

NATIONAL EMERGENCY

RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services



VOLUME 29 NO. 3 WINTER 2016
PRINT POST PUBLICATION NO. PP100018976

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PUBLISHER

National Emergency Response is published by Countrywide Austral

countrywideaustral

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WEBSITE CONTENT

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



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Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

Winter 2016 • National Emergency Response

CONTENTS

REGULAR COLUMNS

2	President's Report
3	New Members
26	Membership information
27	AIES Contacts

FEATURES

4	Victoria on the move
6	One flash and you're ash
10	Giving the farmers a hand
14	Examining Pinery
21	Emergency sign of the month
22	AIES Young Volunteer Award
23	Annual General Meeting & Conference
24	<i>National Emergency Response: Winter flashback</i>
28	A stair-climbing event of epic proportions

2.53pm

The fire grew and expanded so fast it looked different every minute.



FRONT COVER

Examining Pinery. Page 14.
Photo by Mark Dowson.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Steve **Jenkins** MAIES

National President

The 2016 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services took place at University House in the Australian National University in Canberra on Thursday 21 May. There was a good attendance with some members travelling some distance to be here. As an organisation that covers the entire country, the tyranny of distance restricts our ability to meet formally more frequently, so for those who were able to attend in person, the AIES is extremely grateful. Likewise, we are also appreciative of those who could not attend but went to trouble of submitting an apology, or nominating a proxy.

Since the new Constitution and Rules were approved in Sydney at the AGM last year, there have been many governance-related issues that the Board has been required to progress. I thank the Board members involved for their efforts, in particular, National Registrar Peter Schar and Financial Officer David Mack who transitioned into these roles from our past Registrar Bob Maul, who retired after many years of valuable service to the organisation in that role.

Under Peter and David's leadership, new financial management processes have been introduced at both national and divisional levels that have streamlined the Institute's financial reporting and which have provided transparency of finances across the organisation.

This has also made auditing the Institute's financial records much simpler, as the National Registrar now arranges this and completes for national and divisions all at once. Thus, there are fewer costs incurred by the Institute as a whole. There is still more to be achieved in this area despite the great progress.

Rod Young attended the AGM as the newly elected President of the Victorian Division. Rod replaces retiring Victorian Division present Alan Marshall who is a long-serving AIES member

and has held not only the Victorian Division presidency, but also that of National President for many years. Alan has been a source of support and advice for myself since I took office, and I am pleased to see that he is continuing his involvement with the Victorian Division Management Committee as a Committee Member. We thank Alan for his service in these president roles.

The official publication of the AIES is the *National Emergency Response* (NER) Journal, which is published quarterly. Special thanks to President to the Tasmania Division Ron Jones for his efforts in the role of sub-editor and providing the conduit between the AIES and NER Editor Kristi High. There are deadlines to meet with the publishers and without the efforts of Ron and Kristi we would be in all sorts of trouble. One thing that is frequently lacking is articles for the journal. I would like to encourage everyone to consider writing something for the inclusion in the Journal. It does not have to be war and peace, even just a photo with a couple of sentences about something of interest is sufficient. Tell your colleagues in your respective organisations as well. Anyone can put articles in the journal. Ron and Kristi can be contacted by emailing editor@aies.net.au

Since the new Constitution and Rules were approved in Sydney at the AGM last year, there have been many governance-related issues that the Board has been required to progress.

The AIES also has a Facebook page that is managed by AIES Director for Membership John Rice. Like the Journal though, John struggles to find enough information to post. Any time something of interest happens, or is planned, let



The Constitution and Rules also allow for the appointment of non-voting Directors to the Board.

John know so he can post it. John is also desirous of having divisional media officers who can be provided limited administrator rights to the Facebook page so that divisions can do their own posting. I would like to thank John for his efforts, frustrating as they are at times, and also those of his son who spends quite a bit of time administering the website. John can be contacted via membership@aies.net.au

The Constitution and Rules also allow for the appointment of non-voting Directors to the Board. I am pleased to advise that Associate Professor Brett Aimers has been appointed to the Board as an Independent Director. Brett is presently a General Manager in the Emergency Management Division of the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

In conjunction with the 2016 AGM, National Board members took part in a two-day Strategic Planning Workshop to scope out some future directions for the Institute. There was some very interesting discussion during the workshop, which was facilitated by Brett, who will be drafting a comprehensive report for the Board in due course.

Following the AGM, members attended the annual dinner in the University House dining hall. Australian Capital Territory Division President Scott Milne filled in as the guest speaker due to scheduled speaker cancelling at the eleventh hour to respond to a serious family health matter. A Senior Response Manager with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Scott provided a very interesting overview of the search for Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 including response operations, the Australian political, and international geo-political issues, and their impact on the search operation. Scott's presentation was extremely well received by those present.

In my next report I hope to be able to provide a precis of the outcomes from the Board's strategic planning workshop. Until then, stay safe, and please consider submitting an article for the NER Journal. ●

RECENT AIES EVENTS

- Two AIES Queensland Division representatives attended Leadership Training for Emergency Management Volunteers workshops conducted in Brisbane by the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum (AEMVF). The delegates were Mr Keith Williams from the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association (Qld) as the senior delegate, and Ms Tia Rowley, a State Emergency Services (SES) volunteer in Cairns as the Youth (Junior) delegate.
- Ms Rowley is also AIES's 2016 nominee for the Young Endeavour voyage. Ms Rowley was nominated by Queensland and was the only member from that state eligible for consideration. No nominations were received from any other state.
- Ms Lisette Reinke, an SES and CFA volunteer from South Australia, attended a three-day Volunteers Leadership Program conducted by the Red Cross on behalf of the AEMVF in Melbourne.
- On behalf of AIES, I was invited by the Australian Radio Communications Industry Association (ARCIA) to be an award presenter at its 2016 Gala Dinner, held in Melbourne, as part of the CommsConnect 2015 Conference and Exhibition on 2 December 2015. Victorian President Alan Marshall and I attended the dinner, and I presented the award.
- AIES again participated in the Australia and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference (ANZDMC) and the Search and Rescue Conference, which was held at Jupiters on the Gold Coast from 30 May to 1 June 2016. The conference attracted over 500 delegates.

NEW MEMBERS

The Australian Institute of Emergency Services is pleased to announce the following emergency services people joined the AIES between April and May 2016.

NAME	ORGANISATION	DIVISION
Adrian Brown	SES (SA)	SA/WA/NT
Matthew Bouzaid	Covertex Ltd	NSW
Victor Cork	Rural Fire Service	NSW
Jack Daniel	SES (Vic)/ADF	VIC
Nicholas de Rozario	DEWNR (SA)	SA/WA/NT
Peter Dubiez	Enviro Frontier Pty Ltd	NSW
James Gegg	SES (Qld)	QLD
Brett Henderson	NSW Police	NSW
Rebecca Hunt	SES (SA)	SA/WA/NT
David Johnson	Emergency Management (Vic)	VIC
James Middleton	AVCG (SA)	SA/WA/NT
Louise Murphy	St John Ambulance (NSW)	NSW
Tony Pearce	SES (NSW)	NSW
Daniel Rickard	St John Ambulance (Vic)	VIC
Nicholas Roberts	Ambulance Victoria	VIC

LEGEND:

ADF: Australian Defence Force; **AVCG:** Australian Volunteer Coast Guard; **DEWNR:** Dept Environment, Water & Natural Resources; **SES:** State Emergency Service



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or log in at au.linkedin.com and search for 'Australian Institute of Emergency Services' under 'Companies'.



www.facebook.com/aies.online

VICTORIA ON THE MOVE



New President: Rod Young.

Rod Young MSTJ, MAIES, has been appointed as President of the Victorian Division of the AIES as former President Alan Marshall CSTJ, AIMM, LFAIES, moves to a committee role.

Rod has more than 30 years' experience as a member of St John Ambulance Australia (Vic) and held many positions up to the rank of Regional Superintendent.

He is currently a member of the Victorian State Emergency Response Planning Committee (Communications), North/West Metropolitan Regional

Emergency Management Team and a member of the St John Ambulance Association (Vic).

Rod has worked at Telstra since 1985. He commenced as a Trainee Technical Officer and worked in various exchange maintenance technical roles that included the responsibility of Emergency Services Liaison Officers (ESLO) throughout metropolitan Melbourne.

In 2011 he was promoted to the position of National Emergency Response Manager. This role encompasses the responsibilities of being the Telstra National ESLO which is also responsible for approximately 50 ESLOs that represent Telstra across the nation at state and regional level to ensure that it is actively engaged with emergency services and critical infrastructure providers for disaster planning, response and recovery activities.

Rod is a recipient of the St John Ambulance Service Medal and a Member of the Order of St John. In 2013, he completed his degree in Emergency Management and received an MBA (Consulting) in 2016.



Past President: Alan Marshall.

As Rod takes the helm in Victoria, Alan Marshall, CSTJ, AIMM, LFAIES, moves to a committee role, providing support to Rod.

Alan has been involved in emergency management for more than 35 years. He believes that emergency management officers must continue to inform, educate, mitigate and build resilience into Australian communities and that it is the responsibility of the AIES to pass on knowledge gained from involvement in major operations so it is not lost or buried. ●

VICTORIAN DIVISION.

- President/Director – Rod Young, MSTJ, MBA, BEmergMgt, MAIES
- Vice President – Grant Coultman-Smith, VA, BJ, JP, MEmergMgt, BSocSc, DipBus, FBIA, MAIES
- Registrar/Treasurer – Richard Lodder FFS, FAIPOL, MCSFS, MAIES

Committee Members

- Alan Marshall CSTJ, AIMM, LFAIES (immediate past President/Director)
- Ian Munro AFSM, M.I. FireE, MAIES
- Associate Professor Brett Aimers CSTJ, RN, FACN, MAIES

Historical Advisor

- Alan Alder OAM, LFAIES

NEW HISTORICAL POSITION

A new position of Historical Advisor has been added to support the Divisional Management Committee of the Victorian Division.

Alan Alder OAM, LFAIES, is moving from Divisional Registrar to this new position of Historical Advisor.

Alan has been the Institute's Registrar in Victoria for over 35 years, as well as a past National President and National Board member.

Alan's expertise and experience will help Victoria retain the knowledge base and detail workings of the Institute. He is a person who gives trusted advice in his particular

field and brings to the committee his direct involvement in community activities over many years as a team player. He is oriented to detail and diligent in his continuing support to the Australian Institute of Emergency Services.

Alan was awarded the AIES National Award of Excellence in 2014 in recognition of excellent and outstanding service rendered to the Institute and its members over many years.



(L-R): Past Victorian President/Director Alan Marshall CSTJ, AIMM, LFAIES, and Alan Alder OAM, LFAIES, receiving the National Award of Excellence in 2014.

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ONE FLASH AND YOU'RE ASH



Des **Lambley**

There was a time when the Cold War threatened the Western World. That was one-and-a-half generations ago and not long after atomic bombs were dropped on Japan to help end their engagement in World War II. The nuclear age began. It was a new and devastating weapon of mass destruction.

All countries had every right to be a little concerned. Most countries had counter plans in place for preparedness, response and recovery should a major city be bombed. That concern preceded a later concern about accidents from the 'peaceful' use of nuclear reactors. In Australia the general community was not really made aware of government planning because of the belief that it would cause widespread panic (and political repercussions). Today, except for a few rogue states and their impeding leaders, some 162 countries are signatories to a United Nations sponsored convention on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In Australia during the Cold War period the military services were planning for and preparing their operational responses should nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons be used against us.

Governments also initiated and funded arrangements to ensure civil defence organisations and plans were in place for a suitable response for the general community. These plans included the education of certain people about the effects of a nuclear detonation and the subsequent needs of a society to rebuild its life.

Among the priorities to be considered: governments needed to secure their ability to govern, to ensure that a means of communication and transport was possible, to secure energy sources and safe water and food stocks, to protect or reassemble factories and to re-establish order promptly.

Intrinsic to government is the responsibility to protect the life and property of its peoples. The mechanisms and linkages of a modern society are complex and any one defective component cascades upon others necessary for life and limb. Planning for the nuclear threat in Australia fell to each of the states' emergency services and civil defence organisations. The New South Wales Government established a Civil Defence Organisation in 1955.

In August 1972 the first legislation, the *State Emergency Services and Civil Defence Act 1972* (Act No.11, 1972) was proclaimed to regularise the organisation and it became known as the State Emergency Service of New South Wales (the SES). The change of emphasis from civil defence to state emergency resulted from the realisation that the possibility of a nuclear holocaust was diminishing. Under the new legislation, civil defence became simply part of the many different types of emergencies to be dealt with.

I had been trained by the military in the 1960s about the nature and effects of nuclear weapons, and how, as a soldier confronting these killer weapons, one might minimise the risk.

These days most people know that a nuclear blast has multiple effects. It causes an electromagnetic pulse that can destroy electronic equipment, it has a blast with intense light and heat that incinerates and sets fires, it has a pressure wave that destroys structures and it causes a widespread fall-out of radioactive material that can contaminate everything for kilometres around ground zero for great periods of time.

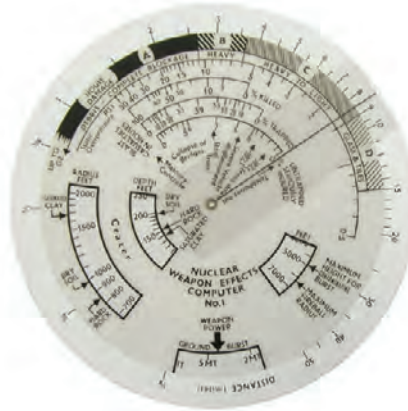
Roentgens were the units of measurement for radiation doses. Wilhelm Conrad Rontgen had discovered x-rays in 1908. Wikipedia tells us that although roentgens describe radiation, their relation to the absorbed dose (which is usually important for human safety) is not straightforward. The impact depends on the different absorption rates of the radiated alpha, beta, gamma or neutron particles upon different kinds of living tissue but an exposure of 500 roentgens in five hours is regarded as lethal for human beings.

While employed at the state headquarters during the early 1970s I often wondered who the visiting strangers were. 'They are the NBC advisers and you didn't see them', was the answer. Their work was secret. A limited number of selected SES staff were involved with this planning.



When leaving on promotion for a position in another public service department, my SES friends gave me as a memento an unwanted piece of civil defence era equipment – a computer. In fact, it was a Nuclear Weapon Effects Computer No.1. 6665-99-949-1 47 manufactured by Blundell Rules Limited of Weymouth, England, c.1960. A collector's piece nowadays.

Academic historians and museum archivists understand well that heirlooms link and strengthen the fibre of a society down through the generations.



Nuclear Weapon Effects Computer No.1

When leaving on promotion for a position in another public service department, my SES friends gave me as a memento an unwanted piece of civil defence era equipment – a computer. In fact, it was a Nuclear Weapon Effects Computer No.1. 6665-99-949-1 47 manufactured by Blundell Rules Limited of Weymouth, England, c.1960. A collector's piece nowadays.

They prompt us to reflect upon the socio-economic and geo-political contexts that dictated the lives of people living in a previous age, and remain precious objects significant to our history.

The computer consists of two rotatable plastic disks, the outer five inches (12.7 cm) and an inner disk four-and-a-half inches (10.8cm) in diameter, and a rectangular cursor to line up known detail about the

nuclear explosion. Little windows in the top disk show a scale for quantifying required detail. For example, the Weapon Power (from 10KT to 20MT), whether it was a Ground Burst or an Air Burst at a given altitude, and the maximum fireball radius (from 400 to 12,000 feet). From the various aligned scales an indication of a theoretical damage impact to buildings from ground zero out to a 'glass and tiles' range in miles can be read off. It calculates an estimate of the percentages of people likely to be killed, trapped or seriously injured at the various distances. On its rear it has a compass rose and a ready-reckoner for the fires likely to be caused at various weapon powers, for air and ground bursts, at various distances.

It is thought that this crude, simple, cheap computer was merely a training tool rather than an operational one. Otherwise, it beggars belief that any person would stand and watch a nuclear explosion. Anyone within viewing distance would be a bit goggle eyed anyway when witnessing such an explosion and if still alive and sane, would still have to guess the detail needed in order to be able to compute an estimate of the damage. I shall never give away this wonderful exhibit. It reminds me of a different time when our existence was threatened by the Cold War; but my blood still curdles each time I look at it. ●

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Find out more about AIES membership on page 26.

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Submissions now open for the Winter edition of *National Emergency Response*.

We are looking for:

- Stories or articles
- Peer reviewed papers
- Photographs

Send your submission to editor@aies.net.au by Friday 5 August, 2016.

The best submission, as voted by the AIES National Council, receives a gold pen award at each year's Annual General Meeting.

Congratulations Doug Caulfield MAIES, winner of the 2016 NER Gold Pen Award for his article on Council collaboration in the Spring 2015 edition.

GIVING THE FARMERS A HAND



Since it started in 2009, BlazeAid has volunteered \$25 million worth of work for farmers and farming communities affected by natural disaster.

Mary Howarth

BlazeAid Inc

Photos by Peter Boer, Flickr, All Creative Commons, QLD, 2013

The volunteering origination founded by Victorian couple Kevin and Rhonda Butler after the Black Saturday fires of 2009, has cleared and built thousands of kilometres of fences for in-need farmers.

During the Black Saturday fires, the Butlers lost over 5kms of fences. Having to retain their stock and needing help, they placed an ad in the newspaper and were inundated with volunteers from all over Australia and overseas.

The camp ran for 10 months rebuilding fences for many more farmers, and so it is said BlazeAid was 'Born out of the Ashes'.

Today, BlazeAid is stronger than ever, with volunteers helping our Aussie farmers not only with fencing but rebuilding stock yards, farm sheds and machinery and much more.

Wherever there is a natural disaster in Australia, BlazeAid is there with a

band of willing volunteers eager to help. Every year we have had camps assisting with fire, flood, cyclone, and since drought was declared a natural disaster three years ago, we have had four drought relief camps operating with another three opening in outback Queensland next month at Muttaborra, Winton and Julia Creek.

After a disaster, BlazeAid is invited into affected areas by the Council.

We usually set up a camp either at a sports or recreation grounds where there are good facilities for the volunteers. Our volunteers usually have their own accommodation in a motorhome, caravan, tent or swag.

We don't always have power or water for our vans but the common areas in the club houses are well set up with a kitchen, dining area for meals, showers and toilets.

Most of our camps last for up to three months or more depending on the severity of the disaster and the need for us to be there.

The drought camps work differently. The coordinator sets up in town at an oval for volunteers to stay for a few days before they are placed on properties.

We usually send two couples who are self contained to act as support for one another and not a burden on the farmer, who only needs to provide bathroom facilities.

We also try to match up volunteers with a skill that may be needed on a property. Some farms may need small electrical or plumbing work done or where possible if children are doing School of the Air, we might have a teacher that can give a mother some time off.

In past years we have painted





THE STATS

2009-2016

Properties worked on: 3,520

Fences cleared: 6,533 kms

Fences built: 4,849 kms

Volunteers: 13,032

Volunteer days: 107,622



inside homes, done bore runs, fed stock, helped fence or farm sit while some have taken a holiday and much more.

Outback farmers are doing it tough so we try to lighten the load for them or just be there when they need someone to talk to.

The volunteers will often stay a week or more when at a camp, as they are not only building fences, they are helping to rebuild farmers' lives.

BlazeAid is a total volunteering organisation that relies on generous donations from companies, farmers and individuals.

All money donated goes towards buying new trailers, tools and equipment to help farmers in future disasters.

Figures show the true worth of our wonderful volunteers and without them donating their time, BlazeAid would not be where it is today. ●



All photos in this article were taken by Peter Boer and published from Flickr under a *creative commons* licence.

For further information on BlazeAid or current camps go to blazeaid.com
Or contact Mary Howarth via blazeaid.mary@gmail.com or 0429 367 538.



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Further to this, APS is owned by its members, so any profits are channelled back to members. Help spread the word by introducing new members and APS will send you, your nominated charity or your staff social club \$100 (until 30 June, 2016) for each new friend that joins as a member.

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2.24pm

Looking west towards the eastern flank of the Pinery bushfire (over 15 kilometres away) and about 2 hours and 20 minutes after its commencement. The township of Hamley Bridge is in the foreground. The head fire is over 10 kilometres to the left/south of the photograph. © Mark Dowson

EXAMINING PINERY

Improving public information warnings with the use of forecast bushfire path maps

The 2015 Pinery (lower mid-north) bushfire joins the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires in the south-east and the 2005 Wangary (lower Eyre Peninsula) bushfires as exceptionally fast moving and destructive bushfires in agricultural lands that significantly impacted upon their respective South Australia communities.



Peter Schar, FAIES

National Registrar

Miraculously, the Pinery fire resulted in only two deaths as compared to the 28 and nine deaths respectively for the other fires¹. Was this sheer luck or is it testament to the considerable investments made over years by the Country Fire Services (CFS) and their supporting agencies to improve public warning systems and educating the community about bushfires and their associated risks?

Rather than ponder that question, the important one is – *can bushfire warnings be improved to support community safety?* It is the focus of this paper, and the approach is based on best business practice principle of seeking continuous improvement.

Data for this paper came from interviewing eight people impacted by the Pinery bushfire and reviewing information available in the public domain. It included examining the websites of CFS and the Bureau of Meteorology, various internet posts, TV and radio commentary and newspapers. Whilst there were limitations in the data collection, two particular themes emerged. The research focused on the first five hours of the bushfire as this was considered the period when public safety was critically at risk.

The two themes that impacted upon public safety were:

- difficulty for people visualising the bushfire's location and areas under



2.47pm

Shortly after the arrival of the cold front and sudden change in wind direction from the north/west to the south/west. The former eastern flank fire significantly increased its intensity and now became the new fire front with a chain of fires linking up to create the new fire front. © Mark Dowson

threat from the official bushfire safety messages and therefore not sure of the level of threat to their situation

- implications of the major wind change were not understood by the people within the bushfire potential impact area.

In discussing these themes and providing possible solutions the author has drawn upon his bushfire investigation and emergency management experience.

THE BUSHFIRE²

Wednesday 25 November 2015 was declared by the CFS as a day of 'catastrophic fire danger'. By late morning the Lower Mid-North was experiencing temperatures in the mid 30s, relative humidity below 7 per cent and very strong north-westerly winds of 55 to 75km/h. A cool change was expected in the afternoon with the arrival of a strong cold front from the south-west.

Although it was late spring, South Australia had experienced two months of record-breaking temperatures and little rainfall. In recent decades land use in the relatively flat lower mid-north had changed from mixed farming to broad acre or continuous grain cropping and it was the middle of the harvest season.

In addition, the extensive road network had scrub/tree roadside vegetation on both sides of the road of a few metres in width.

Also stubble was no longer burnt towards the end of autumn but allowed to decompose to provide an important mulch layer that built up over the years. It meant there was considerable amount of continuous tinder dry fuel. It was the 'perfect storm' for a disaster. All that was needed was a fire source.

At about 12.05pm, a grass fire was reported occurring in a paddock adjacent to Traeger Road, Pinery. The cause of the fire has not been announced but arson has been ruled out. Fanned by near gale force winds it very quickly became an uncontrollable bushfire. Water bombers and CFS appliances had no opportunity to control the fire in its initial build-up stage.

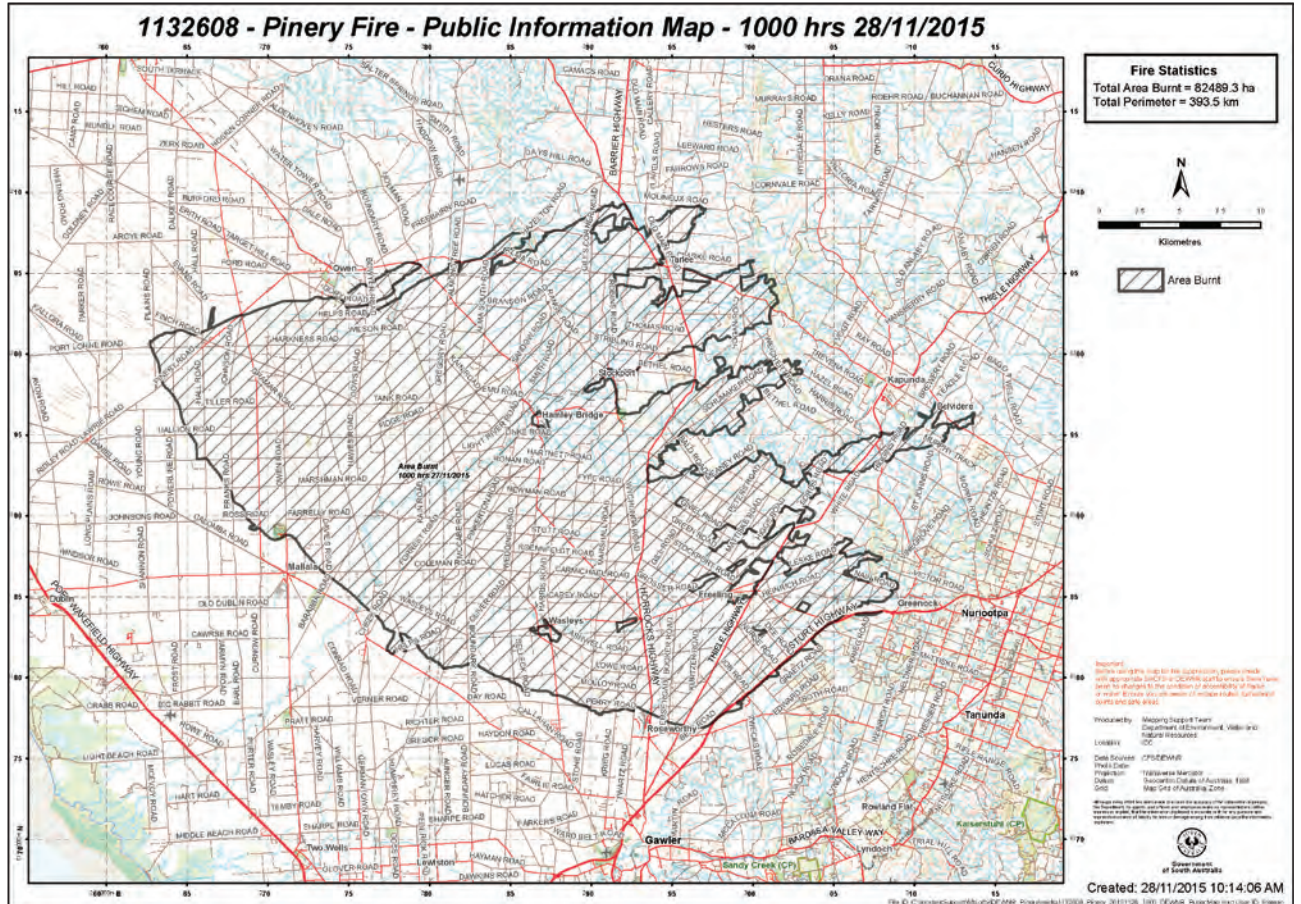
Within 30 minutes, the CFS was issuing emergency warnings and advising the fire was out of control and heading in a south-easterly direction under the influence of a strong north-westerly wind.

By 1pm, the fire had travelled over 16 kilometres and was on the outskirts of Mallala when a slight wind shift to the west occurred, reducing the

damage impact to the town. Just over an hour later the small township of Wasley experienced the threat of being confronted by a fire front. The fire had now travelled about 35 kilometres and was quickly heading towards South Australia's famous Barossa Valley.

About 2.45pm, the fire front had reached the Sturt Highway at the northern fringe of the Barossa Valley. It had travelled about 47 kilometres and its front was about 3-5 kilometres wide. The fire could be described as having a long banana shape bending towards the east. Photographs posted onto the internet suggest that the flanks of the fire were burning freely and were slowly widening perpendicular to the mean wind direction.

This meant that the fire front had travelled at an average fire speed of about 17km/h – an exceptionally fast moving and high intensity bushfire. Fast moving bushfires, although infrequent, are not rare. Similar average fire speeds were recorded in the South East during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires, the 2005 Wangary bushfire and the 2015 Cascades bushfire in Western Australia³. The majority of bushfires that occur each summer



in South Australia do not exceed an average fire speed of 2km/h. Luke and McArthur (1978) suggest there is a direct relation between fire speed and its intensity – double the speed and fire intensity increases fourfold. Dealing with a bushfire at eight times the speed significantly impacts on the ability of fire services and their supporting agencies to coordinate and organise response activities as their lead-time is greatly reduced.

The media frequently reports people observing fire speeds of 40, 50 and even 60+ km/h. Donald Douglas⁴, a bushfire behaviour expert, explained that this would be true for isolated locations and situations but these fire speeds occur in short bursts and are not maintained over the long term. Also, fire fronts do not move at constant speed or in straight lines. They speed up, slow down, break-up and come together based on a number of variables relating to weather, topography and fuel attributes. However, if these variables are relatively constant then the average fire speed over an extend period of time (ie hourly periods) is generally constant.

About 2.45pm, a strong cold front from the south-west reached the fire ground and caused a 90 degree shift in the mean wind direction to the north-east – saving the Barossa Valley. The Bureau of Meteorology had accurately forecasted its arrival. The eastern fire flank that had been slowly expanding along its 47 kilometres length now became a ferocious fire front. The clashing of the two wind systems often results in an increase in wind speeds, particularly in the early stages. Also, heat generated from the new wall of flame contributes to additional localised extreme weather conditions that increase the fire intensity and the potential impacts of what was already an extremely dangerous situation.

The average speed of the new fire front after the major wind change was difficult to estimate from information contained in the public domain and from interviewees.

However, photographs posted onto the internet indicate it was an extreme event producing large flames and massive rolling black smoke plumes across the entire new front. It appeared

to display the same characteristic of the first major wind change of the 2005 Wangary bushfire.

On that occasion the average speed of the fire front before the wind change was about 9km/h. Upon the wind change from the north-west to the west, the fire intensity increased dramatically and the average fire front speed was estimated by the bushfire behaviour expert who examined this event, for the coronial inquest, as averaging about 32km/h for the first 15 minutes – travelling about eight kilometres. The fire then slowed down and after another 50 minutes ran into the sea north of Port Lincoln having travelled about 20 kilometres since the wind change.

By 5pm, the arrival of the cool change had a significant impact upon the fire. Its intensity and rate of fire spread had reduced considerably. It still had active and dangerous fire edges and houses, trees and other structures within the fire perimeter were burning. It still remained a dangerous situation, however the fire situation was now more manageable. It would be nearly a week before the CFS declared this fire controlled.



2.49 pm
The intensity increases. © Mark Dowson



2.50 pm
The smoke filled the whole western sky. © Mark Dowson



2.52 pm
Huge wall of smoke and flames dwarfs a shed. © Mark Dowson

VISUALISING THE BUSHFIRE THREAT FROM OFFICIAL FIRE SAFETY MESSAGES

Three of the people interviewed for this paper were in the path of the bushfire prior to the major wind change and the other five were on the eastern side of the initial fire run and were impacted upon the major wind change. All were aware of the fire for at least an hour prior to being directly impacted. Their main sources of fire information were mobile phone conversations with friends and relatives, radio and the CFS websites/information feeds.

They were all taken by surprise by the speed and intensity of the bushfire. None had previously experienced a bushfire of such magnitude. They were all aware of one or more of the Country Fire Services' bushfire safety messages – *Bushfire Watch and Act* or *Bushfire Emergency Warning*⁵. The interviewees particularly commented on issues relating to the content of safety messages. The issues they identified included:

- The use of uncommon place names to describe the location of the bushfire and the areas under fire threat
- Interpreting the compass bearing directions

- Inability to visualise the location and path of the fire
- No indication of the speed or ferocity of the fire
- Lack of advice of the anticipated major wind change and its potential impacts.

provide a bushfire forecast map service as part of their public safety messaging arrangements. The National Review of Warning and Information report prepared by Emergency Management Victoria indicated that the various fire

Three of the people interviewed for this paper were in the path of the bushfire prior to the major wind change and the other five were on the eastern side of the initial fire run and were impacted upon the major wind change.

There was an expectation that the bushfire safety messages should be accompanied with a bushfire forecast map displaying the current fire location and likely future fire path. The CFS website did carry a map that showed the location of the point of fire origin but it was some hours before a fire map was available. By that time the fire risks had substantially reduced.

All of the people interviewed said a simple supporting map would be of great benefit in visualising and understanding the future potential risks. It is likely to make them respond more quickly and more appropriately to the threat.

There has been reluctance from the CFS and other Australian fire agencies to

services prepare fire maps for internal purposes but are awaiting a sophisticated solution based on accurate computer modeling capabilities to prepared forecast maps for public use. Whilst there is considerable research occurring in this area and discussions as to common presentation standards, it may still be some time before the agencies deem a suitable product and capability is available.

The author suggests that bushfire forecast maps for public use do not need to be highly accurate to support the community in their decision-making. They only need to show a representation of the current fire situation and the likely areas under



2.53pm

Car after car flees from the progressing fire to take refuge in Hamley Bridge. © Mark Dowson

threat in the next one, two or further hours ahead together with warnings of pending major wind changes, if known. An indicative map of an approximation of what is likely to happen will allow the public to react early enough to prepare for the impending threat.

Fire service members have expressed concerns about providing inaccurate bushfire forecast maps to the public. The BoM provides weather forecasts every day and some of these under or over estimate the eventual weather. While some people may complain about the inaccuracies, there is a general understanding it is only a forecast and subject to error. People prefer to have weather forecasts rather than attempt to make decisions without them. The solution is to regularly review forecasts and provide revised information.

Some firefighters created quick and simple bushfire forecast maps during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires for intervals up to four hours ahead and they proved to be reasonably accurate.

They used a methodology that could be called the 'mean wind direction' model. It was based on the premise that for bushfires occurring during periods of high winds, the major influence on the direction, shape and speed of the fire was the mean wind direction. It significantly over-ruled the influences of other bushfire variables such as changes in fuel and topography.

This model comprised the following steps:

- Marking on a map the approximate point of origin of the fire and time of commencement
- Drawing an arrow away from the point of origin at the bearing of the mean wind direction
- At regular intervals (ie 30 minutes or hourly) obtain a location from the field of the approximate position of the head of the fire and mark it on the map together with the time
- Calculate the average fire speed and make a forecast of where the fire front would be in one, two or further time periods ahead and place a line/band perpendicular to the mean wind direction arrow together with the time interval indicating where the fire front would likely be for different time periods
- Check the weather report as to the timing and direction of any forecast major wind changes
- Make the assumption that upon a major wind change the entire active flank becomes the new head fire until information to the contrary is obtained.

The use of this methodology requires discipline to ensure information is regularly received from the field as to the new position of the head fire, any changes in the mean wind direction and attributes of the smoke column. At regular intervals the forecast is

recalculated to ascertain if the fire is moving slower, faster or the same as the previous forecasted and an updated forecast map prepared and distributed. For significant fires the appointment of dedicated field information/intelligence officer(s) is recommended to ensure field information is forthcoming.

An issue with the bushfire forecast maps prepared during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires was the lack of communication technology to distribute and share this critical intelligence. Thus the full value of these maps could not be realised. Modern day social media and other communication tools have overcome that issue. Indeed they have created a far greater demand for information.

During the 2005 Wangary fire the incident management team did not have access to computerised bushfire mapping capability. However, they received and recorded on a large map, constant information as to the position of the head of the various breakout fires as they progressed, together with the changes in mean wind directions. However, no one in the team had the skills to convert this information into forecast as to the likely future fire path and approximate times of impact upon the various communities. It also impacted the quality of the bushfire safety messages provided on that day. The skills of using the mean wind



2.56 pm
The plume of smoke was quickly billowing towards me (photographer Mark Dowson) as I was leaving Hamley Bridge. © Mark Dowson

direction methodology to prepare manual bushfire forecast maps appear to have been lost during the preceding two decades.

The author has used this methodology over many years for various bushfires as a 'stop-gap' whilst awaiting official mapping products from the CFS, if available. The bushfire forecast maps prepared were found to be relatively accurate and were effective in supporting various activities in advance of the path of the fire.

25 of the 28 deaths in 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires and eight of the nine deaths in the 2005 Wangary bushfire occurred within an hour of a major wind change and many of these were within minutes of the change

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAJOR WIND CHANGE

While all eight people interviewed were aware that a cool change was expected during the afternoon, none were forewarned of the timing of the actual change, although it was broadcast on ABC radio. They all became aware of the wind change by observing its effects upon the bushfire. The BoM accurately predicted the arrival of the cold front and provided wind change warnings.

The transformation of the eastern fire flank into a powerful and extremely dangerous fire front appears to have

caught many people on the eastern side of the fire unaware. Public domain commentary described numerous people undertaking late evacuations. The layout of the road network appeared to allow most people to escape ahead of the arrival of the black dense smoke. Unfortunately, Janet Hughes of Hamley Bridge was not able to escape and tragically died⁶.

Only one of the eight people interviewed stated they understood the implications of a major wind change

and the need to plan for its arrival. That person had undertaken basic bushfire training as part of their employment.

Blanchi, Leonard and others (2012) stated in their report relating to understanding the loss of life in bushfires – *there is a prominence of life loss around the time of a wind change during a fire event*. This is particular the case in South Australia.

For example, 25 of the 28 deaths in 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires and eight of the nine deaths in the 2005 Wangary bushfire occurred within an hour of a major wind change and

many of these were within minutes of the change. However, the timing and potential impact of a major wind change on a bushfire does not appear to be sufficiently highlighted in public safety messages.

CONCLUSION

The 2015 Pinery bushfire was an extremely fast moving and destructive fire particularly in its initial five hours. Fires of this magnitude are no longer uncommon. Change in farming practices together with more frequent extreme hot weather events brought about by climate changes is likely to lead to more frequent devastating bushfires. In these circumstances people have limited time to make decisions and act.

The issuing of public safety messages, for example, *Bushfire Watch and Act* or *Bushfire Emergency Warning* by fire services is a critical element of protecting the community from bushfires. Currently these warnings are wholly textual in nature. The people interviewed as part of the research for this paper had difficulty in converting the textual messages into a visual or mental picture for their situation. They believed bushfire forecast maps should be part of the safety message distribution.

Although fire services are working with researchers to development an



3.03 pm

The huge unleashing of energy had formed a wall from north to south over 5km high with the main fire smoke rising into the upper troposphere. The dots on the horizon are trees that are about to be consumed. © Mark Dowson

accurate computer-modelling program to prepare timely bushfire forecast maps for public use, they have had mixed success to date and it may be sometime before a suitable detailed product is available.

The author has suggested an interim solution based on the 'mean wind direction' methodology used and found to be relatively accurate during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires in South Australia and for various fires since. The computerisation of this methodology may be the solution to meet the needs and expectations of the public.

The major wind change nearly three hours after the Pinery fire commenced significantly changed the dynamics of this bushfire by causing the entire eastern flank to become the new head fire. It caught many people by surprise. It is suggested that bushfire safety messages need to be more explicit in advising the timing and implications of forecasted major wind changes. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Schar recently retired from the South Australia Police after 43 years. The majority of his career was spent as a detective or working in the emergency and incident management policy development and training fields. He was part of the investigation team for many emergencies including the 1983 Ash Wednesday and 2005 Wangary bushfires and has consulted for various fire investigations. With the police he has been involved in the response to numerous bushfires and other emergencies including as the Operations Manager in South Australia's State Emergency Centre.

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NOTES

- 1 Details of the 1983 Ash Wednesday and 2005 Wangary bushfires used throughout this paper were sourced from the respective coroner's inquest reports and investigation documents.
- 2 The description of the bushfire and weather conditions were gleaned from a variety of public domain sources and the people interviewed for this paper.
- 3 Refer to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, 2016, *Major Incident Review of the Esperance district fires*.
- 4 Donald Douglas was the bushfire behaviour expert for three of the coronial inquests and a criminal trial for the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires in South Australia.
- 5 The CFS website advises these messages are prepared in accordance with the AEMC's protocols – *National framework for scaled advice and warnings to the community*.
- 6 *The Advertiser*, 27 November 2015.



EMERGENCY SIGN OF THE MONTH

This sign was spotted in the National Museum, Canberra by NER sub-Editor and AIES (Tas) Life Member Ron Jones. Have you seen a safety or emergency sign that is just a little bit different? Please, take a photo and send it to editor@aies.net.au ●



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THE AWARD

The AIES Young Volunteer's Award, proudly supported by the Emergency Response Division of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, aims to reward one young person for their outstanding and ongoing contributions and commitment to their chosen emergency service.

The award winner will receive a fully sponsored voyage in the sail training ship Young Endeavour where he or she can develop their skills in teamwork, leadership and communication.

Runners up will receive a certificate of commendation from the AIES.

NOMINATIONS

A member of the public, the young volunteer's supervisor, manager or another emergency service member, can make nominations. At least two referees who have known the nominee for a minimum of 12 months and who can attest to the nominee's volunteer service must second all nominations.

NOMINATION CRITERIA

The nominee will be assessed on his or her:

- commitment to the emergency services including continuity and length of service
- demonstrated willingness to learn and progress within the emergency service
- current or future leadership potential

The nominee must:

- a. be a volunteer member of an emergency service organisation for a period of at least two years
- b. be aged between 18 and 33 years of age
- c. be available to undertake the voyage on the date nominated in the award

In addition, nominees must meet all of Young Endeavour's mandatory selection criteria including:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- be able to swim 50 metres and be in good health
- weigh less than 120kg
- complete a medical examination to the required standard
- not having completed a voyage in Young Endeavour previously

SELECTION

The award committee will select the winner by assessing each nomination against the selection criteria. The authenticity of all claims in the winning submission will be verified.

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The award committee's decision of the winner of the AIES Young Volunteer's Award is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

PRESENTATION

Within three months of completion of the voyage, the awardee will be required to provide a written report on their voyage and make a presentation at an AIES Division meeting. The written report will be published in the Institute's journal *National Emergency Response* and by the award sponsor the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations should be marked CONFIDENTIAL and sent to the Registrar of the Division of the AIES in which the nominee resides. Details can be found on our website at www.aies.net.au

Nominations must be received by 4pm 1st February each year.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This award is subject to the terms and conditions as detailed on the AIES website.

MORE INFORMATION

More information on the award can be found on our website, www.aies.net.au



Congratulations to Tia Rowley, winner of the 2016 Young Endeavour Volunteer award.

Tia has been an active member of the Holloways Beach Group of the Queensland State Emergency Service since 2012 and participated in a number of emergency management events.

She will set sail on the Young Endeavour later this year.

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Canberra, 21-22 April



Setting the strategic direction for the next 12 months.



Rose in good hands at Parliament House, Canberra.



After the work was done, it was time for some extra curricula activities. (L-R) Joanne Thomson, Wayne Coutts, Search and Rescue Chief AMSA Craig Condon and Ron and Rose Jones.



Memorial for our detection dogs.



(L-R) AIES member Brian Holecek receives his Fellow certificate from President Steve Jenkins.



(L-R) Steve Jenkins presents Scott Milne with his 'Thank you for Giving Your Organisation a Plug Award' for filling in as guest speaker at the last minute.



AIES Board and members during the 2016 Annual General Meeting in Canberra.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE: WINTER FLASHBACK

THE GENESIS OF THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

By A. R. Grant Ed Maies

The author joined the State Headquarters of the New South Wales Civil Defence Organisation and State Emergency Services as the Chief Signals Officer on its formation in 1955. He later became the Chief Training Officer, occupying this post for some fifteen years prior to his retirement in 1978. He now resides on the far north coast of New South Wales and is the Local Controller of the Byron Shire SES. Mr. Grant is founder member of this institute.

Members of the State Emergency Services, if they pause to think about it, are vaguely aware that their organisation followed on from the concepts of the Second World War emergency arrangements in Australia. No recent history has been published giving the details of the various arrangements for the management of emergencies in Australia since 1939-45. An interesting brief reference is made to the genesis of the volunteer emergency services in Dr. Don Aitkin's book "The Colonel", ANU Press 1969.

"The Colonel" refers to Sir Michael Bruxner, the celebrated civilian soldier and politician of New South Wales. Born of British pioneer parents at Bonalbo on the far north coast of New South Wales in 1882, Michael Frederick Bruxner became a stock and station agent at Tenterfield in 1907 and a prominent figure in rural and community affairs in that district. He joined the militia, was commissioned and commanded the Tenterfield half squadron on the 6th, Light Horse. On the outbreak of World War I he enlisted in the AIF and departed for the Middle East in December 1914. After service at Gallipoli he returned to the Middle East to serve with his Light Horse Regiment as a Major, gaining recognition as a leader in the battle of Romani. His experience as a stock and station agent equipped him well for the duties associated with the organisation of stores, rations and transport administration and he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel as the AA & QMG of the Australian Mounted Division. He spent four and a half years on service overseas, was wounded twice in action and returned to his wife and family in July 1919 with a DSO, the Croix de Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and twice mentioned in despatches.

Back in Tenterfield he was their most famous soldier son. From Mickey Bruxner the stock and station agent he became "the Colonel". There was soon to be an election for the New South Wales Parliament and the people of the town and district persuaded him to enter public life as a candidate. He was elected in 1920 as a member of a group representing the rural community; a group which ultimately became the Country Party — Now the National Party. He continued to represent his electorate with little or no opposition until 1959. During much of that long period he was the Leader of the Country Party and the holder of a number of ministerial portfolios. In the years leading up to the outbreak of World War II he was the Minister for Public Works and Roads.

As a former soldier he was always interested in the defence of the nation. As Minister of Transport he could see war coming and actively began preparing for it in 1937

by having the Department of Main Roads quietly build strategic roads and upgrading the Railway Workshops with modern machine tools and equipment for the future production of war equipment. These measures proved later to be vital to the war effort.

Bruxner's interest in civil defence arose from a journey to Melbourne in December 1938 to attend a conference on air raid precautions. Apart from agreeing that civil defence was a State responsibility, the conference got nowhere. (Shades of similar conferences twenty years later). Reading the newspapers in the train returning to Sydney he read the accounts of the uncontrolled bush fires that had been consuming lives and property in Victoria. It occurred to him that air raids were the same sort of disaster as bush fires. The same sort of organisation was needed to combat them; groups of trained volunteers ready to drop everything in an emergency to perform the

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tasks — first aid, demolition, traffic control, communications, cleaning up — for which they had been trained. By the time his train reached Sydney the scheme was elaborated in his mind. He took it to Cabinet the next day and found ready acceptance. Bruxner's title for the new organisation — National Emergency Services — suggested that its purposes were general.

On the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 the plans were implemented. The organisation was quickly raised and training commenced. Large scale exercises were held and after the lessons were absorbed, and the deficiencies corrected, there was a good and effective "civil defence" organisation. Later, when there had not been any enemy activity, the organisation began to fall away. Wardens — the leaders of the organisation — began to seek power and quarrel among themselves. Nevertheless, the basic organisation existed and could have been committed to action should the need arise. Indeed, during the raid on Sydney harbour by Japanese midget submarines later in the war the organisation was able to cope.

Contemplating this account, there is revealed a typical Australian solution to a typical Australian problem. Based on the national experience of peacetime where people "dropped tools" and turned to dealing with the effects of bush fires, and no doubt other types of emergencies, arose the concept of honorary volunteers organised and trained to effectively deal with community disasters. This con-

cept is largely unique to Australia. There are few other countries in the world that have followed this concept for one reason or another. To have reserve numbers of trained people to respond, many countries conscript people for such service, either full or part time. This is an enormous drain on the public purse.

It soon became obvious that the professional emergency services — Fire, Ambulance, Hospitals, Police — can never be employed in the numbers required to deal with massive disaster situations. Indeed, as costs rise the numbers of these services are reduced.

Australia has good reason to be proud of its State Emergency Services. With more publicity, modest but improved funding and a wider understanding of the need, we in Australia are as well befitted to manage the effects of disasters as any country in the world. "Colonel", we salute you for your groundwork in bringing this situation about!

STIMULUS . . .

A motorist stopped in Punt Road, Prahran, when he saw a house on fire. He carried out one old man, led others to safety, then returned to his car to find he had a \$20 ticket for parking in a clear-way.

President's Piece

This is the first edition of the national journal of the Institute — a true milestone in our history as a professional body. The publication of a truly national journal fulfils one of our most important needs as emergency service officers of communication on matters affecting us all and at the same time provides a forum for the expression of views and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

We are all indebted to the South Australian Division of the Institute, its Executive, the Honorary Editor and the publishers who have agreed to change their excellent Divisional Journal into a national one. The South Australian Division has also undertaken the task of distribution and mailing — please accept the sincere thanks of all members throughout the Commonwealth.

A quality publication, both in content and layout, is an important part of any professional body as it not only provides a medium for communication between members but also with kindred professional bodies, associated organisations and the general public.

Each Division of the Institute has now appointed a "correspondent" or sub-editor and all letters, articles, papers and other material for publication should be forwarded to the appropriate Divisional representative who will collect, collate and forward to National Editor for inclusion in the Journal. The names and addresses of the

editorial "correspondents" appear elsewhere in this edition. I extend our thanks to them for accepting this most important task.

It is important that all members know that the Journal does not cost the Institute a single cent — consequently our publisher has placed a limit on the number of copies that he can profitably produce. Members will initially receive extra copies for circulation to other interested persons and organisations and you are urged to ensure that they are not wasted. I believe that this can be a most effective way of enlisting new members and encouraging the development of emergency services everywhere.

Journals are only as good as their contents and members' contributions (no matter how seemingly insignificant) are genuinely sought, together with news items, results of operations, seminar papers, conference notes — in short, any material which YOU think will be interesting, informative or educational. The Editor must be supported by sufficient material to produce something worthwhile. Go to it!

May I extend my personal good wishes and those of General Council to all members for 1985 and hope that you all have a fruitful and fulfilling year.

J. H. LEWIS-HUGHES,
President

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership forms are available online at www.aies.net.au

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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.

THE INSTITUTE OFFERS

- 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.
- An independent forum where you can be heard and your opinions shared with other emergency service members.
- A journal with information from institutes and other sources around the world in addition to the interchange of views between Divisions in Australia, as well as access to the Institute website.
- Reduced fees for members at Institute Seminars and Conferences and an information service supplied by professional experienced officers.
- A Certificate of Membership.

- 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.

MEMBERSHIP

Costs
Nomination Fee: \$30.00
Annual Subscription: \$60.00
Fellows: \$80.00
Corporate Subscription: \$500.00
Note: Institute Fees may be tax deductible.

Classes

There are four classes of membership:

- Members • Fellows • Life Fellows • Corporate

There are five categories of affiliation with the Institute that may be offered to persons who do not meet the requirements for membership:

- Associate • Student Member • Retired Member
• Honorary Member • Honorary Fellow

ELIGIBILITY

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

- Are members of a permanent emergency service or associated service, or
- Are volunteer members of emergency or associated services.

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

MEMBERS

Our members come from

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



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NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE JOURNAL

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A STAIR-CLIMBING EVENT OF EPIC PROPORTIONS AT STADIUM STOMP ADELAIDE OVAL

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