

NATIONAL EMERGENCY



RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

A.I.E.S.

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NATIONAL

EMERGENCY

RESPONSE

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Winter 2017 • National Emergency Response

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FRONT COVER

NSW RFS Training.
Photo by Laurie Sherwood..



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Steve **Jenkins** MAIES

National President

It is with great sadness that I advise the recent passing Mr Graeme Pretty FAIES, President of the New South Wales Division of the Australia Institute of Emergency Services (AIES). Graeme had been a member of the Institute for a considerable period of time as well as being a member of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard for a number of decades. In late 2016, he nominated for the NSW Division Committee and was elected by the Committee to the role of President. I had a number of personal dealings with him whilst he was in that role - I found him to be a gentleman committed to his family, and to the volunteer roles he performed with the Coast Guard and AIES. My sincere condolences to Graeme's family on behalf of the AIES. Graeme will be sorely missed.

I am pleased to announce three new appointments within AIES executive management. Mr Wayne Coutts who

me in the years I have been with AIES, and also his commitment to the AIES more broadly over a good number of years, which has also included the roles of Divisional and National President. He has well earned a break to provide more time for other activities.

The 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the AIES was held in Melbourne on Saturday 29 April. There were 28 attendees, 16 in person and 12 by valid proxy. My thanks to all who were able to attend or who nominated a Proxy. Unfortunately, a number of the proxies received had to be ruled invalid as their receipt did not comply with the AIES Constitution and Rules, or they contained factual errors. The holding of an AGM is a legal process under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and the Institute's Constitution etc., therefore, the procedures and associated documentation need to be correct.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the personnel of all the emergency services and those agencies that support or complement their activities, for their efforts during the recent weather events on Australia's east coast, in particular those from volunteer agencies.

replaces long-serving member John Rice as the Director for Membership; Mr Shane Rae as President of the Queensland Division and Director representing Queensland; and Ms Jennifer (Jenny) Crump and the new National Treasurer. Wayne Coutts is also taking on the role of Systems Administrator (formerly Web Manager), which was also previously performed by John Rice. John remains involved in the sidelines to assist Wayne, and his son Craig also continues to provide specialist information technology support to the AIES. I thank John for the assistance and support he has provided

The principle item on the AGM Agenda was a Motion proposed by the Board for a subtle change in the Institute's registered name. Specifically, the Motion read as follows: *That the name of the company be changed from The Australian Institute of Emergency Services to The Australasian Institute of Emergency Services.* I am pleased to advise that the Motion was carried by a substantial majority following some healthy discussion both for and against. The Board had been discussing a broader name change, however, it determined to propose the subtle change only for the short-term, with any further change



to the name to be considered only after member consultation.

The meeting was also advised of the Board's decision following recent events in South Australia which resulted in that Division being unable to establish a Divisional Management Committee. Essentially, Northern Territory members would now be included in the Queensland Division, and the South Australian members in the Victorian Division, until such time as there are adequate members in South Australia who wish to reform a Divisional Management Committee for that state. Discussion and consultation is continuing towards that objective.

It is pleasing to report that the establishment of the Institute's Western Australia Division is progressing well. The new WA Division will have its inaugural Annual Meeting soon. I look forward to welcoming the new Division Management Committee and Director representing that Division, when they have been nominated and elected.

As is AIES practice, the AGM was followed by the Annual Dinner. Those who attended were treated to an excellent meal, after which member Mark Tregellas (retired Senior Constable with Victoria Police) entertained all with a selection of stories from his 34-year career. Descriptions of events and 'war stories' involved white vans, German backpackers and stolen gnomes along with a showering with carrots and horses, shooting hares and disturbing grave-diggers.





Finally, but also importantly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the personnel of all the emergency services and those agencies that support or complement their activities, for their efforts during the recent weather events on Australia's east coast, in particular those from volunteer agencies. It is generally acknowledged that significant events are becoming more frequent. Providing and effective and efficient response to events of such magnitude would not be possible if it were not for the

The annual face-to-face meeting of the Board was also held in conjunction with the AGM. Between AGMs and the face-to-face meeting the Board meets via teleconference, and aims to do so on a monthly basis. A number of issues have taken precedence of late, however, these have now been resolved, and the Board is looking forward to making significant progress in the coming year, particularly with the subtle name-change now approved.

The Australia and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference (ANZDMC) was held in May. This is the sixth year of the conference, and was once again held on the Gold Coast. Delegate numbers surpassed previous years, with approximately 600 attending. Patron of the Queensland Division of the AIES, Commissioner Ian Stewart APM, was a guest speaker and AIES Victorian President, Rod Young, also spoke during a plenary session.

involvement of volunteers.

One such volunteer is AIES's new National Treasurer, Jenny Crump, a member of the Queensland State Emergency Service (SES). I am very pleased to acknowledge Jenny's recent receipt of the *Queensland State Emergency Service Meritorious Service Medal* and congratulate her on this award. I know from personal knowledge of Jenny's activities with the SES that this award is extremely well deserved. ●

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NEW MEMBERS

The Australian Institute of Emergency Services is pleased to announce the following emergency services people joined the AIES between March and June 2017.

| NAME | ORGANISATION | DIVISION |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| Adam Gwin | Qld Fire and Emergency Services | QLD |
| John Moy | Qld Fire and Emergency Services | QLD |
| Grant Prendergast | NSW Ambulance | NSW |
| Brett Richardson | Sutherland Shire Council | NSW |
| Damien Taylor | Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning | VIC |
| Michael Young | Qld Fire and Emergency Services | QLD |



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BE A CONTRIBUTOR to *National Emergency Response*

Submissions now open for the Spring 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 Monday 7 August, 2017.

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



JOIN THE AIES IN 2017

Simply go to the website and apply online

Membership is open to all members of the Australia and New Zealand emergency services, and affiliated organisations.

Membership cost: \$60 yearly subscription plus \$30 initial joining fee*.

Student, Associate and Retired Memberships are also available.

Chapters of the Institute are established in most States in Australia, and membership of the Institute carries a professional post nominal.

*Both of these fees are tax deductible for people employed in an emergency management or counter disaster capacity.

Visit www.aies.net.au to join, or to find out more. Find out more about AIES membership on page 26.



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“SEAC considers that fluorine-free foams can be taken into account on a long-term basis but cannot be relied on for the coming years for such a critical use.”

Committee for Socio-economic Analysis (SEAC), Draft Opinion, on an Annex XV dossier proposing restriction on PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related substances, 10 September 2015, p14.



NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES MEMORIAL



Faye Bendrups

Independent Chair, VicSESVA

The emergency services industry peak body AFAC (the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council) holds an annual memorial service to honour the commitment and sacrifice of fire and emergency services personnel who have been killed in the line of duty.



Wreaths laid at the memorial sculpture.

The service, now in its third year, is a public event, with Members of Parliament and media invited to promote the role of fire and emergency services and the sacrifices made by AFAC members.

The ceremony is held in Canberra at the National Memorial sculpture, overlooking Lake Burley Griffin, and directly south of the Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade. The ceremony is a reminder of the dangers the men and women of the fire and emergency services face as they work to protect our communities. On 28 April, the 2017 service was attended by more than 300 serving EM workers and family members. A memorial Medallion was presented to partners of those who have died



VicSESVA representative David Rowlands.

and for their children, to honour those in the emergency services who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The Service was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer of AFAC, Stuart Ellis AM, and the official address was given by The Hon. Sussan Ley MP. The AFAC Council Address was given by Naomi Stevens, Director Fire and incident Management Section, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The service was attended by representatives from all States. Victorian SES volunteers were represented by the members of the National SES Volunteers Association, Faye Bendrups and David Rowlands. The Chair of the National Association, Charlie Moir, participated as part of an official wreath-laying party, in recognition of SES

continued on page 8



The National SES Volunteer Association (NSESVA) representatives at the memorial.



AFAC introduction given by Stuart Ellis CEO.



NSESVA Chair Charlie Moir (centre) laying wreath.

volunteers across Australia who have lost their lives on duty.

A moving *Prayer for Emergency Service Personnel* was read by Chris Beattie, Chief Officer, South Australia State Emergency Service:

The Australian Institute of Emergency Services is planning to attend the Emergency Services Memorial next year. If you would like pay your respects to our fallen emergency services heroes from Australia and New Zealand, please join other AIES representatives in Canberra next year. Full details to come.

Almighty God of all people,

We ask today for your blessing upon all our emergency services personnel throughout Australia and New Zealand as they work to protect and preserve life and property across our nations.

We thank you for all who take risks and make sacrifices for others in their daily work, and especially for the men and women who work in our emergency services.

Help us honour and appreciate our fire and emergency services and to be thankful to them as we offer our support to them all.

Be with them each day, keep them safe and enable them to do their work without threat or harm.

Maintain a culture of respect and appreciation in our nations, and inspire those who work in our emergency services to excel and care in equal measure.

May we be quick to thank and slow to criticise those who risk so much for our safety.

On this special day, we also remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice, having lost their lives in the line of duty. Protect and care for their families, colleagues and friends as they remember and honour their loved ones.

We unite as one to offer our prayer, in faith believing, Amen.



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EXERCISE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Exercise Comm Alpha was conducted on Friday 28 April 2017 at the Sandown Park Racecourse in Melbourne. The event conducted by the Victorian State Emergency Response Planning Committee – Communication Subcommittee (SERPCCS) was a one day event dedicated to field communication management, operators and technical staff of emergency services and allied support agencies that assist the community in times of disaster.



Rod Young MAIES

President Victorian Division AIES

The day was very successful with 117 participants from across 19 emergency services, government, telecommunications and mobile radio vendors. The display had 16 mobile field communications units from across Victoria including emergency network equipment from Telstra and NBN.

The day consisted of multiple information sessions aimed at this specialised group and commenced with a presentation from the Deputy Commissioner and Director of Capability and Response from Emergency Management Victoria, Tony Murphy who provided an excellent overview on the strategic direction of communications focussing on shared vision and shared goals at set a positive direction for the day. This was then followed by a presentation by Emergency

Management Victoria's Laura Sexton, Program Director – Operational Communications Program, on the strategic direction of Victoria's emergency services communications over the next ten years.

Presentations were also delivered by participating agencies on the existing capability of their mobile field command and communications units including lessons learnt in the development phase and feedback from field personnel.

A presentation on the Next Generation Triple Zero delivered by Victoria Police Inspector Peter Ferguson (Chair SERPCCS) and General Manager of Telstra's E000 Team Jane Elkington.

The event allowed for emergency services technical staff to ask questions and discuss issues with a service provider technician in a non-commercial environment, whilst the information



sessions provided a first-hand view on future technologies that will be of use to the next generation field communications units.

Events like this would not be possible without the support of sponsors and I would like to and acknowledge and thank the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Telstra and Emergency Management Victoria for their generous support. ●

Other presentations delivered by:

Motorola's Graeme Stanley on Future trends in Local and Global Technology for Public Safety Critical Communications

Telstra's Stephen Howell on Future Mobile Network Developments, which included a display of the next generation high powered mobile network repeaters for use in emergency service communications units called Cel-Fi Go.

NBN Network's Cameron Scott and Telstra's Rod Young provided an overview of the existing technologies that can be used to support emergency services and the wider community in times of disaster.



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SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Creating safer and more resilient communities in Victoria must be a partnership across agencies, state and local government, business and communities.



Craig Lapsley

Emergency Management Commissioner

Our communities face a number of global challenges and emerging risks. With higher-than-average temperatures, reduced rainfall, increased drought conditions and more extreme weather events, we can expect more intense and frequent natural disasters.

Population growth, greater urbanisation and technological advances, mean potential increases in disease, pandemic outbreaks, security threats and telecommunication risks.

Against this backdrop, the objective of all emergency management activity in Victoria is to reduce the impact of emergencies on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure and the environment.

If our aim is for safer and more resilient communities, working to strengthen the capacity of both our communities and the emergency management sector to plan for,

withstand, respond to and recover from an expected increase in emergencies, the question is how do we do what we need to do to get there?

Resilience underpins all we do in emergency management. It is the foundation upon which we build our future as it runs across infrastructure, planning, emergency management and community sector capability. It affects our capacity to prepare for and recover from emergencies. As we prepare to release the Community Resilience in Emergency Management Framework and the Victorian Preparedness Framework this is more apparent than ever.

Building resilience requires communities, state and local government, agencies and business to work in partnership and share responsibility. It requires an integrated approach that puts people at the centre of decision making and supports



Resilience underpins all we do in emergency management. It is the foundation upon which we build our future as it runs across infrastructure, planning, emergency management and community sector capability.

the emergency management sector to better connect with communities to understand their values, priorities and strengths.

Safer and more resilient communities are connected communities. At their core, resilient communities are flexible, agile and resourceful, able to accept uncertainty and proactively adapt and respond to change.

EMV strength and resilience projects

- **Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management** – Provides guidance to the Victorian emergency management sector to align and advance investment towards achieving a shared vision for resilience and to support placing community resilience at the core of the emergency management sectors strategies, programs and approaches with a view to helping build safer and more resilient communities. To be released soon.
- **Resilient Recovery Reform Strategy** – Reform to Victoria's relief and recovery arrangements is being undertaken to support wellbeing, liveability, sustainability, viability and community connection outcomes. Through the Resilient Recovery Discussion Paper we have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders in order to develop the future strategy for relief and recovery in Victoria.
- **Planning Bill** – The Emergency Management Legislation Amendment (Planning) Bill contains proposed amendments to underpin the new integrated emergency management planning arrangements.
- **Emergency Management Planning Guidelines** – New emergency management planning guidelines are being developed to provide effective, consistent, community-centred and practical guidance for developing emergency management plans at state, regional and municipal levels across Victoria. An external Reference Group made up of more than 40 emergency management experts from across the sector is providing ongoing advice and input.
- **Community-Based Emergency Management** – starts at the grass roots and helps communities build resilience in the face of emergencies by understanding their own risk and preparing for the before, during and after.
- **Emergency Management Climate Change Program** – This program recognises the synergy with and impact of climate change on emergency management and will work with communities, businesses, government and agencies to integrate climate risks, impacts and projections into all phases of emergency management.
- **Victorian Preparedness Framework** – Provides a practical model that will enable the emergency management sector to understand capability requirements to prepare for, respond to and recover from Victoria's greatest risks. The outcomes will help guide priorities for the sector, working in partnership with communities, government, agencies and business to share the responsibility of emergency management into the future. To be released soon.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Framework** – The Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework: Respect and Inclusion for All will guide actions for creating a more diverse and inclusive sector and better connecting to all of Victoria's diverse communities.

Resilient communities typically share many common characteristics. They are able to bounce forward to a new normal after acute shocks and they work together to address chronic stresses before, during and after emergencies.

The emergency management sector, which includes state and local government, industry, community and

business, is leading a number of major reform projects that recognise the need to look to, and plan for, the future of the emergency management sector and the community. This is facilitated and led by Emergency Management Victoria.

It is only by working together and planning for them that we can better manage emergencies before, during and after. ●



COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

NSW RFS

EXERCISE NORTHERN 16

This paper was presented by AIES President Steve Jenkins at the Fire Protection, Safety and Security Conference in Slovakia, May 2017.

Steve Jenkins

AIES President

HISTORY OF THE NSW RFS

The New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has more than 80,000 members and is the world's largest volunteer fire-fighting organisation.

It has responsibility for responding to all fires and other emergency-related incidents such as motor vehicle incidents that occur in 99 per cent of the 800,630 square kilometres that geographically comprise the land mass of the state of New South Wales. This also represents more than 10 per cent of the Australian continent.

Like many large police and emergency service organisations today, the NSW RFS had humble beginnings.

For example, reference to controlling fires was first mentioned in NSW legislation in the *1867 Municipalities Act*, which identified the legally constituted municipalities. Section 153 of this Act read *inter alia* that: "The Council of any Municipality may from time to time make by-laws for preventing and extinguishing fires." The NSW Fire Brigades was established by the NSW State Government through the *1884 Fire Brigades Act (No 3)* with responsibility for fire prevention and control vested therein. In 1896, the first volunteer bush fire brigade was established in Berrigan and was formally recorded in November 1900.

As the 20th Century began, two further Acts of the NSW Parliament, the *1901 Careless Use of Fires Act* (revised in 1906, 1912, and 1930) and the *1906 Local Government Act* were passed to ensure that volunteer brigades could be formed through local councils.

The early 1980s saw some of the worst bush fire seasons since the 1950s. In the 1980-81 season, eight people tragically died and over 887,000ha were scorched. The following year, a pine plantation worth \$12 million was destroyed in southern NSW. This fire was so hot that it burnt 24,000ha in just two and a half hours. Lightning strikes on Christmas Day in 1984 ignited more than 100 fires in grassed areas of Western NSW. Half a million hectares were burnt as a result. That year 6,000 fires raged. Four people lost their lives, and a total of \$40 million of losses was recorded. The decade closed as it had begun, with major fires burning in the eastern part of the state.

DEPARTMENT OF BUSH FIRE SERVICES

In 1985, Chairman of the Bush Fire Council Philip (Phil) Koperberg was appointed Executive Officer of the Bush Fires Branch. While in this role, Mr Koperberg led the response to the bushfires that occurred during the 1993-94 fire season, which, at the time, was the most protracted and largest fire-fighting effort in Australian history.

Over 18,300 volunteer fire-fighters were deployed at over 800 fires throughout NSW. Notwithstanding their efforts though, four lives and 206 houses were lost.

Following the subsequent Coronial Inquiry, the NSW Government introduced legislation for a single Rural Fire Service in 1997, the *Rural Fires Act*

continued on page 18



LPG Scenario. Photo by Laurie Sherwood.

1997 No 65, which was proclaimed 1 September 1997. Philip Koperberg AO AFSM BEM, was appointed as the first Commissioner of the NSW RFS.

In October 2007, Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM succeeded Phil Koperberg to become the second (and current) Commissioner of the NSW RFS. The year also boasted a remarkable number of members participating in a new online communication channel with 10,600 members registered users of the MyRF volunteer website. Mr Koperberg continued to be involved with emergency management and recently completed five years as Chair of the NSW State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).

The *Rural Fires Act 1997* established the Rural Fire Service, and defined its organisational structure, which included rural fire districts that are constituted around local government boundaries. The Act also strengthened the operating capabilities of the service, and laid the groundwork to simplify how the NSW RFS was to be managed. It redefined the world's largest fire service and built on a century of experience in protecting some of the most fire-prone areas on earth.

In August 2002, the *Rural Fires and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act 2002* amended

both the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to provide an even stronger and more streamlined system for building developments in bush fire prone areas.

Today, the NSW RFS is the combat agency for bush, grass, and structure fires along with other incidents in rural fire districts. It is also the lead agency for coordination of bush firefighting and prevention throughout NSW.

STATISTICS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

For the year ending June 2016, the NSW RFS recorded a membership of approximately 80,000 volunteers in over 2100 rural fire brigades across the state. These volunteers were equipped, supported and trained and operationally managed across the state through 50 Fire Control Centres (FCCs). The RFS operates over 5,300 vehicles as follows:

- 3,783 tankers
- 65 pumpers
- 1,296 transport and command vehicles
- 59 bulk water carriers
- 81 catering vehicles
- 40 specialist communications vehicles.

In the last financial year, 2,000 qualified trainers delivered 314,680 hours of training at local centres.

The service also completed hazard reductions which protected 118,021 properties and 2,773 community education programs were conducted across the state.

In partnership with community and through the professionalism of its members, the NSW RFS continues to grow and to improve - while always promoting the ethos of volunteering.

Additionally, over 900 staff members are employed to manage the day-to-day operations of the service at District Fire Control Centres, Regional Offices, Customer Service Centres, Operational and Mitigation Support Service bases across the State, and the service's Headquarters at Lidcombe.

IN 2015/16, THE RFS ATTENDED OVER 16,000 INCIDENTS INCLUDING:

- Bush and grass fires 7,686
- Structural Fires 1,166
- Motor vehicle fires 1,808
- Motor vehicle incidents (crashes) 4,562
- Assistance to other agencies 1,085



Photo by Laurie Sherwood.

SAFETY IN FIRE-FIGHTING

Safety in the NSW RFS is paramount to all of the service's activities. Too many lives have been lost fighting fires over the years in NSW – 69 in total since 1954!

Sadly, despite the increasing strong emphasis on safety, the perilous dangers experienced by fire-fighters in-the-field and the unpredictability of Mother Nature, 14 volunteer fire-fighters still lost their lives since the year 2000ⁱⁱ.

The NSW RFS recognises the contribution and sacrifice of those members who have lost their lives in the line of duty, while helping to protect others in need, and their property. The names of those volunteers are inscribed on the Volunteer Memorial Honour Roll at Mrs Macquarie's Chair in Sydney.

A service is held at this memorial each October and NSW RFS members, family, friends and members of the community are welcome to attend. We sincerely hope that no further names are inscribed on this memorial.

Although fighting fires and protecting the community from emergencies is the most visible aspect of the NSW RFS, as the leading agency for bush fire management and mitigation in NSW, the service has many other functions and responsibilities that support the provision of those services.

The NSW RFS employs a range of people with a variety of skills and varying backgrounds. The work carried out at Regional and District levels includes:

- Membership (Brigade management, Learning and Development, OHS&R, staffing etc.)
- Operations (response, hazard management, mitigation planning, community engagement etc.)
- Infrastructure (brigade stations, fleet, communications, IT etc.)
- Management

Corporate areas include positions in areas relating to environmental planning and assessment, development control, corporate planning, research, finance, information technology, volunteer support, human resources, engineering and executive services.

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING IN REGION NORTH

An example of the NSW RFS's commitment to ensuring its members are appropriately trained, Region North, has conducted an annual training exercise since 2001. The exercise was held in South Grafton in 2001 and 2002 before being relocated to Glen Innes in 2003, where it has been held each year since.

In 2001, the exercise involved approx. 240 personnel who were exposed to

13 scenarios, utilised 33 appliances, and cost less than \$10,000.

In 2016, Exercise *Northern 16* involved over 460 personnel, 10 scenarios, and 60 appliances from both NSW and Queensland rural fire brigades (excluding a bulk water tanker, the Category 6 water tanker, catering vehicles, and operational command vehicles), and cost almost \$50,000.

EXERCISE NORTHERN 16

In 2016, Exercise *Northern 16* was held over three days from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 March with the Glen Innes Showgrounds being the main staging point where vehicles were parked and participating members slept, ate and received briefing / debriefings. Members travelled to Glen Innes on the Friday, attended the scenarios throughout Saturday and on Sunday morning, and returned to their home brigades on Sunday afternoon.

Scenarios change from year to year based on assessed needs throughout the region. The scenarios that participants were exposed to during Exercise *Northern 16* were:

- Fire Overrun
- Motor Vehicle Crash (colloquially referred to as a MVAs, however, they are rarely 'accidents')

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Maintenance. Photo by Alan Brinkworth.

- Water pumping
- Back-to-Basics
- Vehicle Maintenance & Engineering
- Structure Fire
- Counter-Terrorism (Conducted by members of the NSW Police Force)
- First Aid
- Aviation incident (both fixed and rotary wing aircraft)
- Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) fire.

FIRE OVERRUN:

One of the most dangerous events that can occur during firefighting is being overrun by fire. Today, the construction of firefighting appliances includes the ability of the appliance to provide a level of protection for fire-fighters caught in such circumstances. Appliances have water sprayers to protect the vehicle, and drop-down reflectorised curtains to protect against radiant heat. These supplement the wearing of full personal protective equipment clothing including fire hoods and the use of fire blankets so that the firefighter is completely covered while inside the vehicle. This one hour scenario provided members with information about the importance of being prepared for such an event, including some strategies for avoiding being caught in such situations in the first place, and the opportunity to practice what to do in the event of a fire over-run.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH (MVA):

Increased vehicular movements on roads and highways make MVAs an all-too-frequent occurrence. Responding to MVAs (and rail and aviation incidents), whether they involve fire or not, can be a psychologically traumatising event, especially for volunteers. This scenario at the exercise, even though staged, provided a high level of realism, allowing members, particularly those who may have not previously attended an MVA, to experience how they might react to a real life situation.

As volunteers, they are not required to attend an incident if they feel uncomfortable doing so. The scenario involved a three vehicle crash with multiple simulated casualties, including an entrapment, a serious injury and a third patient wandering aimlessly in the vicinity of the crash. It was also simulated that one of the vehicles had caught fire. Being exposed to this type of activity in the exercise situation allows members to make better decisions about their own wellbeing in real life circumstances.

WATER PUMPING:

Without water, firefighters are little more than by-standers. Water pumping occurs for a variety of reasons including refilling appliances from static water supplies

(creeks, dams, swimming pools etc.), a temporary water source established near such a source where appliances might not be able to otherwise access water without getting bogged, and transferring water from one appliance to another (i.e. in relay). This two-hour scenario involved drafting, foam application and how to identify and solve problems associated with pumping.

BACK-TO-BASICS:

No matter how well people are trained, irrespective of what type of activity it is, it never hurts to go back and revisit the basics. Firefighting is no different. Firefighters, like anyone, can forget, or variations to the correct process can creep into how they go about something. In order to improve and enhance interoperability, all fire-fighters must do things the same way and to the same standard, i.e. in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures. This helps improve the effectiveness of not only fire-fighting operations, but also safety for individual firefighters and their colleagues performing firefighting activities beside them. Additionally, this one hour scenario reinforced the use of the Incident, Threats, Actions, Support, and Command and Control (ITASC) approach when performing briefings along with the importance of ensuring the accuracy of



First Aid. Photo by Alan Brinkworth.

information being transferred from the fire-ground to Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and/or the public.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE & ENGINEERING:

Basic maintenance of vehicles and equipment allocated to Rural Fire Brigades is the responsibility of the members, especially vehicle drivers, thus members need to know what needs to be checked and how conduct those checks, not only on the various types of vehicles but also the equipment (e.g. pumps and chainsaws, etc.).

It is necessary to know the correct location and procedures and lifting (tilting) truck cabins, accessing dip-sticks and air-filters etc. Incorrectly accessing, removing and/or replacing these could result in damage to the vehicle thus rendering inoperable for fire-fighting purposes and incurring costly repairs. Members attending this scenario were provided with practical skills for maintaining appliances and pumps, and viewing the latest prototypes of appliances and PPE improvements.

STRUCTURE FIRE:

Although the name Rural Fire Service has its origins in bush firefighting, the RFS is responsible for responding to all types of fire and emergency related incidents

that occur outside populated urban areas where Fire and Rescue New South Wales are the primary response agency. This includes, in some instances, urban areas on the outskirts of Sydney and other major population centres. In rural areas the RFS responds to fires in houses, farm sheds, caravans and any other structure if might be affected by fire. In some areas, RFS members are also trained in the use of Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) equipment so as to be able to perform fire-fighting and/or rescue in structures that are alight. Topics covered in this scenario included positioning of appliances, hose-work and Crew Leader responsibilities. The demonstration of hose work in this scenario, utilising actual fire in a caravan to simulate a structure fire, was particularly useful for members as it included a technique for conservatively and effectively applying water onto a fire inside a structure.

COUNTER TERRORISM:

This scenario was conducted by members of the New South Wales Police Force's Antiterrorism & Security Group. It comprised the provision of information on the history of extremism and global terrorism, and some of the signs to look for when responding to and fighting fires that might occur particularly in remote areas, especially if they are

without any reasonable indication as to how they started. The importance of this type of instruction cannot be overstated. Extremists frequently travel to remote areas to practice or perfect whatever it is they plan to cause and create death, devastation and fear into the community, and RFS members are generally the first on-scene, or the only agency to respond. The ability to recognise suspicious, or possible terrorist-related situations, not only could save their life, or the life of a colleague, it could also provide the statutory investigative authorities with valuable information and evidence.

FIRST AID:

Heart attack and cardiac-related conditions is one of the biggest causes of death amongst fire-fighters during fire-fighting operations. Knowing the signs of these types of conditions, and how to provide first aid to those suffering them, could well be a life-saver. This includes how to use an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) that is carried on many of the RFS's vehicles, and how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Snakebites are also possible when conducting fire-fighting operations in the forests and open spaces. Participants were also shown the most recently approved method of bandaging

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Aviation Scenario. Photo by Alan Brinkworth.

a snakebite victim during this two hour scenario which was conducted by paramedics from the Ambulance Service of New South Wales.

AVIATION INCIDENT:

Actual fire was utilised during this scenario which included both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and casualties (dummies) in the vicinity of the aircraft. Positioning of appliances and angle of approach are particularly relevant when responding to this type of incident. Firefighters need to be cognisant of the possibility of aviation fuel exploding, and the presence of metals, alloys and composite fibre materials that are sometimes used in aircraft construction and might be hazardous to humans, along with tensioned cables and other hazards. Members were required to safely approach the scene, suppress the fire, and extract the victim during this one hour scenario whilst also being cognisant of the need to preserve the scene for transport safety investigators.

LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG) FIRE:

This scenario also used actual fire and required crews to use a three-man fog attack to suppress a gas fire in a barbecue. The intensity of the explosion of a pressure can filled with gas was also demonstrated during this one hour scenario. ●

AWARDS AND REWARDS

In addition to the personal rewards that each member received individually by way of improved knowledge and skills from attending and participating in the exercise, it is important to also have some formal rewards. On the last day, the annual exercise awards were announced.

The Alan Brinkworth Perpetual Award for Outstanding Crew

Gladfield Maryvale Brigade, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

Prize: \$500 from Gilbert & Roach Isuzu

Best Strike Team Leader

Ken Barker, Northern Tablelands.

Prize: Mini i-Pad from RFS valued at \$1,000

Best Crew Leader

Nathan Greaves, The Hills (Region East).

Prize: Mini I-Pad from RFS valued at \$1,000

Committee Encouragement Award

Dianne Fellows & the Catering Crew, support members from various Districts from throughout the Region.

Prize: \$500 from Gilbert & Roach Isuzu

Committee Encouragement Award

Brayfield Dury Liverpool Range Zone.

Prize: RFS Voucher for \$500

Outstanding Support Person

Alan Minty, Namoi Gwydir RFB.

Prize: RFS voucher for \$250

Outstanding Crew Member

Steph Greacen, Mid-North Coast District.

Prize: RFS voucher for \$250

Best presented Appliance

Crows Nest Brigade (QFES),

Prize: RFS Voucher for \$500

Best presented appliances – Runners up

North Shore 1, Mid Coast, Hattonvale (QFES), Woodenbong 1, Northern Rivers Southampton 1, Clarence Valley.

Prize: Grease gun & truck wash kits from Gilbert & Roach Isuzu



Counter Terrorism. Photo by Alan Brinkworth.

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- Superintendent Sean McCardle AFSM, Manager, Mid North Coast Team, NSW Rural Fire Service, Coffs Harbour.
- Captain Laurie Sherwood, Karangi Rural Fire Brigade, NSW Rural Fire Service, Karangi (near Coffs Harbour).

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- Daly, B. 2016, *Region North Annual Field Exercise "Northern 16": Coordinating Instructions*, NSW Rural Fire Service.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Jenkins recently retired from the Queensland Police following a distinguished and diverse 34 year and five month career. During his career, Steve served at many locations throughout Queensland, including rural and remote areas and Indigenous communities. He performed a variety of different functions including general duties, criminal investigations, education and training, police communications centre operations and management, information and communications technology program and project management, district duty officer and district disaster management officer.

He also performed duty at the rank of Inspector for extended periods including in the roles of district inspector, regional professional practices manager and principal project officer.

In September 2016, Steve was elected as a councillor on the Bellingen Shire Council where he is also the Chair of the Dorrigo Saleyard Committee and the Council's Councillor representative on the Mid North Coast Bushfire Management Committee.

Steve is also the National President of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services. Since retiring, Steve has become a Senior Consultant with Gravelroad and Crowd Intelligence.

Steve has numerous formal qualifications including Master degrees in Business Administration, Police Management, Project Management, Technology Management (Risk Management) and Community Development (Emergency Management), along with a Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management, a Bachelor in Social Science (Emergency Management), and five diplomas. He is currently completing a Doctorate in Business Administration.

New St John app helping people in emergencies

St John Ambulance Western Australia is using a new smartphone app to enlist qualified first aiders who can respond to someone in distress before the ambulance arrives.

In an Australian first, the free St John First Responder app is designed to alert registered users to incidents occurring in public places within 500 metres of them.

The first responder would then be dispatched to give the appropriate first aid, along with the closest ambulance.

The incident types that will trigger an alert include cardiac arrest, burns and allergic reactions.

St John Chief Executive Officer Tony Ahern said the app will help first responders get to incidents quickly.

"The app will provide the first aider with exact location details so users get to a scene quickly."

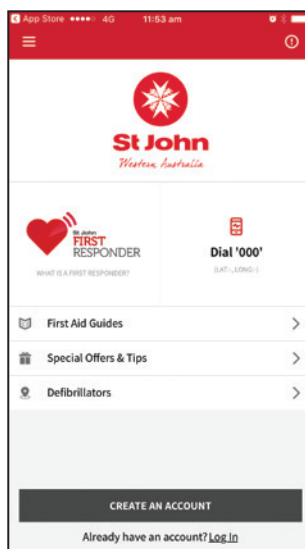
"This fits in with our purpose of making first aid a part of everyone's life."

Mr Ahern said the alert would perhaps be used 10 times a day, based on typical ambulance call outs.

The app also lists the location of registered defibrillators nearby, allowing first responders to be able to retrieve and use a defibrillator during a cardiac arrest.

The same technology has been used successfully in many countries.

The app is available through the Apple or Google Play app stores. Search: "St John first responder." ●



- First aid is a proven lifesaver. Early defibrillation and effective CPR can double a person's chance of survival.
- St John is the leader in first aid in WA, training more than 317,000 Western Australians in first aid each year.
- The app will also include first aid guides for spider bites, electric shock, asthma, bleeds and other conditions.

One stop app

Whether it's a flood, fire, storm, earthquake, tsunami or shark sighting, Victorians can receive warnings for all emergencies through a single mobile phone app and phone number.

Minister for Emergency Services James Merlino launched the new *VicEmergency* app and new *VicEmergency Hotline* – 1800 226 226 – late last year.

"We're putting people first with a one stop shop for emergency warnings that will help keep Victorians safe during emergencies and natural disasters," Minister Merlino said.

Both the app and the hotline provide a one-stop shop for Victorians to access information about emergencies and natural disasters.

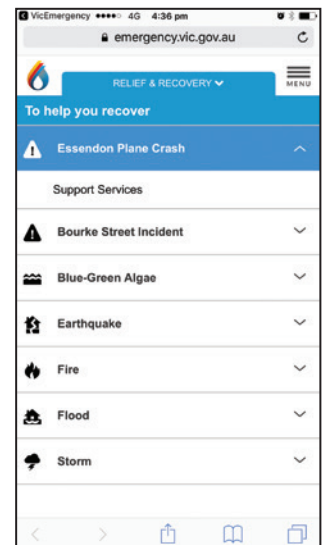
The *VicEmergency Hotline* 1800 226 226 brings together all emergency numbers, including the Victorian Bushfire Information Line, the Victorian Relief and Recovery Information Line and the VICSES Flood and Storm Information Line.

The *VicEmergency* app replaces the existing *FireReady* app and provides warning and incident notifications for a variety of emergencies, including storms and beach closures, not just fires.

It can send 1.2 million notifications per minute and has undergone extensive performance testing to make sure it can manage peak periods and critical incidents.

Monitored 24-hours a day, seven days a week, the app has disaster recovery capability set up within Australia and overseas.

Key features include improved watch zones, which allow users to target the locations and incidents that are relevant to them. ●



For more information before or during an emergency, phone the *VicEmergency* hotline 1800 226 226, visit emergency.vic.gov.au

ARE FLUORINE FREE FOAMS MISLEADING US?

Many are perhaps encouraged to use Fluorine Free Foams (F3) when transitioning away from undesirable legacy long-chain (PFOS/PFOA) fluorinated foam agents... but do they provide the necessary balance between the pollution derived from fire against pollution derived from firefighting?

Sometimes F3 success is achieved with small fires by using higher rates and gentler application, but this is not possible with fixed foam systems. F3s also seem unreliable on larger more volatile fuels eg. gasoline. Is a more effective alternative available?

Australian firefighter studies show smoke/breakdown products from structural, vehicle and bush fires can cause increased incidence of cancers. Harmful breakdown chemicals, including known carcinogens like Benzo(a)pyrene, can penetrate skin through firefighter turnout gear, overhauls, and returning to station.

Scientific research, comparative testing and real-life incidents have confirmed a factor of 3 times more F3 agent, often required for volatile flammable liquid fires like gasoline, Jet A1 and industrial alcohols like Ethanol, compared to short-chain C6 fluorinated foams. F3s have no fuel shedding capability or film forming ability for fast vapour control (most effectively provided by fluorochemicals). Hence mixing F3s forcefully with volatile fuels delivers sudden, unpredictable flashbacks/flare-ups. Fuel vapour trapped in these F3 bubbles is released as blankets breakdown, potentially igniting from burning/incandescent materials

nearby. Sudden re-involvement results, increasing life safety and re-involvement risks.

This slower fire control of F3 is often accompanied by increased production of smoke and fire breakdown products, wastewater run-off and foam residues to deal with, which are also likely to be up to 30 times more aquatically toxic than the equivalent amount of short-chain C6 agent needed for the same incident. Use of C6 foams will result in typically 1/3rd of the hazardous effluent to collect and contain, compared to F3 agent usage. Sufficient evidence now confirms such significant performance differences - beyond reasonable doubt.

F3, C6, C8-based foams can all pass the ICAO Level B fire test standard at $\leq 20^{\circ}\text{C}$, but such small scale certification testing is only indicative of future fire performance, it provides no guarantees! A Singapore ICAO Level B F3 demonstration was cancelled under humid 32°C conditions because "too many environmental factors were not under our control" claimed this leading Australian F3 manufacturer. F3 failed extinguishment on this same fire twice the previous day, when allegedly the separator also ignited, suggesting little fire control was achieved. Aren't these

conditions experienced around most of Australia, most of the year? If life safety is paramount, why are we risking lives unnecessarily by relying on F3s, when substituted C6 AFFF worked reliably and effectively under these 32°C conditions, when F3 clearly could not? Is this perhaps a contributory result of the recent 2013 dilution of ICAO level B fire test requirements, now permitting edge flickers beyond the previous extinction time of 60 seconds up to 120 seconds. Critical seconds count when saving a life.

Are we as air passengers travelling around Australia therefore more vulnerable to potential aircraft crashes turning into disasters, than those travelling in other countries like USA where Mil F Spec AFFF is mandatory for Civil Airports and Defence applications? What does this say about our duty of care to passengers, crew, emergency responders and minimizing adverse environmental impacts from such fire incidents?

A comprehensive risk assessment usually leads to a more comprehensive analysis where fast, reliable, effective & efficient use of C6 foam agents usually delivers lowest environmental impacts.

Have you considered these important implications?

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SUN SETS ON SUMMER

Summer has officially come to an end with Queensland volunteer surf lifesavers packing away red and yellow flags for another busy season.

Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) volunteers patrolled beaches between Forrest Beach to Rainbow Bay for 300,000 hours between September 2016 and May 2017. During this period, SLSQ watched over 3.41 million beach-goers, with 71,931 requiring preventative assistance. Surf life savers treated 24,912 first aid patients, and directly saved the lives of 936 beachgoers via in-water rescues (690 of these rescues occurred outside of the red and yellow flags).

The past season saw SLSQ implement a number of key patrol and educational initiatives at selected blackspots and

high-risk locations across the state in a bid to offer even greater protection to Queensland beachgoers.

The organisation also introduced extended patrol hours and roving services across the state's coastline during peak periods while on the Gold Coast, dusk patrols were extended through to 10pm at Surfers Paradise during busy holidays.

SLSQ will remain active across winter with 24/7 emergency response groups now active and operating in all regions across the state. On the Gold Coast, lifesavers will continue to perform roving dawn patrols each day of the year.

The Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service also operates in south east Queensland during the cooler months, with crews on-call around the clock to assist with emergency search and rescue operations. ●



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A national, not-for-profit private health insurer that's now here for you and your family - when you need us most.

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For more information visit eshealth.com.au,
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