brings together a range of law enforcement and emergency services personnel to compete in a wide range of sports every two years.  
Photo: Courtesy of Hutt City Council.*

## GOOD SPORTS IN HUTT CITY

The siren has sounded on the 2012 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games in Hutt City, New Zealand.

**A** strong contingent of more than 600 Australian athletes have made the trip across to New Zealand to compete in a range of sports including soccer, hockey, touch rugby and waka ama.

The games started on 2 March and will conclude on 9 March with the inaugural Trans-Tasman clash. Players from each country were selected to participate in the Trans-Tasman clash, which was sponsored by Tait Radio Communications, from their performance over the week.

When not competing, participants and their supporters have plenty to do off the field with a range of activities and organised tours including a girl's day out, adventure afternoons and a grape and grain excursion.

To view event photos and the results of the 2012 Hutt City Games visit [www.apandesgames.com](http://www.apandesgames.com).

The next Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games will be held in Melbourne from 19-24 April 2014 with more than 50 sporting disciplines set to feature. ●

# IN BRIEF

## NT FUNDING

Applications for the 2012/2013 NT Disaster Resilience Emergency Volunteer Fund are now open.

Funding up to \$75,000 is available to assist volunteer organisations at the frontline of territory emergency management in recruitment, retention, training or equipment projects that will improve their ability to respond to natural disasters. The funding is part of the Natural Disaster Resilience Program made possible through a national partnership agreement between the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth. Applications close 13 April. For details on eligibility, application forms, and how to submit a grant proposal, visit Funding Programs at [www.emergency.nt.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nt.gov.au)



## ARSON COMMUNITY WEBSITE



A new website to reduce the number of deliberately lit bushfires in Australia has been launched by the Commonwealth.

The Bushfire Arson Prevention website will educate the community about arson and provide people with the tools to identify risks and report suspicious activity.

Up to 50 percent of bushfires in Australia are deliberately lit or start in suspicious circumstances.

The website was developed in recognition of the important role the community plays in detecting suspicious behaviour of arsonists and working with police to keep the community safe.

Check out [www.bushfirearson.gov.au](http://www.bushfirearson.gov.au)

## AMBULANCE ACTIVE



Paramedics and other ambulance-related professionals, who are part of a union, are discussing issues that are important to their industry on a new social networking website called Ambulance Active. If you work in the ambulance industry, and a member of a state-based union, sign up at [www.ambulanceactive.com.au](http://www.ambulanceactive.com.au) to contribute your thoughts by way of an article, blog or forum discussion, upload a photo or video or just keep in touch with your colleagues. If you are interested in the ambulance industry and not a member, you can still view the content on the website.

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# NSWPF HITS BACK AT STUDENT'S CLAIMS

The Australian Institute of Emergency Services welcomes the response from Assistant Commissioner NSW Police Force Michael Corby APM to an article that appeared in the Spring 2011 edition of *National Emergency Response Journal*.



**Assistant Commissioner  
NSW Police Force  
Michael Corby APM**

In an article titled *Actors in Waiting? Time for a review of NSWPF recruiting policies*, Christopher Budd has made a number of ascertains throughout the article that I feel are incorrect or poorly researched and need to be clarified so readers are provided with an accurate overview of our recruit training.

The NSW Police Force (NSWPF) and Charles Sturt University have formed a unique partnership to design, develop and deliver tertiary courses in policing. The driving force behind this partnership is the recommendations made by the Wood Royal Commission in 1997, in particular, to broaden the focus to

include the involvement of higher education. The Associate Degree in Policing Practice is managed through a contractual arrangement between Charles Sturt University and NSWPF.

The university has had a contractual relationship with NSWPF since 1992 when the Constable Development Program commenced. The Diploma of Policing Practice was introduced in 1998. This became the Associate Diploma Policing Practice in 2004 and the Associate Degree in Policing Practice (ADPP) in 2006. Most recently, this contractual arrangement was awarded to Charles Sturt University through a successful open tender submission. A new contract was awarded in January 2006 for an initial five year period, with a further five year extension option.

Since 1998 the NSWPF has recruited and trained over 15,000 students, with almost 12,000 of those students becoming police officers.

Since 2006 the NSWPF has grown from 14,456 to 15,806 sworn police, as of November 2011.

Attrition rates under this system are no different to pre-1998. Many of the recruits are people who hold trade qualifications and a substantial experience in a range of employment. They bring valuable life experience to a complex job.

There are several study pathways through which a person may enter the ADPP and commence their training to become a police officer in NSW. There

are five sessions of study. Sessions 1 and 2 are undertaken at the Academy and sessions 4, 5 and 6 are undertaken following attestation while employed as a probationary constable. In addition, session 1 may be studied by distanced education for those who do not wish to attend full time on campus at the NSWPF academy. Session 1, via distanced education mode, requires an additional 13 weeks to complete and attendance at residential schools conducted at the NSWPF academy.

The University of Western Sydney Bachelor of Policing, and Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Justice Studies, also offer degrees that provide students with an ability to articulate into the ADPP for the third year of their undergraduate degree. Entry for these bachelor candidates commences at session 2 and all students are required to complete this session at the Goulburn Academy.

In his article, Mr Budd refers to the cost of the course fees. Higher degree courses in the Australian education arena attract a cost for students and the ADPP is no exception. The ADPP is a Fee-HELP based course and the Higher Education Loan Program is available on application. There are a variety of payment plans available for students. There is generally a 25 percent discount for paying up front, which is a personal choice for students. For pre-attestation sessions 1 and 2, the fees equate to a total of \$7720. Fees for post attestation sessions 3, 4 and 5 equate to a total

## ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN POLICING PRACTICE

<b>Session 1</b> Internal (13 weeks)		80 hour work placement	<b>Session 2</b> Internal (14 weeks)	<b>Attestation and Graduate as a Probationary Constable</b>	<b>Session 3</b> Distance Education (14 weeks)	<b>Session 4</b> Distance Education (14 weeks)	<b>Session 5</b> Distance Education (14 weeks)	<b>Confirmed as a Constable of Police Awarded Associate Degree in Policing Practice</b>
<b>Session 1A</b> Distance Education (13 weeks)	<b>Session 1B</b> Distance Education (13 weeks)							



*NSW Police on the job in Coogee, Sydney.*

of \$4632. Fee-HELP can be paid back periodically on commencement of employment with NSWPF. All ADPP students receive scholarship funding for accommodation and meals while living on campus at the NSWPF academy. Additionally, scholarship funding (between \$1400 to \$12000) is available for up to 60 percent of students, and a range of hardship funding is available on approval.

The implementation of this training regime has not affected the average age of recruits. The average age of students entering the ADPP is between 25 and 27 years of age. It is simply not true that the NSW Police has trouble meeting intake targets, particularly compared to other states.

In our view, having a university qualification is a very strong attractor. As a result, NSW has no problem recruiting large numbers of high quality applicants with our recruits being more diverse and representative of the communities they join to serve.

Applicants for the ADPP, and therefore the NSWPF, must go through a rigorous recruitment and testing period prior to being accepted. In addition to medical and physical testing, they must also reach a standard in typing, be able to swim, and hold first aid qualifications. They must also pass a professional suitability assessment that obviously relates to criminal history and traffic history checks and overall aptitude for the role of a police officer.

Despite this rigor, the applicant pool size remains large and diverse. Approximately 25 percent of all applicants now come from outside the major population centres of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong regions. The Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that 37 percent of the population of NSW lives outside these regions, so the percentage of applicants is quite high.

The notion that a student will remain in the program due to the fact they have invested their own time and money into it is a nonsense. The people in the program are motivated to become police officers. The academy staff are well aware that they are training people to work beside their colleagues, family and friends; and ensure the highest



standards are maintained. Having said that, students do leave the program for a variety of reasons, and as the level of study is at the university level, they are able to use their grades for entry into other fields of study if they choose.

Mr Budd is correct in his assertion that it will take a NSWPF officer nine years to become eligible for commissioned rank. There are very valid reasons for this.

Unlike soldiers, police officers have an oath of office, that of constables of police. All police officers must adhere to their oath of office and therefore no matter what rank they hold they hold the same power of arrest, and more importantly that of discretion. Lord Justice Denning in the Privy Council identified that a constable's power is an

original one and is his (sic) own. Unlike a soldier that can be ordered to open fire, a police officer's discretion to apply the law cannot be dictated. It is therefore vital that commissioned police officers know the law, know how to apply it, and know power of discretion. Police perform a very different role than the military. We are sworn to uphold the peace, to enforce the laws, but more importantly to do this with discretion. To assert that a police officer is completely competent in all facets of their profession at the stage their probationary period is completed is an understatement at best. Policing is a profession that has no end date to learning. Similarly, it is a profession where a person may choose to take different paths during their career, each

time learning new skills and developing personally, but always maintaining their commitment to their oath of office.

The Accelerated Prosecutors Training Program has been a success in recruiting and training specialised people for a single purpose. People who enter the police through this stream already hold qualifications in law. If they then chose to enter the police prosecutions branch they are still provided training and development in that field. Having made the oath of office, these people can still be called upon to perform the role of a police officer if required. This is markedly different than recruiting a person for commissioned officer rank.

More importantly, there is more to being a commissioned police officer and a leader, than merely being a planner. It is a naïve view of policing to merely differentiate from commissioned rank to non-commissioned rank as either an actor or a planner. A police force has many responsibilities to their communities well above the role of the military. Being one of the largest police forces in the world, we have a vast body of police officers to draw from. The NSWPF now has leadership training embedded in the transition programs from constable to sergeant, from sergeant to inspector, and inspector to superintendent, as well as a leadership centre aimed specifically at continuing the development of commissioned officers. There are a number of other leadership initiatives aimed at the development of our staff in all facets of leadership and management, not just as a planner.

Commissioned officers in the NSWPF have the experience of policing to rely upon when making decisions. They have the credibility of having 'done the job' and not just holding a tertiary qualification. Mr Budd's opinions regarding officer level intake and rapid promotion don't reflect almost universal standards and practice in police agencies across the western world. Such systems are more common in the developing world.

We recruit from all sections of the community, our selection criteria is deliberately high as are our standards. More information can be obtained from our website at [www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au), Charles Sturt University website at [www.csu.edu.au](http://www.csu.edu.au) or by contacting our Recruitment Branch on 1800222122. ●

# HUNDREDS TAKE PART IN NATIONAL SUMMIT

Recommendations from  
The Future is in our Hands



Photo: CFA Strategic Communications.

**Alastair Wilson**

**M**ore than 400 delegates representing 27 emergency services agencies and organisations – almost all of them volunteers – is a mighty impressive gathering.

The slogan for the 2011 National Emergency Management Volunteers Summit, *The Future is in our Hands*, might appear at first glance to be rather benign, but for the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF), which secured the summit in Canberra last year with Commonwealth Government funding, the deeper challenge was always going to be how to make such a conference relevant.

This was the third national summit for the volunteers and the key issues presented, discussed and debated, were just as relevant as those brought to the very first one in 2001 – the issues of time, training, cost, recognition and people. Ten years on and the sector is still grappling with these primary challenges, however the emphasis has changed from major dependence on government to

taking the challenges into the hands of the volunteers themselves. As Amy Winter, chair of the Australian Youth Council of St John Ambulance Australia, said in giving the volunteers' response to the summit, 'The contributions (to the summit) will go a long way to improving the future of volunteering in the Australian emergency sector. I'm Amy, I'm a volunteer, and the future in is my hands.'

The Summit Working Group distilled 15 recommendations from the two-day conference. These were grouped into the main themes of the conference.

On the subject of time, the two recommendations were that emergency management volunteer organisations minimise the amount of time operational volunteers are required to devote to non-operational tasks, including administrative functions. Also, that organisations review volunteer membership policies to ensure attendance requirements are flexible, other than for operations and essential training.



On the subject of cost, it was recommended that organisations investigate new ways to offset out-of-pocket expenses, including the supply of protective clothing, safety equipment, training and professional development.

On the subject of recognition, the two recommendations were that emergency management volunteer organisations, through the AEMVF, be given the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of policy initiatives that impact on volunteers, and that the role of recovery organisations is better recognised, and that they be provided with improved funding and support.

On the subject of training, recommendations included: volunteer training requirements be streamlined and minimised without compromising standards; training should be dynamic, interactive, flexible and accessible equally to all emergency management volunteers; delivery methods should include e-learning, face-to face and on-the-job training; and volunteer leadership programs be increased and accessible to all emergency management volunteers.

Other recommendations focussed on volunteer organisations ensuring that all training qualifications be portable and that organisations be provided with necessary support to meet the training compliance requirements.

On the topic of people, the recommendation was that emergency management volunteer organisations draw on the expertise and capacity of various partners by establishing strategic alliances between relevant organisations and agencies.

Then, on the subject of research, there were vital recommendations that sector-wide research be undertaken at the local, state and national levels to gain a better understanding of:

- How emergency management volunteers can be better recognised and what current best practice exists within the sector
- How emergency management volunteers can be managed more flexibly and what best practice exists within the sector
- The changing demographics of the sector including age, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as recruitment and retention statistics.

Finally, there were four recommendations relating the AEMVF itself:

- That the AEMVF provide broad representation of emergency management volunteers including younger volunteers, Indigenous volunteers, and volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- That the AEMVF promote increased communications across the sector
- That the AEMVF website be utilised as a clearing house for research and best practice information
- That the AEMVF, with the support of the Australian Attorney-General's Department, undertake to convene the next national summit within a maximum of five years.

### LEADERSHIP

Some of these issues are already being tackled. One that will bring particular value to the volunteer sector is on the subject of leadership training. The very successful Volunteer Leadership Program that has been based at the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) at Mt Macedon through the past three years will be expanded and taken into the regions. AEMI has undertaken to run train-the-trainer sessions that will allow the program to be hosted within a state or territory. A development course was held in late February where more than 20 selected volunteer trainers focused on building

a portable course that could, in the first year, bring the benefits of this leadership training to at least five regional areas. This is in addition to another scheduled Volunteer Leadership program to be held at the Mt Macedon institute late in May.

On the topic of support for volunteers in the emergency sector, it has been a subject of interest that national political leadership has changed. We now have a Minister for Emergency Management in the Commonwealth. While all the state and territory jurisdictions have an emergency services minister (sometimes doubling with police), this is the first time that the Federal Government has placed a minister in charge of emergency management.

Many volunteers will have met Robert McClelland MP, either at the summit in Canberra or at training courses or during operations. As Attorney General, he was responsible for emergency management and took a keen interest in all aspects of the sector's activities. The cabinet reshuffle of last December reduced Mr McClelland's workload by giving the Attorney's role to someone else and creating a special ministry for emergency management. The portfolio will continue to manage the funding that comes to the jurisdictions following major disasters, as well as oversee the activities of the AEMI. It is hoped that this move will give Mr McClelland more time to visit and participate with volunteers in their vital work in preparing for and responding to emergencies across Australia.

The full report from the Volunteers Summit can be downloaded from the AEMI institute's website at: <http://www.em.gov.au/Volunteers/Pages/2011NationalEmergencyManagementVolunteersSummit.aspx> ●

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# NOTICE OF 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



All Members of the Institute are cordially invited to attend the

## 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

to be held at the: Riverside Hotel, 20 Montague Road,  
 South Brisbane on Monday 16 April 2012 commencing at 7pm.

### The Order of Business shall be:

Welcome  
 Apologies  
 Confirmation of Minutes of 2011 Meeting and Matters Arising  
 President's Report  
 General Secretary/Registrar's Report and  
 Adoption of Financial Statements  
 Notices of Motion  
 General Business

### By order of the Board of Directors

**Robert A Maul**

*General Registrar/Company Secretary, AIES*



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# EARTH: FIRE & RAIN

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### **CALL FOR PAPERS NOW OPEN**

Visit the conference website <http://anzdmc.com.au> for details of invited and confirmed speakers, and the list of themes for presentations.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information go to [www.anzdmc.com.au](http://www.anzdmc.com.au) or contact Joint Association Conference Coordinator Angela Stuart on 07 5502 2068 or email [admin@anzdmc.com.au](mailto:admin@anzdmc.com.au)

*This conference is a joint initiative of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services (Queensland Division), the Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Association Inc and the Association for Sustainability in Business Inc.*

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# THE COLOURFUL CHARACTER OF APY

SAPOL Detective Brevet Sergeant Matthew Buck talks to *National Emergency Response Journal* Editor Kristi High about the landscape, lifestyle and colourful characters of APY Lands after spending 18 months working in one of the most remote parts of our vast country.

*Photo: Detective Brevet Sergeant Matthew Buck heads back to South Australia from a visit to Wingellina in Western Australia.*







An abandoned rusty HQ Holden merges with nature.

The daily issues facing police, like substance and sexual abuse, domestic violence, and theft may be the same as most metropolitan and regional stations, but 12 hours north of Adelaide it can be a whole different ball game where permits to enter the land are required, alcohol and gambling are outlawed, and cultural values are respected by 'visitors' working in different services.

In 2010, SA Police Detective Brevet Sergeant Matthew Buck fulfilled a career-long goal in becoming a country cop.

The role? Officer in Charge of Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Criminal Investigation Branch.

Now back at home in Adelaide after almost 18 months on a fly-in/fly-out arrangement, the SAPOL veteran with more than two decades service under his belt, recalls the landscape, lifestyle and colourful characters of APY Lands.

"I was first attracted to APY Lands during a series of two-week stints on general patrol, relieving permanent officers on a fly-in fly-out basis," Detective Buck said.

"The goal of one day being a country officer or detective had long been in the back of my mind, but family commitments came first.

"When a permanent opportunity became available at APY Lands, and the timing was right with my family, I jumped at it."

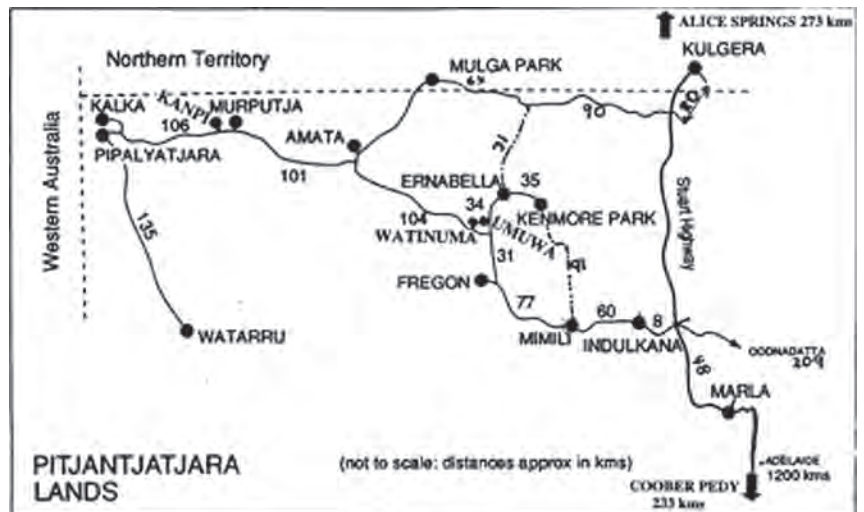
Over the next year and a half, Detective Buck would travel a total of 60,000 kilometres, mostly on some of the worst roads in South Australia. On his six days, he would travel more, back home to Adelaide, mostly on the police plane.

"Apart from the distance, and missing out on special family occasions and children's milestones, there were plenty of benefits working in the APY Lands," he said.

"From a personal perspective, I made some good friends up there and it has been a memorable experience undertaking police work in what were very different conditions to a city station.

"There have also been some benefits also from a family perspective in that there is limited financial drain since everything up there was provided, including housing accommodation."

When referring to 'there', Detective Buck means Umuwa, the administrative centre of the APY Lands, chosen because of its cultural neutrality and central location to the seven main APY communities.





these communities a permanent police presence for the first time.

More than 80 percent of APY Lands' 2,500 strong population are Indigenous Australians from the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara or Ngaanyatjarra peoples who have a long history with the area, and with each other.

Detective Buck recalls the local league football final not soon after he arrived in the APY Lands (2010) that disintegrated into a riot when a spectator from Fregon entered the oval during play and approached the Mimili full back.

"This was more than football rivalry. It stemmed back to family issues with a history going back generations," he said.

"When police went to remove the spectator from the ground, a scuffle broke out.

"Then some onlookers thought the police were being too heavy handed and both teams turned on us, but we managed to regain control."

Keeping in control can have its barriers too, like language differences. The 2006 census showed 58.6 percent of residents living in APY Lands listed Pitjantjatjara as their language spoken at home, with a further 14.3 percent speaking Yankunytjatjara leaving just 18.7 percent speaking English, compared with 78.5 percent of the overall Australian population.

Detective Buck said learning the local's language was important in breaking down barriers.

"The kids can usually speak English but the Elders speak Pitjantjatjara as a first language," he said.

"I've done a few courses and can pick out key words and greetings.

"The older people love the fact we've made an effort."

In February 2012, Detective Buck finished his work at APY Lands, returning home to his wife and two children in Adelaide and leaving behind the 24/7 on call hours, his modest two bedroom house, the dodging of venomous King Brown and Taipan snakes, and waiting for the mail plane to bring letters from home. He also had to say goodbye to the locals, among them his mate, and Aboriginal Elder from Fregon with the adopted camel, who was upset to hear of his leaving because he had not yet taught Detective Buck to throw a traditional hunting spear – a privilege not many non-Aboriginals get to experience. Maybe next holiday Matt! ●

Spread across more than 100,000 square kilometres in north western South Australia, APY Lands is a large Aboriginal local government area that extends into Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The distance and borders can make it difficult to catch criminals, but a collaborative tri-state approach to policing has allowed cross boundary investigations to take place without legislative restraints.

"We have a multi jurisdictional police force in designated areas, which makes it easier to chase crooks," Detective Buck said.

The APY Lands is governed under State Law but also has its own legislation and by-laws pursuant to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act (1981).

Under the legislation, visitors to APY Lands must have a permit to enter, and among the list of by-laws is the prohibition of alcohol.

"The main problems we see here are alcohol, which is outlawed, substance abuse and gambling," Detective Buck said.

"Even though it is prohibited, alcohol still finds its way into the community through the black market where locals on-sell it for phenomenal prices.

"If a non indigenous person who is on the land via a permit is found with alcohol, it is immediate expulsion from APY Lands.

"Cannabis and petrol sniffing are the major vices of substance abuse and we find once we have had some success stopping one, the other rises, so it is a bit like a vicious circle."

Domestic violence and sexual abuse incidents are also high but police take a zero tolerance towards the former and extra reinforcements to combat the latter have arrived in the past year at the Umuwa police branch.

"The drivers of domestic violence are the same across most cultures and aren't unique to APY Lands – stemming primarily from money problems, alcohol abuse or jealousy," Detective Buck said.

"When the money has gone, domestic fights can arise and this also appears to go hand in hand with alcohol abuse."

To reduce the incidence of child sexual abuse and other sex crimes, a separate police unit focusing on these investigations has been established at Umuwa. A Senior Detective was seconded from the SA Sexual Crime Investigation Branch late last year and two female Senior Constables are working in the unit to take statements from victims.

The extra resources came following recommendations from a 2008 report by former Supreme Court Judge Ted Mulligan. The Mulligan Committee of Inquiry Report on sexual abuse in the APY Lands uncovered "harrowing" sexual abuse and inadequate support services for victims.

Since its release, recommendations from the report have been implemented with funding from the Federal and SA State governments. In addition to the extra, specialised, officers at Umuwa, capital funding for new police stations has seen three new police facilities open at Mimili, Amata and Pukatja since December 2009. The new Mimili, and upgraded Amata and Pukatja, police stations have given each of

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# SEARCH AND RESCUE IN ANTARCTICA

## PART III - INCIDENTS

In Martin Boyle's final article on search and rescue operations in Antarctica, he delves into two incidents on the east of the world's most remote continent. Both of these incidents required mutual aid and a multi-national response from national Antarctic programs, and search and rescue agencies.



**Martin Boyle, MAIES**

*Department of Environment, Water,  
Heritage and the Arts  
Australian Antarctic Division  
Field Operator*

### TRAJER RIDGE

Davis station is situated in the Vestfold Hills at 68°35'S 77°58'E, more than 4700 kilometres (kms) south west of Perth, Western Australia. It is one of three Antarctic stations run by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD). Davis is 20 kms from the edge of the continental ice sheet and on one of the largest ice-free areas in Antarctica. The station is surrounded by many islands, lakes and fjords.

On 20 October 2008 at approximately 2pm, an expeditioner crashed a quad bike near Trajer Ridge in the Vestfold Hills, 23 kms from station. The rider was in a field party of two people on a multi-day recreational trip in the local area. He had driven off an ice cliff, making a hard landing on the frozen lake below.

At that time of year, the winter season was coming to an end and there were only

17 people on station. The group had been completely isolated since the last resupply ship, Aurora Australis, left the previous April. The sea ice and extreme weather conditions in the Antarctic over the winter period made it impossible to get in or out of the region. The Aurora Australis was not due in for another three weeks when the wintering team was scheduled to return to Australia.

At the incident scene, the second party member provided first aid and environmental protection for the injured expeditioner. He tried to call the station but found he was in a radio shadow and had to climb the nearby ridge to raise the alarm. Weather conditions at the time were minus 13 degrees Celsius, clear skies, a light north west wind of five knots and a wind chill of minus 19 degrees Celsius.

On station, the radio operator received the message and the search and rescue (SAR) alarm was activated. The station leader quickly established the Davis station SAR team.

Fortunately, the station doctor was at a hut near where the incident had occurred and was able to deploy to the incident scene with other initial responders within 40

minutes. It took an additional two hours for the SAR team to get to the site due to the difficult nature of the terrain. They travelled in a tracked snow vehicle, or Haggglunds, with field and medical equipment.

The doctor made a thorough assessment of the patient and it was suspected that the expeditioner had several broken bones and internal injuries. A decision was made to transport the patient back to Davis station. Travelling in the back of a Haggglunds can be a rough and uncomfortable ride at the best of times, so to alleviate some of the bumps and knocks for the patient, a stretcher was suspended from the roof of the rear cabin. It took more than three hours to return the injured expeditioner to station, a total time of just over six and a half hours after the incident took place.

On arrival at the station, the lay medical team took over the care of the patient under the supervision of the doctor. As mentioned in Part 1 of this series of articles, the lay team receives only 10 days' training in anaesthetics, theatre nursing and basic medical procedures. In this case the team consisted of two communications technical officers and an electrician. The patient was





*Rescue crews on quad bikes en route to attend to an injured expeditioner who fell off an ice cliff near Trajer Ridge, Vestfold Hills. Photo by Tod Iolovski*



*In 2010, an AS350 helicopters crashed while en route to Dumont D'Urville, killing all four passengers onboard. Photo by Noel Tennant.*

listed as critical and the AAD Polar Medicine Unit recommended he be evacuated. The performance of the lay medical team throughout the incident was outstanding.

Meanwhile, back in Australia at the headquarters of the AAD in Kingston, Tasmania, the Crisis Management and Recovery (CMR) team was meeting to look at the strategic implications and logistical requirements of the incident. Some of the options considered for the evacuation included using the Aurora Australis, the AAD's Airbus 319, and mutual aid from the United States Antarctic Program (USAP).

At the time of the incident, the Aurora Australis was 200 kms from Casey station and about to begin the ship-to-shore fly-off of expeditioners. The helicopters had been bladed up and the ship was waiting for the weather to clear to discharge passengers and cargo. Casey is more than 2000 kms from Davis station.

An air evacuation was considered to be the best option; however, as it was late October it was too early in the season to have any aircraft operating in Antarctica. The AAD's Airbus 319 usually lands on a blue-ice runway on the plateau 70 kms from Casey.

It had never made a sea-ice landing, so this option was considered too risky. Davis station only had a skiway tailored for small, fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters so a temporary sea-ice runway would need to be prepared if larger aircraft were to be used. A decision was made to divert the Aurora Australis to Davis to potentially evacuate the expeditioner and to provide additional medical support from the ship's doctor.

At Davis station, work started on construction of a sea-ice runway directly in front of the station. All expeditioners on station were rostered to assist the Doctor and lay medical team, and all but essential operations stopped. The injured expeditioner received round-the-clock intensive care.

It took nine days at full steam for the ship to crunch through the sea ice and get within flying range of the station. With poor weather conditions reducing visibility, it wasn't until 31 October, 11 days after the incident, that the relief medical team and supplies were flown to station. It took the Aurora Australis a further four days to travel the last 180km to Davis due to the almost impenetrable sea ice.

Meanwhile, a range of mutual aid options was being worked up. Assistance in the form of an LC-130 (ski equipped Hercules) was made available by the USAP but was going to take a number of days to be in position to make the flight. The aircraft had to come from Christchurch in New Zealand via McMurdo station in Antarctica, about 3000 kms from Davis station.

On 4 November, an LC-130 landed on the sea ice at Davis. The main hazard for the aircraft was the risk of hitting Adelie penguins, which have a tendency to wander onto the airstrip and need to be herded off. The crew

then spent the night preparing to move the expeditioner and flew him directly to Hobart the next morning. After a nine hour flight the aircraft landed at 11.40pm on 5 November and the expeditioner was transferred directly to the Royal Hobart Hospital for treatment.

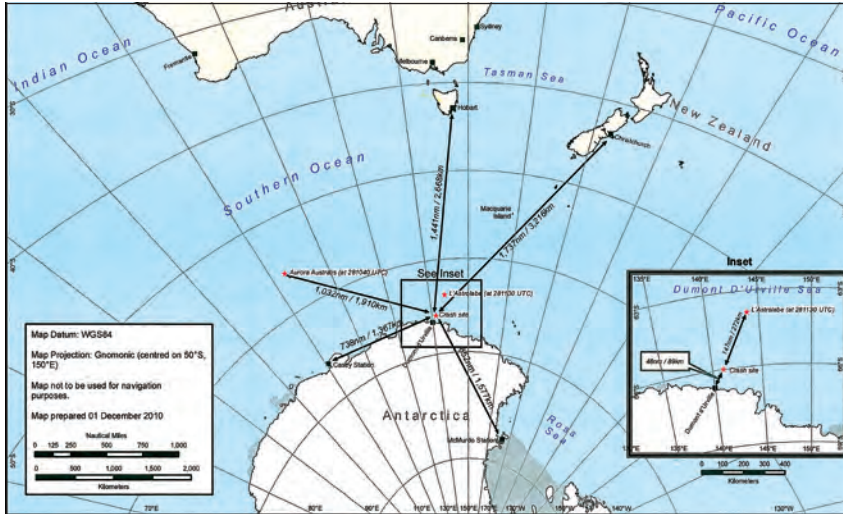
The evacuation had taken 16 days. Had the incident happened during the winter it would have taken considerably longer, perhaps even months, before any assistance was able to reach the station.

This incident had a significant impact on AAD operations for the remainder of the season. Due to the diversion of the Aurora Australis and the amount of fuel used to break through the sea ice, the ship had to return to Hobart to refuel before going back to Casey. This meant that a 10 day voyage turned into a seven week odyssey. This, in turn, delayed the opening of the Wilkins Aerodrome ice runway by almost two months because the ground crew was stuck on the ship. A number of science programs were also rescheduled into smaller time windows.

A comprehensive review of the incident was undertaken and a number of recommendations were made. A quad bike training system was implemented in line with national standards. Policies and procedures were amended and an alternate concept of operations was developed to counter some of the single points of failure in the program.

### ADELIE LAND

French station Dumont D'Urville is located in Adelie Land on the Île des Pétrils at 66°40'S 140°01'E. The icebreaker L'Astrolabe is used to resupply the station and deliver expeditioners to Antarctica travelling



Map of Adelle Land, East Antarctica, where a fatal helicopter crash occurred near French station, Dumont D'Urville, in 2010.

a distance of 2,635 kms from Hobart. The vessel is also used to deliver expeditioners to Mawson's Huts at Commonwealth Bay, 115 kms from the French station.

On 28 October 2010, L'Astrolabe was 200 nautical miles from Dumont D'Urville and preparing to fly-off expeditioners using two AS350B3 Squirrel helicopters. These helicopters carry survival equipment, have aviation and marine radio, and a 406MHz Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT). However, on this particular Squirrel, the ELT was a non-GPS model.

The first helicopter took off for the station at 3.45pm with the second following 20 minutes later, each with four people on board. At 5.55pm, approximately 50 nautical miles from the station, L'Astrolabe lost contact with both helicopters after reporting bad weather conditions. The first helicopter made it to station, noting that the conditions en route were less than favourable, with visibility of less than 1 km and a cloud base of 50 feet. The second helicopter did not arrive at station. At 6.15pm the satellite flight system provided a last geo-localisation position for the helicopter with a speed of 20 knots and altitude of 29 feet. This fuelled hopes that the helicopter had managed to set down on the sea ice to wait for the weather to clear.

An ELT signal was detected at 6.28pm but was classified as an un-located alert by satellite as no fixed position could be ascertained due to the lack of in-built GPS in the unit. The signal was received by the French Mission Control Centre (MCC) and passed to the Australian MCC as it fell inside their SAR region. Control of the incident passed from Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) France to RCC Australia at 8.28pm. The Australian RCC immediately

started notifying various agencies regarding asset availability including the AAD and the Australian Defence Force.

Meanwhile, at Dumont D'Urville, the helicopter that had arrived safely started searching but was quickly forced to return to station because of bad weather. The station reported deteriorating local conditions of fog, snow, high winds with gusts of up to seventy knots and blizzards that were forecast to



An injured expeditioner is transported from an LC-130 aircraft to Royal Hobart Hospital after a quad bike accident that led to a 16 day rescue mission.

last for two days, shutting down any flying operations. The terrain curtailed land-based rescue attempts, with the surface between the station and the beacon location a mixture of sea ice and open ocean.

In this area of East Antarctica, there are usually very few ships. L'Astrolabe, as the closest vessel, would normally have been tasked to respond. However, it was in heavy sea ice and unable to move closer to the incident site. Efforts had been made to contact the helicopter by radio but there was no response. At this early stage in the season there were no merchant ships, fishing vessels or commercial operators in the area within a realistic distance to respond. The

closest ship, Aurora Australis, was at least 1850 kms from the site and was en route to Davis station. It had two S76 helicopters on board. After discussion with the RCC, the ship was diverted but would take more than three days to reach the location at full steam.

Distances to the distress location from Australia and New Zealand, meant that most long range aircraft would have reduced capability and limited time on station over the beacon location site. Fixed-wing aircraft would not be able to land but could verify the nature of the distress and potentially drop supplies to survivors. The RCC asked the USAP for assistance and a C17 Globemaster in Christchurch, New Zealand was tasked immediately. It wasn't until 10.22pm that an initial satellite alert was received from the ELT and the position confirmed 30 minutes later. The C17 was first to reach the distress position at 9.20am the following day and attempted to communicate using VHF, but there was no reply. The ELT signal was confirmed on 121.5 MHz but due to reduced visibility and cloud cover, the target could not be seen. The C17 then continued on to McMurdo station to refuel.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) had an AP3 Orion available in Darwin - a long transit from one end of the country to Hobart at the other. Once in Hobart, the pilot and crew were briefed by AAD staff, as this was a unique operation for the RAAF which does not traditionally operate in polar environments. Satellite ice imagery and mapping support were provided along with air-drop survival equipment for those at the helicopter. Additionally, the crew were issued with freezer suits and polar survival gear.

The AP3 Orion departed Hobart and reached the distress position at 5.12pm, almost a day after the ELT was activated. Initial reports from the aircraft indicated that

there appeared to be a field of wreckage with debris consistent from the missing helicopter. Forward Looking Infra Red (FLIR) imagery taken over the site indicated that there were no signs that anyone had survived the crash. But this couldn't be confirmed until rescue parties arrived on the scene, so supplies were dropped and the aircraft continued trying to get a response from the ground. The C17 returned from McMurdo to provide top cover for the AP3 while it did air drops and then returned to Christchurch due to continued bad weather. On arrival back in Hobart the AP3 had done a 17 hour round trip.

At 10.30am the following day, 30 October, the remaining helicopter at Dumont D'Urville took off for the crash site. It was assisted by a USAP LC130 from McMurdo station and the AAD's Airbus 319 from Hobart, which provided top cover and communications relay. It was confirmed by the ground party that all four people on board were deceased. The bodies were recovered by helicopter and taken to Dumont D'Urville. The helicopter wreckage was not salvaged



*Davis station, one of the three Antarctic stations managed by the AAD, 4700 kms south west of Perth, WA. Photo by Martin Boyle.*

due to the difficulty of retrieval. The Aurora Australis continued to steam towards the area until it was stood down.

An incident debrief highlighted some important lessons to be learnt from the event. One was the importance of having a GPS-encoded Beacon. Had the 406 distress beacon on the helicopter been a GPS model, a location would have been instantaneously transmitted to geostationary satellites, instead of the four-hour delay that occurred. Non-GPS encoded 406 rely on polar orbiting satellites to calculate a position accurate to within 5 kms.

The Antarctic is a harsh environment

in which to operate and a difficult place to access. Therefore, it was also recommended that operators carry more than one beacon as battery life varies between 24 to 48 hours. In this case, the ELT continued to transmit for 23 hours and 44 minutes.

The support and coordination between all agencies in this operation was outstanding. All efforts were made to reach the distress location with the hope that there would be survivors. While, unfortunately, in this case that did not occur, the operation highlighted that mutual aid and relationship building between all stakeholders in the Antarctic is critical to the success of any operation. ●



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Wed 25th - Mon 30th Apr - Raiders vs. Sharks

Sat 5th May - Brumbies vs. Waratahs

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Sat 26th May - Brumbies vs. Reds

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Fri 29th Jun - Mon 2nd Jul - Raiders vs. Dragons

Fri 13th - Mon 16th Jul - Raiders vs. Titans

Sat 14th Jul - Brumbies vs. Blues

Fri 27th - Mon 30th Jul - Raiders vs. Knights

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# ON THE SAME WAVE

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TWEEN THEM

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Xasuso Calan... alanin  
Rappelez-vous

LOOK  
THE S



**S**urf Life Saving Queensland is rolling out a beach safety initiative, called On The Same Wave, targeting the state's diverse and multicultural communities.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are over-represented in both national and state drowning figures and, as such, are considered a high risk group by surf authorities.

On The Same Wave is funded by the Queensland Government and designed to engage with people from CALD communities and equip them with key beach safety skills.

Beach safety information has been translated into 23 different languages including Swahili, Chinese, Dinki, Arabic, Dari and Samoan.

The initiative also includes surf lifesaver visits to schools with high populations of students from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and Surf Life Saving Queensland has a regular presence at multicultural festivals across the state.

Since the program launched in 2010, Surf Life Saving Queensland has educated more than 26,000 students across Queensland, and engaged with a further 60,000 potential beachgoers. ●



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