

# RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE EDITION 11



## OUR STRATEGY

BUILDING ON OUR PAST, CREATING OUR FUTURE

READY TO RESPOND:

RESULTS ARE IN:

SEEING STARS:

NEW QFES STATE DEPLOYMENT CENTRE OPENS IN BRISBANE

2016 QFES VOLUNTEER SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

QFES JOINS EFFORT TO PROMOTE PEACE AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES

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### ON THE COVER

A large bushfire in Coolool on the Sunshine Coast in January saw more than 30 SES, RFS and FRS crews work over four days in a coordinated response to control the blaze and keep the local community safe.

**Pictured:** FRS appliance Tewantin 457A alongside RFS Doonan 52. Photo courtesy Auxiliary Captain Kerry Eleison, Tewantin Fire and Rescue Station.

**Insets:** RFS firefighters and SES volunteers on the ground during the incident.

**RESPONSE** is a bi-monthly magazine produced by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' Media, Communication and Engagement Unit. Contributions and feedback are welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity and clarity.

**Address:** Response magazine, Media, Communication and Engagement Unit, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4001

**Editor:** Saskia Tigchelaar  
Phone: 07 3635 2515  
Email: Magazine.Editor@qfes.qld.gov.au

**Advertising:** Leah Homibrook  
Phone: 07 3635 3417

**Graphic Design:** Nejjien Creative  
Email: design@nejjen.com.au

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# FOREWORDS



**Katarina Carroll**

## **Commissioner**

### **QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The new year is well and truly underway and I am excited to see so much of the planning and preparation undertaken in 2016 ready to be put into action in 2017.

This year will see considerable and important change implemented across the department. There has been an enormous amount of work to bring us to this point and, while there is still more to be done, the progress we have made to date has laid a solid foundation for QFES to build on.

The organisational structure required to deliver on the capabilities needed by the department, now and into the future, has required careful evaluation and consultation over many months.

The realigned QFES organisational structure that will support our position, capabilities and renewed focus on preparedness has been finalised and will be implemented between March and June 2017.

It also aligns with our partners as well as our legislated parameters; in particular those relating to our three main services — the FRS, RFS and SES. The QFES high-level organisational structure is set out on page 7.

It is of the utmost importance to me that every QFES member feels supported, valued and respected. As a department, we are making significant progress developing our organisational culture in line with recommendations made in the Allison Review. The ways we are implementing recommendations are discussed further on page 4.

In January, Fire and Emergency Services Minister Mark Ryan announced the Emergency Volunteers Advisory Forum. This forum will give all Queensland volunteer emergency service organisations a voice and will be a valuable platform for them to access government.

With a large volunteer workforce, this announcement is incredibly positive for QFES and demonstrates a high level of support for our emergency service volunteers and the work they are doing to support Queensland communities. You can read more about this on page 6.

The hard work is being done to define and realign the department and to use this as an opportunity to bring our people together. I am proud of what we have achieved so far and I thank you all for being part of this journey and look forward to continuing this work with you all in the year ahead.



**Mark Roche**

## **Deputy Commissioner**

### **CHIEF OFFICER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

### **READINESS AND RESPONSE SERVICES**

Welcome to the first edition of *Response* magazine for the year. If the calendar for the next few months is anything to go by, 2017 is going to be a busy year for QFES.

We have already seen our crews in action attending a number of protracted incidents across the state. The Commissioner made special mention in January of more than 120 QFES members who worked tirelessly to contain a large bushfire at Cooloom where numerous properties were threatened. This incident, as with others of this scale, showcases the exceptional skills of our people and the interoperability between partner agencies including QPS, QAS, local disaster management groups, QPWS and local councils. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all involved in achieving the successful outcome at Cooloom, with no loss of life or property.

I had the honour of attending Australia Day Achievement Awards ceremonies in Brisbane and South Western regions in January to recognise QFES members for their exceptional work in the delivery of fire and emergency services over the preceding 12 months. Ceremonies were also held in Far Northern, Northern and Central regions and I congratulate all those who received Australia Day Achievement Medallions. Thank you also to the organisations and individuals external to QFES who were presented with appreciation certificates for their outstanding support of the department and our people.

In January, I travelled to New Zealand to meet with members of the Australian Road Rescue Organisation in preparation for the 2017 Australasian Rescue Challenge (ARC17) which will be held in Hamilton NZ from 20–23 July. Nominations for ARC17 close 9am 20 March — please contact Inspector Peter Bradow via email at [peter.bradow@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:peter.bradow@qfes.qld.gov.au) for further information. Congratulations and good luck to ARC16 runners-up, the QFES Cairns team who have been invited to showcase their rescue skills on the world stage later this year when they take part in the World Rescue Challenge in Romania held 30 August – 3 September.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the newly appointed Chief Superintendents and Superintendents. These appointments will continue to bring stability and new skills to the regions and I wish each of them all the best in their new roles.



## Independent Committee checks off on QFES progress

During the past two years QFES has worked to transform the department's culture to ensure safe, inclusive and secure working environments for all fire and emergency services personnel.

In January 2015 the Cultural Improvement Implementation Project (CIIP) team was established in response to Margaret Allison's 2014 *Independent Review of an incident involving Queensland Fire and Emergency Services employees* (the Review).

The CIIP team addressed the barriers and enablers to the implementation of the recommendations of the Review and confirmed QFES' clear commitment to achieve not just cultural reform, but cultural change.

In April 2016, Lieutenant General Mark Evans (retired) was appointed chair of an Independent Committee — also comprising Commissioner Carroll and senior representatives from a number of government departments — formed to oversee the implementation of the Review recommendations.





**From Roma Street Fire and Rescue Station in the Brisbane CBD to Mornington Island Rural Fire Brigade in the Gulf of Carpentaria, QFES is committed to developing a diverse paid and volunteer workforce that reflects the communities we serve across Queensland.**

To date, the Independent Committee has accepted QFES' application to close 21 of the 30 Review recommendations. Some of the outcomes achieved include:

- A QFES-specific online Code of Conduct and Workplace Behaviour Training package is now available to all paid staff with a plan to roll out to the volunteer workforce in the near future. This will ensure all QFES members are aware of the conduct and behavioural expectations placed on them.
- An independent review of the QFES basegrade firefighter recruitment process was undertaken and a new recruitment and selection process introduced. Under the revised process, applications open annually giving QFES access to a fresh pool of applicants providing increased scope for high quality and diverse recruitment.
- A Harassment Information Line and Harassment Contact Officer network has been introduced for the QFES paid and volunteer workforce across the state. This service makes it easier for Fire and Emergency services members who experience or have queries about unacceptable workplace behaviour, to access the necessary support and information.

- Robust strategies, policies, systems, tools and information guides for complaints management, conflict management, bullying and harassment have been developed to ensure safe and secure work environments.
- The required standards for QFES facilities have been revised and a comprehensive program of work is underway to ensure that all QFES physical workplaces are safe, secure and inclusive.

### Where to from here?

While the Review and the CIIP were the catalysts for reforms to date, QFES is committed to continuing our cultural transformation journey in line with emerging local and global challenges.

The establishment of the Human Capital Management (HCM) Directorate and the formation of the Culture, Change and Engagement Unit are examples.

The HCM Directorate's mission is to support and improve the end-to-end workforce experience by providing strategic and people-focused programs and services.

The Culture, Change and Engagement Unit will deliver on components of the Human Capital Management Strategic Plan 2017–2019 with particular focus on:

- QFES leaders driving cultural change by modelling and living departmental values and standards
- creating a workforce culture that embraces and reflects the diversity in our community and is inclusive and respectful of all people
- valuing the QFES workforce by recognising and rewarding their achievements and success
- fostering a workplace that supports the safety of its people and the people we serve — physically, emotionally and psychologically
- promoting a healthy work-life balance and the wellbeing of the QFES workforce.

The Unit is also gathering extensive workforce insights from the Commissioner's Future of QFES Survey, the Volunteer Survey, the annual Working for Queensland Employee Opinion surveys and focus groups.

Feedback from these surveys is being used to identify areas for improvement in making QFES a better place to work now and into the future.

# Emergency Volunteer Advisory Forum announced

Queensland's emergency services volunteer network will have a greater say in their future with the formation of the new Emergency Volunteer Advisory Forum.



Minister for Emergency Services Mark Ryan said the forum will ensure access at the senior levels of government and will include nominees from a broad range of emergency services volunteer organisations including the RFS, SES, Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ), Volunteering Queensland and others.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll welcomed the announcement.

“This forum will be invaluable in providing a platform for all volunteer emergency service organisations to access government,” Ms Carroll said.

“The establishment of the new forum demonstrates the support for emergency service volunteers and the work they do in our communities across Queensland.

“Our RFS and SES volunteers do remarkable work and this forum will further strengthen their relationships with other volunteer emergency service organisations now and into the future.”

Deputy Commissioner Emergency Service Volunteers Mike Wassing said the forum is one of a number of initiatives focused on establishing a more robust and sustainable emergency service volunteerism model into the future.

“QFES recognises the important role emergency service volunteers play in enabling resilient communities, as well as supporting our communities during their time of need before, during and after disasters,” Mr Wassing said.

A number of other volunteer initiatives will be developed and implemented throughout 2017 to assist emergency service volunteers in supporting and working with their local communities. These include:

- The development of the QFES Volunteerism Strategy which will help shape QFES as a department and allow it to better meet the challenges of the future and in turn, the needs of the community. The strategy will look at a range of issues including recruitment and retention initiatives to training and other opportunities for volunteers.
- A Volunteer Emergency Services Grants Program which will provide a coordinated opportunity for funding distribution to enable all emergency service volunteer groups to gain access to grants for operational equipment, vehicles, appliances, watercraft, trailers and facilities.
- QFES and Volunteering Queensland are working together to support an Emergency Service Volunteers Register.

The register will provide an avenue for people wanting to volunteer for emergency services who are time poor or unable to commit to ongoing training, but who could be readily available and used as temporary volunteers during large-scale emergencies.

- QFES will also progress an initiative to establish SES Response Units that can be easily and quickly accessed when extra resources are required during emergency events.
- A Leadership Development Centre will be established to provide a structured approach for developing future staff and volunteer leaders within QFES and support volunteers into the future through training, experience and development opportunities. This will include the targeting of current volunteer leaders and will support the development of emerging leaders as well as provide special opportunities to RFS and SES volunteers who are under the age of 25 years as well as PCYC Cadets.

**QFES recognises the important role emergency service volunteers play in enabling resilient communities**

# Building on our past, creating our future: Our Strategy



QFES is a department with a unique and proud history, through the FRS, RFS and SES, of serving the people of Queensland.

Since becoming a department in its own right, QFES has worked to be well positioned and prepared for an ever-changing future and the challenges this poses to meeting community needs and expectations.

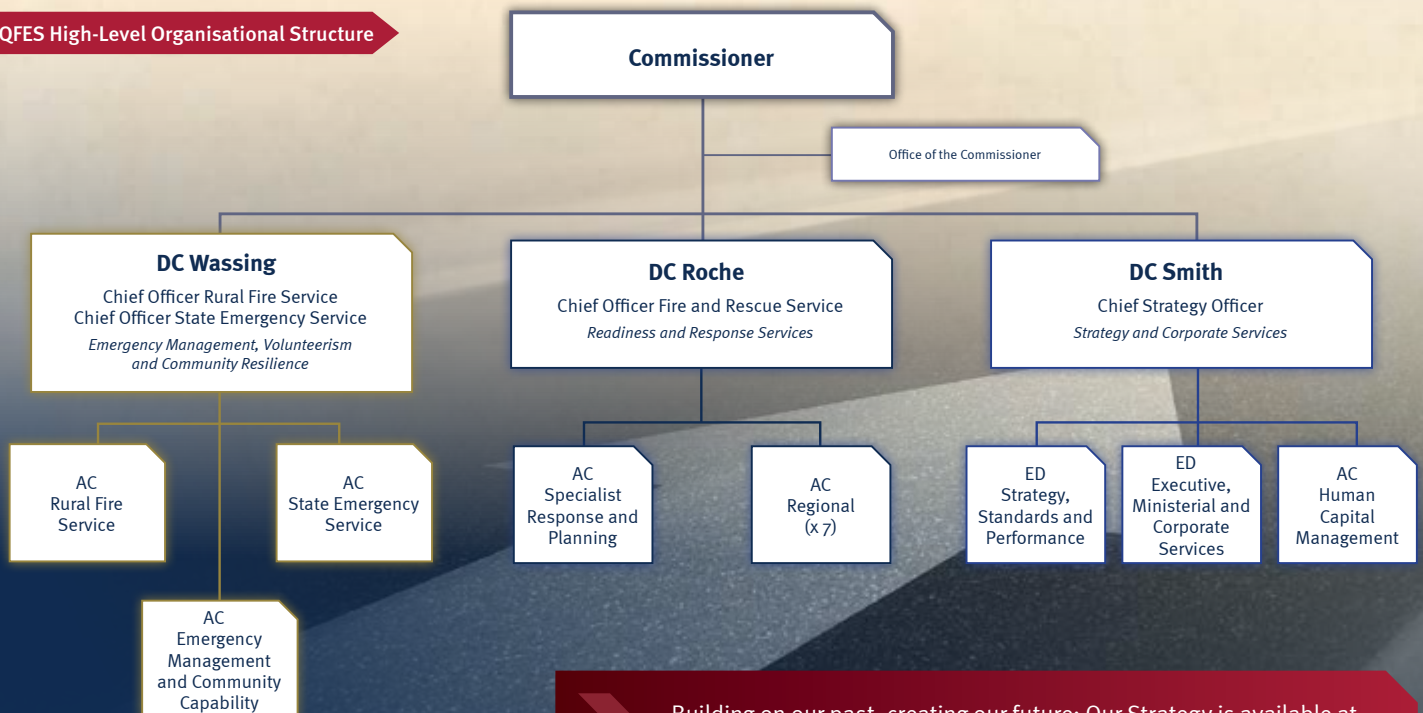
*Building on our past, creating our future: Our Strategy (Our Strategy) brings together QFES' three services underpinned by emergency management capabilities across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. It clearly outlines the work that has been done and is underway in relation to how QFES is changing to meet emerging local and global challenges.*

Critical to undertaking and supporting this work has been the realignment of QFES' organisational structure and how it will

support our position, our capabilities and our renewed focus on preparedness. The capability needs of QFES are what ultimately defined the shape of the final structure which was assessed on these principles. Furthermore, it aligns with our partners as well as our legislated parameters; in particular those that relate to our three main services — the FRS, RFS and SES.

QFES needs to remain relevant in an ever-changing world; we need to build on our past and plan for an unpredictable future. This realignment will improve the department's ability to plan for, prevent and mitigate, and respond to the unexpected. It will also support QFES in the role of facilitator, coordinator and collaborator, as we continue to work with our many stakeholders, partners and the community to deliver positive outcomes and enable others to do the same.

## QFES High-Level Organisational Structure



Building on our past, creating our future: Our Strategy is available at <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about/Pages/Our-Strategy.aspx>



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# Honing FRS firefighters' in-helmet communication

QFES has recently established a working group to evaluate new and emerging technologies to help firefighters communicate when wearing personal protective equipment.

Some of the in-helmet and breathing apparatus communication products currently being evaluated:

Effective communication between firefighters on the ground is critical. The unique environments that firefighters work in, however, with high levels of heat and ambient noise, low visibility and the continual use of their hands for other tasks means maintaining operational communications can be challenging.

To support communications, firefighters have previously used a variety of helmet-mounted and breathing apparatus (BA) compatible accessories — the most recent of which incorporating bone-conduction technology.

Manufacture of this product has recently ceased and with current QFES issued equipment reaching end of life, Commissioner Katarina Carroll said there was an opportunity for QFES to investigate and take advantage of new and emerging technologies.

“The existing bone conduction communication units have served their purpose and kept our firefighters safe during operations for a number of years,” Ms Carroll said.

“There has been significant development in the area of in-helmet communication technology and as QFES transitions from analogue to digital radio communications we will take this opportunity to ensure our Fire and Rescue crews are using the most modern, safe and fit-for-purpose equipment available.”

A working group will be led by Superintendent Lance Duncan and will consist of station officers, firefighters and subject matter experts from within QFES.

A market scan is underway to examine available products that will enable the best possible operational communications during incidents, with an emphasis on firefighters' communication while wearing BA. The working group will also ensure that specific requirements of fully encapsulated chemical suits, technical rescue disciplines, pump operation and all-terrain vehicles are all considered during the scan.

Once finalised, selected products will be trialled and regional offices will have the opportunity to provide input, with testing and roadshows planned to be conducted throughout Queensland.



MSA helmet — boom microphone with over-ear speaker



Scott EPIC3 — in-mask microphone with internal speaker and Bluetooth to remote speaker microphone



Sabrecom — in-mask microphone with over-ear speaker



Savox — bone conduction helmet communication system



# Emergency services hub ready to respond



In December, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan and Commissioner Katarina Carroll opened the new QFES State Deployment Centre in Morningside, Brisbane.



The new QFES State Deployment Centre will be the state's logistical hub for the deployment and coordination of emergency services personnel and equipment when major incidents occur — whether locally, interstate or internationally.

During disasters, emergency services including the SES, RFS and Fire and Rescue Service, as well as the Queensland Ambulance Service and other agencies will operate side-by-side from the facility to ensure seamless delivery of multi-service and multi-agency responses.

The facility also houses the QFES Technical Rescue Unit and specialised equipment including trucks, trailers, swiftwater rescue vessels and resources. The unit responds to all

rescue types, including swiftwater, confined space and vertical rescues and manages the preparedness and response of Queensland's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the new facility will boost the capability of the department and its partners to provide fast, coordinated emergency response services when they're needed most.

"The new State Deployment Centre will provide the resources and space needed to reduce deployment coordination timelines, so our people can get into communities as quickly as possible," Ms Carroll said.



# Results are in from the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey

QFES has around 42,000 dedicated volunteers across Queensland who are a key component in our ability to deliver services with our many partners and the community to help keep Queenslanders safe.

So it's essential our volunteers have the chance to provide feedback for us to better understand how QFES can support them in their roles and what can be done to improve their overall volunteer experience with us.

In July and August 2016, the QFES Volunteer Survey was undertaken by market research company TNS and more than 5200 volunteers participated. Of all respondents, 3243 (62.3 per cent) were RFS, 1925 (37 per cent) were SES and 37 (0.7 per cent) were volunteers from other areas of QFES.

While many positives were identified, areas we can improve were also highlighted. These included providing relevant and timely communication; increasing the effectiveness of trainers; improving leadership skills across all levels; increasing training in workplace behaviour and Code of Conduct; providing support in relation to bullying; and exploring ways of engaging with our volunteers outside of times of crisis.

## Moving forward

Feedback from the survey is already helping to shape and inform a number of initiatives across the department. These include the framework for our QFES Volunteerism Strategy, our Valuing Volunteers Initiatives, the QFES Transforms Through Leadership (leadership and development program within the department) and training reviews.

**For those interested in reading the full 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey report or the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey Highlights, please visit the points of interest section on the QFES website homepage [www.qfes.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au)**

## Key highlights

Here are some areas where QFES is doing well and where survey feedback was positive:

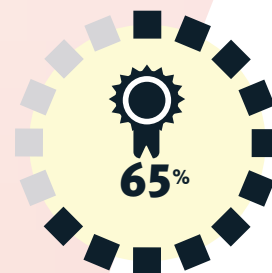
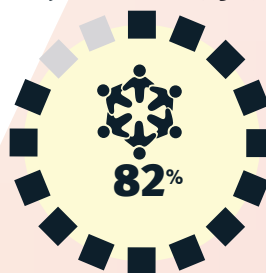
- ◆ Overall satisfaction with the volunteer experience is very positive, with almost four in five (79%) volunteers satisfied and one in three very satisfied. Ratings were consistent amongst RFS and SES volunteers.



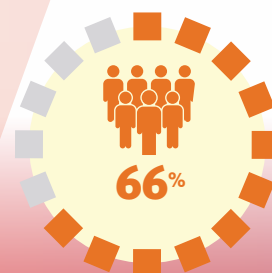
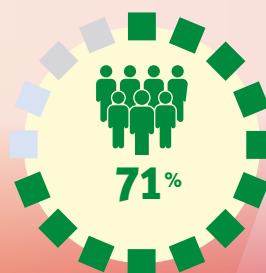
- ◆ This strong, positive sentiment is supported by the fact that almost all (88%) volunteers said they intend to continue volunteering.



- ◆ Volunteers believe their respective services to have a good reputation in the community (82%) and are professional (65%).



- ◆ Most volunteers perceive a strong culture of teamwork in their brigade/group and local area (71% RFS and 66% SES).





# QFES celebrates Peer Support Week 2017

The role of Peer Support Officers (PSOs) within the department is crucial and the personal nature of the service they provide means their work is largely unseen. PSO Week is an opportunity to shine a light on these indispensable members of our workforce.

Peer Support Week 2017 is 12–18 March and is a chance to recognise the valuable contributions PSOs make towards improving the health and wellbeing of the QFES workforce around the state.

PSOs volunteer their time to assist and support colleagues experiencing personal or work-related difficulties, providing an empathetic ear and linking people with additional resources to help them through tough times.

During PSO Week celebrations, the recipient of the annual QFES Olga Wilson Award for Peer Support Officers will also be announced.

For more information on PSOs around Queensland and the work they do, visit the QFES website [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/fessn](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/fessn)

If any member of the QFES paid or volunteer workforce finds themselves in need of someone to talk to, give your local PSO a call. Their contact details are also listed on the above website.

Take some time before, during or after PSO Week to thank your local PSO for their efforts

## A PSO's perspective: "I love my role as a Peer Support Officer and I hope to continue as long as I can"



"After working as a Peer Support Officer in the SES over the past five years, I've realised the importance of the role, as sometimes volunteers need to talk about the things they go through.

"One of the most memorable tasks I was a part of and sticks in my memory was when I was deployed to assist in the recovery efforts following Ex-Tropical Cyclone Yasi. As a doctor, I was assigned as a first aid officer at the showgrounds, assisting people when they needed it, but also getting the opportunity to get to know my fellow SES members.

"It was there I learned how important volunteers were and the work they do for the community. After seeing what SES members go through in the role, I decided to look deeply into peer support and how I could best help fellow members and the community. I love my role as a Peer Support Officer and I hope to continue as long as I can."

– Dr Gerard Meijer – PSO.

# PEER SUPPORT WEEK

## 12-18 MARCH 2017

A TIME TO RECOGNISE THE WORK OF THESE EXTREMELY VALUABLE PEOPLE



# QFES aims for the stars

The department is supporting a global effort to weave a million colourful stars to help promote peace and bring an end to violence in our communities.



As part of One Million Stars to End Violence — a worldwide project promoting peace and an end to all forms of violence including violence against women, bullying and racism — QFES has pledged to help make and gather one million hand-woven stars from the community. Once collected, these stars will then be used in a spectacular art installation for the Commonwealth Games to be held on the Gold Coast in April 2018.

Members of the QFES workforce, both paid and volunteer, have begun forming star weaving teams to contribute to the QFES star collection and to be part of this community effort.

Chief Superintendent Darryl King is the QFES Director of Commonwealth Games and Major Events, and said it was a great project to be part of alongside so many contributing communities.

“It will be fantastic for participants to be able to see the final product and say ‘I am part of that’,” Mr King said.

“The One Million Stars to End Violence project’s goals also align with our department’s shared values of building safe and secure workplaces, and supporting our communities across Queensland.”

QFES is supplying and distributing ribbon in our corporate colours (maroon, navy blue, orange and green) to members of our workforce who wish to participate.

## Start weaving today

To be part of the star weaving initiative, fill out a registration form, which can be downloaded from the Gateway, or by emailing [comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au)

After receiving your registration form, QFES will post out the amount of ribbon you have requested. It’s important to think about how many stars you can feasibly weave before June 2017 to ensure you order the correct amount of ribbon and to save on wastage.

You may like to form ‘weaving groups’ with friends, family and colleagues — the more people who take part the more stars we can make.

## Learn how to weave your stars

Learn how to weave a star by watching the tutorial video on the One Million Stars website [www.onemillionstars.net](http://www.onemillionstars.net)

You can also download a PDF with instructions from the One Million Stars to End Violence page on the QFES Gateway, or by emailing [comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au)

## Send us your stars

You have until June 2017 to return your woven stars to Kedron, but be sure to return any you have completed as soon as possible so they can be displayed at Kedron before they are sent to the Commonwealth Games office in July 2017.

Return address for your completed stars is:

### Post:

Attention: Kathleen Tyler  
Strategic Policy and Legislation  
Mail cluster 2.1  
GPO Box 1425  
Brisbane QLD 4001

### In person:

Kathleen Tyler  
Level 2, Block D  
Emergency Services Complex, Kedron

If you have any further questions about the project visit the One Million Stars website or email QFES directly at [comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au)



# Top honours for our finest on Australia Day

The work of the department's paid and volunteer workforce has been celebrated at the annual Australia Day Achievement Awards.

Australia Day Achievement Medallions have been awarded to 79 QFES members from around the state in recognition of exceptional contributions to the department and the community over the past 12 months.

Each of the recipients was acknowledged for going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the highest quality outcomes for QFES and the people of Queensland.

Examples of work being recognised varied from outstanding contributions to charity organisations and fundraising activities, building resilience through community engagement, exceptional drive and leadership, and demonstrating passion and professionalism to enhance QFES capabilities.

Individuals were also acknowledged for their contributions to specific major projects, including the Safer Together Major Accident Hazard Awareness Program, the Queensland Disaster Management Portal

and coordination of the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital building fire safety approvals.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said recipients represented a diverse cross-section of the department's workforce, with people from all services demonstrating a range of capabilities presented with the prestigious award.

"I am proud to see the SES, RFS and FRS represented at this year's Australia Day Achievement Awards as well as staff from QFES business and operational support capabilities," Ms Carroll said.

"We are one QFES and it is the hard work and commitment of all services and capabilities, alongside our many partners, that make it possible for us to achieve our vision of building stronger and more resilient Queensland communities.

"It is an important reminder that effective emergency management is a team effort and that each part of the puzzle is essential in achieving our goals.

"Congratulations to today's recipients and thank you for the ongoing commitment you have shown QFES and the community and the valuable contributions you have made over the past year."

Australia Day Appreciation Certificates were also awarded to six organisations and individuals from the wider community for their support of QFES and its paid and volunteer workforce. Certificates were presented to Carey Fuller from Energex, Cameron Smith from Education Queensland, Aurizon Rockhampton, NQ Crash and 4WD Spares, Cook Shire Council and Southern Downs Regional Council.

Thanks to QSuper for their ongoing support of QFES and sponsorship of the Australia Day Achievement Awards.



Brisbane Region Australia Day Achievement Awards



Northern Region Australia Day Achievement Awards



Northern Region Australia Day Achievement Awards



South Western Region Australia Day Achievement Awards



Far Northern Region Australia Day Achievement Awards

# QFES members honoured with national award

On Australia Day, two of the nation's highest awards for emergency service personnel were presented to four QFES members.

Part of the Australia Day 2017 Honours List, the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and the Emergency Service Medal (ESM) are among the most prestigious honours that can be bestowed upon QFES personnel, recognising exceptional service to the people of Australia.



## Captain Stephen Christie (AFSM) FRS NORTH COAST REGION

Captain Christie was awarded for his leadership and dedication in enhancing the QFES auxiliary firefighter workforce throughout not only the North Coast Region but the whole of Queensland. He is highly respected in his field for his extensive knowledge of core operational firefighting techniques, advocacy for teamwork and passion for fairness, honesty and diligence.



## First Officer Alexander Moroney (AFSM) MOUNT FOX RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

First Officer Moroney was awarded for tireless determination and commitment as a volunteer. He has dedicated himself to strengthening the operational capability of the Mount Fox Rural Fire Brigade and to building the resilience of the isolated Mount Fox community.



## Station Officer Joseph Ryan (AFSM) FRS BRISBANE REGION

Station Officer Ryan was awarded for his outstanding professionalism and distinguished service. He is recognised as a role model to his peers and consistently displays a high degree of resourcefulness, passion and conspicuous merit, exercising integrity and diligence above and beyond expectations to drive change across QFES.



## Paul Kelly, Queensland SES Volunteer Association Executive AND BRISBANE SES GROUP (NORTHERN UNIT) TEAM LEADER

Mr Kelly was awarded for more than 20 years of dedication and commitment to SES groups across Queensland. He is recognised for his integrity and drive in delivering a collaborative, multi-agency approach to training, exercise management and operational coordination within QFES and with public safety partners QPS and QAS. Mr Kelly is held in high esteem across the SES and the broader community for his contributions to major incidents and deployments and through his leadership and passion for regional preparedness and operational excellence.



# Outstanding achievements recognised at Commissioner's annual awards

In December, the winners of the QFES Commissioner's Awards for Excellence and the QFES Innovation Awards were announced at a ceremony held at Kedron.

Members of the QFES paid and volunteer workforce who have achieved exceptional results and made significant contributions to QFES have been acknowledged at the 2016 Commissioner's Awards for Excellence.

Individuals and teams from across the department were awarded in six categories: Operational Excellence; Great Place to Work; Empowering Volunteerism; Working Together; Capable Organisation; and Trusted Service.

A seventh award, the QFES Innovation Award was instituted alongside the Commissioner's Awards for Excellence in 2015 to recognise QFES innovators for their ideas and contributions to transforming the department into the future.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said all awards recipients had far exceeded what is required of them in their roles.

"Each of the recipients have been recognised for the tireless and outstanding work they do to make Queensland communities safer and more resilient," Ms Carroll said.

"Striving to achieve excellence and innovation in all that we do is key to helping QFES develop into a modern, mature and capable department that is ready and equipped for the challenges ahead.

"I am incredibly proud of our workforce — of the people that make our department what it is and the many skills and abilities they bring to QFES and the communities we live in and serve."



Great Place to Work — Christine and Les Green, Tinaroo Rural Fire Brigade



Working Together — Senior Firefighter Ian Lawless and Station Officer Ian Fulton



Empowering Volunteerism — Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade



Highly Commended — Bundaberg SES Unit





QFES Innovation Award — Research and Scientific Branch



Trusted Service — Craig Lovell on behalf of Community Safety Operations Unit, North Coast Region



Capable Organisation — Training and Emergency Management Unit



Operational Excellence — Research and Scientific Branch

## Commissioner's Awards for Excellence

### Operational Excellence RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC BRANCH

For the design, construction and implementation of a new flexible field portable decontamination trailer.

### Great Place to Work LES AND CHRISTINE GREEN

For leadership and commitment to the Tinaroo Rural Fire Brigade.

### Empowering Volunteerism GREENBANK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

For dedication and commitment to engaging the community of Greenbank.

### Working Together STATION OFFICER IAN FULTON AND SENIOR FIREFIGHTER IAN LAWLESS

For delivery of road crash rescue training to LifeFlight and Queensland Ambulance Service Advanced Care Paramedics.

### Capable Organisation TRAINING AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UNIT

For the Safer Together Initiative in partnership with Gasworks Heavy Industries.

### Trusted Service COMMUNITY SAFETY OPERATIONS UNIT, NORTH COAST REGION

For operation of the SafeHome partnership with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

### QFES Innovation Award

### Operational Excellence RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC BRANCH

For the development of the Emergency Response Decision Support System.

## Highly Commended

### Capable Organisation BUNDABERG STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

For innovation and collaboration to improve the business processes of the Unit.



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## Northern Region

Firefighters from Kirwan Fire and Rescue Station and Blazer visited Townsville General Hospital and Ronald McDonald House on Christmas Day to brighten the children's day.

Thankfully a lot of unwell children were able to go home for Christmas, but for those too sick to leave the hospital and for their families the visit was very welcome and brought big smiles to some little faces.



Members of the Northern Region paid and volunteer workforce have been acknowledged for outstanding achievements at a QFES Australia Day Achievement Awards ceremony held at the South Townsville Fire and Rescue Station on 25 January.

The annual Australia Day Achievement Awards ceremony provides QFES with an opportunity to highlight and recognise the important contribution of our people and supporting businesses.

Staff and volunteers were also recognised for their deployment to the G20 and 2016 Tasmania Bush Fires. Additionally, the ceremony provided an opportunity to acknowledge 10 years meritorious service for a local SES volunteer and present an Assistant Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation to an RFS volunteer.



SES Northern Region, Townsville area, held their Rescue Competition on the weekend of 26–27 November 2016. The event puts SES members' training to the test and also sharpens their skills. For new members in particular the competition is a valuable opportunity to build their skills in the field.

There were four six-member teams, comprising members from the Townsville, Thuringowa, Bluewater, Palm Island, and Charters Towers Groups. Teams had 50 minutes to complete each of four different scenarios and points were scored across every aspect of the team's performance. Scenarios incorporated map and navigation, land search, and casualty rescue tasks.

Townsville Alpha Team took out the trophy on the day after scoring the most points. They will represent the region in the State Rescue Competition being held in Townsville 29 – 30 March.



## Central Region



The 2016 Central Region SES Rescue Competition was conducted at the Rockhampton Heritage Village late last year – the first time the event had been held in the region for a number of years.

All teams thoroughly enjoyed the activity and learnt a lot from the four scenarios which were created around the Heritage Village.

The teams were from the Rockhampton and Banana Shire SES Units. The 'Rocky Raiders' came in first, Biloela's team 'Powered by Bananas' were second and 'F-Troop' from Rockhampton placed third. Congratulations to all involved – the Rocky Raiders will now represent Central Region at the State Rescue Competition to be held in Townsville from 29 April – 1 May 2017.



The Calliope Emergency Services Day was held in December and was a joint collaboration between QFES, QPS and the Queensland Ambulance Service.

The day was an opportunity for the community to interact with local emergency service personnel and find out more about the services available to them. A multi-agency road crash rescue scenario was held with firefighters working with police and paramedics to show how each agency is involved in road crash incidents.

Rural firefighters and SES volunteers were also on hand to demonstrate their capability and engage with members of the community by sharing safety information and tips on how to best prepare for storms, bushfires and other emergencies.



The annual Bunnings Australia Day sausage sizzle was held at the Rockhampton and Yeppoon stores on Saturday 28 January, raising money for the local RFS and SES.

FRS, SES and RFS crews attended both stores from 7am to late afternoon with the community rallying behind the emergency services, helping raise much needed funds through sausage sales and the raffle of items donated by Bunnings.

The event raised more than \$4200 and QFES Central Region would like to take the opportunity to extend a huge thank you to Bunnings Corporate for their ongoing support with this event.



## North Coast Region

On 18 January 2017, a fire broke out near the Sunshine Motorway near Coolum on the Sunshine Coast that turned into a four-day major fire incident. By the time the fire was under control 900 hectares had been burnt; however, thanks to the quick and sustained response from QFES and the support of our partner agencies, no homes or major infrastructure were lost.

The response was a whole-of-QFES approach, with FRS and RFS crews on the fire ground and SES assisting with doorknocking and at road closure points along with QPS. On Friday 19 January a number of residents had to be evacuated and a temporary place of shelter was provided by the Coolum Surf Club. A QFES briefing held at the Surf Club on the Friday evening put residents' minds at ease, and they were able to safely return to their houses that night. The wider Coolum community were kept up to date and homes in high-risk areas were monitored at all times by crews on the ground.

The successful response to the fire, minimal loss of property and no loss of life demonstrates the strong relationships and interoperability of all stakeholders including QFES, QPS, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, QAS and Sunshine Coast Council. The community was very grateful for the work undertaken by the emergency services and letters of appreciation were presented to those on the ground by local kids – this meant a lot to the crews.

Before Christmas, Gympie Fire and Rescue Station accepted an invitation from local QPS officers to join in a Road Accident Awareness Day at the Puma Service Station in Kybong, 12km south of Gympie. The crew joined representatives from QPS, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Energex, Claytons Towing and Gympie Funerals to communicate important road safety messages to motorists.

Throughout the day, the Gympie crew demonstrated a number of road crash rescue techniques, giving advice and answering questions from the community. As the event was held at the start of the school holidays it was a great opportunity to target the higher volume of people travelling on the busy Gympie Highway, and a large number passing motorists visited the display.

QFES Community Safety Operations North Coast Region recently received the Commissioner's Award for Excellence – Trusted Service, for the Operation SafeHome partnership with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS).

Manager Regional Community Safety Operations Craig Lovell received the award on behalf of Community Safety Operations Command for the work undertaken particularly by Acting Managers Mathew Phillips and Greg Walters, Community Engagement Officer Julie Bruynius and, importantly, the crews undertaking the SafeHome visits.

The SafeHome program is an excellent example of innovative ways in which QFES can further engage with communities by integrating its services with external partners to provide a safer Queensland. Following the successful trial of this initiative in North Coast Region the Queensland Government announced in October 2016 that the program will be rolled out statewide.



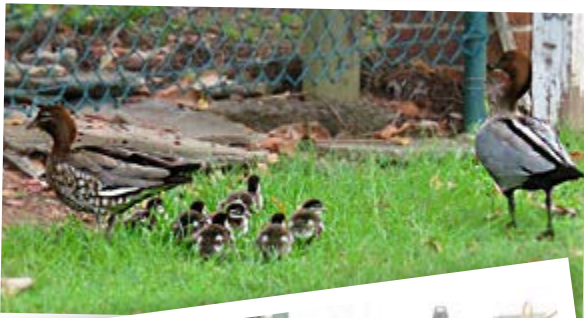
## Brisbane Region



Recently, four Brisbane Region members graduated with a Bachelor of Emergency Service from Central Queensland University.

Acting Executive Manager, Steven Bates from the Professional Development Unit congratulated Doug King, Jason Mannix, Daren Mallouk, and Heath Mallouk on their achievement at a graduation ceremony held at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

All four graduates said the course was both interesting and directly applicable to their roles in QFES. They were among eight graduating QFES members who are the first to undertake the new degree. We look forward to the benefits this formal professional development program will have on the region.



Capalaba Fire and Rescue Station received a call-out to a rescue of different kind in January when a brood of Australian wood duck hatchlings fell into a stormwater drain on a busy road.

With an anxious mum and dad looking on, firefighters and Pelican and Seabird Rescue (PaSR) were called to the scene to remove the grate, fish the tiny ducklings from the drain and reunite the feathered family.

PaSR thanked QFES and presented firefighters with a certificate welcoming the department as official protectors of Australian native wildlife and members of the PaSR Feathered Friends Club.

Thanks to Hammy Forrest from PaSR for the photos.



The Moreton Island My Resilient Community Expo, led by QFES and QPS, was held over three days in January targeting campers, holiday makers and residents. The aim was to educate people about the hazards they could face while holidaying or living on the island and how to keep themselves and their families safe.

Scheduled during one of the island's peak holiday seasons, it was also a perfect opportunity to discuss general community safety, including beach driving safety.

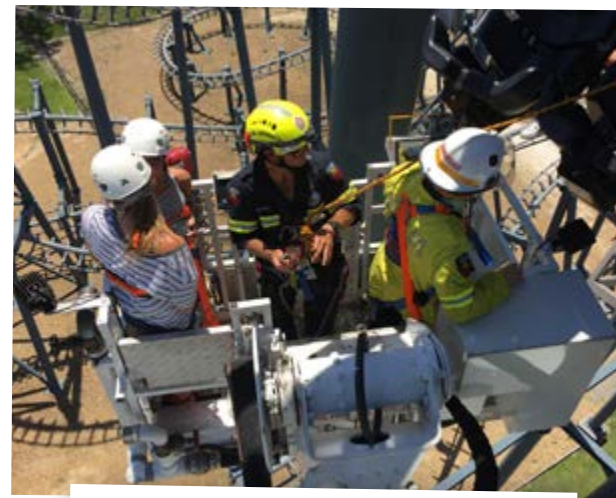
The project was the initiative of RFS Bushfire Safety Officer Liane Henderson and Senior Sargent Julia Cook and was a collaboration between RFS, SES, QPS, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Brisbane City Council, Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.



## South Eastern Region

In January, a number of FRS crews were called to the Movie World theme park on the Gold Coast to rescue 20 riders stranded on one of the park's roller coasters. The ride had stopped at a peak of the track accessible by steps and a walkway, with riders still in the carriages.

On what was a very hot day, South Eastern Region crews from Helensvale, Nerang, and Surfers Paradise Fire and Rescue Stations worked alongside Brisbane Region's Durack Fire and Rescue crew for more than an hour to get the riders safely back on the ground.



Congratulations to South Eastern Region Senior Firefighter Peter Derges from Woodridge Fire and Rescue Station who was awarded with an Australia Day Achievement Medallion on 24 January. Peter received the award for his exceptional contribution and commitment to providing community education programs to the greater Queensland community.

Peter was one of 79 members of QFES paid and volunteer workforce who received Australia Day Achievement Medallions at awards ceremonies around the state in January. The award acknowledges those who have gone above and beyond their usual duties and made outstanding contributions in their community over the past 12 months.



Following a short break for Christmas, South Eastern Region Rescue Competition winners Logan SES Unit's 'Logan Legionnaires', are back in full swing training for State Rescue Competition in April.

The entire Logan SES Unit has thrown its support behind the team and there is no shortage of members wanting to help them train, playing the role of casualty or, for more experienced members, taking on the role of competition judge. The executives are coming up with as many different and challenging scenarios as possible. Pictured right is the team responding to a bus crash with multiple casualties and rescuing a victim of snake bite from an island using a small boat. Good luck Legionnaires!





# Celebrating those who serve our communities

Each year the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Australia Day Achievement Awards celebrate the best of the best staff and volunteers across the state who tirelessly give their time to help those in need. It's your dedication to creating safer communities through world-class emergency and disaster management services that QSuper is thrilled to support and be a part of.

Well done to everyone involved in the awards this year for your outstanding efforts to help protect Queensland communities. It takes a lot to help others during times of need and your selflessness and the commitment you show to your duties is why awards like these matter.

*At QSuper we're all about celebrating those who serve our communities which is why we're proud to support the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Australia Day Achievement Awards.*



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## South Western Region

**In South Western Region, QFES and QPS this year hosted a combined Australia Day Achievement Awards and medal ceremony for the first time.**

More than 150 people gathered to celebrate the achievements of 45 QFES and QPS staff and volunteers as they were presented with Australia Day awards, service medals and appreciation certificates.

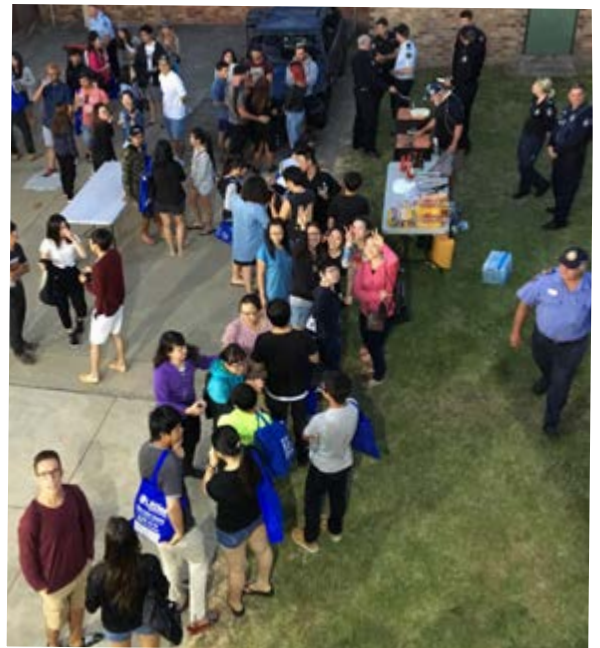
Well done to everyone who received awards this year and for your continued commitment to protecting Queensland communities.

Each year, the QFES Australia Day Achievement Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of our paid and volunteer workforce across the state who tirelessly give their time to help those in need.



**Stanthorpe Fire and Rescue Station hosted public safety information sessions in November and February for a total of more than 350 backpackers from around 10 countries who are in the area for harvest season.**

QFES were represented by FRS, RFS and SES members, with QAS, QPS, Southern Downs Regional Council and other partner agencies also attending the events. Each event was a great success with the international attendees being welcomed to the community and receiving important safety information.



**On Friday 6 January, 120-year-old Glennon House in Toowoomba was destroyed by fire.**

Investigations into the cause of the fire were hampered by the huge amount of roofing iron that had fallen on the scene as the building burned, so it was decided that additional resources would be required for the job at hand. After a few calls, 13 SES volunteers, four auxiliary crews and four permanent firefighters were on site.

With regular hydration stops, the team removed an impressive amount of roofing within the day. A secondary search was conducted and fire investigators were able to move freely around the site with the fire scene cleared in four hours instead of what would have taken three days without the extra help.

Best of all a lot of knowledge was exchanged and all involved walked away with a sense of a job well done.



## Far Northern Region



### Cairns Fire and Rescue Station was visited recently by the Australian Navy Cadets Northern Territory and North Queensland flotillas.

Around 60 Navy cadets from as far away as Nhulunbuy in north-east Arnhem Land, Darwin, the Torres Strait Islands and south to Mackay were given the chance to see firefighters using Holmatro rescue equipment during a road traffic crash demonstration, followed by a chance to experience a basic confined space scenario.

The visit was part of a two week course for cadets to develop employment strategies and experience the different opportunities that the Navy can offer; as part of this, a day long visit to other agencies including QFES, QPS and QAS was provided.



### While other parts of Queensland suffered through heatwave conditions in January, sections of Far Northern Region received huge rainfall causing moderate flood warnings to be issued, with a few downpours creating flash floods.

SES Groups across the region were out in force supporting the community throughout each of the storm events. Among the standard tarping, sandbagging and tree-down tasks, activations included a search, several flood boat resupplies and QAS assist tasks.

Thank you to all Far Northern Region SES volunteers for your efforts this wet season.



### In December, firefighters and police in Cairns took part in a joint training exercise to develop their capability and interoperability in tackling clandestine drug laboratories in the region.

Clandestine drug labs pose a significant threat to community safety as the highly toxic and flammable chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs can cause fires and explosions and emit toxic gases which can be life-threatening.

The joint exercise provided participants the opportunity to put into practise leading techniques for safely dismantling volatile substances in this environment while strengthening interagency operability.

# Emergency Management

## National Resource Sharing Centre — QFES Agency Representatives

The National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC) was established in February 2016 to coordinate national and international resource sharing for disasters. As a partner to the NRSC, QFES has 11 Agency Representatives (AREPs) who are responsible for managing Australian contingents deployed to international incidents. The primary role of an AREP is to:

- monitor health and safety, fatigue, stress and address issues as they arise
- establish fatigue tracking systems and monitor shift lengths worked by resources
- facilitate discussions with Incident Management Teams (IMT) to avoid excessive fatigue loads occurring
- ensure assignments are carried out within the contingent’s capability
- facilitate movement of personnel between incidents
- ensure rest breaks are planned and run smoothly
- maintain relationships with the Incident Commander and IMT
- liaise with senior management from agencies contributing to the deployment.

AREPs are required to be fit for task as determined by the NRSC and the requesting agency. They must pass a personal health screen assessment and complete an annual Arduous Pack Test. This test is designed to demonstrate that AREPs have the necessary level of aerobic fitness and endurance to meet the duties required in this environment. For AREPs to successfully complete the test, they must walk 4.83kms (3 miles) on a level track carrying a weight of 20.4kg within a time of 38 to 45 minutes.

Pictured are Acting Chief Superintendent Neil Francis and Inspector Richard Gorey undertaking the Arduous Pack Test.



## Event Management System training

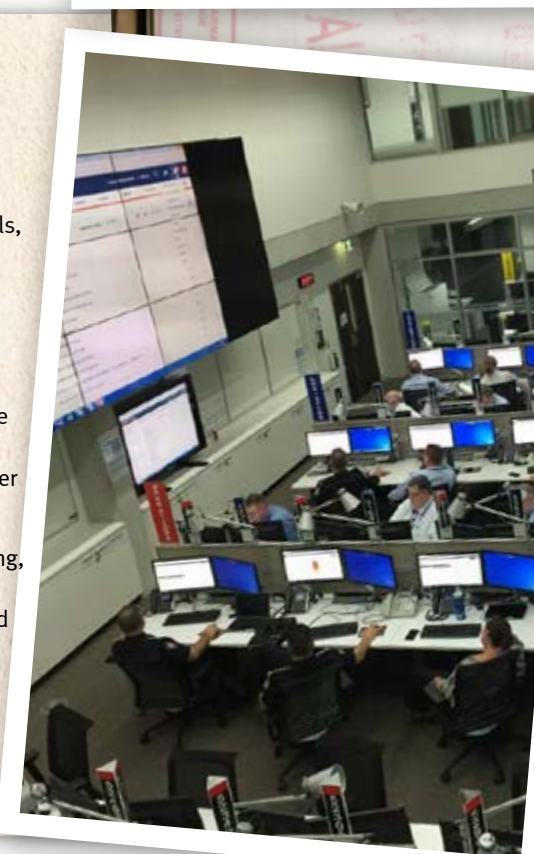
The Event Management System (EMS) used in the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) is the primary tool for managing and communicating all information pertinent to disasters in Queensland and is a critical platform for QFES and the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements. All SDCC contacts, communications, warning products, reports, task approvals, and requests are generated and managed within the EMS.

The EMS provides real-time situational awareness and decision support, reduces workload through automation and replaces five systems and paper-based entries with a single cloud-based system which can be accessed anywhere internet is available.

Between October 2016 and January 2017, EMS training was delivered to 253 staff from a range of organisations within federal, state and local government departments and agencies. This included a large proportion of staff that were new to the SDCC and disasters and also refresher training for more experienced staff.

The SDCC workforce consists of seven capabilities — command, operations, logistics, planning, intelligence, aviation and public information. It is supported by 37 agencies — including 23 Queensland government agencies, Commonwealth agencies, utility, telecommunications and non-government organisations — and has a total trained workforce of about 700 staff.

The SDCC workforce is a crucial part of Emergency Management. They are provided with the necessary skills to support the SDCC during activations and opportunities for cross-organisation knowledge and good practice sharing.





# “Choose a job you love and you’ll never have to work a day in your life”

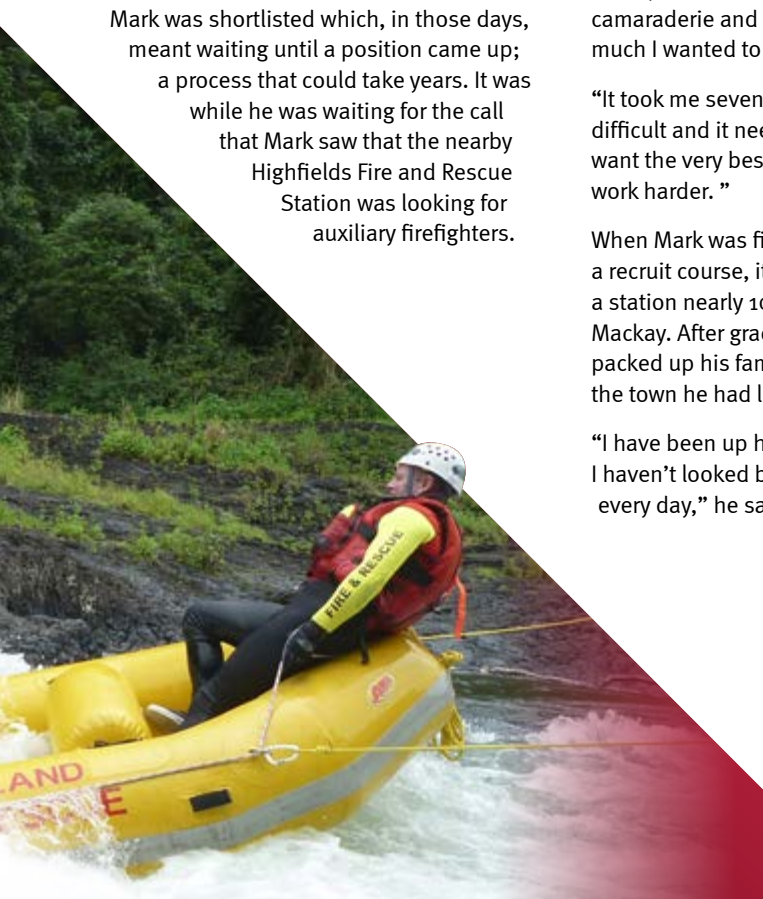
Station Officer Mark Ashford is so passionate about his job as a firefighter, to him it doesn't feel like work. Since joining the Fire and Rescue Service fulltime 10 years ago he has dedicated himself to his work, jumping at every opportunity to further develop his skills. This year will see his career come full circle as he takes on the role of regional training officer for Mackay, passing his knowledge and experience on to other firefighters coming through the ranks.

—By Saskia Tigchelaar



Mark Ashford had been working as a carpenter and joiner in his home town of Toowoomba for 15 years when he made the decision to apply to become a firefighter.

Mark was shortlisted which, in those days, meant waiting until a position came up; a process that could take years. It was while he was waiting for the call that Mark saw that the nearby Highfields Fire and Rescue Station was looking for auxiliary firefighters.



“I wanted to make a difference in my community so I got on board,” he said.

“I was an auxiliary firefighter for three years. I loved the work and the camaraderie and it confirmed for me how much I wanted to be a firefighter fulltime.

“It took me seven years to get in; it’s very difficult and it needs to be. They definitely want the very best and it just made me work harder.”

When Mark was finally offered a place on a recruit course, it was for a position at a station nearly 1000 kilometres away in Mackay. After graduating in May 2007, he packed up his family and moved away from the town he had lived in all his life.

“I have been up here for 10 years now, and I haven’t looked back; I love going to work every day,” he said.

“I am proud to be a firefighter. We are one of the most respected professions and very visible to the public — I enjoy being a part of and representing QFES in the community.”

In May last year, Mark achieved the rank of station officer and is also a qualified technical rescue technician, trained in swiftwater, vertical, confined space and trench rescue as well as Urban Search and Rescue.

He is a presenter for the Road Attitudes and Action Planning (RAAP) program and is currently undertaking the seven-month QFES Fire Investigation Program — a course which Mark says is by far the toughest he has done to date.

“In this job there are so many things you can be involved in, and I have immersed myself in every opportunity that has arisen,” he said.

“There are so many things you can be involved in,  
and I have immersed myself in every opportunity that has arisen.”



“The ability to constantly develop new skills is something I really enjoy; every day I learn something new.”

Among the highlights of his career, Mark lists supporting the community during the 2008 Mackay floods and in 2010 when Cyclone Ului hit the Whitsunday region — both eye-openers for Mark who, coming from Toowoomba, had never seen a flood or a cyclone before.

Mark would witness flooding again, on a far greater scale, during the 2010–11 Queensland floods, when he was deployed to Bundaberg and Brisbane.

“Not too many people can say they have paddled down the Ipswich Motorway — I’ll always remember that,” he said.

The biggest highlight of his career, however, was the day he became a recruit firefighter.

As a professional firefighter and emergency first responder, Mark has also been through his share of tough times.

“Seeing the emotional reactions from families and friends at incidents where there has been a fatality is really hard,” he said.

“To this day when I talk to young adults during RAAP, I can’t help becoming emotional about the various types of incidents I have attended; they are with you for life.

“The toughest thing for a first responder is not always the types of incidents we attend, but identifying the need to deal with them after they occur by talking about them with your work colleagues, partner or peer support officer as they understand what you are experiencing.”

Being the best firefighter he can be and helping others do the same through building and sharing knowledge is a key driver for Mark and something he sees as critical for QFES to meet changing community needs.

“Learning from others and seeing how people do things in other regions is really helpful,” he said.

“If you come across a good idea, you can use it in your own region. New ways of doing things are constantly evolving.

“The same goes for passing on knowledge and skills to new recruits coming through — when you’re a new recruit you have your training but practical knowledge and skills from experienced firefighters is so beneficial.”

Such is his passion in this area, Mark has applied to go into day work as the regional training officer for Mackay and will be taking on this role mid-year.

“My attitude is, ‘Don’t let any opportunities pass you by. If you’re not afraid of hard work and dedication towards your profession, seize every opportunity as it will develop you into the person you strive to be,’” he said.

“I always liked the quote: choose a job you love and you’ll never have to work a day in your life.”



# QFES Office 365 gives you more than just an email

Have you heard about the FREE rollout of  
QFES Office 365 to all QFES volunteers?  
Still wondering what it's all about?

QFES Office 365 provides an unprecedented suite of online resources for volunteers which will improve connectivity across brigades, groups and their members, and deliver more efficient communication channels. This will allow for better collaboration and engagement between volunteers and QFES.



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- ✓ You will have the ability to host or join online meetings with audio, video or web conferencing available over the internet. If you can't make brigade or group meetings in person you can arrange to join from any internet connected computer, tablet or phone. Just be aware that doing so may impact on your private data plan if you do connect via mobile networks on your smartphone or tablet.
- ✓ You get instant messaging and Skype connectivity, providing fast and secure communications.
- ✓ You get 1 Terabyte (TB) of file storage and sharing. This allows for an enormous amount of brigade or group material to be easily accessible from any internet connected computer, tablet or phone. These files can also be shared and edited online.
- ✓ You get Office Online, which means you have access to online versions of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. You'll be able to work on brigade or group business from anywhere using an internet connected computer, tablet or phone.
- ✓ You also get a work management tool which can be used to plan, organise and assign brigade or group tasks, share files and chat about your progress on tasks.

## How to sign up to enjoy the benefits of QFES Office 365

1. Ensure your personal details are up to date in OMS (RFS) or VIMS (SES).
2. Go to the QFES Volunteer Portal <https://volunteers.emergency.qld.gov.au> to register for QFES Office 365 access.
3. If you are new to the Volunteer Portal you'll be notified of your QFES Office 365 email address upon successful registration.
4. If you already have a Volunteer Portal login, go the Change Profile page to obtain a QFES Office 365 email address.
5. You can then use your QFES Office 365 email address and your Volunteer Portal password to log in to QFES Office 365.

Volunteers are the first group of QFES' workforce to have the QFES Office 365 tools made available to them. Soon paid staff will join you, providing even more efficient communications and connectivity with those people employed to support you.

Join up now and enjoy all of the benefits QFES Office 365  
can bring to you, your brigade or group.





# Bunnings sausage sizzle snags huge community contribution

Thanks to Australian generosity, more than half a million dollars has been raised nationally in support of local volunteer emergency services through the annual Bunnings Aussie Day Weekend Fundraiser Barbeque.

On Saturday 28 January, Queenslanders helped raise more than \$109,000 through donations and the proceeds of sausage sizzles held at 54 Bunnings stores statewide.

Bunnings Managing Director Michael Scheider expressed his appreciation to everyone who supported this important initiative.

“We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone that bought a snag or donated on the day in support of the emergency services, including any local businesses that donated supplies,” Mr Scheider said.

“We’d also like to thank the local emergency service volunteers, along with our team members, who rolled up their sleeves and ran the events on the day.”

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing applauded Bunnings staff and emergency services volunteers for committing time out of their busy lives to take part in the fundraiser.

“It’s encouraging to see so many people behind the scenes showing sincere commitment to these fundraising opportunities,” Mr Wassing said.

“This is a great acknowledgement of the tireless contribution of our emergency services volunteers to the safety of Queenslanders.”

More than 2200 team members and local volunteers ran more than 270 barbeques all over Australia with all money raised going directly to local volunteer fire brigades and SES groups.



Deputy Local Controller Brisbane SES Unit Steph Yerkovich at Bunnings Toombul



QFES members at Bunnings Rockhampton



SES and RFS members at Bunnings Yeppoon



Redland City SES Unit at Bunnings Capalaba



Cairns SES Group at Bunnings Cairns



Buchan Point SES Group at Bunnings Smithfield



In January, more than 30 RFS and FRS crews battled a large bushfire that threatened the community of Cooloom on the Sunshine Coast. By the time the fire was under control, 900 hectares had been burnt. No property was lost.



The Mirani SES Group recently conducted a rescue training exercise at the Wheel of Fire Falls in Finch Hatton Gorge west of Mackay.

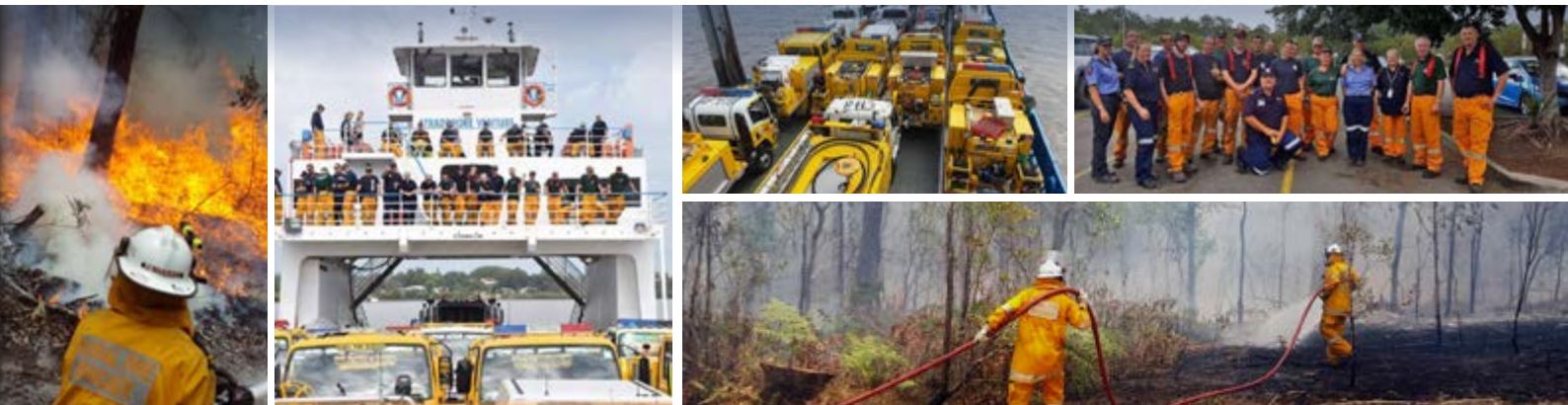


Early on Christmas Day FRS firefighters and some other special visitors joined staff at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital to help Santa deliver presents and put some smiles on kids' faces.



Toowoomba firefighters and SES members joined forces in January to clear the scene of a fire that destroyed 120-year-old Glennon House — the job would usually have taken three days, but this team had it all done in four hours.





The Russell Island Rural Fire Brigade had help at hand when a large bushfire threatened Island residents and property in December. Rural firefighters from Brisbane and the Gold Coast and Brisbane FRS crews worked for a number of days to contain the blaze and save every home.



FRS firefighters from Stanthorpe, Killarney, Miles, Crows Nest, Pittsworth, Highfields and Dalby came together in December to practise their Road Crash Rescue skills.






Brisbane SES volunteers visited Roma Street Fire and Rescue Station in December, having a look at the technical rescue equipment and trucks before FRS and SES members spent time sharing handy skills and tips.



Rockhampton FRS crews were called to Mount Ironpot to rescue a stranded climber 20 meters from the ground. Crews performed a ground-up rescue, which required the team to climb up to the man, stabilise him and rig a rope system to lower him safely to the ground.

Follow us on social media and share your photos with us:

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-  Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES
-  @qldfire

# Reaching great heights

## more than 40 years of vertical rescue



Collingwood Park vertical rescue by FRS firefighters in 2002. Photos: Station Officer Chris Dowdle, now stationed at Ripley Fire and Rescue Station.

**In 2002, 13 Ipswich firefighters were called to rescue a teenage girl who had fallen from cliffs at a disused open-cut coal mine near Collingwood Park, Ipswich.**

The operation would be one of the first vertical rescues carried out by firefighters under the then Queensland Fire and Rescue Service’s formalised technical rescue capability.

Prior to this, the SES had been the primary response to such incidents since the 1970s and remain highly-skilled in this capability today. The SES and FRS both deliver vertical rescue operations today. Quite regularly

the two services cooperate to assist Queenslanders who find themselves in difficulty.

In most remote locations around the state, specially trained SES volunteers continue to be the people called on to respond when a bushwalker, hiker or climber finds themselves dangerously stranded at height or depth.

From July 2016 to the end of January this year, QFES has responded to 48 vertical rescue incidents.

While the equipment, techniques, training and operational procedures may have changed over the years, the skills, courage and fortitude required of rescuers remains unchanged.

Station Officer Chris Dowdle remembers the very early days of vertical rescue within the FRS.

“I can recall training at Ipswich doing hose-climbing up the tower — that is really old school stuff though,” he said.

“The old general purpose line on the appliances used to be tested weekly with a six-man load pulling on the length of rope to make sure it was able to hold someone being rescued.

“Today’s vertical rescue crews undergo extensive training and are regularly required to refresh their skills and accreditation.”

SES vertical rescues in Central Region, circa 1980s. Photos: Don Wheeler, Local Controller Blackall SES Group



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