

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 8



BUSHFIRE READY

NEW PUBLIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES

NEW TOOLS:

QFES OFFICE 365 TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION FOR ALL

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PAGE 7

CHALLENGE COIN:

DESIGN COMPLETE FOR SIGNATURE ITEM

—

PAGE 12

MEDALS AWARDED:

DEDICATED QFES PERSONNEL RECOGNISED

—

PAGE 14




CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

INNOVATE
QFES Office 365 to improve communication

07



EDUCATE
Design complete for signature item

12



CELEBRATE
Dedicated QFES personnel recognised

14




ON THE COVER

Rural firefighter and crew leader John Foster of the Woodgate Rural Fire Brigade surveys the fire-ground during a hazard reduction burn in June. Mitigation activities are continuing across the state as part of Operation Cool Burn.

Photo by Peter Carlsen, Woodgate Rural Fire Brigade.

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

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» Future Direction of QFES mapped out	4
» AFAC16 a matter of days away	6

INNOVATE

» QFES Office 365	7
» Innovation with a capital I	8
» QFES delivers training in Papua New Guinea	9

EDUCATE

» Bushfire Safety Campaign launched	10
» QFES celebrates NAIDOC Week	11
» QFES challenge coin unveiled	12
» Demonstrations boost chances for recruit hopefuls	13

CELEBRATE

» Queen's Birthday Honours for eight QFES personnel	14
» QPCU Everyday Heroes Awards honour QFES top community achievers	15
» Photo submissions heat up	16
» Team QFES muscles in on AP&ES Games	17

AROUND THE STATE

» South Eastern Region	19
» South Western Region	20
» Far Northern Region	21
» Northern Region	22
» Central Region	23
» North Coast Region	25
» Brisbane Region	26
» Emergency Management	27

COMMUNICATE

» "We support the people who support the community"	28
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UP TO DATE

» Sunshine Coast volunteers benefit from Energex partnership	30
» Energex funding assists SES	31

COMMEMORATE

» Historic hydrant finds new home	34
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FOREWORDS



Katarina Carroll

Commissioner **QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

One QFES. Many services, many capabilities, many partners.

This is a phrase you should be familiar with by now, as set out in the *Our Future Direction* document which has recently been circulated.

In this document, we refer to our future in terms of the changes we are making now that will redirect the course of this department, with the outcomes to be seen and felt for years to come.

If you haven't yet seen it, you can read more about it on page 4 and 5, but I want to reiterate the phrase above and stress that we can only achieve the goals that we have set if we come together.

If our focus remains on serving the community, as it should, we will achieve the best outcome every time by making the most of all of the department's services, capabilities and partnerships.

As I have been travelling around the state attending QFES Transforms workshops, I have seen that our department's leaders are on board with the direction we are headed and this is encouraging.

Also encouraging is the feedback from the Working for Queensland survey results. Firstly, thank you to everyone who completed the survey; QFES' participation rate this year was more than double that of 2015. This demonstrates to me that staff are keen to share their views and opinions and contribute to building more positive workplaces and workgroups.

The feedback provided also shows a positive upswing in attitudes towards the department, the goals we are achieving and how we are going about it.

In particular, having leadership and engagement identified as one of our most improved areas gives me great confidence that it is not only our executive who are on board with our future direction, but our personnel at all levels.

The Executive Leadership Team and I will be using the results of the survey to further examine lessons we can learn and look for ways to continue this trend and make improvements where necessary.

I have said many times before that this is such an exciting time to be a part of this department and I hope that you are as proud as I am to be involved.



Mark Roche

Deputy Commissioner **OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

August well and truly marks the passing of the first half of 2016. If the first six months are anything to go by, we can expect a busy and eventful run until the end of the year.

Most significantly, we have almost finalised our new structure, and welcomed the return of the staff and business units that have transitioned back to QFES from PSBA.

In July, QFES Transforms workshops were held in Far Northern, Central, Brisbane and North Coast Regions along with two workshops at head office.

The QFES Transforms program assists the development of leaders in our department, equipping them with skills essential in creating a positive work climate and achieving results.

The Commissioner and Executive Leadership Team are committed to the success of this program, and further workshops are scheduled over the coming six to eight weeks.

At the end of August, QFES will host the 2016 Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

The AFAC Conference provides opportunities to network and engage with exhibitors and key speakers and to learn about the latest technology and research in the fire and emergency management industry. It is also a great opportunity for QFES to showcase the excellent work we are doing in disaster and emergency management.

The QFES Commonwealth Games Program Office has entered the next phase of planning, with the appointment of project managers focusing on volunteering, operations, training and exercises, communications and business capability in the lead up to the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

The preparedness phase will explore in detail the response capability at the event and will see the program team continue to collaborate with other key Games' partners.

Big thanks to those staff that participated in the Working for Queensland survey which closed in May.

Your feedback helps the Executive Leadership Team to identify the department's strengths in the eyes of our workforce, and draws focus to the areas in need of improvement.

I encourage everyone to read the QFES responses as they become available and identify how you can contribute to improvements.



Future Direction of QFES mapped out



ONE QFES. MANY SERVICES, MANY CAPABILITIES, MANY PARTNERS.

The strategic framework that will underpin the QFES of the future has been announced with a vision for a modern and mature department.

The QFES Future Direction plan outlines the changing way the department will operate to support and work with the community.

While protection of person, property and the environment remains key, a need has been identified to shift focus toward working with the community

on planning and mitigation activities for a range of hazards as well as supporting local communities in building their resilience to disasters.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the QFES Future Direction plan will help the department evolve into one that is capable of anticipating and responding to future community and operational needs, as well as developing a strong and cohesive workforce.



“QFES is now one organisation with many services, many capabilities and many partners,” she said.

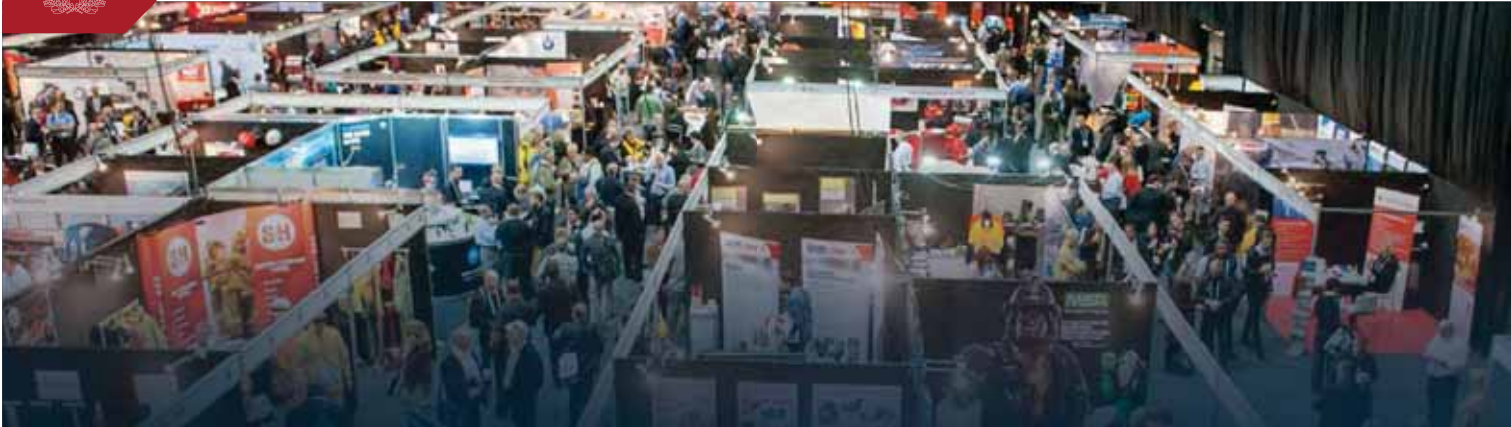
“By expanding our focus on partnering with communities and working with business and government to plan for and mitigate against disasters, we will further align ourselves with community expectations

around appropriate prevention, preparedness, response and recovery services.”

Ms Carroll said the QFES Future Direction plan also reinforced departmental values of workplace diversity and inclusion.

“QFES will continue to develop its own identity as one that reflects the people we serve, by fostering a diverse, inclusive and safe workplace that supports innovation and the development of our workforce,” she said.





AFAC16



a matter of days away

At time of print, the AFAC16 conference is due to commence in a matter of days at Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre.

AFAC16 runs from 30 August to 1 September with a comprehensive schedule of interesting presenters from the fire and emergency services industry.

Day one incorporates the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, with the main conference commencing on 31 August.

A series of post-conference development sessions will also be conducted on 2 September.

Nominations to attend AFAC16 and WAFA conference have closed with the senior executive notifying chosen attendees.

Those attending will have the opportunity to network with industry's most respected experts and attend the gala dinner.

AFAC have also kindly provided tickets to attend the exhibition which will be distributed among QFES volunteers.

The exhibition features an engaging show floor where the volunteers will be able to meet with business leaders of the emergency services industry.

The expo stage will also host short insightful presentations and live demonstrations will provide an opportunity to participate with elite industry organisations.

The AFAC16 powered by INTERSCHUTZ Knowledge Lounge also allows attendees to gain insight from selected leading research material.

Chief Superintendent Darryl King thanked the QFES AFAC16 Steering and Conference committee members for their efforts in organising this large-scale event.



Further information can be found at www.afaconference.com.au





QFES Office 365 rolling out to volunteers

QFES Office 365 brings a new level of communication, collaboration and engagement to all QFES volunteers.



The gradual implementation of QFES Office 365 provides anywhere, anytime, any device connectivity for all QFES volunteers.

The decision to standardise the way QFES staff and volunteers communicate aligns with the QFES' vision for an integrated department working together to meet the needs of the community.

Volunteers will be able to use the QFES Office 365 platform for everything from corporate email to project and team document collaboration and online meetings. These new communication channels are in addition to those already in use and will complement existing and essential face-to-face communication.

Each volunteer will receive a dedicated email address which, when activated, will be their point of contact with the department. This ensures every member of the QFES workforce has the same experience when it comes to internal communication and is not reliant on personal email providers. An added benefit is the ability to manage official QFES communications, keeping them separate from other work or personal emails.

Volunteers will also be able to host and participate in video-capable online meetings with colleagues across the department from desktop computers, smartphone or tablet.



Other QFES Office 365 capabilities include instant messaging, online file storing and sharing.

Information will be made available to volunteers at each stage of the implementation process. Questions and feedback can be directed at any time to the following email addresses:

- **RFS members – Email:**
Office365FeedbackRFS@rfs.qfes.qld.gov.au
- **SES members – Email:**
Office365FeedbackSES@ses.qfes.qld.gov.au
- **Scientific Branch members – Email:**
Office365FeedbackSCI@sci.qfes.qld.gov.au



Innovation with a capital I

A safety audit app being trialled in Northern Region has the potential to revolutionise QFES inspection, audit and assessment processes.



What started out as a way to automate and improve maintenance inspection reports has grown into a significant opportunity for improvement in the way QFES undertakes all inspections, audits and assessments.

Station Officers Shane Miles, Trevor Doyle and Mark Fraser from Northern Region Community Safety Command began working with a local Safety IT company to identify a tool for smart devices to streamline maintenance inspection report (MIR) auditing processes.

The solution presented was iAuditor, an existing mobile app developed in 2012 used for creating checklists, conducting audits and submitting reports from the field.

It didn't take the station officers long to see the full potential of iAuditor to revolutionise the way inspections, assessments, reports and fire investigations are carried out right across the department.

As a digital platform, the app enables paperless audit inspections that can be recorded and shared in real time and stored electronically. The app can also be used offline, meaning it can still be used in remote locations.

iAuditor is used in more than 80 countries to maintain workplace safety and quality control in industries such as transport and logistics, construction, mining, engineering and aviation.

For QFES operational teams, the application can be used to complete a range of tasks including appliance and equipment inventory checks, inspections and MIRs as well as hazard risk assessments quickly and efficiently.

The program software provides comprehensive data analytics which can be captured in several forms with advanced exporting features to ensure the right data is captured and received by the right person in the most appropriate format.

While it is still early days the expected interoperability of iAuditor is another significant area of potential to enhance systems, as is the analytical capability to support planning and resource management.

Northern Region Fire and Rescue is currently trialling the app in the Townsville area, with the intention to expand the trial to include more locations later in the year.

QFES delivers training in Papua New Guinea



The Papua New Guinea Fire Service has received AIIMS training from QFES officers.

Under the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA), two QFES senior officers travelled to Port Moresby to assist the Papua New Guinea Fire Service (PNGFS) in June.

Chief Superintendent David Hermann from South Eastern Region and Acting Chief Superintendent Brad Commens from the Specialist Response and Planning Branch delivered introductory AIIMS training to the senior management of the PNGFS.

The awareness training sessions were well received by the Chief Fire Officer and his senior team, with further training since being provided to the senior staff from PNGFS.

The two-day AIIMS training course was conducted at multiple locations throughout Papua New Guinea.

The sessions that were delivered included an introduction to the AIIMS structure, the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and how AIIMS works across agencies.

There was also an emphasis on AIIMS in action with a case study from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake response.

The training initiative was coordinated by the TEM team and initiated by Assistant Commissioner Neil Reid through the PIEMA.

The PIEMA was established in 2013 to strengthen preparedness and response capacity in the Pacific by improving interoperability between key emergency service providers and is a United Nations Sustainable Development initiative.





The billboard image was shot by The Morning Bulletin's Chief Photographer Chris Ison during the 2009 Rockhampton bushfires. Chris provided the image to help Queenslanders understand the risks they face.



Bushfire Safety Campaign launched

Queenslanders know all about storms and floods, but what about bushfires?

This year's Bushfire Safety Campaign is firmly focused on Queenslanders acknowledging the reality and risk of bushfire and driving people to the Rural Fire Service website where they can complete and print their Bushfire Survival Plan.

The statewide advertising campaign kicked off in late July and will be running until mid-October with advertising booked for radio, online search, Facebook, Yahoo display and roadside billboards (see image above). All promotion will point to newly-developed content on the Rural Fire Service website providing Queenslanders with the 'need to know' about bushfire preparedness.

The user-friendly webpages step visitors through their preparations and risk factors, culminating in the delivery of an interactive Bushfire Survival Plan tailored to their household that they can print and keep. It also walks through Bushfire Warnings and Fire Dangers Ratings, as well as how to tune in to warnings and find current information during bushfire season.

To complement this activity, a DL-style Bushfire Survival Plan home survival guide will be printed and distributed to all regions for letterboxing to selected households as part of Operation Cool Burn community education.

Be sure to visit the new web pages at www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/bushfires to look at how QFES is making it easier for Queenslanders to prepare for bushfires and listen and look out for our ads in the marketplace.



The Standing Order for Operation Cool Burn 2016 has been extended to 13 September 2016.

The original order was due to expire 31 July 2016, however was extended based on the current weather conditions being experienced in large areas of Queensland.

The extension will allow some of the planned mitigation activities from Operation Cool Burn to be completed, or alternative actions taken where appropriate.

This extension will mean an overlap with the commencement of this year's operational fire season, reflecting the variety of conditions in different areas of Queensland.

QFES celebrates NAIDOC Week

Local partnerships, shared goals and mutual respect were the focus of 2016 NAIDOC Week celebrations.

QFES has honoured the culture and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during NAIDOC Week celebrations held at Kedron Emergency Services Complex in July.

A Welcome to Country by retired Station Officer Uncle Norm Clarke — Queensland’s first full-time Indigenous firefighter — followed the symbolic raising of the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags.

Speaking at the event, Commissioner Katarina Carroll said NAIDOC Week was an important occasion to honour the rich history, traditions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“NAIDOC Week is a time for all Australians to feel proud of the Indigenous heritage of this country and the invaluable contribution of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in our communities,” Ms Carroll said.

“It is also the chance for us to look at the ways we can continue working together to achieve our shared goals of strong, resilient and safe communities.”

Commissioner Carroll spoke about local partnerships in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where Indigenous rangers and RFS members are working together to manage fire and fuel levels in the area, and in Cherbourg, where QFES and the local

community are working to strengthen relationships and revitalise Fire and Rescue services in the town.

“These relationships are built on mutual respect and an understanding that we work better and deliver better outcomes for the community together,” Ms Carroll said.

“By building these connections, working together and sharing our unique knowledge and skills, we are better positioned to provide appropriate local solutions to local challenges.”

To close the celebrations, the headspace Nundah Indigenous dance group performed a series of traditional Aboriginal dances.



These relationships are built on mutual respect and an understanding that we work better and deliver better outcomes for the community together



QFES challenge coin unveiled

A new challenge coin has been unveiled embodying QFES’ values, its people and the services the department provides to the community.

In April, a call went out to submit design ideas for a QFES challenge coin that would represent department’s services, capabilities and vision for the future.

From 34 submissions, two were chosen, with the final coin design being developed from concepts submitted by Hervey Bay RFS volunteer Vicki Avcin and Stuart River RFS volunteer Aaron Clampit.

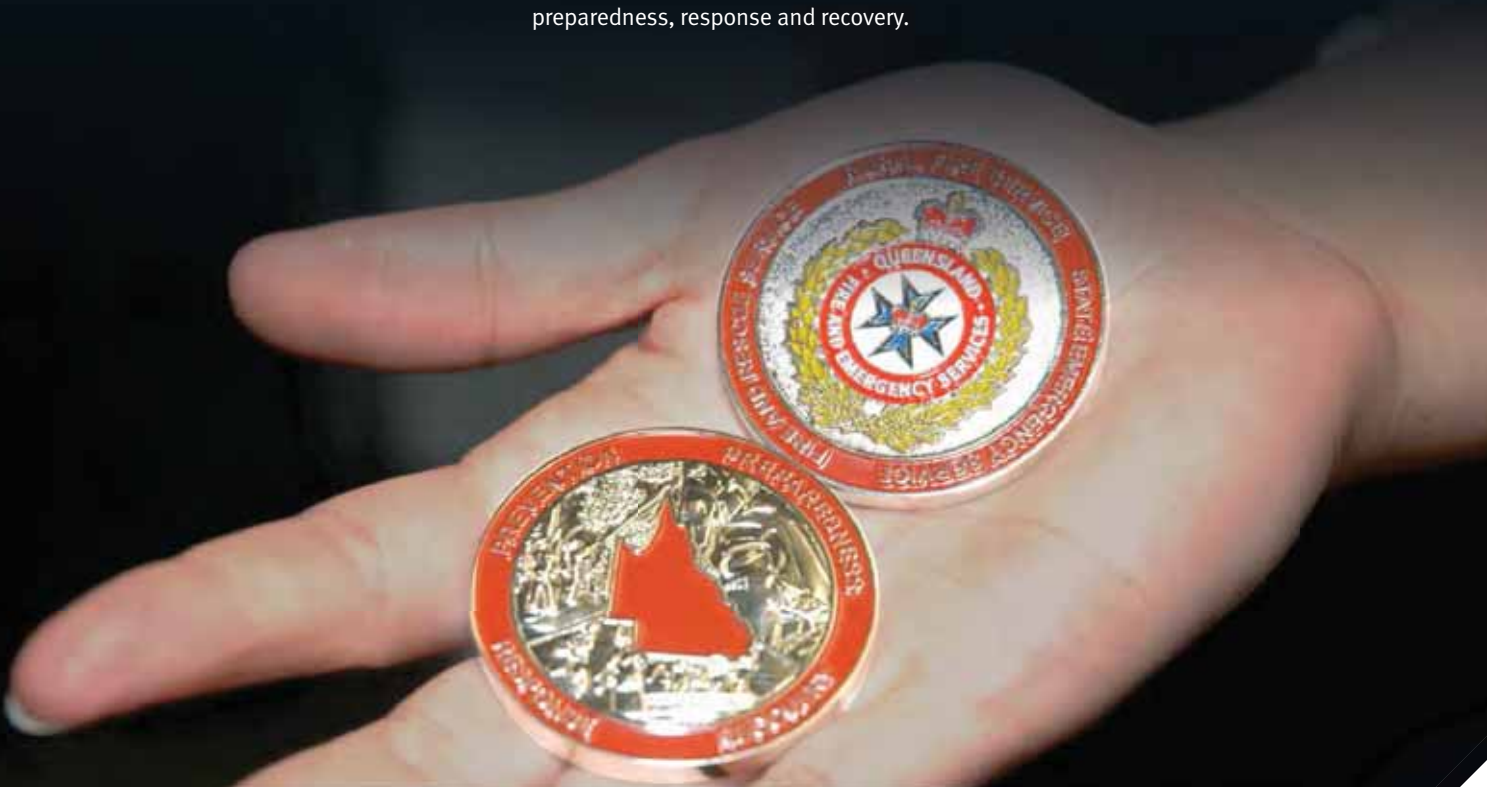
Commissioner Katarina Carroll said she was impressed by the calibre of submissions and that the final design embodied the many facets of QFES.

“QFES is a united department made up of many services and many capabilities and the new QFES challenge coin clearly depicts this,” Ms Carroll said.

“The final design also emphasises the four central pillars of QFES’ service delivery in Queensland — prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

“These challenge coins are a symbol of the pride our members take in delivering world-class integrated and interoperable emergency services that meet the needs of the people of Queensland.”

The QFES challenge coins will be available for presentation to international dignitaries, corporate stakeholders and operational partners.



Demonstrations boost chances for recruit hopefuls

QFES is running a series of demonstrations of the Queensland Physical Abilities Test 1 (QPAT1) to assist recruitment applicants prepare for the testing.

If you can't drag a 78kg dummy, you can't be a firefighter – but how will you know until you try?

QFES Recruitment is giving hopeful applicants an opportunity to increase their understanding of the physical requirements of the role of a firefighter and the best chance of succeeding in the physical assessment by holding demonstrations of the tasks required.

Hosted around the state, QFES staff take applicants through what is to be expected in the assessment before they get to try their hand at each task and also provide them with the opportunity to speak to current firefighters about the job and its requirements.

The experience and advice gained from staff at these demonstrations assists applicants in getting the best result when the time comes to undertake the assessment.

QFES Recruitment Acting Manager Michelle Sheedy said applicants who attended demonstrations were provided with good insight into the demands of firefighting and had a much higher rate of achieving success in the actual assessment than those who did not practise beforehand.

“The demonstrations give applicants a great opportunity to see exactly how the assessment will be set up, use the actual equipment and also ask any questions about what they can and can't do on the day,” she said.

“Applicants often underestimate the requirements of this assessment and even the fittest, strongest people can struggle if they are not prepared.

“The demonstrations can also help to reduce nerves and anxiety on the day of the testing, as the applicants have a better idea of what to expect and that could make the difference between a pass and a fail.”

QPAT1 demonstrations are being held in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville until September.

Applications for the 2017 recruitment campaign closed on 7 August, with the applicants to progress through testing for the remainder of the year.

Those who are successful will be placed on recruitment courses at the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training at Whyte Island throughout 2017.





Queen's Birthday Honours for eight QFES personnel

QFES staff and volunteers were bestowed with high honours in recognition of their outstanding service to their communities.

Eight QFES personnel were recognised with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and Emergency Services Medal (ESM) as part of the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll congratulated Jonathan Karas, Patrick Hollands, Maxwell Hunter, Stephen De Prada, Geoffrey Henderson, Richard Lohse, Leonard Toscano and Shane Tinsley on receiving national recognition for their achievements.

"Each day, Queenslanders benefit from the actions of our emergency services personnel and while these individuals do not perform their roles for public recognition, the contribution they make to protect our state deserves our gratitude," Ms Carroll said.

"These individuals have spent their lives making our communities richer and better, so to them I say thank you."

QFES 2016

Queen's Birthday Honours List



Jonathan Karas (AFSM)
BUDERIM FIRE AND RESCUE STATION

Buderim Fire and Rescue Station captain Jonathan Karas received the AFSM for his exemplary leadership and distinguished service to his station. His professionalism, integrity and enthusiasm as a firefighter has been evidenced at a local, regional and state level.



Geoffrey Henderson (AFSM)
SAMSONVALE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Volunteer Geoffrey Henderson of Samsonvale RFB has made the Brisbane region proud, receiving an AFSM for more than 60 years of service and commitment to his community. Mr Henderson's knowledge of local terrain and fire history has contributed greatly to incident response over the course of his volunteer firefighting career.



Patrick Hollands (AFSM)
MOURA FIRE AND RESCUE STATION

Patrick Hollands was recognised for operational excellence and outstanding innovation in his role as captain at Moura Fire and Rescue Station. He has displayed distinguished leadership to his crew and is committed to enhancing the capabilities of auxiliary firefighters across the Biloela Command.



Richard Lohse (AFSM)
CABOOLTURE RFS AREA OFFICE

Caboolture Area Training and Support Officer Richard Lohse earned the prestigious honour for his commitment to enhancing community resilience through the delivery of training and community education activities.



Maxwell Hunter (ESM)
STANTHORPE SES

Stanthorpe SES volunteer Maxwell Hunter received an ESM for dedicated and distinguished leadership of the SES within communities in the Southern Downs. He has ensured the community is serviced by well-trained, resourced and prepared teams, and his knowledge, leadership and composure have guided disaster response with confidence. He is a highly respected community member whose leadership has been demonstrated across many roles.



Leonard Toscano (AFSM)
TOOBANNA RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Toobanna RFB First Officer Leonard Toscano joins the list for exemplary service and innovation to the RFS. His innovative initiatives in relation to equipment and airbase operations have played a pivotal role in incident response and recovery.



Stephen De Prada (AFSM)
SPEEWAH RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Volunteer firefighter and training officer Stephen De Prada was honoured for exceptional dedication and commitment to the Speewah Rural Fire Brigade (RFB). His extraordinary devotion to volunteerism is shown through his consistent willingness to be deployed to prolonged and high-risk environments and an outstanding commitment to community safety.



Shane Tinsley (AFSM)
TECHNICAL RESCUE UNIT, BRISBANE

Fire and Rescue Station Officer Shane Tinsley's outstanding work in the QFES Technical Rescue Unit has been acknowledged with an AFSM. Mr Tinsley has applied his knowledge during deployment in disasters, and represents QFES with distinction at national and international technical forums.



QPCU Everyday Heroes Awards honour QFES' top community achievers

The winners of the 2016 Queensland Police Credit Union (QPCU) Everyday Heroes Awards were announced in June, with QFES members taking out two of the six categories.

QFES members have been recognised for outstanding contribution to community service in the 2016 Queensland Police Credit Union (QPCU) Everyday Heroes Awards.

Auxiliary Captain Cameron Bond from Murgon Fire and Rescue Station was awarded the Everyday Heroes Award for Dedication. Cameron was nominated for his contribution to efforts to strengthen community relationships and revitalise Fire and Rescue services in Cherbourg through the delivery of mentoring and coaching programs for the community's young people.

The trio at the helm of QFES' Bike 4 Burns team, Ian Ogborne, Beau Hanlon and Karen Perry, were awarded the Everyday Heroes Award for Working Together recognising their work over 10 years organising, promoting and riding in the Bike 4 Burns charity ride and raising more than \$500,000 for the Children's Hospital Foundation.

Of 18 finalists, seven were QFES nominees. Trevor Jarvis from Sandgate Fire Station, retired firefighter Kevin

Stevenson, Horn Island RFS volunteer Benjamin Doolah, John-Byron Bacalakis of Cairns South Fire Station and SES volunteer Matthew Burrows each made the finals in their nominated categories.

Special mention also goes to Rhys Lloyd, of Cooroora PCYC Emergency Services Cadets, who was a finalist in the Young Everyday Hero Award category.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll congratulated our staff and thanked them for their outstanding commitment to community service.

"I am extremely proud of the QFES nominees, finalists and winners who have gone above and beyond for their communities and represented the department to the highest standard," she said.

The QPCU Everyday Awards recognise outstanding achievements of Queensland police, firefighters, paramedics, health workers, teachers and volunteers.

QPCU has since rebranded and is now QBANK.

Photo submissions heat up

After we ran the first selection of readers' photos last edition, more and more quality submissions came rolling in.

Many entries focused on interoperability, including the one featured below from QGAir Rescue Aircrew Officer Daren Parsons, taken from Rescue 500 during a swiftwater rescue exercise at Wivenhoe Dam.

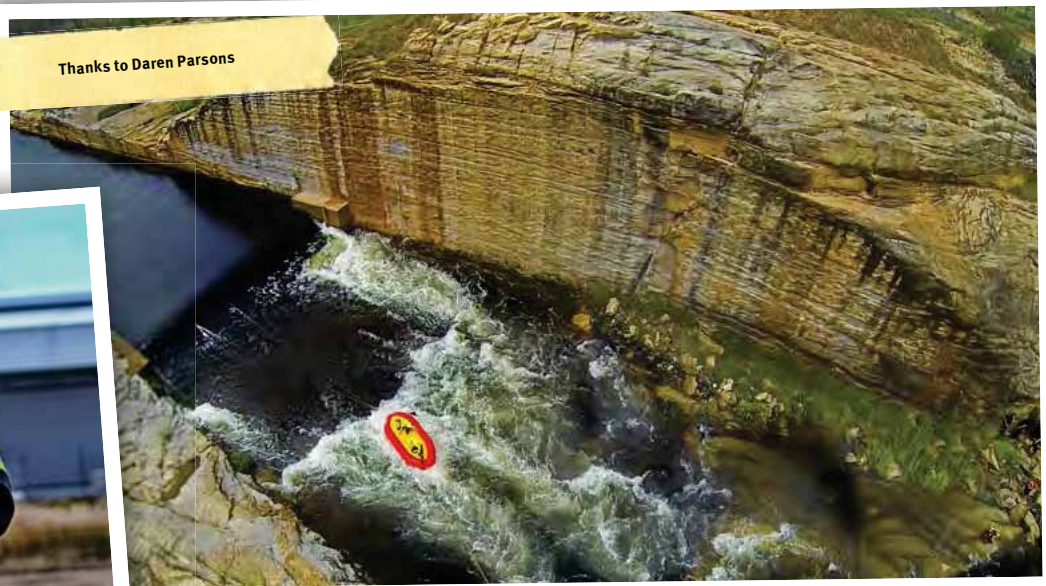
We also got a glimpse into the lesser-known capability of USAR dog training with this supplied image of firefighter Brian Ranse, taken by his wife Michelle.

The third image was sent in by Station Officer AR Buchanan with the caption "Always happy when the fires are out" and shows the relieved, sooty faces of firefighters Richard Stuart and Bec Pratten from Wynnum Fire and Rescue Station.

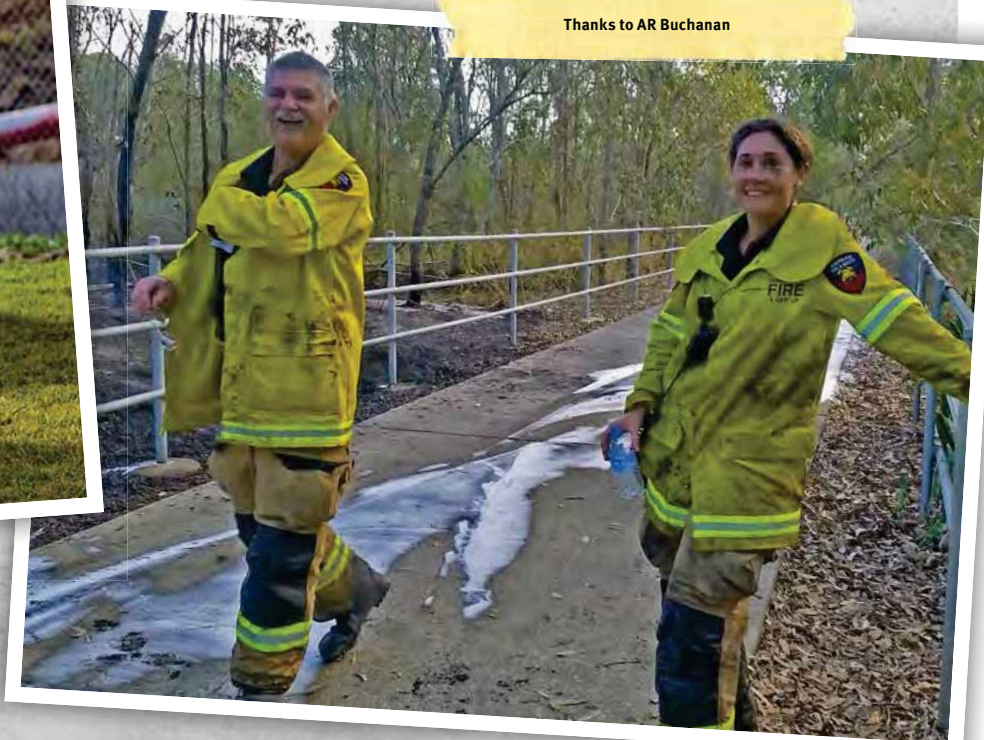
Submit your photo entries via QFES Gateway Snapshot or by emailing magazine.editor@qfes.qld.gov.au



Thanks to Daren Parsons



Thanks to AR Buchanan



Thanks to Michelle Ranse





ANNEKE DORGELO



ANDREW DUBELAAR



MATT VAN BEEK

TEAM QFES muscles in on AP&ES Games

QFES members are getting ready to compete in the 2016 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games on the Sunshine Coast in October.

Team QFES will be a force to be reckoned with at the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games with members from all services and regions already registered across a range of sports.

Anneke Dorgelo (top left) is an SES staff member and volunteer with the SES North Eastern Group, Brisbane Unit, and will be competing in the triathlon during the week-long event.

“I joined a triathlon club in January and I love it,” she said.

“I train every day and while there has been a huge increase in my overall fitness it’s the social aspect I enjoy most — I am part of a great club and a really good bunch of people.

“I am really looking forward to representing the SES as part of QFES at the Games, as well as the challenge and seeing how much I have improved.”

Firefighter Andrew Dubelaar from Mackay Fire and Rescue Station (top centre) grew up in a family where sports were a big part of life and has been playing basketball since he was 12 years old. He has signed up to represent QFES on the court at the Games.

“Most of my family plays hockey, but my twin brother and I have always played basketball — I enjoy the high intensity, the cardio workout and that it is a team sport that you can play with your mates,” he said.

“At the Games, I’m looking forward to catching up with friends in emergency services that I have played with and against in the past.”

Landsborough rural firefighter Matt Van Beek (top right) was a track and field competitor at the 2014 Games in Melbourne and has entered again this year to make the most of QFES’ home ground advantage. Matt is registered in the 400m, the long jump, triple jump and javelin.

“I have been doing track and field since I was about seven years old; I did a lot in high school and received some state medals,” he said.

“I haven’t done as much lately — life gets in the way after school, but being a roof tiler keeps me fit.

“It’s just a great opportunity to get together with mates from the fires, police and ambulance, throw a javelin and pull a muscle.”

All QFES personnel over the age of 18 are eligible to register for the Games. Teams must be registered by Friday 9 September, with all entries closing COB Friday 23 September.

Emergency Services Community Expo at the Games

The second North Coast Region Emergency Services Community Expo will be held this year in October in conjunction with the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games.

The free event aims to raise community awareness about disaster and emergency preparedness and provide information about how people can keep themselves and their families safe.

WHAT: North Coast Region Emergency Services Community Expo

WHO: The expo will feature demonstrations and workshops from the SES, RFS and Fire and Rescue as well as QFES’ partner emergency service agencies and is open to the public.

WHEN: 11am – 4pm on Saturday 15 October 2016

WHERE: Sunshine Coast Stadium, 31 Sportsmans Parade, Bokarina



2016 Australasian Police and
Emergency Services Games
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QFES



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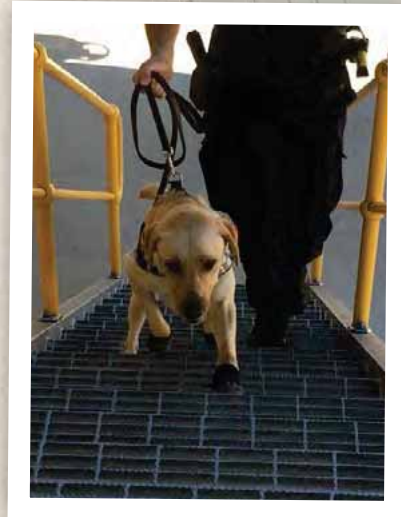
South Eastern Region

The Beaudesert Fire and Rescue Training Facility has hosted QPS Police Dog Training Course 181 as part of a four-month QPS drug and firearms detection program.

The day was an opportunity for the canine-handler teams to train in an unfamiliar environment surrounded by different scents. Drug and firearm training aids were hidden throughout the facility for the teams to practice and be tested in a range of search procedures.

The dogs also received additional training to familiarise them with wearing protective dog boots when using exposed metal stairs.

QPS were very appreciative of the opportunity, further reinforcing the strong working relationship between QFES and QPS.



The RFS and Queensland National Parks have conducted a large controlled burn in Tamborine National Park.

Crews took the opportunity to use the burn as a major training exercise, to hone their skills and prepare for the upcoming fire season.

The weekend exercise resulted in smoke coverage in the Tamborine Mountain and Cedar Creek area. This controlled burn was part of the larger Operation Cool Burn activity for this year's bushfire season.



South Western Region



Pastor Joel Pukallus has been installed as the new QFES Volunteer Associate Chaplain for the Toowoomba Command Area in a service in his home congregation of Goombungee.

Pastor Joel is the Minister of the Goombungee-Maclagan Lutheran Parish, and has been a rural firefighter with the Goombungee Brigade and an associate member of the Gowrie-Little Plains Brigade for the past year. This has given him an understanding of the particular challenges faced by not only rural firefighters but by Fire and Rescue crews and the SES. Pastor Joel is the only Chaplain for the South Western Region, and as such can be deployed as necessary for critical incidents throughout the region. Pastor Joel was welcomed by Acting Chief Superintendent Eddie Lacko on behalf of Assistant Commissioner Stephen Smith.



In July, QFES members from the Cambooya Rural Fire Brigade, Oakey SES Group and the Toowoomba Command attended a community NAIDOC Week celebration held in Toowoomba.

Staff and volunteers teamed up with local police to provide information to the community about severe weather safety as well as a quick session on home fire safety with the children. Despite a late change of venue due to the weather, more than 200 people attended on the day to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.

QFES senior managers also attended the Queensland Police NAIDOC Week flag raising ceremony in Toowoomba. The ceremony is held each year to acknowledge local Elders and to build connections between police and the Indigenous community in a respectful and harmonious way.



Toowoomba's firefighters have staged their 20th annual (Queensland) Fire and Rescue Service charity golf day at the City Golf Club in Toowoomba joined by their emergency services mates — both serving and retired — from around the state.

Toowoomba firefighter Brian 'Monty' Clelland took out the coveted Ron Tessmer memorial shield on a total of 43 points.

The event raised almost \$5000 for the Toowoomba Hospital. As a result of funds raised at last year's charity golf day, an \$8000 Accuvein handheld vein illumination system was purchased for the Toowoomba Hospital Emergency Department.



The Tara Emergency Services Cadets Unit was officially launched in June in conjunction with a major emergency services demonstration involving SES, RFS and Fire and Rescue personnel.

PCYC Emergency Services Cadets is a volunteer-run program for 12-17 year olds who wish to learn emergency response skills, contribute to community through volunteering and aspire to become emergency services personnel in the future. The program is funded by QFES and delivered by PCYC and is a major potential recruiting pool for emergency services throughout Queensland.

The new Tara unit currently has 17 members, with several cadets already expressing interest in a career in the emergency services.



Far Northern Region

A new Variable Message Sign (VMS) — a well-known roadside icon — will be used to assist with QFES community messaging throughout the Far Northern Region.

The new VMS will be used alongside major and local roads at approved and specific locations to communicate critical community information such as weather and other warnings, fire restrictions and total bans, QFES public information campaign messaging and general notifications.

The resource can also be used to assist with QFES operations and exercises.



Twelve level-two technical rescue technicians from around the Far Northern Region have had the opportunity to test and practise their skills during a two-day high-angle rescue course.

For the course, QFES was granted access to a restricted area of the Tinaroo Dam to simulate previous incidents where members of the public have tried to scale the dam wall. The training involved three separate scenarios where specialist high-angle rescue equipment was needed to complete the rescue.

On average, between five and 10 high-angle rescues are carried out each year on the Tablelands west of Cairns. Most of the equipment used in this type of rescue is not carried on standard fire trucks or emergency response vehicles and deployment of the technical rescue vehicle from Cairns is required.



SES groups from Far Northern Region have conducted a major search exercise over two days in the Innisfail, Babinda, Russell River and Bramston Beach areas.

The exercise covered a large area in a scenario that saw groups search for two skydivers that had jumped from a plane just before it made a forced landing because of engine failure.

The exercise involved multiple search techniques and resources including foot search teams, fast action search teams, vehicle-based searching from four-wheel drives and all-terrain vehicles, waterway searches from flood boats and air observation from fixed and rotary winged aircraft.

The RFS supported the Air Operations Base at Innisfail with the installation of its communications trailer and Fire and Rescue deployed the Operational Support Unit as the search base headquarters at Bramston Beach.

The exercise culminated with a rescue by an SES Search and Rescue team in very difficult, thick rainforest on the top of the Mt Graham Range.



Northern Region



The 2016 Townsville Cadet Games were held in June for the second year running, with Australian Defence Force and emergency services cadet groups from across the Northern Region competing for the top prize.

In total 15 cadet teams from up and down the coast and as far west as Hughenden were pitted against each other to test their skills and promote camaraderie across the services with teams from Australian Air Force Cadets, Australian Navy Cadets, St John Ambulance Cadets and PCYC Emergency Services Cadets taking part.

While the focus of the Games is to test knowledge, skills and teamwork, there was also a lot of fun had by all with a variety of engaging and challenging events. The cadets were well supported by a number of adult leaders along with QFES and QPS personnel.

First place went to Team Alpha - 101 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets, with second place and the medal of allegiance for teamwork awarded to the TS Pioneer Australian Navy Cadets.



Northern Region Assistant Commissioner Steve Barber recently had the privilege of promoting three senior firefighters. Congratulations to SO Ross Frickie, SO Robert Smith and SO Paul Smith.



The RFS and SES joined forces at this year's North Queensland Field Days event in Townsville, working together to get important information about emergency warnings and bushfire and storm safety out to the community.

Rural firefighters, Volunteer Community Educators, SES volunteers and Townsville Area Office staff spoke with members of the public during the event to find out how well they knew their emergency warning levels and whether they felt their homes and families were prepared in case of an emergency.



The new Bluewater SES shed is officially up and running, after being handed over at a function in June.

Last year, the Bluewater SES Group received a grant to allow them to build a new shed to house their vehicle and trailer which, until now, had to be stored at the residence of the group leader.

The official handover coincided with the retirement of Bluewater Group Leader Bernie Smith after 25 years' service with the SES.

Bernie received a Commissioners Certificate of appreciation from Commissioner Katarina Carroll to thank him for his service. The Townsville SES Unit presented him with a gift card for BCF as a farewell gift, as Bernie plans to spend a lot more time fishing now he has retired.



Central Region

The Caves Rural Fire Brigade has taken part in the Cancer Council Queensland's Relay for Life in Rockhampton, celebrating cancer survivors and raising money for cancer research and patient support services in honour of Malcolm Hannah.

Mr Hannah, a Rockhampton local, was a strong supporter of the RFS, donating \$40,000 towards the construction of The Caves Rural Fire Station. Mr Hannah lost his battle with cancer in 2014. A team of 33 brigade members and families participated in the 18-hour overnight relay which began at 2pm and finished at 8am the following day. The brigade raised more than \$1700 for the Cancer Council and was awarded trophies for the best themed team and most fun camp site. The fire truck named in Mr Hannah's memory, Caves 52 Malcolm Hannah, was on display throughout the event. The team had a great night and hope to encourage other brigades and QFES members to join them in supporting Relay for Life, held throughout Queensland, next year.



SES volunteers from the Carmila, Greenhill and St Lawrence SES Groups have completed a four-day road crash rescue course held at Carmila, 100 km south of Mackay.

The course was conducted by SES road crash rescue instructors and aims to boost the capability of SES Groups in the area to respond to traffic accidents occurring on this stretch of the Bruce Highway. All nine participants successfully completed the course and are now accredited road crash rescue operators, with one achieving accreditation as an instructor for the course. Congratulations and well done to all participants and instructors — thank you for giving up your time to complete this valuable course.



QFES Emerald has hosted an Emergency Services Open Day at the Emerald Fire and Rescue Station.

The event focused on emergency services volunteer groups within the community and was an opportunity to celebrate Rural Fire Service Week and commemorate the 40th anniversary of the SES in Queensland. The open day also provided a chance for Emerald SES and RFS members and auxiliary firefighters to get to know and work with members of other local emergency service agencies. QAS, QPS and local government emergency management personnel also had a presence on the day with each agency holding their own displays and activities for guests to participate in. The day was a great success with an estimated 1000 visitors in attendance.



How do you make a Triple Zero (000) call when you can't hear the person on the other end of the phone?

QFES Central Region and Deaf Services Qld have been working together to engage the deaf and hard of hearing community to uncover any difficulties in making a Triple Zero (000) call and having a fire safe home. This initial meeting was received with great appreciation from the deaf community who attended. A very talkative group led to some great community sourced ideas for building a more resilient and safer deaf community. Participants voiced their experiences, ideas and questions through an Auslan interpreter who flew up from Brisbane for the session. The group will meet again to discuss the concepts derived from the consultation and to provide information on the barriers this community faces when trying to remain safe.





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North Coast Region

Crews from Cooroy and Maroochydore Fire and Rescue Stations and Eumundi Rural Fire Brigade responded to a report of a horse stuck in a dam in the Noosa Hinterland.

The horse, Kalkite, had been moved to the paddock four days earlier and, unfamiliar with his new environment, had fallen into the dam. On arrival, Captain Brad Ensbey secured a support line around Kalkite's neck to keep the horse's head above water. With the assistance of a local vet, Acting Area Commander Warren Hunter and the crew of 474L, led by Acting Station Officer Denis Donadel, fed wide straps beneath Kalkite's belly, attached them to a Tirfor winch and pulled the horse to safety. Thanks to the rescue team and much to the relief of his owners, Kalkite made a full recovery.



A multi-agency exercise incorporating QFES, QAS, QPS and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has been carried out at the heritage-listed Burnett Bridge in Bundaberg.

Crews operated under a scenario where a TMR worker had spotted three children climbing scaffolding attached to the eastern side of the bridge. The worker gives chase, tripping and breaking his ankle on the top level of the scaffolding. A child also falls and lies injured beneath the scaffolding, and the other two are seen running toward the river. One of the children swims out to an island and is hiding; the other makes it as far as a pylon under the bridge before becoming stranded. The SES located and rescued the two runaways and all three children were attended to by QAS. The injured TMR worker was rescued by a level-one and two level-two Fire and Rescue technical rescue technicians assisted by two SES and two TMR workers. Conducting a rescue from the bridge scaffolding posed a significant challenge: there was very limited space and careful consideration was required regarding which structures were sound enough to be used for anchors and so on. The contribution of SES members included in the vertical rescue team was invaluable and all agencies worked together with great success.



Nambour Fire and Rescue Station and QFES safety equipment officers have conducted a joint training exercise with Queensland Health at Nambour General Hospital.

The exercise was designed to test the capability and emergency procedures of the hospital's emergency department in the event of patients presenting with chemical contamination. QFES supplied a decontamination facility and support vehicle 482 Sierra for the mock scenario. Three male patients, played by medical students, had been contaminated by unknown chemicals before driving to the hospital and self-presenting at the Emergency Department. Thanks to safety equipment officers Gary Burnett, Greg Gowlett and Brad Holloway for the supply, set up and staffing of the decontamination trailer and 482 Sierra. Also to 'A' shift Nambour Fire and Rescue for their coordination and participation in the exercise.



Brisbane Region



Brisbane Region was on hand at the Woodford Combined Emergency Services Expo in May to demonstrate QFES' capability and build relationships with the local community and other emergency services agencies.

The theme for the expo was Disaster Resilience and Recovery with a focus on the local community's preparedness for fire and storm season.

Woodford Fire and Rescue crews conducted an impressive simulated road traffic crash demonstration supported by local QAS and QPS officers. There were also displays from all emergency service responders and a water bombing demonstration from Air Operations.

The event was hosted by the Moreton Bay City Council with local RFS officers pitching in to help with preparation and set up.



QFES has officially opened the new Bribie Island 'Jim Sorensen' Safe House.

The Safe House, located beside the Bribie Island Fire and Rescue Station, replaces the old Petrie Safe House and was dedicated in memory of the late William 'Jim' Sorensen who served as Station Officer on the island from 1985 to 2000. The building was specifically designed as a multi-use facility and will be used as a community education centre, Divisional Command and a training venue for Bribie Island auxiliary firefighters.



In June, film crews and presenter Julia Baker from the Animal Planet 'Snake Boss' program came to Hendra Fire and Rescue Station to film for the upcoming season.

The budding snake catchers from C Shift at Hendra and 592A will become stars on the show after being exposed to a number of venomous snakes including red belly black, brown, king brown and two types of taipans. The visit provided a fantastic educational opportunity for all. Snake Boss was the highest rating show on Animal Planet in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific in its first season in 2015. The second season of Snake Boss will go to air late 2016.



The 2016 Brisbane Cadet Games were held at Sandgate in July, celebrating the skills and strengths of emergency services cadets and challenging them to draw on their training as well as innovative thinking, team work, camaraderie and respect.

PCYC Emergency Services Cadets were joined by cadets from the Australian Defence Force, Rural Fire Brigade, St John Ambulance, Military Cadets and Junior Surf Life Saving programs, competing in teams of six for the title of Ultimate Cadet Crew.

After a fun and vigorous day of competition, this year, Mermaid Beach Surf LifeSavers cadets took home the prize.

Emergency Management

On 30 June 2016, the new Disaster Management (DM) Portal went live. The DM Portal is an online hub for guidelines, policies, doctrine and tools for DM stakeholders across Queensland.

The DM Portal project, led by the Disaster Management Branch (DMB), will continue to engage with users and DM stakeholders to further enhance the portal's capabilities and functionality during phase two of the project over the coming months.

Planned enhancements include the capability for online forums, discussions, reporting and document collaboration among users. Further information will be provided as new features become available.

The DMB is working to migrate data and develop further instructions to guide users around the portal and its functions. Some instructions have already been published on the portal home page.

The portal currently has approximately 900 users, with 80 registering since going live.

Should you wish to access the new DM Portal visit www.disaster.qld.gov.au/dmportal and select 'Register Here'.

If you have any feedback or questions regarding the portal, please email the DM Branch at dm.branch@qfes.qld.gov.au



The Emergency Management Training Command (EMTC) School of Fire and Emergency Services Training has marked a significant milestone with the integration of emergency management training into the firefighter recruit curriculum.

The inclusion involves the recruits undertaking the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) online course through the Disaster Management Learning Management System. The recruits are then provided with a one-hour Emergency Management Contextualisation session, which was developed by the EMTC and is delivered to the recruits by a QFES Emergency Management Coordinator.

This training provides recruits with an understanding of their role within the disaster management arrangements, importance of key stakeholder partnerships, the role of local government in disaster management, and Emergency Management within the broader QFES department.

This milestone is one step in the integration of emergency management into the Fire and Rescue Service learning pathway and supports the QFES vision of increasing integration and enhancing interoperability across the QFES workforce.

The incorporation of Emergency Management training in the recruit curriculum has been undertaken for all firefighter recruit courses starting in 2016. It was launched with Recruit Course 96/16 which graduated on 19 May 2016.

“We support the people who support the community”

An upbeat and practical approach to life and a strong connection with people has steered Barb Gonda toward her current role helping QFES members manage the impact of their operational roles, get through life’s difficult times and get the most out of their working lives. – *By Saskia Tigchelaar*

From her early career as a nurse to her current role as Manager Operations Support with the Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) Barb Gonda has spent her life helping people.

Barb’s nursing career included a position with the Royal Australian Navy before she went on to complete further study to become a psychologist and take a job managing officer support services with the Queensland Police Service 16 years ago.

Barb has been with the QFES staff and volunteer counselling and support program FESSN — still known to many by its former name FireCare — for seven years.

“A hundred years ago, when I first became licenced I just wanted a job as a counsellor, I didn’t care where,” she said.

“This is a nice marriage for me, being a counsellor from a nursing background and working with the characters and personalities of first responders.

“Providing operational support to emergency service personnel is what brings it all together for me.”

In 2011 severe flooding, cyclones and other critical incidents throughout Queensland saw the involvement of FESSN escalate. Barb and her team of Peer Support Officers (PSOs) were deployed around the state to assist QFES personnel on the ground.

It was during this time that Barb spent many weeks on deployment supporting staff and volunteers as they dealt with the devastating aftermath of major flooding in south-east Queensland, followed immediately by the mobilisation of disaster response and recovery teams in northern Queensland after Cyclone Yasi tore through the region.



“ Put me in the middle of an event or a disaster with a couple of good PSOs and I’m in my element. ”

Barb was awarded the National Emergency Medal recognising sustained service of 28 days or more during a nationally significant emergency.

“We support the people who support the community,” she said.

“It’s about repair, restoration, growing, and enabling.

“It is very fulfilling to be part of operational support; I find the connection with people very meaningful.

“What I enjoy most about my role with QFES is the people, I like working with good people who have a sense of duty and commitment; people who are genuine, charitable, salt-of-the-earth characters.

“Put me in the middle of an event or a disaster with a couple of good PSOs and I’m in my element.”

Into the future, Barb is keen to look at how better to support emergency services personnel to ensure they are receiving the right support during extended operations and deployments for them to be able to function well both operationally as well as in their own lives when the emergency response is over.

“It is definitely an area that needs more study — what we can do better for people deploying in an operational capacity during emergencies; maybe a PhD in that!”

For now at least, Barb spends her spare time on her two-acres of bushland at Mt Glorious making jewellery, sketching, painting or doing some woodwork, among other hobbies. Also on her list: more travel.

“I adore travel; I have been to Antarctica several times — it’s an amazing place!”



»»» Sunshine Coast volunteers benefit from Energex partnership «««

Rural Fire Service volunteers have essential new equipment at their disposal thanks to the financial support of Energex.

Brigades from around the Sunshine Coast were presented with more than \$14,400 in portable pumps and fridges, flare kits, navigational devices and reversing cameras at an official handover ceremony at the Glass House Mountains.

The RFS crews purchased the equipment under Energex’s Rural Fire Service Equipment Program, which is providing \$75,000 this year to brigades throughout Queensland.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll used the handover to thank Energex for its ongoing support for Queensland’s 36,000 RFS volunteers.

“Rural firefighters responded to more than 6300 incidents across Queensland last year, as well as 2600 hazard reduction burns and 380 community education events,” Ms Carroll said.

“It is crucial they have the resources they need to keep doing this and Energex is making that happen through the Rural Fire Service Equipment Program.”

Energex Chief Executive Officer Terry Effenev said for many years Energex and the Rural Fire Service shared a special friendship in good times and bad.

“Energex crews and rural firefighters share a common interest in providing a high quality service to the community while ensuring the public remains safe when events turn dangerous,” he said

“Our crews and emergency volunteers have stood shoulder to shoulder in many natural disaster situations, and south-east Queensland has certainly copped its share.

“Over the past seven years we have been proud to be able to provide more than \$600,000 in support resulting in more than 125 local rural brigades receiving vital life and property saving equipment.”





Energex funding assists SES



SES groups throughout south-east Queensland have added more essential disaster response equipment to their stocks thanks to funding from Energex.

Almost \$15,000 has been provided via the Energex partnership to eight SES Groups to help them purchase scene lighting equipment, chainsaws, generators and polesaws.

The equipment was distributed at an official handover ceremony at Ipswich SES Unit Headquarters.

The funding stems from the \$200,000 Energex, Ergon and Powerlink SES Equipment Program, which is a statewide initiative putting lifesaving tools in the hands of SES volunteers.

SES Assistant Commissioner Peter Jeffrey said the tools purchased under the equipment program would be put to good use.

“Scene lighting equipment can make all the difference when responding to an event when darkness falls, while generators and chainsaws are essential during and after severe weather events,” he said.

Mr Jeffrey said the \$200,000 partnership developed out of the close relationship the SES shared with Queensland’s three energy corporations.

“I am confident this relationship will continue to grow well into the future. On behalf of the SES I want to thank Energex, Ergon and Powerlink for their support.”

Ipswich City Council Mayor Paul Pisasale said initiatives such as the Equipment Program were crucial to providing SES groups with the resources they needed to keep serving Ipswich residents.

“SES volunteers have been an integral part of Ipswich for more than 40 years, and the support they receive from programs like this ensures they can continue their vital work,” Cr Pisasale said.

“As the population of Ipswich continues to grow, the SES will only become more important in the years ahead. Thanks to Energex, Ergon and Powerlink, SES volunteers will have the resources they need to keep serving the region.”

Energex Chief Executive Officer Terry Effeney said the three electricity businesses were proud to be able to assist SES volunteers through the new \$200,000 equipment program.

“Emergency crews do more than rescue people from flood waters, tarp roofs and conduct searches or, in our case, help us restore power. They give people hope. They inspire people to keep going. They really make a difference,” Mr Effeney said.

“We are delighted that through this new equipment program vital equipment will be provided to SES groups across the state for use in their local communities.”





Far Northern Region swiftwater rescue technicians were joined by SES and RFS as well as other emergency services to conduct a major exercise at popular tourist spot, Josephine Falls.



Volunteers from Ormeau Rural Fire Brigade and Pimpama SES came together to learn valuable skills from one another with some joint training nights.



NAIDOC Week was celebrated by QFES personnel around the state at a number of events to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements.



Many rural brigades opened their doors for open days and other activities during RFS Week in June.



One of the first new-look RAAP workshops took place at Craigslea State High School. Students were able to learn about the fire appliances and ask firefighters questions afterwards.



The second of two Rural Fire Service Volunteer Summits took place on 25 to 26 June at the Gold Coast.






A VCE Skills Day took place at Whyte Island in July including volunteer community educators from RFS and SES, emergency services cadets and auxiliary firefighters.



A multi-agency exercise including firefighters and SES members from Maroochydore and Caloundra took place in June, practising a response to a crash between a bus and car with entrapments and multiple casualties.

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Historic hydrant finds new home

Kurwongbah's Queensland Fire Museum has added a new piece to its collection following a chance discovery.



Queensland Urban Utilities crews were repairing a burst water main on Cornwall Street, Annerley when they stumbled upon one of Brisbane's oldest fire hydrants.

The 104-year-old hydrant is one of only three of its type still in the Brisbane metropolitan area, with the others in West End and Highgate Hill. The crew was so chuffed to come across the solid cast iron hydrant, they began a month long labour of love to restore it and donate it to the Queensland Fire Museum at Kurwongbah.

President of the Fire Brigade Historical Society of Queensland Alex Nixon said they were delighted to receive such a special piece of history.

"It's very rare to find such an old hydrant with information about when and where it was installed," he said.

"We have hydrants at the museum, some we know are probably from the 1930s, but not as old as this.

"There wouldn't be too many left. They were fitted on big 6-inch mains and they were down Queen Street in the city and they were marked by a marble chip in the kerbing.

"If we don't preserve our firefighting history, our younger generations will never have the privilege of learning how things once were."

"Queensland Urban Utilities have gone to a lot of trouble and it's in good condition and we've set it up so it's looking pretty authentic."

The hydrant is now on display at the museum, which is located at North Pine Country Park on Dayboro Road, Kurwongbah.

The museum is open to the public on Sundays from 8am to 12pm.



Visit www.firemuseum.com.au for more information.

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Prepare to take the heat out of bushfire season

Queenslanders know all about floods and storms, but what about bushfire?

Bushfires can affect anyone in Queensland and with bushfire season underway, it's important to prepare now to protect yourself, your family and property against bushfire.

You don't have to live in the bush to be threatened by bushfire – just close enough to be affected by burning material, embers and smoke.

It's too late to start planning as the fire is approaching. So here are some things you can do now so you're better prepared this bushfire season.

Act, so your family and property are safe

Preparation is vital when it comes to reducing the threat and severity of a bushfire. An unprepared property is not only at risk itself, but may also present an increased danger for neighbours.

Look at the simple things you can do, like mowing the lawn regularly and removing combustible materials like dry leaves and branches in gutters and yards to reduce your risks.

Create your Bushfire Survival Plan today

Having a Bushfire Survival Plan in place, just in case, is one way you can protect your family and home well in advance.

Your plan outlines if you will leave early or stay, lets you know what you'll need in an emergency kit or evacuation kit, and the actions you will take.

To find out more about preparing for bushfire season and to prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan visit

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

