

RESPONSE

RESILIENT AND READY FOR THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE EDITION 18



SWIFT RESPONSE FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND FLOODS

QFES STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED WITH RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND CLEAN UP IN THE NORTH

PARTNERSHIPS

CELEBRATE

TECHNOLOGY

DETECTING AND PREVENTING WILDFIRES IS A JOINT EFFORT

STAFF BRAVE THE SHAVE AND RAISE THOUSANDS FOR SHAVE FOR A CURE

THE SCIENCE AND CAPABILITIES BEHIND THE NEW CAFS TRUCKS

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ON THE COVER

Phyllis Grant and Lydia McLaren from Tully State Emergency Service (SES) loading helicopters to resupply the school kids near Tully.

Photo: David Barra, Tully SES Local Controller.

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.

Let the editor know what you think about this edition of Response by providing your feedback to QFESMagazine. Editor@qfes.qld.gov.au

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FOREWORDS



KATARINA CARROLL
Commissioner
QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

March and April have proved to be busy months with a lot going on around the state.

The first of April saw Operation Cool Burn commence; 850 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) staff and volunteers were involved in the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games working some 3500 shifts; and wet weather over the past two months has affected most of the state.

QFES crews were on the ground during the response and recovery phases in northern Queensland for Tropical Cyclone Nora and the wet weather that followed.

From swiftwater rescues and evacuation assistance to welfare checks, damage assessment and recovery across northern Queensland communities, it makes me extremely proud to see the integrity and dedication of our workforce during these difficult events. Thank you to everyone who provided support and assistance to the northern communities. You can read more about the north Queensland flooding on page 6.

I also had the pleasure of attending award ceremonies for International Women's Day (IWD) and Peer Support Week. Awards were presented to those who made an outstanding contribution to the inclusion of women in QFES, and for assistance and support to colleagues through work-related or personal difficulties respectively. Congratulations to all QFES staff and volunteers who received awards. You can read more about Peer Support Week on page 12.

As always, I am so proud of the dedication and perseverance everyone in the organisation has demonstrated over the past two months. It's been a tremendous effort.

Katarina Carroll
Commissioner
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services



DOUG SMITH
Deputy Commissioner
STRATEGY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

As we emerge from the first part of the year and head into the midst of GC2018, QFES continues with its business as usual planning and reporting cycles, responding to the demands of the end of the 2017-18 financial year with budget preparation well underway.

At this important time, the alignment of QFES business with our strategic direction and our fiscal needs means it is also a time of reflection on our services and outcomes over the financial year. It is also a time of heightened liaison and consultation across other agencies to ensure the priorities of Queensland Government are on track.

Earlier this month approximately 70 staff from across QFES attended a workshop to talk about what might be on the road ahead for the department. CSIRO Futures researcher, Dr Jerad Ford, presented on the Australia 2030 report that included mega-trends shaping the future of our country. The group later worked through how drivers of change, like technology and climate change, might impact QFES.

Our Human Capital Management team continues to invest in the development of our people with the pilot Step Up coaching program being held in Toowoomba. Step Up is QFES' coaching program specifically designed for our workforce and environment. The long-term benefits of coaching are well documented, including improving work performance and self-confidence, better relationships and communications, and providing an invaluable space for personal and professional development. Step Up will include a mix of face-to-face workshops, webinars and online support. Step Up is the forerunner to the launch of the performance and goals module in Nexus towards the later part of this year.

I was delighted to see QFES recommence its Speakers Series with the first session of the year being held in late February. A highly informative and insightful presentation was provided by Dr Nikola Stepanov, the Queensland Integrity Commissioner on integrity related matters.

Doug Smith
Deputy Commissioner
Strategy and Corporate Services



HON CRAIG CRAWFORD
Minister
MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Having spent time last month inspecting flood damage in the state's north and north-west, I have an even greater appreciation of just how resilient Queenslanders really are.

On an inspection with QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll, I met with impacted residents, local councils, government agencies, MPs and of course our hard-working Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel who helped out during these emergencies – stretching from Cairns south to Townsville, and out to Mount Isa, Cloncurry, McKinlay and Winton.

Overwhelmingly, the feedback was how grateful everyone was for the support they received during and after the significant weather event.

QFES continues to work closely with councils and Local Disaster Management Groups during the recovery phase.

Like Commissioner Carroll, I'm extremely proud of the response from our local emergency services, including Fire and Rescue staff, State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers.

The SES alone responded to more than 500 calls for assistance across Queensland for the weather event in the state's north and north-west. A large number of these call-outs were for sandbagging and flood assistance, particularly around Ingham, Halifax, and Innisfail.

Additional QFES crews were deployed to the affected areas to bolster the response capability – working shoulder-to-shoulder with local teams to firstly deal with the emergency call-outs, then with the clean-up.

I'd like to thank our firefighters and volunteers for their tireless work. Many gave up their own time to help flood-affected communities across north and north-west Queensland.

Unfortunately, this is the season for severe weather, and no doubt I'll be travelling again soon.

And when I do, I'm confident QFES and other agencies will once again impress.

Hon Craig Crawford
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services



QFES looks to 2030 and beyond

With the ever-changing needs of our communities, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is conducting workshops with staff to gather ideas about how the future might look for community safety.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has a proud reputation delivering a trusted and reliable set of hands when it comes to keeping communities across the state safe and prepared in case of an emergency.

Whether we are looking at tomorrow, next year or 10 years down the track, the role that all of our people play in community safety will remain our priority. However, how we achieve this will alter depending on the changing needs of our communities.

To ensure our organisation is ready for the future needs of Queenslanders, QFES Strategy Branch has been conducting workshops with a range of staff about what might shape our future. Your thoughts and ideas will help us to identify the capabilities required for the years ahead.

Deputy Commissioner Strategy and Corporate Services Doug Smith said people right across our organisation, as well as external stakeholders, will be invited to take part in workshops to ensure we capture all areas of the business and community expectations when looking into our future needs.

“There is no doubt that QFES is greatly supported by our communities and all

levels of government, which is a testament to each and every one of our people,” Mr Smith said.

There is no doubt that QFES is greatly supported by our communities and all levels of government, which is a testament to each and every one of our people.

“However, to ensure we remain a leader in innovative thinking and adapting to changing community environments, it is critical that we work together to look at what factors could impact the way we go about our business in the future.

“These workshops will allow us the opportunity to consider such things as how demand might change as the population moves, grows and ages or how climate

change and technology might influence our department’s future needs – looking to 2030 and beyond.

“Through identifying any potential gaps, risks or opportunities to which our business can adapt over the coming years, we will ensure we are positioned as leaders in emergency services and continue to be seen as a trusted and reliable frontline service.

“All Queenslanders know that QFES’ number one priority is community safety, and Strategy 2030 is another step to ensuring we advance our service to keep pace with community change.”

Dr Jerad Ford from CSIRO, who was a guest speaker at the QFES Horizon Planning Workshop, said the more powerful the narrative, the more powerful it will be as a change agent for the organisation.

More information about Strategy 2030 and the way it is being developed is available on the gateway as well as on the volunteer portal.

COMMITTED TO A CULTURE OF RESPECT



April will see QFES begin an important journey to become a White Ribbon accredited workplace. White Ribbon Workplaces promote respectful relationships, gender equality and a zero tolerance towards violence.

The Australian statistics are horrifying. One in six women and one in 16 men have experienced violence by a current or former partner since age 15. Each day about eight women and two men are hospitalised for assault by a current or former partner and, on average, one woman a week and one man a month is killed by a current or former partner. The problem isn't confined to our homes. In Australia, one in five women experience harassment in the workplace.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing said QFES was working hard to improve the supports available to staff, volunteers and their families who were impacted by domestic and family violence (DFV) and workplace harassment.

“We are dedicated to changing workplace culture to prevent abuse and violence.

“As part of QFES’ commitment to stopping violence against women, we are now embarking on the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program. The program recognises workplaces that are taking active steps to stop violence against women, accrediting them as a White Ribbon Workplace.

We are dedicated to changing workplace culture to prevent abuse and violence. – Mike Wassing

“White Ribbon is an international movement that was started by men who saw a need to work towards ending men’s violence against women,” Mr Wassing said.

“The workplace accreditation program is a priority for QFES that builds on existing gender equality and diversity initiatives and directly ties into our values of Respect, Integrity, Courage, Loyalty and Trust.

“Like most men, I believe that violence against women is never acceptable. The impacts of DFV are not confined to the home. The victim may have issues that arise in relation to work attendance and performance and this can affect their co-workers and the whole organisation. Employment can also have a positive impact on DFV as having a job is often a pathway to women leaving an abusive relationship.”

First Officer Rural Fire Service (RFS) Ben Heilbronn said he was pleased QFES was becoming a White Ribbon Workplace.



Ben Heilbronn is pleased QFES is becoming a White Ribbon Workplace.

“This accreditation acknowledges the importance of stopping violence against women, it promotes the steps we have already taken as an organisation towards creating a more inclusive workplace and will provide more supports for people who have been the victims of violence.

“White Ribbon accreditation will create greater awareness amongst RFS volunteers of the counselling and support we have access to.

It will also be a formal recognition that QFES has zero tolerance for violence against women. People, regardless of gender, can sign up to volunteer with the knowledge that they will be treated with respect and given the opportunity to build positive relationships,” Ben said.

“It is incredibly important that organisations such as QFES set an example that violence against women is never okay. There is no place for it in your home or your workplace. There is no place for it in an RFS brigade or group. Men speaking out about violence against women creates a culture where women feel safe and supported.”

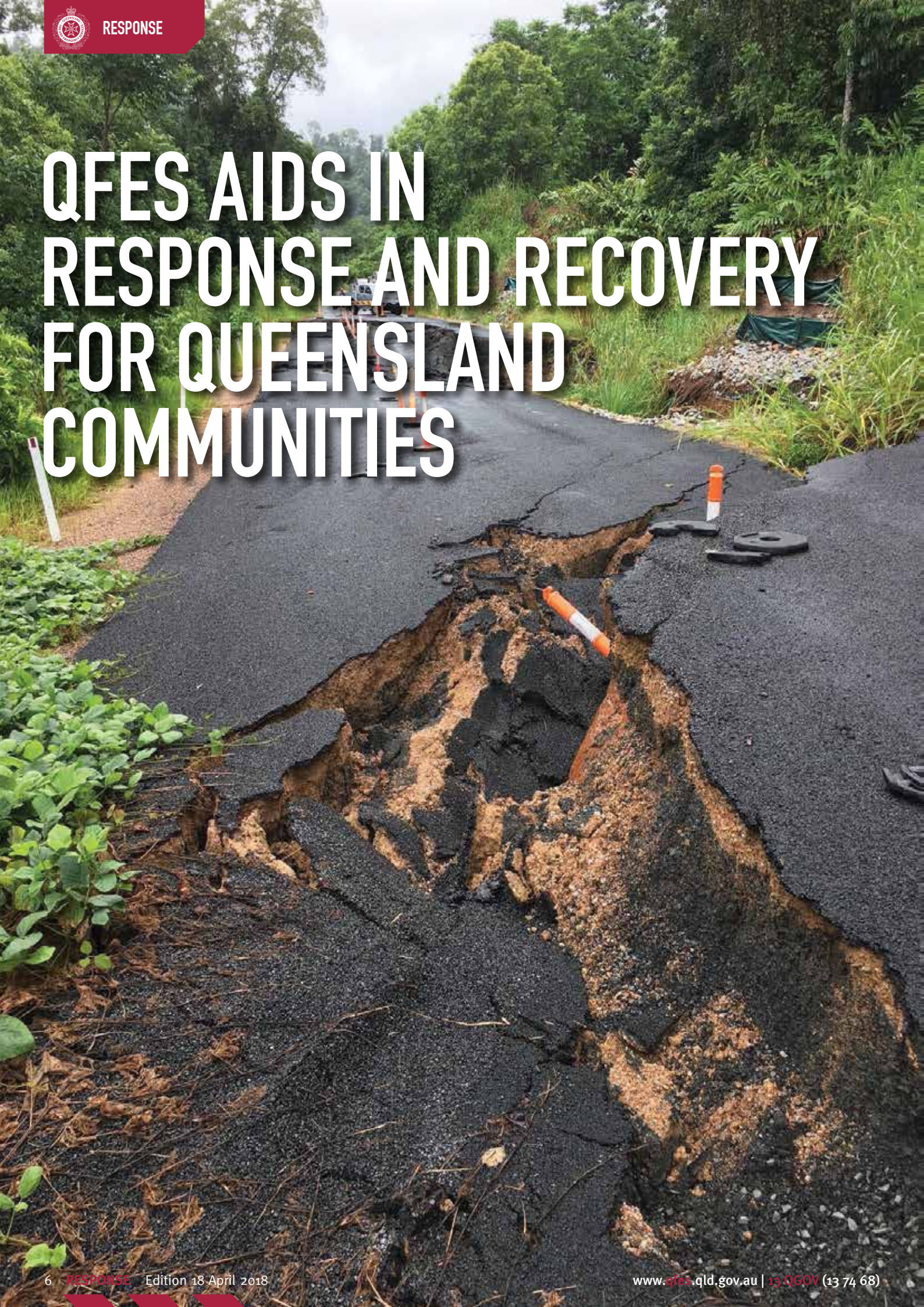
The White Ribbon accreditation program will take place over 18 months and create a safer and more respectful workplace for everyone.



QFES People and Culture Committee.



QFES AIDS IN RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FOR QUEENSLAND COMMUNITIES





Queensland Fire and Emergency Services crews responded swiftly to cyclone and flood preparation, response and recovery across Queensland.

March and April proved to be busy months for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) personnel across the state.

Early in the month a slow-moving low-pressure system dumped hundreds of millimetres of rain over northern Queensland.

Towns were cut off, residents were evacuated and hundreds of homes were affected by floodwater.

Rainfall totals of 300-600mm were recorded over the Herbert River catchment in just three days, with the flood peak reaching 14.7 metres, similar levels to February 2009.

The small town of Winton, northwest of Longreach, was severely impacted from the heavy rainfall after more than 200mm of rain fell on the town over three days – four times the March monthly rainfall average.

On March 9, the Hinchinbrook Shire Council Local Government area was declared a disaster zone after flooding caused extensive damage to homes around Ingham and Halifax.

Normanton, Karumba, Burketown and Doomadgee were isolated and inaccessible by road. The Bruce Highway between Townsville and Cairns was also cut in several places at Ingham and Tully.

Fire and Rescue swiftwater rescue crews along with SES flood boat crews were deployed to the state's north west to bolster response capability. Deployed personnel were from all corners of the state.

QFES liaised with other agencies, including local governments, to ensure a swift response. One of the more publicised rescues was the retrieval of more than 80

Year Six students stranded at the Echo Creek Adventure Camp site near Tully due to rising flood waters.

It was a major logistical operation, with QFES liaising with other government departments, commercial transport operators and the Defence Force.

Three fixed-wing aircraft, a number of four-wheel-drives and about six minibus taxis were used during the operation.

SES personnel were kept busy with about 460 tasks being received in just one week from March 5-12. The jobs ranged from flooding, sandbagging, structural damage and trees down.

Swiftwater rescue teams assisted with medical emergencies, evacuating and relocating residents, and resupplying towns with food and medication. They were also involved in several rescues, including stranded people at Gardner Falls, Maleny, and a vehicle in a swollen creek at Normanton.

Staff and volunteers were also involved in many activities such as welfare checks, evacuation assistance, clean up, rapid damage assessments and the ongoing recovery.

As the clean-up headed into full-swing in the north, ex-Tropical Cyclone (TC) Nora crossed the coast on March 25 as a Category 3 cyclone near Pormpuraaw, on the Cape York's west coast.

Although the system was downgraded to a tropical low later that afternoon, the affects were felt much further afield than just parts of Cape York. Several Emergency Alerts were issued, including Aurukun, Weipa, Mapoon, Caravonica and Kamerunga.

The heavy rainfall caused flooding in some low-lying parts of Cairns, cars were swept away in floodwaters in Earlville, the Kuranda Range was closed in both directions from a rockslide, and landslips and fallen trees caused delays on the Captain Cook Highway north of Cairns.

Extensive power outages were felt in Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw from fallen and damaged powerlines.

QFES personnel were again deployed to the north. Swiftwater technicians were deployed to Mareeba, Port Douglas, Cooktown, Mount Isa, Normanton and Cairns.

Dozens of homes and scores of caravans and vehicles were damaged after a flash-flood event in Cairns in the early hours of March 27.

Swiftwater rescue crews saved more than 40 people at caravan parks in Redlynch and Brinsmead, while two people were also rescued from floodwater on the Captain Cook Highway north of Cairns airport.

As reeling northern communities began the clean-up from TC Nora, ex-TC Iris re-formed.

On the Easter weekend ex-TC Iris redeveloped into a Category 2 system and flirted with the Queensland coast between Cairns and Yeppoon.

Winds of up to 100km/h were felt around the Whitsunday Islands and exposed coastal areas, with flood watch warnings current between Cairns and Rockhampton. Further swiftwater crews were pre-deployed to these areas.

As *Response* went to print, ex-TC Iris was downgraded to a Category 1, and was expected to downgrade further to a low-pressure system in 24 hours and remain out to sea.



Rural Fire Service brigade members from Bambaroo, Rollingstone, Rangewood, Black River, Mount Fox, Toobanna alongside staff from Townsville and QPWS rangers from Giringun were deployed to Ingham.



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Real-world experience at QFES for two aspiring professionals

Two young professionals spent 12 weeks over the Christmas and New Year break working as interns at Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) head office at Kedron.

Students Robert Wolski and Kayla-lee Craib were QFES' first interns through the CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program.

CareerTrackers is a national non-profit organisation that works to create internship opportunities for Indigenous university students.

Creative Industries and Business student Robert worked alongside the multimedia team, while Psychological Science (Honours) student Kayla-lee spent her time with the Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) team.

Queensland University of Technology student Robert, who is majoring in film and advertising, worked on a variety of projects across QFES and the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

These included OpenLine, proactive social media messaging for QFES Media and live streaming QPS' new recruits graduation ceremony at Oxley.

"The multimedia team were welcoming and supportive, plus the smaller size of the team made it a very personable experience," Robert said.

"I secured a 10-week full-time position with the multimedia team after my internship was completed in February.

"I hope to come back in June and November this year for further internships."

Kayla-lee is currently studying at the University of Queensland and is taking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as an elective.

During her time at QFES she worked on the CultureCare aspect of Peer Support. Kayla-lee detailed target areas in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives which could induce a negative impact, particularly their working life, for peer support officers to be aware of.

Kayla-lee also worked on an Aboriginal art piece to tell QFES' story, which will be released later this year.

"I really enjoyed my time at QFES – I met many diverse people and started conversations which raised awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," Kayla-lee said.

"The conversations we had were really eye opening and it exposed more people to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture.

"I'm hoping to get a graduate position here when I finish study in 2021."

Director Human Capital Strategy Callum MacSween said QFES' collaboration with

CareerTrackers and the summer internship program had been a great opportunity for the department to meaningfully contribute in improving career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students.

"Not only has QFES been able to contribute to the career pathways of Robert and Kayla-Lee in helping them prepare for leadership in the workplace and community, Robert and Kayla-Lee have helped QFES reach a deeper understanding of the many diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures across Queensland, highlighting the benefit for all members of the QFES workforce to attain a broader awareness of these cultures," he said.

QFES is looking at the winter Internship program provided by CareerTrackers and encourage any area of QFES interested in hosting an intern to contact the Talent Development Unit at QFESTalentDevelopment@qfes.qld.gov.au for information about this valuable initiative. Head to the QFES Learning Cache to find information on QFES' cultural capability training.



Kayla-lee Craib and Robert Wolski with Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche.



Robert Wolski films an event for the multimedia team.

DIRECTION
332 deg(M)

27.61648°S
153.35150°E

ACCURACY 5 m
DATUM WGS84

DETECTING AND PREVENTING WILDFIRES IS A JOINT EFFORT



Partnerships within QFES and with external companies play a vital role in detecting and preventing wildfires in Queensland.

Before technology became what it is today, fire spotters were used to detect fires by sitting high above the tree tops in fire towers, watching for the first wisp of smoke from a potential wildfire.

In the early days these lookouts used small clearings on the top of hills or climbed atop large trees. It was soon recognised there was an increasing need for early detection of wildfires in forests, which led to the creation of a series of fire towers across Queensland.

Since the late 1990s the use of staffed fire towers in Queensland has dwindled due to changing forestry practices and emerging technology such as satellites, remote sensing and spotter planes.

Today, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) works closely with various partners for wildfire prevention and response, such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and QFES Air Operations.

In February QPWS installed seven remotely-operated cameras in wildfire-prone forests with high-value cypress pine west of Toowoomba, to improve fire detection and response times.

Bushfire safety officer for south-west region Michael Welsh said it was good to have the extra pair of “eyes”.

“QPWS can share the vision from the seven cameras if required, which have a combined coverage of 1.2 million hectares,” he said.

“QPWS will be notified if a hot spot turns up on satellite signal and they will then check the camera to validate if there’s a fire and to see what direction it’s moving and if smoke is rising.

“They’ll then send crews to investigate and let us know if further assistance is required. Through our partnership with QPWS we often work closely with them to help manage out-of-control fires.”

Michael said QFES would also liaise with aircraft suppliers to request vision from air observers or for water bombing responses.

Biram Rural Fire Brigade volunteer Mark Doble has been an air observer for nearly six years.

He became involved with the QFES Air Operations Unit when he was trained as an Airbase Operator, a ground-based role that supports QFES aircraft operations during fire, flood, cyclone and other disasters.

During fire season he is rostered on duty at the QFES Airbase at Archerfield Airport.



“The role of an air observer is to support ground crews by providing accurate intelligence,” he said.

“Once in the air, air observers are trained to gather incident intelligence using many different tools. For example, we use an iPad in the case of a wildfire to map items such as the perimeter, fire and wind direction, spot overs, access tracks for crews and threatened property and assets.

Knowing you've helped ground crews maintain their safety and situational awareness and ensured the safety of our communities makes it all worth it.
– Mark Doble

“During a fire detection flight, a pre-determined route is flown and an air observer will look for smoke plumes and upon sighting we will direct the pilot to fly to the smoke plume for further investigation.

“The information gathered can then be passed to Firecom who will dispatch ground crews to investigate.”

Mark said although he would welcome any new technology that could enhance the safety of communities and ground crews, he believed having eyes in the sky was vital.

“In my six years I have seen many great advances in technology which has made my role more effective and easier to perform,” he said.



“The role is vital in providing situational awareness to ground crews in situations that can change quickly. For example, a wind change can be relayed immediately.

“We can spend up to six hours at a time in a small aircraft flying in hot, smoky conditions while trying to map a fire in very turbulent air, however knowing you've helped ground crews maintain their safety and situational awareness and ensured the safety of our communities makes it all worth it.”

Fire investigation and research manager Bruno Greimel said although wildfire detection was becoming quite sophisticated, there would always be the need to have someone on the ground.

“In regards to detecting fires faster, QFES is working with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) and other fire and land management bodies to continuously improve methods of early fire detection,” Bruno said.

“While technology is evolving rapidly, a study on three remote fire detection systems in Australia in 2010 showed that while remote sensing systems were capable of detecting fires, they were not considered a suitable replacement for staffed fire towers.

“The human eye proved more efficient in detecting fires, avoiding false alarms and validating fire locations.”





Peer Support Officers honoured

Twelve Peer Support Officers (PSOs) from across the state have been acknowledged for their outstanding service in supporting their colleagues.

The 2018 Peer Support Week began with an awards ceremony in Brisbane, with the week celebrated throughout the state with special events in each region.

Mr Bart Mellish, Member for Aspley representing the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Craig Crawford, and Commissioner Carroll reflected on the challenges faced by all QFES personnel.

In Commissioner Carroll's address to PSOs and their supporters, she told the audience everyone has a role in looking after their own wellbeing and caring for colleagues.

"The challenging role of being a first responder can take an emotional toll.

"Here at QFES, however, members can rely upon professional support to assist them through difficult times.

"The Fire & Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) has established a range of support services available to all staff, volunteers and family members.

"In Peer Support Week we acknowledge a very important role our PSO officers play within QFES.

"They facilitate education presentations to promote positive mental health, participate in on-call support for critical incident response and management, and refer members to additional resources if required" she said.

This year the three recipients of the Olga Wilson PSO Awards are:

Nellie Baron – from Charters Towers Rural Fire Brigade. Nellie has been a PSO for an extensive period, and completed her initial PSO training 22 years ago. She has been a familiar face to many during numerous disaster deployments, and often mentors new PSOs as they learn the role.

Michelle McLeod – from State Fire Communications. Michelle has been a PSO for the past five years during which time she has developed a strong reputation for her compassion. She actively encourages proactive support across all ranks and roles of QFES.

Claire Browning – from State Emergency Service Logan group. Claire joined the PSO program in 2016 and has been recognised for her comprehensive quality support following intense rescue events.

PSO Awards were also presented to Mr Jason Anderson Fire and Rescue Service, and Mrs Nesha Saunders (and Bob our Support Pooch) from State Fire Communications.



QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll with Bob, a qualified therapy dog.

Nominee	Region/Branch	Role/Area	PSO Induction date
Jason Roberts	Brisbane	Station Officer, Hendra	29/07/2011
John Roberts	South East	Station Officer, Nerang	12/03/1998
Nesha Saunders	South East	SES Deputy Group Leader	18/09/2015
Jenny Goulding	South East	SES Deputy Group Leader, Logan	17/09/2016
Gael Hardsman	Central	Captain Rural Fire Brigade, Cawarral	29/10/2010
Andrew Vaughan	North Coast	Firefighter, Beerwah	18/09/2015
Janelle Searles	Central	GFES Administration Officer Longreach	29/07/2011
Guiseppe (Joe) Torrissi	Far North	Station Officer, Cairns	26/06/1997



Firefighters brave the shave

It's been 20 years since QFES first took part in the World's Greatest Shave and we were invited back to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

More than \$200 million has been raised since the Shave first began in 1998 and our firefighters were there at the beginning.

Fundraising to support the Leukaemia Foundation, all money raised from the Shave goes to research and support for those who have been affected by blood cancer, including leukaemia, myeloma and lymphoma.

Three of the original number returned to take part in this year's event with Paul Smeath, Paul Omanski and Sean Rivers all acknowledged with certificates recognising their contribution to the Shave.

There were more grey hairs than twenty years ago when all three men decided to get back in the barber's chair and support the cause.

They were joined by new faces from Roma Street and Ashgrove Fire Stations who were 'brave and shaved' including Catherine Duchock, who raised more than \$1700 for the Leukaemia Foundation.

Catherine was approached on the morning of the shave to take part and, with the help

of the crews at Roma Street, quickly got on the phones to request donations from other stations across Brisbane.

There was no shortage of support with the number of donations continuing to climb, raising the total figure to more than a \$1000 within a couple of hours.

Supported by her friend and fellow firefighter Ian Baker, Catherine's smile got bigger and bigger as the hair came off.

There were more firefighters who wanted to get in on the action, with Fransiskus Nahak, Pete Macan and Tom Eyles giving Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) a grand total of eight participants in this year's shave.

It was an excellent turnout for the twentieth anniversary of the World's Greatest Shave and the Leukaemia Foundation were grateful for QFES' support.



Ian Baker and Catherine Duchock before the shave.



Ian Baker and Catherine Duchock after the shave.



THE CAPABILITIES AND SCIENCE BEHIND THE NEW COMPRESSED AIR FOAM SYSTEM (CAFS)

So far there's been positive feedback from firefighters who have used the new Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) fitted Type 2 appliances. And the word is getting around.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) received its first CAFS Type 2 appliance about one year ago.

Today, there are 23 in action across the state, set to be boosted to 30 this month. Another 30 appliances are expected to be rolled out by the end of 2019.

Acting technical officer for fleet operations (PSBA) Bryce Bell said the new appliance had a more efficient foam injection system coupled with the CAF technology.

“The old system saw the foam mixed in the pump through a venturi system and applied through a standard branch and sometimes an aspirator, which reduces the projection of the foam onto the fire,” he said.

“With the implementation of the new post-pump foam injection system we can now get a very accurate mix of foam which coupled with the CAF aid mixing chamber, allows us to produce the compressed air foam.

“This results in a far better projection allowing safer application, the foam structure is more uniform allowing it have a much better drain time and more resistant to the heat breaking it down.

“Additionally, it will use less foam concentrate due to its efficiency.”

The new CAFS can be used on a variety of situations including bush fires, deep seated fires, structural external attack and

transitional attack, industrial fires, vehicle fires and even pumped into aerial apparatus appliances.

The durable bubble structure also allows the foam to be used on vertical structures, meaning it can be used for creating fire breaks and even exposure protection.

“The CAFS is a much better tool for fighting particular fires as it has a quicker knock down rate, which means saving water – it can be up to four times more efficient than just using water,” Bryce said.

“As the water and foam system has air injected into it, hose lines become much lighter and easier to manoeuvre which means it's also an additional help for fatigue.

“CAFS also attacks all three sides of the fire triangle and simultaneously blankets the fuel, which reduces the fuel's capacity to seek out the oxygen.

“I've received feedback from some Toowoomba firefighters who have been to quite a few truck fires, and they've come back with good reports of being able to knock the fires out quickly. It's a great tool particularly for firefighters in rural areas as they won't always have water with them.”

In 2004 CAFS was introduced into Australia, and was a valuable resource at the historic 2014 Brown Coal fire in the Hazelwood Mine in Victoria.



Acting technical officer for fleet operations (PSBA) Bryce Bell with a CAFS Type 2 appliance.



Although CAFS was not a standard firefighting method at the time, it reduced smoke and ash for nearby residents. CAFS appliances from the ACT, NSW and Queensland deployed to the mine proved its ability to bring the situation under control when water only was not effective.

Station officer Wayne Brown said Fire and Rescue CAFS trainers from ACT and trainers from America conducted initial training for QFES personnel.

“Tony Eggins, Shan Raffel and I completed a CAFS road show presentation in 2009 to fire services in Brisbane, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia,” he said.

“An agreement was formed between Australian fire services to share information and training. The base system for the Type 2 CAFS was developed in Tasmania, and the blue print of the system was provided to QFES.

“CAFS is the way of the future for firefighting – in the right situation CAFS has been proven to be an excellent firefighting medium, however it has limitations and is not a silver bullet.”

Today, all states in Australia have a CAFS program of some kind. Each CAFS costs about \$55,000, with total truck cost at \$540,000. The appliances have an average lifespan of 15 years.

Across Queensland, each region now has at least one new CAFS appliance, with auxiliary firefighters the first to undertake the 16-hour training course to use the system.

Training will soon be rolled out to permanent staff to operate the new CAFS Type 2 appliance.

Benefits of new CAFS

- *Less water required (up to four times more efficient than using water)*
- *Lighter hose lines*
- *Faster knockdown time*
- *Greater projection*
- *Attacks all three sides of the fire triangle*
- *Creates a more uniform bubble structure which increases durability and heat protection*
- *Reduces smoke emission and runoff*
- *Can adhere to vertical surfaces*
- *Less chance of reignition*
- *Firefighter safety*
- *Asset protection and exposure protection*

Vital equipment handed over to South East SES

State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers in the South East Region became the first units in Queensland to receive new equipment under the Energising Qld SES Equipment Program last month.

Stretchers, defibrillators, vehicle accessories, lighting and chainsaws were among the new equipment provided to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) South East Region last month as part of a partnership program.

The equipment for the South East Region SES groups is the first \$34,000 of a \$200,000 resource injection for the state, delivered by SES Supporting Partners, Energex and Ergon Energy (as part of the Energy Queensland group), and Powerlink Queensland.

SES groups applied for a range of valuable equipment and prioritised needs, with consideration given to other resources within their local areas.

Applications were reviewed by a working group comprising representatives from QFES, SES, Energy Queensland and Powerlink. With more than \$600,000 of applications the partnership was pleased to be able to deliver most of the high priority items.

Member for Gaven Meaghan Scanlon attended an event on behalf of Fire and Emergency Services Minister Craig Crawford to announce the handover on Wednesday 28 March.

Ms Scanlon said the new equipment would be a great help in the critical work of SES volunteers throughout the state.

“The new equipment was certainly timely and a welcome boost as QFES personnel were in the final phase of preparations for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games,” she said.

“It’s fantastic to see the practical support provided through this partnership to our hard-working SES volunteers.”

Chief Executive Officer of Energy Queensland David Smales said when severe weather and other disasters strike, it is important to have people you can rely on and the best equipment to do the job.

“Energex and Ergon crews always have nothing but praise for the SES volunteers they work with during emergency events,” he said.

“They know they can depend on them to

undertake jobs, such as clearing debris from roads and properties along with other important tasks that help us get the power on faster.

“We are proud to be able to provide mutual support in the form of new equipment to assist them with the great work they do in community recovery events.”

Powerlink Chief Executive Merryn York said the work SES volunteers do to help keep

communities safe during critical times is invaluable.

“We are so pleased to be assisting groups in the south-east region, particularly the Gold Coast, to continue providing support through this important partnership.”

She said Powerlink was proud of its ongoing partnership to deliver much-needed equipment to SES groups across the state.



Heavy vehicle rescue training crucial for Central Region staff

With mines nearby and busy transport routes, rescues involving heavy vehicles and machinery are frequent jobs for staff and volunteers in central Queensland. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel refreshed their heavy vehicle rescue skills earlier this year.

In February staff across central Queensland took part in specialist training involving heavy vehicles and machinery in a bid to prepare for emergencies they may be called to respond to in the region.

QFES Regional Training Officer Shane Tapp said the exercises were an opportunity to refresh staff with response equipment and practices to ensure they maintained the capability and training needed to perform their roles.

“These are very important skills and particularly for those in regions such as central Queensland where a lot of heavy vehicles associated with the mining and transport sector are using the roads,” he said.

“We recognised this and prioritised this training program, so that it could be delivered to about 180 personnel across central Queensland, at locations such as Gladstone, Mackay, Rockhampton, Emerald and Longreach.

“By delivering the training throughout the region we were able to ensure everyone had the chance to take part and more communities would see the benefits.”

Shane said staff responded to several incident-based scenarios under the guidance of Central Region Road Crash Rescue (RCR) heavy rescue trainers as part of the two-day courses.

“We wanted this to be a program our personnel would take a lot from, so we made sure it recognised the practical aspects of their role,” he said.

“To achieve this we incorporated trucks, buses, cars and mock patients in our exercises. Crews used the latest emergency response techniques involving hydraulic equipment, low pressure air bags and other specialist heavy rescue equipment to ensure the best possible outcomes in each of the simulated incidents.

“The feedback has been really positive and there have already been requests to deliver the program to more crews.

“I want to thank the State Road Crash Rescue Unit, especially Assistant Station

Officer David Gemeri for committing State Heavy Rescue trainers to educate local RCR instructors, so they were then able to deliver this program throughout Central Region.”



QFES SWIFTWATER RESCUE CAPABILITIES BOLSTERED BY NEW CRAFTS



One of the first groups undertaking their training on the Tully River.

New Motorised Swiftwater Rescue Crafts (MSRC) are now available for swiftwater crews in each region, providing a valuable tool for trained swiftwater rescue technicians.

“Statistics show there are more rescues from swiftwater environments than from fires,” said Brad Commens, Director Specialist Response and Communications Branch.

He said the new MSRC were a first for Australian swiftwater rescue capability, and would be an invaluable tool for trained technicians in swiftwater environments.

“They are specifically designed to allow rescues to be undertaken in hostile river and swiftwater situations,” he said.

“The new crafts will provide rescue crews access to people in swiftwater environments where the distances and speed of the water flow makes a paddled rescue impossible.”

QFES began an investigation into the feasibility of the motorised craft with pragmatic testing of inflatable boats and compatible motors after a recommendation from the 2011 Floods Commission of Enquiry.

As a result, the 3.8 metre Zodiac boat and a 30HP Evinrude motor combination was chosen.

“The first seven boats arrived in October 2016, with the final six due for delivery this month (April),” he said.

“Currently we have 23 personnel trained to use the craft, and another 36 who have finished the first half of their training. The second half of the course will be done in a swiftwater environment in the Tully River when conditions allow.

“There is currently one new MSRC in each region, with an additional four at the State Deployment Centre for Training and Deployment.

“When the six new craft arrive, they will be used for the next round of training and then dispatched to the regions, so they will have two each.”

Mr Commens said as there was no prior training available in Australia for the new craft, overseas providers were used in the development of a course and delivery of instructor training.

“Personnel from the Bowling Green State University of Ohio travelled to Australia to deliver the National Fire Protection

Association (NFPA) Standard Instructor Training on the Tully River,” he said.

“QFES then commenced the delivery of the training in an Australian-first rescue capability.

“The training is a nine-day course consisting of boat handling and rescue technicians working in a tidal environment, followed by an additional four days in the swiftwater environment to hone skills and provide real life training scenarios.”

These new craft will provide rescue crews access to people in swiftwater environments where the distances and speed of the water makes a paddled rescue impossible.

Senior Instructor Gregory Duncan has been working with the MSRC since the idea was first introduced, and has received positive feedback from those he’s trained.

“There has been a lot of interest in the crafts, and a lot of people have showed interest in being trained,” he said.

“The course is in two parts: Phase 1 is a preparatory phase stepping participants up in still and tidal flow on the Pumicestone Passage, and Phase 2 which is conducted in swiftwater on the Tully River.

“With the recent rain up north we’re confident that the five courses planned for May and July will be at high flows.”

Greg said everyone who finished the course would be qualified drivers of the MSRC.

“It’s important that driver and crew work together and the driver communicates well, and understands the capabilities and limitations of the craft,” he said.

“The crew is an integral part of the operation as they need to be mobile in the craft for it to perform safely and to its potential.”



Swift water rescue trained QFES personnel in Queensland

- 302 swift water rescue technicians, trained in five facets of technical rescue
- 82 swift water rescue operators trained in swift water rescue

Features

- 3.8 metre Zodiac boat
- 30HP Evinrude motor combination which complies with future emissions standards, and is fitted with a hi-torque propeller and propeller guard
- Inflatable floor and keel, which means they can be transported either deflated and packed for road or air transport, or inflated ready for use
- The crafts are fitted with a standard breathing apparatus cylinder and can be inflated within a matter of minutes



First week of training in a calm water environment at Caloundra.



SOUTH WESTERN REGION

English as a second language, safety as the first message

On March 14, representatives from the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) attended the English as a second language classes at the Toowoomba TAFE to provide valuable information for new migrants on what to do if there is an emergency and who to call.

We saw upwards of 200 students ranging in nationalities and ability to speak or understand English. This was an opportunity for greater awareness of the services in Australia and to welcome them to our country.



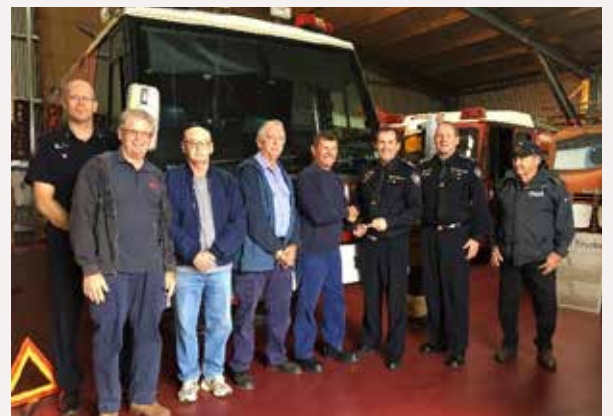
Toowoomba Fire Brigade Historical Society – Firepac presentation

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Stephen Smith attended a presentation at the Toowoomba Fire Brigade Historical Society (TFBHS) to present the keys of Fleet 597 to members. This date coincided with the monthly morning tea held for all retired firefighters.

Firepac Fleet 597 was originally stationed at Toowoomba and was the main turnout appliance from Anzac Avenue Fire station for many years. After being withdrawn from operational service it has spent the last 10 years at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA) being used for recruit training.

The TFBHS approached Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) and QFES Fleet Management to have the appliance returned to Toowoomba and help preserve the history of firefighting and fire appliances. After its retirement from Whyte Island the members drove the appliance home to Toowoomba.

The official handing over of the keys was conducted with AC Stephen Smith, members of the society, representatives of the Retired Firefighters Association of Queensland and media. The presentation was aired on Channel Seven news in Toowoomba.



Emergency Service Cadets

South West Region now has its third Emergency Services Cadet unit, with AC Steve Smith welcoming 28 young men and women to the sign on night at Highfields Fire Station earlier this year.

QFES has sponsored the new unit that will be hosted at the Highfields Fire Station and is run under the PCYC Emergency Services Cadets (ESC) program. Local auxiliary and permanent firefighters, Highfields police and ambulance staff, SES, and community members have signed up as the Unit's foundation Adult Leaders and Instructors.

Cadets will receive weekly instruction from the fire, police, ambulance, and SES staff, and later in the year will send a team away to the Emergency Services Cadet games.





FAR NORTHERN REGION

SES Trinity Beach unit look over Rescue 510

Cairns-based Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) Rescue 510 crew from Queensland Government Air (QGAir) facilitated an up-close-and-personal training operation with the Trinity Beach State Emergency Service (SES) unit.

As part of the unit's normal training night they received an overview and a brief on response operations, including search and rescue both at sea and on land, and how some of the response and operation equipment operated.

As most of QGAir's rescue helicopters accumulate a great deal of airtime, they are rarely non-operational due to maintenance.

QGAir combines the aviation assets, facilities and personnel of the former Emergency Management Queensland Helicopter Rescue, Government Air Wing and Police Air Wing into a unified government flight service. QGAir has both a transport and incident response capability.



North Queensland students had the opportunity to learn about various QFES roles and storm and cyclone preparedness at their annual Careers Fair

James Cook University (JCU) hosted its annual Careers Fair in March and invited a broad spectrum of potential employers.

QFES Far Northern Region's Regional Engagement Community Officer (RCEO) used the opportunity to engage students with the new QFES 'All in, all fronts' campaign and to promote storm and cyclone season preparedness.

Many students also stay in shared accommodation, so building fire safety and new smoke alarm legislation knowledge was shared.

The RCEO received feedback from several students who thought QFES was just firefighters, and they were surprised to learn the size and variation of roles that drive QFES.



Far Northern Region in partnership with the Defence Force

Last month Superintendent Lance Duncan represented Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Far Northern Region at the Australian Army's Birthday Celebration at the Cairns RSL.

During the celebrations Supt. Lance Duncan accepted a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Assistant Commissioner John Bolger for Far Northern Regions continued support for Defence Force Reserves.

Far Northern Region have many personnel in the Defence Force Reserves, and they are held in high regard by our Defence Force Leaders.



Chair of the Defence Force Reserves Lara Wilde and Lieutenant Cornel Tim Rutherford with Supt. Lance Duncan.



NORTHERN REGION

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) grazing land management workshop

Fire is a major factor shaping Australian ecosystems and grazing systems. The purpose of this three-day workshop was to enhance the collective understanding of land management practices and the impacts fire and our decision-making may have on these systems.

This was the second three-day workshop held in Charters Towers, specifically tailored for Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) staff and volunteers from principal extension officer Bob Shepherd and his team, in collaboration with Rural Fire Service (RFS) Northern Region.

More than 25 staff, volunteers and land holders from Far Northern, Northern, Central and Southeast Regions attended the workshop at the end of January.

The workshop involved topics included the grazing land ecosystem, land management practice and improving land condition, as well as the role of fire as a land management tool, regimes and weed management.

The third day included a field trip to Wambiana Station where grazing/land management trials have been conducted for more than 20 years, and where workshop participants met with local graziers to discuss issues on the land.

“The workshop was a fantastic opportunity to network and build on our understanding of effective land management practices in conjunction with DAF and the land holders,” said Gordon Yorke, Bushfire Safety Officer Northern Region.



Northern Region Volunteer Community Educator Workshop

25 volunteers and staff from Northern Region spent the day together to look at ways to build the region’s VCE capability. The workshop was designed to broaden the understanding of the role and get a greater appreciation for the complexities involved in engaging and educating our communities on risks and hazards, and empower them to plan, prepare and mitigate their effects.

The workshop is the first of many planned activities designed to increase this important aspect of disaster prevention preparedness for the region using volunteers.

“It’s a priority area in our region,” said Bushfire Safety Officer Gordon Yorke. “It’s about enhancing our peoples’ engagement and facilitation skills to work effectively with the community.”

Hughenden cadets

A total of 25 volunteers and staff from Northern Region spent the day together to look at ways to build the region’s Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) capability. The workshop was designed to broaden the understanding of the role and get a greater appreciation for the complexities involved in engaging and educating our communities on risks and hazards, and empower them to plan, prepare and mitigate their effects.

The cadets have a long history remaining active through all the changes in Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) until being managed by PCYC, even though Hughenden doesn’t have a PCYC. The 25 cadets are well managed and supported by their adult leaders.

Mr Anderson kept the cadets on their toes with some knot tying tasks. When they excelled in those it was made harder with the addition of some vision impaired goggles.



The recent development of the Regional Community Engagement Network (RCEN) is a big step forward in valuing the importance of community engagement across QFES.





CENTRAL REGION

QFES prepared to come-a Waltzing Matilda

Winton is famous for dinosaur finds and an unconfirmed comet strike around 300 million years ago. But this month its link to Banjo Paterson will be in the headlines as the town celebrates its new Waltzing Matilda Centre.

With the event expected to attract a heap of visitors, emergency services recently came together for a multi-agency exercise involving Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Longreach Airport.



Mackay SES shifts into new digs

The Mackay State Emergency Service (SES) has been boosted by the opening of a new \$1.5 million headquarters.

The facility will be the administration hub for the Mackay Regional SES Unit, supporting its 161 volunteers across eight groups, and also the home of the Mackay SES Group and its 100 members.

The project was fully funded by the Mackay Regional Council and became operational in February.



Island home for new RFS station

The Gladstone region has a new Rural Fire Station at Gatcombe which provides extra services to Facing Island South.

In 2016 the Facing Island Fire Brigade was split into two areas because of the distance from the top to the bottom, with the Facing Island South Brigade area covering 45 square kilometres. The Facing Island Rural Fire Station was completed last year at a cost of \$74,793.

Funding came from Queensland Fire and Rescue Services (QFES) and the QGC Pty Ltd Sustainable Communities Fund. Member for Gladstone Glen Butcher officially opened the station during a special ceremony on 3 February 2018.





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NORTH COAST REGION

Three of our well known and much valued Glasshouse SES members clock up 102 years of service

Graeme Cheal, who has been a member for 38 years, was one of the first to join the newly formed SES Glasshouse Group when it opened in March 1980. The group that joined the SES had been performing mountain rescues previously and were known as the Rover Scouts Mountain Rescue Group. Graeme was appointed Group Leader in 1980 and stayed in that role until 2010. During that time, he recalls doing at least 200 mountain rescues while also running his group and assisting rain/storm events when they occurred.

Ross Lowe joined the Glasshouse SES in August 1984 giving him a total of more than 33 years' service. Ross has assisted in nearly all rescues over the years and has been Duty Officer for the Group for a long time. Ross has had the dubious pleasure of having Duty phone and receiving calls at all times of day and night and in turn ensuring there was a team activated to respond. Ross has also of late been the person at the bottom of the mountains waiting to ensure that the team got back down safe and ensuring they have all of the equipment they need.

Robert Barry joined the SES in July 1987 and has more than 30 years' service. Robert was Group Leader from 2010, until 2017 when he retired from the position. Owning his own Butchery in Beerwah enabled Robert to assist at most of the rescues, and while he was Group Leader he was normally at the bottom of the mountains with Ross waiting for all of his members to return safely and organising communications, welfare and interviews with the media.

Between the three of these members they have 102 years of service to the SES.

The Glasshouse Mountains SES Group have received quite a few awards and certificate of thanks over the years, including the Group Bravery Citation in the National Bravery Awards in February 2012 for a particularly hazardous rescue on Mt Tibrogargan. Six members of the team received National Bravery Awards which included Graeme Cheal. Graeme also received an Australia Day Award in 1996 for his mountain rescue service.

The considerable knowledge these men have developed during their many combined years is incredible - very generously they have all said they will remain available to impart their knowledge.



Bravery medal for North Coast Region firefighter Craig Hogarth

In February the Commissioner presented senior firefighter Craig Hogarth with a Commissioner's Medal for Valour at a Sunshine Coast awards ceremony. Craig received the award for displaying exceptional bravery during an incident last year where he rescued two unconscious people from a seven storey apartment building fire.

Craig's actions saved lives and put his own at risk, but he said he could not have done it without the help of passing police officers. Craig said that the bottom storey of the unit was going like a bomb, with flames up to the third floor.

Lying on his stomach with his feet holding open the door, he reached through the thick smoke and felt a hand. He pulled a woman out and reached back in and felt another hand and pulled a man out. Both were unconscious and not breathing.

Craig had to move the people a second time when the fire intensified and that is when the police officers arrived to help. More than 20 firefighters were needed to put out the fire and six other people were rescued from the units. Congratulations Craig.





BRISBANE REGION

Brisbane Region crews have their technical rescue training refreshed

Technical rescue training took place in Brisbane region in March with crews conducting confined space rescue training at the Queensland Maritime Museum. Using the bowels of the HMAS Diamantina, rescue crews extracted patients who were unconscious after working in an oxygen deficient environment.

As part of the annual refresher training, crews were required to conduct atmospheric monitoring before packaging and treating patients. Pulley systems were set-up and oxygen pumped into the bowels of the ship to increase the patients' chances of survival. They were then extracted through a series of confined areas before being handed to paramedics.



45 years since infamous fire

This year marked 45 years since the Whiskey Au Go Go fire which claimed the lives of 15 people.

A small ceremony was conducted at the site of the fire with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) attending to pay our respects to the victims and their families.

Chief Superintendent Peter Varley, firefighters from Kemp Place and members of Retired Firefighters Association Queensland all attended.



What do you put in a storm kit?

Redcliffe State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers educated community members about what to put in storms kits at their public education stand.

Contents of a robust locker should include a first aid kit, transistor radio with spare batteries, torch and containers for water, snacks, medication and important documents. Other items could include shoes, overalls, headware, tarpaulin, rope, nails, hammer and a saw.



SES Inspector Rick Murdoch checks the Redcliffe demonstration emergency kit during a recent storm readiness display at Bunnings Rothwell.



SOUTH EASTERN REGION

Bundamba crews welcome multimillion dollar firefighting boost

Bundamba Fire and Rescue Station was officially opened in March, providing Ipswich firefighters with a first-class facility to keep pace with the needs of the growing region.

While the former Bundamba Fire and Rescue Station served the community well for more than 30 years, the new facility was specifically designed to anticipate and cater for future growth.

Bundamba is one of the busiest stations in south-east Queensland and the busiest in Ipswich, with the trend likely to continue as the region's population continues to boom.

The \$3.64m station features enhanced facilities including an additional engine bay, ample storage for equipment and supplies, a training room plus improved staff work areas and amenities.

Bundamba crews also welcomed the arrival of a new \$875,000 Urban Rescue Tender (Lima) appliance to the fleet during the station's official celebrations.



Community representatives gather to celebrate the official opening of the new Bundamba Fire and Rescue Station on 9 March.

Air ops

The Commonwealth Games has seen the spotlight remain firmly fixed on South Eastern Region. Operation Paratus, QFES' commitment to the Games, saw hundreds of staff and volunteers take part in extensive training in the lead up to the event, including a specialist ready-reaction team based on the Gold Coast.

Community representatives gather to celebrate the official opening of the new Bundamba Fire and Rescue Station on 9 March.

Yarns were spun and snags sizzled when Commissioner Katarina Carroll embarked on a recent regional visit to meet with local Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire and SES staff and volunteers.



Commissioner Carroll and Assistant Commissioner Neil Reid at Logan Village Rural Fire Station.



The Commissioner cooking up a storm at Korralbyn.





You've probably heard their names — whether it was in the news, or more recently at the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Australia Day Awards.

But have you heard the story of the Gallo rescue from their viewpoint?



It was 3am on March 31, 2017, when State Emergency Service (SES) South East Local Contoller Jim Ferguson was notified by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) a flood boat was needed to assist in rescuing three people from a roof of a house in Luscombe, Logan.

He knew Group Leader Chris Holloway and Deputy Group Leader Claire Browning of the Beenleigh SES Group were awake. They met at the Beenleigh SES shed and prepared the boat for operation.

Water was already beginning to flow over the Stanmore Road Bridge. Once the boat was launched, flood water threatened to push the boat over the flooded bridge. Chris, who was driving the car, quickly climbed aboard.

As they began navigating through trees and rough water, a man waved them down and passed on important local knowledge. The three went on, dodging debris, trees and powerlines.

About 30 minutes later they saw flashing lights – locals advising them of more potential hazards under the water and advising a safer route. A local, Clayton, jumped aboard to assist with navigation.

Further upstream, the motor of the boat died. Claire grabbed a tree branch and secured a line around it to avoid being washed downstream. A fire hose was wrapped around the motor. A few minutes later, Jim freed the motor and they were off again.

More locals waved them down and pointed out dangers in the water. Their boat became stuck on a hill, and everyone around helped push the boat back into deeper water. Clayton jumped off the boat, and another local, Sam, hopped on to provide his knowledge.

Soon after, they laid eyes on the family. They positioned the boat alongside the house when they noticed a man, the grandad of the family, was on the second storey veranda, standing in water about 30cm deep. They encouraged him to head back inside.

Once the boat was secured, Jim jumped off it and onto the veranda. He climbed out over the veranda and crawled on hands and knees along the awning to the rest of the family inside the house. Chris and Claire kept the boat in position.

One by one, Jim took the young girl, young boy and mother back to the boat, crawling along the edge of the awning.

Grandad refused to leave the house without his two Huskies. The mother went back inside and returned with the dogs, and Jim, Claire and Chris made the call to take the dogs back with them.

The three quickly briefed the family on what to do in an emergency before letting the lines go and pushing off into the moving flood water.

Chris manoeuvred the boat through several trees to the nearest piece of dry land and unloaded the family. By now, it was dawn and it was clear the river was a torrent. Everyone hugged, and the family said their sincere thanks to Jim, Chris and Claire.

Jim estimated it was no more than 10 minutes later when they heard a ‘crack’ and saw the house they had just taken the family from crashing down the river.

“Claire, Chris and I then had a little release of emotions and cried,” Jim said.

“We were glad we had saved the family and that we were safe. This had been the first rescue for all of us and we were all glad it had been a successful one.”

We were glad we had saved the family and that we were safe. This had been the first rescue for all of us and we were all glad it had been a successful one. – Jim Ferguson

Jim, Chris and Claire have been recognised with many accolades for their rescue of the Gallo family. Most recently, at the QFES Australia Day Awards, Jim was presented a Commissioner’s Medal of Valour while Claire and Chris received a Commissioner’s Commendation for Bravery Award. Last year they were also presented with a Logan City Council bravery award.

Jim joined the SES in October 2010 as the Local Contoller for South East SES. He came from QFES, where he worked in Correctional Services. He was also a firefighter in Beaudesert from 1996-2002.

Chris and Claire joined in the same intake in July 2012. Claire’s husband, Paul “Fly” Browning, was already part of the SES and encouraged her to join.

As well as receiving accolades for the flood boat rescue, Claire last month was awarded the Olga Wilson

Peer Support Officer (PSO) award for her comprehensive support following intense rescue events.

Meanwhile, Chris has recently become a trainer to pass on his knowledge and experience.

“Everyone joins QFES for different reasons. Part of me always wanted to do something to help other people, but you never expect to be given an opportunity like the one we went through,” he said.

“We’re not firefighters, police or in an ambulance where you’ll possibly be saving lives every day.

“The fact we got to do the rescue in our flood boat came completely out of the blue, and to me that’s something I can tell people, I’ve helped someone to the most I possibly can.”

Something they all agreed on was how odd it was to hear people calling them heroes.

“We often say, if the house being washed away wasn’t videoed, no one would know,” Claire said.

“Other people did rescues during the floods, and in my opinion, they probably did more, but they weren’t as publicised. Some people went back three or four times to rescue people, but it was just that our house disappeared.

“For me, I see bravery awards for people in the army or similar. I know everyone says what we did was brave, and yes I’m so proud and honoured we’ve received awards but it’s still a struggle to accept them.”

Today, with the one-year anniversary past, they all hope life can return to normal.

“We keep thinking the rescue will stop being brought up, but it doesn’t – maybe now the one-year anniversary has passed it will,” Chris said.

“The main reason we still talk about it is to highlight the orange, to bring the orange and QFES to the forefront, to say we’re an important part of the community.”



Chris Holloway, Claire Browning and Jim Ferguson with QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll and Minister for QFES Craig Crawford after receiving their awards.

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NORTHWEST QUEENSLAND VOLUNTEERS CARRY BATON

Two northwest Queensland QFES volunteers were nominated to take part in the Queens Baton Relay for their outstanding contributions to their communities.

Darcie-Lee Ashton has many accolades to her name at just 18 years old.

She joined the Cloncurry State Emergency Service (SES) group about one year ago, inspired by her grandmother who joined at a young age and now helps cook food for the group.

Darcie-Lee is in her last year of school at Cloncurry State School and an army cadet.

She graduated Year 9 from St Joseph's Catholic School in 2015, and during her time there she was the JNR Cloncurry Rodeo Queen in 2010, school captain, house captain and a school leader.

"I love meeting new people and helping the community, everyone is very appreciative," she said.

"I'm also in the process of joining the Cloncurry fire brigade – I go to training every Tuesday and should start responding to fires after I graduate."

Most recently she ran in Queens Baton Relay for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Darcie-Lee was nominated in March last year, and received her final confirmation in October.

"It was great – I carried it for all volunteers across Queensland, not just for myself," she said.

Mount Isa's **Gavin Donnelly**, 49, loves helping his community.

He's been a part of the Mount Isa Rural Fire Service (RFS) for the past five years, with the last three years as Treasurer. He's also

part of the Mount Isa SES, and has been an auxiliary firefighter for two years, and an officer at St. John Ambulance.

Gavin also instigated the reopening of the Driver Reviver stop at Fountain Springs, and staffs the stop most school holidays with the help of other volunteers.

"I love helping people who need help, and I love working with others who like to help others too," Gavin said.

"We have a great crew out here. The friendships you make in this line of work are fantastic."

Gavin was nominated to be a Queens Baton Relay runner by the Mount Isa City Council, as he had been picked as the Citizen of the Year for Mount Isa in the 2017 Australia Day awards.

"It was a fantastic experience, and great to have my family and my RFS and SES team mates there watching," he said.



Gavin Donnelly with the Mount Isa SES Group members



A Queensland Disaster Management Committee meeting was held at Kedron in March, in response to ex-tropical cyclone Nora and flooding in northern Queensland communities.



Dr Nikola Stepanov, an independent officer of the Queensland Parliament who is responsible for providing advice on integrity and ethics issues, kicked off this year's Speakers Series at Kedron in February.



The QFES Commonwealth Games office celebrated 'Thank you Firey Day', which is held on February 28 each year. The day gives everyone a chance to let firefighters know how much they value their dedication and efforts.



Children at the Beaudesert Kindergarten were treated to a visit from local firefighters in February.



The QFES all-terrain vehicle ready for action in the Games precinct.



QFES stadium crew ready for Games opening.

The next edition of Response will feature all the QFES action from the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.



The Business Continuity Cell team arrive at the event coordination center at Southport.



QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll with keynote speaker Kay McGrath and Emotional Fitness creator Cynthia Morton at International Women's Day.



QFES crews with Bushy and Blazer helped spread the Easter cheer in Roma.

The Rural future is young, bright yellow and eager



A 27-week program aimed at encouraging youth involvement in local fire brigades is well underway across the Tablelands in Far North Queensland.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) program kicked off in February, when 18 high school students from Atherton State High, Mount St Bernard College, Mareeba State High School and St Stephen's Catholic College began chipping away at a Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations).

After receiving their personal protective gear, including a uniform, helmet and boots, students spend 27 weeks exploring the ins and outs of firefighting and fire safety, radio communication, first aid and teamwork.

On completion, the students will be recognised as fully operational rural

firefighters, plus have received four credit points towards their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

Yet, it's the subtler teachings that will last the students a lifetime, like leadership, respect and community spirit.

It is these subtle teachings that Rural Fire Brigade Support Officer Stephan Powiesnik said provided the students with a sense of worth and belonging.

"They were sold from the moment we started handing out the uniforms and developing their confidence," Mr Powiesnik said.

"The RFS goes together with volunteering, and these students are excited to be a part of that.

"The course encourages them to get involved in their community and hopefully go on to support them as rural firefighters.

"I think if you track them down in 10 years' time, they'll be part of their local brigade no matter where they end up."

If Mr Powiesnik's words ring true, it won't be long until these bright yellow uniforms start showing signs of wear and tear, a lot of hard work and a tonne of pride.





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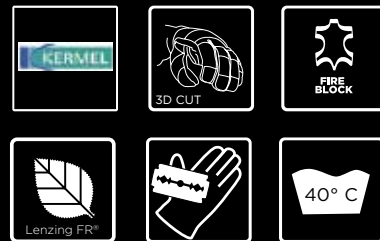
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