

RESPONSE

RESILIENT AND READY FOR THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE EDITION 26



QFES CELEBRATES NAIDOC WEEK

CELEBRATING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORY, CULTURE AND ACHIEVEMENTS - PAGE 13

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RFS ANNIVERSARY
ENGAGEMENT

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ON THE COVER

Far Northern Region SES Indigenous Capability Officers Mark Sarago (left) and Arama Samuel (right) at the Cairns NAIDOC March on Friday 5 July.

Photo: QFES auxiliary firefighter Dwain Guivarra

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



MIKE WASSING

Acting Commissioner

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Firstly, I would like to welcome our new Assistant Commissioners to their roles, Gary McCormack and Joanne Greenfield.

Gary is the new Assistant Commissioner for North Coast Region where his firefighting career began in the mid-1990s, and he has spent almost 10 years in the Rural Fire Service (RFS), often acting in the RFS Assistant Commissioner role. Joanne joins us from Queensland Health as the new Assistant Commissioner for Emergency Management and Community Capability, with a wealth of experience leading large-scale operations in some of the most complex environments in the world. I know you will join me in welcoming both to their new positions, and the experience they bring to QFES. See more on pages 4-5.

There has also been a state-wide rotation of Assistant Commissioners to share our leaders' skills and knowledge across the regions and services. This rotation and these new appointments come at an ideal time, ahead of another active bushfire season, which will be closely followed by storm season.

The two reports into last year's bushfire events – Operation Synergy and the Inspector-General Emergency Management Report – have examined what QFES did well and where we can improve. QFES will continue to learn from these events and subsequent reports and adapt to ensure we are prepared for the future. The full Operation Synergy and the IGEM reports are available on the Gateway. Read more on page 14.

Now that we are in August, the 2019-20 bushfire season, Operation Redux, has begun. Redux means “bring back”, reflecting QFES' objective during times of hazard: to bring back the normality. A key focus for this season will be a collaborative approach with our partners.

Looking forward, the RFS will celebrate their 70th anniversary in September. There are events planned across the state, and I wish all event organisers the best of luck with the final preparations. I look forward to not only attending several events myself but seeing the show of support from other QFES branches at RFS anniversary events. See more on pages 10-11.

The launch of the QFES Engagement Strategy is an exciting achievement that will enable us to create more capable and connected communities through quality, meaningful engagement. Engagement is crucial to our work, and this strategy provides us with guidance for how best to engage with each other, our partners and our communities. Read more on pages 18-19 and access the Strategy on the gateway and QFES website.



MARK ROCHE

Deputy Commissioner

READINESS AND RESPONSE

I recently travelled to the USA to observe the QFES AUS-1 Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) participate in Exercise Shaken Fury. The exercise was held in Indiana in the United States from 2-9 June 2019 and included a combined QFES AUS-1 DART with personnel from the New South Wales DART and Emergency Management Australia. Exercise Shaken Fury was the first time any Australian Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) team had deployed and participated in an international field exercise and it was great to see our QFES colleagues showcasing their skills and expertise on the world stage. Read the full story on page 30.

This year's Australasian Rescue Challenge 2019 (ARC 2019) was held in Dubbo, NSW from 25-28 July 2019. There were 21 teams from Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong competing over the three-day event in simulated Road Crash Rescue challenges that tested the abilities of all teams. QFES had three teams competing this year including one from Cairns and two from Brisbane. Once again the QFES teams did us proud with the Brisbane South team coming fourth overall and winning the Best Technical Team and picking up third in the controlled pit challenge. The Brisbane North team also picked up a first in the time critical pit challenge. See image in the Gallery section, pages 32-33.

As we continue to transition to the new regional reporting model, I want to thank everyone for their patience as we work through details and finalise processes. The new Executive Officer positions within the seven regions are now well embedded and this has been critical in transitioning functions and responsibilities from state to the regions. The new role will also provide high level support to the Regional and Senior Leadership Teams as they continue to focus on regional service delivery and local decisions.

As predicted, the 2019-20 bushfire season has started with high levels of bushfire activity across the state. Operation Redux has commenced and this year we will see a unified chain of command and control under the QFES Regional Assistant Commissioners, supported by their Regional Leadership Team. Please make sure you take care during this busy period and work together to keep Queensland communities safe.

On a final note, a special thanks to those involved in the QFES Estimates preparation. The hard work and effort did not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.



HON CRAIG CRAWFORD

Minister

MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The arrival of the 2019 fire season is a timely opportunity for QFES staff and volunteers and the communities we serve to reflect on the unprecedented conditions in the past year in Central and North Queensland.

Through fire and flood, it was an extraordinary year in which so many gave so much in challenging and confronting circumstances.

Not only do unpredictable and extreme weather events bring out the best in Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, they're also an important part of our organisation's learning experience.

Being prepared for the unexpected is a crucial part of the role QFES plays in building connected, capable and resilient communities.

As Minister, I am genuinely proud of the effort and commitment of QFES teams around Queensland who faced some of our state's darkest times.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to first officers Brad Kingston, Josh Whitcombe, Jeff Farrell and Jenny Kingston from The Caves Rural Fire Brigade who put up an inspiring battle to help contain the relentless Central Queensland fires at The Cave and Mount Larcom.

Their courage and determination won the hearts and appreciation of an entire state.

It comes as no surprise; The Caves Rural Fire Brigade was recently recognised for our highest honour; the Commissioner's Outstanding Award.

This is a coveted and exceptional award for members of the QFES family who exceed the core expectations of the emergency services; The Caves Rural Fire Brigade demonstrated their capability in spades.

On behalf of all Queenslanders, congratulations to Brad, Josh, Jeff and Jenny for your inspiration on the frontline of a ferocious and persistent fire to keep the community safe during the menacing days of the Central Queensland bushfire emergency.

Thank you to the 50 recipients of the Commissioner's Awards for Excellence for your achievements in customer focus, innovation, leadership, performance and sustainability, and your service to QFES.

Queenslanders can be reassured no matter what the weather throws at us we can rely on the dedication and professionalism of QFES staff and our valued volunteers to work in collaboration to ensure the safety and resilience of our state when we need it most. Thanks again.

New Assistant Com

QFES has appointed two new Assistant Commissioners to take over the reins in Emergency Management and Community Capability and North Coast Region.

QFES' new Assistant Commissioner for Emergency Management and Community Capability started her working life half a world away from the Sunshine State.

Joanne Greenfield was a nurse in London, before she said she moved to work with communities in some of the most challenging environments in the world.

"You could say I've worked in the A to Z of countries around the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe," Ms Greenfield said.

Joining us from Queensland Health, Ms Greenfield has an extensive history in leading large-scale operations in complex environments both in Queensland and internationally, including health services for 300 000 refugees, recovery operations including hospitals and power supply in Kosovo, emergency services at Kings College Hospital in London, and emergency management including food and medicine supply chains across 10 southern Africa countries.

"I started in the UK National Health Service and worked clinically in emergency services for a number of years before moving into executive manager roles. I was offered an opportunity to work



internationally in the challenging environment of the developing world, in post-conflict and humanitarian crises."

Ms Greenfield worked as a volunteer and then for the United Nations, in health areas but also on large-scale disaster management and reconstruction programs.

After nearly 15 years of working around the world, Ms Greenfield moved with her husband and young family to Australia.

"I was very lucky to get a job with The Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (AusAID) in Canberra, in health programming, policy and international relations including in large-scale emergencies in the Asia Pacific region," she said.

"I was there for three years and my children really felt Australia was home, even though they were born in Africa. They were very passionate about staying and we knew we were lucky to live in such a fantastic country.

"We were privileged to become Australian citizens and I moved to Queensland Health."

After heading up Queensland Health's Transformation Team, Ms Greenfield said she was looking forward to her role at QFES.

"QFES has a strong reputation around the world, so I feel very privileged to come and work for the organisation. I'm excited to work with our incredible team and volunteers who deliver services every day.

"I'm interested in community capability and I've worked with people from different cultures all around the world. Prevention, preparedness, response and recovery begin at the community level, so the better people are prepared, the better the outcomes.

"I'm looking forward to working with staff and volunteers across the three services and regions and continuing the good work QFES has already implemented to build community and emergency management capability."



Joanne running an emergency response to a measles and cholera epidemic in Badakshan, Afghanistan.



missioners step up

Gary McCormack has returned to his firefighting career origins in the North Coast Region as its Assistant Commissioner.

Growing up south of the border in Newcastle and finishing his greenkeeper's apprenticeship as a teen, Mr McCormack's QFES career started in 1994 as an auxiliary firefighter in Tewantin before becoming a permanent firefighter in Brisbane Region in 1995.

More recently, Mr McCormack had been with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) for the last nine years, including relieving in the RFS Assistant Commissioner role for extended periods of time.

"I love serving the people and communities of Queensland," Mr McCormack said.

"Moving into North Coast Region and into a broader QFES role will be an exciting change.

"I'm looking forward to having a broader portfolio across services and emergency management and the range of work that offers. I'm excited to get back into a region and work with the teams."

He also has proven emergency operation leadership capability and performed the role of QFES Commander State Operations for the unprecedented bushfire and flooding events of 2018/19.

Mr McCormack, who relocated to Hervey Bay and is based from the regional office in Maryborough, said he was most looking forward to getting to know the staff and volunteers in North Coast Region.

"Initially, I want to meet as many people as I can to understand where they're coming from and build some strong relationships with the staff and volunteers within the region, and our external stakeholders as well," he said.

"I am very eager to build my understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face as a region.

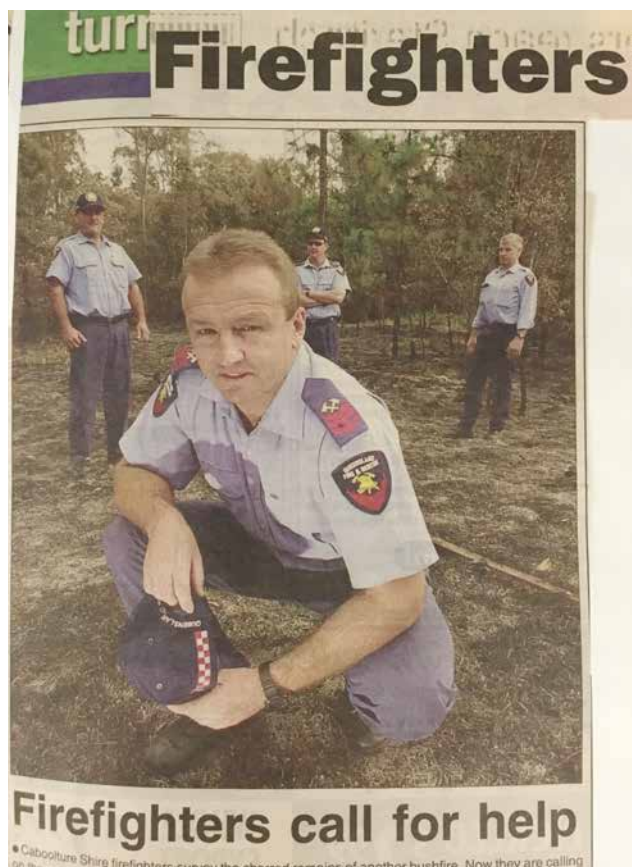
"We've got a clear strategic direction that was set by the former Commissioner and the Executive Leadership Team and my role will also be to ensure that that strategic direction is maintained, and we continue to align our regional direction accordingly."

While Mr McCormack is looking to the future as AC of North Coast Region, he is quick to recognise his time with the RFS.

"I'd really like to thank all the people of RFS for the last nine years that I've spent with them – staff and volunteers – and for the leaders I've worked under and the mentors I've had," he said.

"It was a wonderful part of my career and I learned a lot.

"I'm excited and looking forward to this new role in North Coast Region and becoming part of the team here."



A firefighter of 24 years, Gary takes the reins as the North Coast Region Assistant Commissioner.



Queenslanders discuss disaster preparedness over a cuppa

Operation Community Connect is underway around the state, with QFES members attending and hosting a range of events to encourage communities to work together against disasters.

We're lucky to live in Queensland. It's an incredible state. But the reality is that disasters ranging from floods, storms and cyclones through to bushfires and house fires can occur.

That's why it's so important for Queenslanders to understand the hazards that may happen in their area and know what they can do to prepare for these incidents, and keep themselves and their families safe.

Operation Community Connect is just one way we are building resilience across the state. This multi-agency, state-wide initiative — led by QFES in partnership with Red Cross, Surf Lifesaving Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue, Local Government Association of Queensland and Queensland Reconstruction Authority — is raising awareness of the importance of resilience, preparation for hazards, and community connectedness.

During August thousands of personnel from a range of agencies have been joining forces to discuss important safety matters with Queenslanders. They will encourage people to connect with friends, family and neighbours and talk about hazard preparation.

Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing said it was fantastic to see our services and

our partners working together to connect Queenslanders with their local emergency services personnel and volunteer networks.

"What we've seen happening throughout the month is genuine engagement and real conversations that could help save lives," Mr Wassing said.

"Across every region, there have been feet on the ground at community events from regional shows and school fetes to sporting events."

"Now, more than ever, community resilience is essential."

Assistant Commissioner Emergency Management and Community Capability Joanne Greenfield said Operation Community Connect plays to our strengths as an organisation.

"What's great about our volunteers is that they're part of our communities across Queensland. Our extensive network of community-minded volunteers gives us a unique way to reach into all areas of the state."

"We need Queensland's communities to be connected and capable in the face of disaster, and our volunteers help us spread our important preparedness messages far and wide.

"The timing of the event coinciding with Multicultural Month was another bonus as it helped us get our message out to many of Queensland's culturally and linguistically diverse communities," AC Greenfield added.

Partnerships and Sponsorships Manager Leah Hornibrook said people found the idea of having a cup of tea and a chat about what to do in the case of an emergency very appealing.

"I've had great response at the events I've been to, handing out teabags and encouraging people to talk to their family, friends and neighbours about how to prepare for disasters."

"The teabags give people a focus point. Everyone relates to sitting down and having a cuppa and a chat.

"The people I've spoken to have loved the positivity of the messages printed on the teabags. Both my experience, and that of others I've spoken to, is that the teabags have been a great conversation starter with people in our communities," Ms Hornibrook said.

Operation Community Connect will run until the end of August and is expected to reach close to 100 000 Queenslanders, with events held in every region.



Operation Community Connect was in full swing at the Rockhampton Emergency Services Day (top right) and the EKKA (above), with QFES members handing out tea bags and encouraging locals to get together and chat about disaster preparedness in their community.

New teams ready to tackle remote bushfires

Three new QFES Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT) are ready for deployment following rigorous training and preparation.

QFES has a new capability for fighting remote bushfires this coming bushfire season.

RAFT are trained to navigate to remote locations inaccessible by road or track and fight fires with no appliances and limited support.

Rural Fire Service (RFS) Superintendent Wayne Waltisbuhl said 30 highly trained Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers based in three units – Caboolture, South Coast and West Moreton – graduated on 1 August and were ready for deployment.

“We often get small fires that start from lightning strikes in remote and inaccessible locations,” Mr Waltisbuhl said.

“Previously, the strategy has been to wait until the fire comes to us. The concept of the RAFT is to go to the fire and manage it while it’s small.

“Teams will be dropped off by vehicle at the nearest location accessible by road, or by helicopter, and will hike the rest of the way to the fire – in some cases this will require several hours of hiking.

“During periods of elevated fire danger the units will be placed ready for quick deployment. A rapid, initial attack by our RAFT with air support will be key to keeping fires small and manageable.”

The RFS volunteers selected to join the RAFT had to complete an arduous 4.8km walk in under 45 minutes, wearing a 20-kilogram weighted vest, as well as advanced first aid training, navigation training, and a two-day theoretical training program.



The RFS RAFT team honed their skills during a bush training exercise. Far left: Robert Sargent is enjoying his new role as a RAFT member.

The final assessment was held over two weekends in the field, where participants had to navigate in remote and rough terrain to a location in the bush, establish an overnight camp, demonstrate knowledge of first aid through a medical scenario and manage a long-distance hose lay and wet drill.

Robert Sargent is one of the new RAFT graduates. He is a volunteer at Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade and also a casual employee with RFS at Caboolture.

“I was motivated to be a member of RAFT because I enjoy physical challenges and learning new skills, and I was also excited by the fact that this is the start of RAFT in Queensland,” Mr Sargent said.

“I’m learning a lot of new skills and having a lot of fun while doing so. My colleagues are a fantastic group of people, who bring so many different skills and experiences to the team.

“The new skills and knowledge I am learning from being a member of RAFT will enable me to be a better firefighter, and as a result have the ability to serve our community to an even higher level. This new capability has the ability to reduce the impact of fire on our community and environment.”

The effectiveness of the project will be assessed in 12 months with the potential for expansion into other regions.





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Howes family thanks crew who saved their home

The Howes family could have lost their \$2 million property to a late-night fire but are instead full of praise for the firefighters who saved their home.

The Howes family has credited the quick actions of the Pullenvale Fire Station crew on shift on 31 May 2019 for saving their home.

A fire in the wall cavity above a built-in fire place set the smoke alarms off in the \$2 million home in Pinjarra Hills shortly before 11pm on Friday 31 May.

Homeowner Peter Howes, who was sitting in the lounge room at the time of the incident, was first alerted when the lights went out due to the fire causing an electrical shortage.

As the fire became apparent, Mr Howes attempted to extinguish the flames with buckets of water.

His wife, Heather, called Triple Zero before they evacuated and flagged the crew down from the main road, directing them to the hard-to-spot acreage property.

It took the crew less than 20 minutes to extinguish the fire and contain it to the living room area, saving the rest of the home.

Mr Howes wrote a heartfelt email to thank everyone involved.

“Heather and I want to express our gratitude for the fantastic job that your A Shift did on Friday night at our house in Pinjarra Hills. My wife and I truly feel indebted to QFES and the Pullenvale station in particular,” Mr Howes said.

“There is not a single doubt in my mind that they saved our house from destruction and the consequential loss of all the personal things that reflect one’s life. As it turned out we did not lose one thing that cannot be replaced.

“The speed in arriving, in what to me seems to be seconds, after our ooo call

still amazes me, and then the professional way they went about containing and extinguishing the fire.

“Like most people, I don’t think about emergency services; just vaguely knowing they are there in the background. But when you have the firsthand experience that Heather and I had, it’s very humbling to have the support of people like your A shift.”

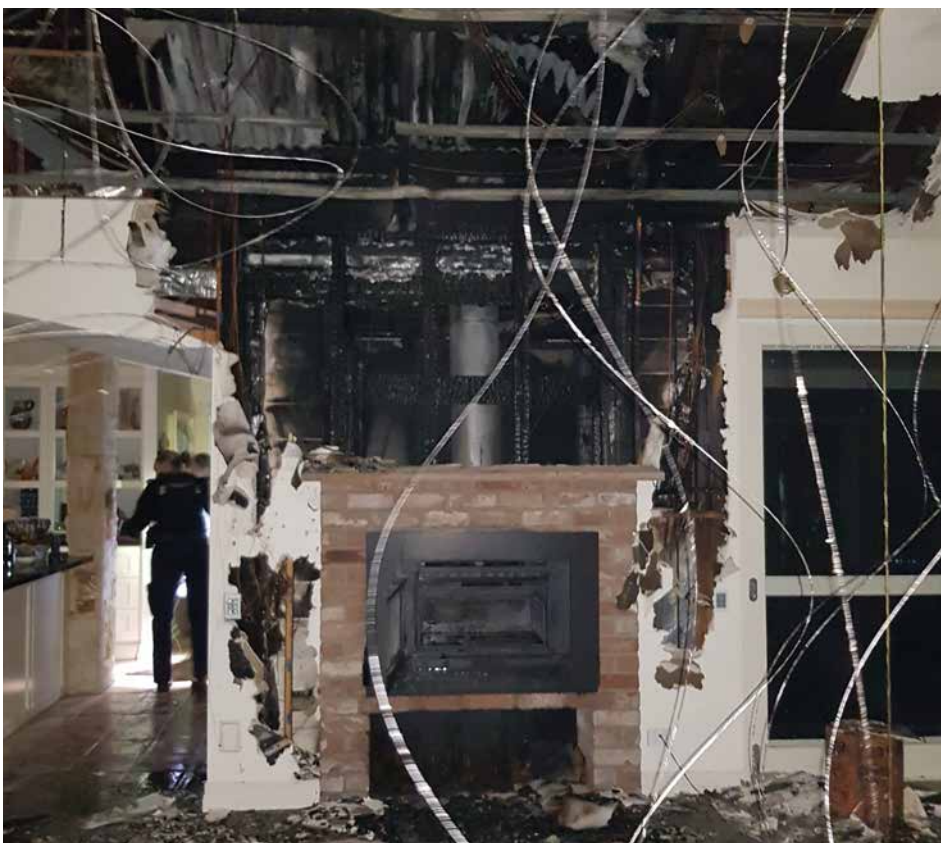
Acting Pullenvale Station Officer Mark Bladen said everyone was just doing their job.

“It was amazing how quickly the fire had spread in a short time, spreading rapidly through the air-conditioning ducting,” Mr Bladen said.

“We contained the fire to the lounge room area, resulting in minimal damage to the home. However, the fire had potential to spread and completely destroy the property under different circumstances. “

Mr Bladen also credited Mr Howes’ quick-thinking for saving the home.

“Peter and Heather contributed significantly to saving their home and lives by keeping a cool head by promptly ringing Triple Zero, ensuring he and his wife evacuated to a safe location, and particularly having the foresight to signal us down with a torch on the main road and direct us to his property location.”



The fire started in the wall behind the fireplace and quickly spread to the roof cavity.



Homeowners Peter and Heather Howes praised the quick actions of the attending crew, who helped save their home.

Platinum anniversary

This year marks a significant milestone in the history of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) as it celebrates 70 years of protecting Queensland communities. Response spoke to two long-serving volunteers about their time with the RFS.

In September the RFS is celebrating its 70th anniversary, with 2019 marking 70 years since the first Rural Fire Brigades were officially registered.

To celebrate this significant milestone, RFS Week 2019 (1 to 7 September) will not only focus on thanking and recognising volunteers, but will look back over 70 years of history.

A 70th anniversary celebration will be held at Kedron during RFS Week. The ceremony will provide an opportunity to recognise

the six brigades that celebrate 70 years in 2019 and reflect on all brigades that have contributed to their communities since the inception of the RFS.

RFS Week 2019 will also see the introduction of the RFS Regional Volunteer of the Year Awards and the Assistant Commissioner RFS Volunteer of the Year Award. These will recognise volunteers who have demonstrated a special contribution to the service. Awards will be presented at the Kedron event.

Lyn's heart for the bush

On 24 May, RFS volunteer Lyn French won the 2019 Queensland Volunteer of the Year Award.

Lyn French's biggest passion is helping others. She has always cared for the environment in and around the station she calls home in north west Queensland. As well as the RFS, Lyn volunteers for The Royal Flying Doctor Service, Bureau of Meteorology, Drought Aid, Angel Flights and Northern Gulf Resources.

It speaks of Lyn's heart, but also of the heart and resilience of rural and remote Queenslanders and many in the RFS.

"I have been on the land most of my life and married Rob French from Gilberton station in 1986, but Rob's family came to Gilberton in 1869," Lyn said.

"I started with the RFS many moons ago when I married. The Gilberton RFB had already been set up so I became a member roughly 35 years ago because it is an important part of the local community when fire season starts.

"My husband Rob has been the fire warden for 25 years and all members of the family are volunteers with our local RFB.

"We live and breathe the land, and with that comes the responsibility of looking after our country.

"From their many years on Gilberton, burning was passed down from the Aboriginal people - Jana people - who were from Gilberton and great friends of the family."

Lyn said that without their local RFB, their voice would be lost in the wilderness because they were too remote to get help from regional centres.

She said this remoteness also presented unique challenges for the local brigade.

"Being a remote RFB we don't get to meet very often - we



are lucky to have a meeting once a year - but if fires are about, as many people attend as possible to help out," she said.

Even the grandchildren.

"In the last 12 months we did a burn and our little grandson was a champ," Lyn said.

"He was with us every inch of the way until the wee early hours of the morning checking to make sure our fire didn't jump into the neighbour's country."

Anniversary for RFS



For the love of volunteering

When most people think of the Gold Coast, they imagine the sun, sand and salty sea breeze. But what about bushfire?

Ormeau Rural Fire Brigade's Bevan Love has seen nearly 50 years' worth of fires in the Gold Coast vicinity. And he's watched the RFS evolve from humble beginnings into what it is now.

Bevan joined the Pimpama Rural Fire Brigade (now Ormeau RFB) at just 17 years old, following in the footsteps of his father, a farmer.

"Many of the properties in our area at that time were mostly dairy farms. A lot of the farmers and their sons joined the brigade and formed the nucleus of the original Pimpama Rural Fire Brigade," he said.

"When I got to a certain age, I just started going to the fires with dad.

"You'd get a call to say there was a fire up the hill somewhere and we'd go - or dad would go and I'd milk the cows, or I would go and dad would stay home."

Bevan says a lot has changed over the past 50 years, and since its' inception, the brigade has overcome many challenges.

"I'm a great believer that there are fires within a community that define a brigade -

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they can show the community, we're ready for this," he said.

"We had a fire in the year 2000 up in the hills which defined the Pimpama brigade. It went for 12 days... and the brigade really stood up.

"It was that incident that just lifted the brigade in the eyes of the community and lifted the brigade within themselves.

"All the training paid off - it was a huge fire, a lot of work. There was a wonderful community involvement, down to making sandwiches and looking after us and all things like that."

Having experienced a number of bushfires over the years, Bevan says the job can be tough at times.

"There's dangers around the fire ground all the time. There's branches that could come down, and rocky parts where you could just lose your footing," he said.

"It's not a glamorous place - a fire ground is a dangerous place.

"And the most important person on the whole fire ground is the guy standing next to you. You've got to look after his back and he'll look after yours.

"In the fire service, that's what we try and get across - look out for your mate."

Although the journey has been challenging at times, Bevan says he is proud of his achievements in the RFS.

"The camaraderie and the friendships that I've made all through my career - it's been just great," he said.

To anyone considering volunteering, Bevan believes it's well worth the time.

"You never cease to be amazed by what a volunteer will do within the community.

"And you can't beat it - it's wonderfully fulfilling."





AC Short brings his passion for leadership to new role in SES

The State Emergency Service has a new Assistant Commissioner who is looking forward to helping members be “the best they can be”.

Andrew Short recently moved to the SES from Human Capital Management (HCM) as part of a QFES-wide rotation of Assistant Commissioners designed to share leaders’ skills and knowledge across the regions and services.

Mr Short said he is pleased to join the SES at an interesting time when a number of significant changes and improvements are underway.

“One exciting piece of work is a project in partnership with local government that will review the way SES volunteers are supported, the role that SES plays in our communities, and what a more state-based SES may look like” he said.

“This is a long-term project, probably over some years, and we are consulting and doing the necessary background work to determine exactly what the best way forward might be.”

“Even in the future as a more state-centric service, the SES’s collaboration with local government always has, and always will be, central to our ability to operate effectively.”

Mr Short and Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing recently met with regional managers and area controllers to discuss key issues affecting staff and volunteers at the Regional Managers’ Conference.

“Another big project underway that was discussed is the enhancement of radio capability across SES. As everyone knows, effective communications during small and large scale events is integral to success.”

They also attended the SES Local Controllers Conference which was taking place in August as *Response* went to print.

After leading HCM for three years, Mr Short said he will continue to have a strong focus on people in his new role with the SES.

“My approach is to encourage honesty and authenticity, so people can be the best they can be,” he said.

“I am also passionate about creating environments where people care about each other and want to help one another. This is what healthy communities or groups of all types do.”

His interest in the people side of the business is evident; Mr Short recently started a podcast series available on the gateway where he interviews people from inside and outside the department to discuss leadership.

“This is about generating a conversation we can all take part in about what makes great leadership and how we can all work together better for a common cause,” he said.

As an active Police-Citizens Youth Club volunteer for 10 years, Mr Short strongly identifies with SES volunteers.

“I’m humbled by the generosity and commitment of SES volunteers who consistently seek to give back to their community.”

“I’m looking forward to getting to know the SES business further, and how we can build on the good work of SES volunteers, and the staff who support them.”

NAIDOC Week celebrated around Queensland

From Cape York to Coolangatta and Mackay to Mt Isa, QFES staff and volunteers showed their support at this year's NAIDOC Week events.

QFES staff and volunteers around the state celebrated NAIDOC Week, embracing this year's theme of *Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together for a shared future.*

NAIDOC Week is a time for everyone to participate in NAIDOC activities and celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

This year, QFES had a presence in many events across the state, including Family Fun Days, Community Days and NAIDOC marches.

Rockhampton SES Local Controller Eddie Cowie said the community family day was a "tremendous day".

"We had about 2500 people marching in the parade through the city and they all ended up at the cricket ground for the family fun day," he said.

"NAIDOC is well set up in Rockhampton. We have many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Central Queensland community, as well as in our organisation, and they were there supporting the day.

"It is one of the best engagement days we've had, talking to 800 people, including children, which was a great opportunity to engage with them and just generally be part of a great event."

SES Far Northern Regional Indigenous Capability Officer Arama Samuel said he was proud that QFES continues to respect and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"NAIDOC Week in Cairns was very entertaining and peaceful, and the people taking part in this year's celebration were just full of joy," Arama said.

"The interaction and engagement with the Cairns community coming together to celebrate NAIDOC is a privilege, knowing we recognise and respect the culture around us - a place where we come together for a purpose and just 'yarn' you, me culture.

"The best part of it is maintaining good relations with key people, mainly our elders and traditional landowners. We talk, we listen, we learn the needs of our people."

Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing said around the state, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues make valuable contributions to all parts of our business and their communities.

"From our Torres Strait PCYC cadets on Thursday Island to the Cherbourg Fire Station's auxiliary crew, from remote Rural Fire Brigades and SES units to our CareerTrackers interns, they make our department stronger through helping QFES truly reflect the communities we work with," he said.



Songwoman Maroochy performs the Welcome to Country at the Kedron flag raising ceremony.

A new painting, commissioned to tell the QFES story, has been handed over.

The painting was done by highly talented Aboriginal artists Sarrita and Tarisse King. Through its depiction of key cultural sites and incorporating elements such as fire, water and earth, this artwork addresses the theme of communities merging together through shared values.

The use of charcoal colours relates to the regeneration of the land and the role the elements play in shaping the diverse landscapes.

The smaller campsites merge into one large campsite along the travelling lines with the different colours of the smaller circles representing the diversity between communities.

The larger campsite, through the use of multiple colours, portrays values like teamwork, camaraderie and respect.

The movement of people between smaller and larger communities is represented through the travelling lines, and the use of colour represents the diversity of people making these journeys.



The painting, 'Together', by the King sisters, tells the QFES story.

Reports shine light on response

A number of actions are already underway in response to recommendations made in the IGEM review and QFES' Operation Synergy report into last year's extreme bushfires.

Small steps can often have the biggest impact.

The two reports into last year's severe bushfires – the Inspector-General Emergency Management's (IGEM) 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review Report and Operation Synergy Operational Review Report 2018/2019 – were released last month after comprehensive interviews with staff, volunteers and stakeholders and analysis of the events.

Between November 22 and December 6, 1250 bushfires burned throughout Queensland.

They were fought by more than 3500 QFES firefighters, 1200 interstate firefighters and 500 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Officers.

The IGEM report found the bushfires tested the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, which had not been invoked for bushfires before.

QFES' own operational review, Operation Synergy, into the significant activities throughout last year's bushfire season, reflects close to 6000 observations, including the effective use of the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS), job roles and their functions, aircraft operations, emergency warnings and alerts, and command and control.

"With the findings of IGEM and Operation Synergy, we have a wealth of information about what we can do to improve, and work is already underway to implement many of these recommendations," Mr Wassing said.

"One IGEM finding was that some landholders didn't have a clear picture of the rules around creating firebreaks on their land.

"As a result, QFES has created a communication plan focused on this one recommendation, which involves sending out information through our partners, such as local councils and fire wardens.

"While seemingly a small issue to address, acting on this with comprehensive communication can have a really big impact in the event of another bushfire in that landholders have the information they need to proactively protect their property."

Another IGEM finding was the need for

more Fire Behaviour Analysts in predictive services to advise on how best to manage and resource bushfire response.

"QFES is already training more members in fire behaviour analysis to address this recommendation," he said.

Many recommendations from Operation Synergy have also been actioned.

"We are also already working to improve internal arrangements to streamline communication and ensure each region has the resources required to manage their growing local bushfire response and use the local knowledge at hand, as recommended in the reports," Mr Wassing said.

"Last year was unprecedented but due to the changing climate we need to treat these fires as if they will be the new normal moving forward."

Operation Synergy can be found by searching 'Operation Synergy Report' on the QFES gateway and the IGEM report is available on the IGEM website www.igem.qld.gov.au.

Early indicators are that conditions are aligning for yet another busy bushfire season ahead.

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) Northern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook, created in conjunction with QFES' Predictive Services Unit (PSU), was released in June.

The current rainfall and temperature outlooks show an increased likelihood of warmer and drier conditions during bushfire season. Increased fuel loads, created by earlier rainfall, will also be a factor.

"While conditions for this bushfire season are not looking the same as the 2018-19 season at this time, QFES will continue to prepare and plan for whatever mother nature throws at us," Mr Wassing said.

The 2019 Bushfire campaign has also just launched, with a postcode checker to help people understand their bushfire risk and be better prepared at www.qld.gov.au/bushfires.





QFES celebrates its best and brightest at awards

Staff and volunteers from across Queensland have been recognised for their outstanding achievements and contributions at the Commissioner's Awards for Excellence.

Eleven QFES teams and individuals received Commissioner's Awards for Excellence in August for a wide range of achievements that align with QFES' values and goals.

Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing said recipients had gone above and beyond in their roles, helping QFES build more connected and capable communities.

"These award winners have achieved excellent outcomes and truly displayed the QFES values in their work," Mr Wassing said.

"It is through exceptional achievements such as these that QFES will continue to improve and grow as we work with our communities to build a more connected and capable state."

Winners

Customer Focus: Logan Command - Logan Blitz on House Fires

For their commitment to the safety and education of the Logan community through the implementation of the 'Blitz on House Fires' community engagement initiative, promoting awareness on the dangers of house fires.

Innovation: QFES Lessons Management Framework Project Team

For exceptional work in the development and implementation of the Lessons Management Framework, using innovative techniques to strengthen and enhance the capabilities of QFES.

Leadership: White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Project Team

For empowering QFES to lead the way in achieving White Ribbon Workplace accreditation, creating a safer, more respectful workplace and community by demonstrating a culture of zero tolerance towards domestic and family violence.

Performance: The Caves Rural Fire Brigade

For displaying professional excellence and outstanding performance in hazardous circumstances to protect their community against the catastrophic 2018 Central Queensland bushfires.

Sustainability: Darling Downs Local Area Finance Committees

For championing change and improving environmental sustainability through the installation of solar power systems in all Darling Downs Rural Fire Brigade Stations.

Innovation: SES, Far Northern Region Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems Team

Innovation: Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems Working Group

Leadership: Fire and Emergency Services Support Network Team

Performance: Samantha Thompson

Commissioner's Outstanding Award: The Caves Rural Fire Brigade

For outstanding dedication and distinguished performance while displaying remarkable resilience to protect Central Queensland communities during the unprecedented 2018 bushfires.

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Long-term visitor 'one of the crew' at Charters Towers Fire Station

Cameron Petersen has been visiting his local fire station every fortnight for eight years to help with jobs and spend time with the firefighters.

Cameron's best mate at Charters Towers Fire Station is Firefighter Steve Olver; they have been mates for years and both look forward to the fortnightly visits.

"I was introduced to Cameron when I was an auxiliary, before I became a permanent firefighter, and he was an interesting character back then," Steve said.

Cameron has cerebral palsy quadriplegia and is slowly deteriorating physically. He also suffers short-term memory loss.

"Like all young boys, he loved fire trucks and wanted to be a firefighter. As he grew into a man he just wanted to be treated like one of the crew," Steve said.

"We gave him a shirt and cap and when he came to the station he was fully dressed in uniform; he enjoys the time with us.

"He is just like one of the crew when he comes to the station, so every time he turns up we joke around and other tomfoolery.

Cameron's mum Cheryl is thankful to Steve and the crew at Charters Towers Fire Station.

"Cameron absolutely loves it there. He's been going since he left school," she said.

"[Former station officer] Peter Pardon knew Cameron from a baby and he and one of the carers got together and suggested he go the station to help out for a little while.

"Now he goes in once a fortnight for half an hour and washes the trucks and he loves it. He feels like he's contributing."

Current Station Officer, Peter Marten, said Steve and Cameron were best mates.

"We all get involved usually but Steve has been working with Cameron for eight years so longer than most at the station," Peter said.

"Steve has seen Cameron's condition deteriorate over the years, and he is now confined to a wheelchair.

"Eventually it will get to a point where Cameron's visits will no longer be possible, but while we have him we ensure he is treated as one of the team."



Sunshine Coast aged-care providers plan for disaster

Forum helps nursing home and retirement community managers grow their resilience by reviewing disaster management plans to protect residents and staff.

The safety of elderly residents of Sunshine Coast aged-care facilities during times of disaster was the focus of an Aged Care Provider Forum earlier this year.

QFES North Coast Region partnered with the Sunshine Coast District Disaster Management Group (Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Noosa Shire Council), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Queensland Health, Inspector General Emergency Management, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and industry networks for the May forum.

Emergency Management Coordinator Peter Harkin said the need for the forum was identified through discussion with aged-care facilities about their disaster plans after a fire event near a Sunshine Coast facility.

"That event very nearly necessitated the evacuation of an aged-care facility. The facility was under prepared and had an expectation that they could rely on the local emergency services and agencies to undertake the evacuation," Mr Harkin said.

"Disaster planning for aged-care facilities has mostly focused on fire management and evacuation to a safe point on site without looking at a variety of risks and strategies and actions the facility may need to incorporate.

"For example, plans need to include transporting those who are frail and with special needs, take account of wheelchair access, and be able to handle the number of patients if evacuation is needed."

Mr Harkin said the forum was also driven by the outcomes of The Cyclone Debbie Review and a recommendation to raise the need for all aged-care providers to plan and exercise evacuation to a similar safe establishment.

QFES is represented on a state working group examining responses to this recommendation, including development of a new continuity plan guideline for aged-care facilities.

Ninety-eight aged-care providers who operate in the Sunshine Coast and Noosa areas attended and heard from emergency services, TMR and the local hospital.

QFES North Coast Region will continue to support Sunshine Coast and Noosa aged-care providers to review their plans to ensure they include sufficient checklists and actions for disaster event management. NCR will also continue to advise providers on how to effectively review and exercise the disaster plans for their facilities, further supporting and strengthening the resilience of the local aged-care sector.



We're stronger when we work together

The QFES Engagement Strategy provides a new direction for creating better and more sustainable decisions that result in positive actions for Queensland.

For many years, QFES personnel across the state have engaged with our people, partners and communities well. We've attended events of all sizes across the state, visited schools and kindys, and reached out through everything from formal meetings to sausage sizzles.

There has always been a lot of enthusiasm. However, with this strategy we have the opportunity to bring our engagement to the next level.

"Bringing the Engagement Strategy together has been a truly collaborative effort," Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing said.

"Drafting the strategy kicked off with a series of workshops held in 2018 along with meetings with many of our key stakeholders.

"As collaboration on the draft document continued, one thing became crystal clear:

there is a hunger across QFES for genuine engagement that will support us to achieve our Strategy 2030 vision of 'a connected and capable Queensland in the face of emergencies'.

Organisational Engagement Executive Director Michelle Tayler believes the Engagement Strategy has the power to transform the way we work across the department, as well as with our partners and our communities.

"The best products, services and solutions are those that are created and delivered with the end user in mind," Ms Tayler said.

"This strategy is for everyone. We hope QFES comes on board to embed engagement into everything they do and think about how our programs, projects and decisions affect others," she said.

Central Region Community Engagement

Officer Julianne Webster-Scott says she is looking forward to the strategy's implementation.

"By focusing on a two-way conversation, we can further understand where we can support the community with QFES services before (in preparation), during and after events," Julianne said.

"Engagement will help build community capability, resilience and enable a greater understanding of community risk and ways in which we can work in partnership to manage it."

The QFES Engagement Strategy is available for download from the Gateway or the QFES website.

If you would like a hard copy of the strategy please contact QFES.Engagement@qfes.qld.gov.au



SES volunteers took part in the Emergency Services Expo, speaking with members of the public.



Redcliffe SES volunteers serve up a snag, conversation and information at Bunnings.



RFS volunteers engaged with the community at the Commonwealth Games.

What is engagement?

Engagement is two-way communication that aims to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower the stakeholder. It can be formal or casual. At the very basic level it aims to listen to and acknowledge concerns.

How can I embed engagement into what I do?

Some examples are:

Our people

- Include QFES staff and volunteers in your decision making through emails, face-to-face, newsletters, phone calls, meetings, taskforces and workshops.

Our partners

- Include an outside organisation in your decision making through emails, meetings, workshops, taskforces and phone calls.

Our community

- Include the public in your decision making – Get Involved website (www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au), shopping centres, community centres, surveys, emails, special events and school visits.

Implementing the Engagement Strategy

Key activities will bring the strategy to life across QFES, including:

- an audit of current engagement activities
- a review and update of engagement policy, procedure, doctrine, documentation and governance
- rollout of tailored engagement training across the department
- a suite of communication and engagement platforms, including regional face-to-face forums and an online engagement platform
- an engagement toolkit, including updated engagement materials
- a network of QFES engagement champions

We need you to:

- listen and consider different ways of thinking
- be planned and coordinated
- focus on continuous improvement
- be inclusive, clear and concise
- be proactive – seek advice early and ongoing
- be transparent
- provide feedback, thank and close the loop
- be appreciative and respectful
- appreciate innovation
- focus on gathering local intelligence
- be targeted so that a decision works at the local level.



FAR NORTHERN REGION

Auxiliary firefighters join forces with ARFF crew

Auxiliary firefighters from Cairns South conducted an aviation fire and rescue exercise in collaboration with Air Services Australia Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) crew on 19 June. The exercise concept was based around testing communication interoperability, interservice operability and response to an aviation incident. This style of exercise augments the service's capabilities and promotes positive engagement between QFES and ASA crews. Testing team responses with effective and efficient training also reduces vulnerabilities.



Sharing NAIDOC message with students

The theme of 2019 NAIDOC Week was Voice. Treaty. Truth.

As part of NAIDOC Week, Holy Cross Catholic Primary School in Cairns invited Indigenous Emergency Service officers to talk about how they use their voice in everyday situations.

Far Northern Region Regional Community Engagement Officer Chris Wegger attended with members from QPS and shared how he used his voice to communicate his traditional knowledge to the community and QFES.



SES volunteers have a 'field day' with farmers in Mareeba

The SES attended the Rotary FNQ Field Days in Mareeba earlier this year, rubbing shoulders with former Brisbane Broncos, Queensland Maroons and Australia Kangaroos legend Shane Webcke, who delivered an influential message on farm safety. All reports were that it was a successful event, engaging with the local farming communities.



Women in Construction talk fire safety

QFES Fire and Rescue held a Women in Construction event on 22 July at Cairns Fire Station, focusing on requirements around smoke detection systems, fire evacuation design, passive fire treatment and the importance of material and design compliance.

The Cairns on-shift crew also provided an overview of each of the fire trucks available in the Cairns area, and the trucks' capabilities. This information was related directly to building design and construction and the impacts of poor design on a fire crew's ability to safely rescue those inside.





NORTHERN REGION

Townsville mum thanks crews who saved her home

The crews from Wulguru and Kirwan fire stations who attended a house fire in Kirwan, Townsville, on 27 June received a very special thank you from the family recently.

Resident Taryn Tower said the crew members who came to the house fire were “fantastic”.

She said: “Special mention to Brian Corrigan for the kindness he showed my 8-year-old daughter and myself. He’s just a great person, doing a great job and worth a very special thank you. Your kindness and humbleness are what make you an asset to any team you’re involved with.



“Thank you for everything you did that afternoon, and the other crew members. We have a world class response team and we are very lucky for that. I do hope to never see you again in the future though”.



Emergency Service Pins awarded to loyal volunteers

Magnetic Island was the chosen site to launch the presentation of Emergency Service Pins to some of our valued Northern Region volunteers recently.

The Acting Assistant Commissioner Northern Region Michael O’Neil and staff were pleasantly surprised when they were met at the ferry terminal by a stretch Jeep for the trip to the Emergency Services Complex to make the presentations.

“We were there to recognise the hard work, dedication and passion that the Magnetic Island volunteers bring to their roles by awarding the Emergency Services Volunteer pin,” Mr O’Neil said.

“The pin is a visible recognition for the contribution our priceless volunteers bring to their communities.”



Charters Towers under fire during road crash rescues

Road crash rescue is complex at the best of times but try undertaking the task while being shot at.

That was the scenario facing the Charters Towers Fire and Rescue Station last month when their usually quiet town was transformed into a fictional country with 200 Staff Cadets from the Royal Military College, Duntroon deployed for exercise Binh Ba, a 10-day exercise designed to practice stability operations.

The scenarios formed part of the final assessments for officers graduating from the Royal Military College. Their task was to secure the scene for an emergency response and then provide security protection while the road crash rescue (RCR) was completed.





CENTRAL REGION

Evacuation Centre training boosts local skills

As part of pre-season preparedness, on 12 June QFES, Red Cross and Mackay Regional Council hosted a one-day Evacuation Centre course to increase the local capacity at the Mackay Entertainment and Cultural Centre.

The training was led by Eleanor Carter from Red Cross, who has extensive experience managing evacuation centres throughout Australia. Course participants included volunteers and staff from

QFES, Red Cross, QPS, SES, local government and the community.

The purpose of the training was to upskill the local community to make a positive difference to the lives of people affected by disasters.

During disasters, local councils retain responsibility for the centres, however, many councils have arrangements with organisations such as Australian Red Cross to manage operations in centres.



Farewell to John Forse

Thirty-two years ago, John Forse followed his brother into the fire brigade.

But he hung up his gear for the last time in June when he retired from the Proserpine Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.



Lieutenant Forse joined the local brigade on 27 June, 1987, after his big brother Robert - who was already a firefighter - talked him into it.

“Being here for the community and supporting the community (have been the best things),” he said.

Back in his younger days, Lieutenant Forse also used to compete in fire brigade skills and drills and road crash rescue competitions, something he also enjoyed greatly.

“We’ve got a great group of guys. We all get on well,” he said.

“I’m only leaving because life’s getting busy but I’m going to miss the guys.”

First published in the Whitsunday Coast Guardian on 28 June 2019, by Monique Preston.

Glenden Fire Station celebrates 30th anniversary

On 16 June 1989, the Glenden Fire Station was officially opened for the Mackay Fire Board, later becoming QFES.

Glenden is 110km south-west of Mackay and was designed and built by Mount Isa Mines as a township for workers at its Newlands coal mine, 30km north-west of Glenden.

On 16 June the station celebrated its 30th anniversary with an open day alongside QAS and QPS.

Glenden State High School contributed to the day, and students also made a new sign out of hardwood for the front of the station.

Some of the day’s displays and activities included a Queensland Police Vehicle display, with thanks from Senior Constable Ian Robertson, a Queensland Ambulance display and tour of the ambulance, as well as paramedics Dean and Amanda teaching the young and old CPR and first aid.

Station tours and truck displays were well received and members of the public were also given a display on using a fire blanket on a stove pot fire.

By firefighter Aidan Eggins



Regional courses enhance local skills

Participants from stations in Aramac, Barcaldine, Blackall, Biloela, Longreach, Middlemount, North Mackay and Springsure attended an ARTEP Hazmat course in Barcaldine earlier this year.

The group went through electrical safety, breathing apparatus, positive pressure ventilation, thermal imaging operator, search and rescue, and basic firefighter skills and drills during the week-long course.

A pump course was also held in Barcaldine recently with participants from stations in Longreach, Aramac and Middlemount. The group went through the principles of pump operations, water supply types and relay pumping.



Central Region Auxiliary Development Training Officer Rowan O’Donoghue said he enjoyed conducting the courses in a regional area because “these areas give so much to the emergency services and the wider community”.



NORTH COAST REGION



North Coast community engagement a winner

Through the support of an NRMA grant, the Caloundra and Pomona Cooroy SES units carried out a range of engagement activities to increase the preparedness of their communities and help strengthen local relationships.

Caloundra SES had a display at the Sunshine Coast Emergency Services Community Expo and developed a colour-in booklet to provide as an engagement tool to generate discussion with families around being prepared.

Cooroy Pomona SES Unit developed a large fridge magnet that promoted the SES and the 132 500 phone number and the Noosa Council Disaster Dashboard, where community can get up-to-date extreme weather information. They also purchased gutter scoops for those who filled out a survey that gauged their level of preparedness, and provided four starter emergency kit prizes drawn from the surveys submitted.

Members held two activities over two weeks, including a display at Kin Kin markets, an SES Engagement Convoy display at Sunshine Beach, and Pomona Markets.

Bunnings Noosaville kindly donated four two-burner portable gas barbecues for the activities.



Celebrating NAIDOC Week at Family Days

QFES North Coast Region attended several NAIDOC Week activities last month, including Cherbourg and Cotton Tree Family Days. Pictured holding the Uluru Statement is Sonya Weymouth Firecom, Tracy Voysey and Julie Bruynius Emergency Management, Marty Taylor RFS and Eleanor Rosam SES.

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Cherbourg community prepared for disaster

On 18 June North Coast Region QFES staff member Peter Harkin EMC, and Regional Community Engagement Officer Julie Bruynius provided training to 23 members of the Cherbourg Council and Local Disaster Management Group in Queensland disaster management arrangements.

Sunwater representatives, who operate the nearby Bjelke Petersen Dam (BJP), also attended and provided training in their Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

A fictitious disaster discussion exercise, held the following day, was led by Sunwater, QFES and QPS, involving the BJP dam wall failing and subsequent flooding of the Cherbourg township and surrounds. The participants split into groups and discussed how the event would be managed and the challenges it would bring to the community and responding agencies.

There were around 50 attendees, including representatives from Cherbourg Aboriginal Council and LDMG, South Burnett Regional Council, QFES, QPS, Queensland Health, Department of Communities and Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.



SES skills recognised with AC Commendations

On Wear Orange to Work Day (WOW Day), 22 May, three members of the Bundaberg Unit received the Assistant Commissioner's Commendation for displaying a high level of professionalism and skill while assisting in a multi-agency rescue at Elliott Heads.

On Saturday 9 September 2017, three SES Bundaberg Unit members helped the QPS rescue two men from a boat which had run aground on the Elliott River at Elliott Heads. The two men were relocating a large boat in heavy weather and decided to seek shelter, but their boat collided with the break-wall and started to sink. Both men needed help into the SES boat and were taken to shore to receive treatment from QAS.

The Bundaberg Unit also received an Assistant Commissioner Unit Commendation for providing training and support to the crew.



Blake Hyde (Bargara SES), Cameron Sage (Bargara SES) and Sharyn Kilby (Elliott Heads SES) holding the Commendations for Bundaberg Unit.



BRISBANE REGION



TV visits Whyte Island with special guest hosts

The crew at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island put on a show for some very special guests last month.

Blazer welcomed the young patients from the Queensland Children's Hospital and their parents to the facility with their own special film crew from Juiced TV.

Juiced TV, an Australian first entertainment initiative, has been running in the Queensland Children's Hospital since 2015 to help sick kids and their families in hospital, one episode at a time.

The visitors had a chance to use the hoses, look over a fire truck, watch a live fire demonstration and interview recruits for their Juiced TV episode.

Tactical Training Unit manger Sven Diga said everyone had a great day.

"It's an absolute privilege to have the children at the Live Fire campus," he said.

"We gave them a display of running a fuel fire with an operational crew and the looks on their faces were quite overawed. There were lots of 'Ooohs' and 'Ahhhs' and we put a foam blanket over it so it looked like it was snowing."

International exchange firefighter heads home to Canada

Over the last 12 months Canadian firefighter Sonia Duranleau and QFES firefighter Marc Herbert have been participating in an international exchange.

Sonia joined QFES from Richmond Fire Rescue Department, Vancouver, Canada, and was based at Ashgrove, Roma Street, Kemp Place and Taigum stations.



Lance Duncan and Sonia Duranleau.

On Friday 12 July, Regional Assistant Commissioner Lance Duncan presented Sonia with a Certificate of Appreciation during her final night shift.



Maryborough Manager Community Safety Craig Lovell (second from right) with the Caboolture team receiving their runner-up trophy: From left to right: Brett Hines, Chris Broad and Marcus Fitzgerald. Absent - Kane Maley

Monto wins Western Challenge, Caboolture places second

In June, one Brisbane team joined in the fun of North Coast Region's Western Challenge in Gayndah, an annual skills and training competition between fire stations.

A team from Caboolture joined teams from Gayndah, Monto, Mary Valley/Imbil and Pomona/Nambour.

The team from Monto Fire Station won the challenge, Caboolture came second, and the Mary Valley/Imbil team received the Encouragement Award.

Sixteen members from Hervey Bay and Biggenden Emergency Services Cadets were kept busy assisting at the event, making up hoses after each round and ensuring equipment was ready for the next challenge.

Events included two hose reel deliveries, hose and hydrant, direct using FB5X Foam branch, get dressed tanker and direct, and Case 4 with one delivery.

Land search skills

On Saturday 6 July, 10 attendees joined the Brisbane Region SES Regional Land Search course on Lamb Island. The course used trainers from the Brisbane Regional Office, plus volunteer trainers from both the Redlands and Brisbane SES units. The event was also supported by the Lamb Island Rural Fire Service through the provision of their facilities and resources.





SOUTH EASTERN REGION



S/O Nathan Chadwick with RAAF Fire Fighter.

FRS and RAAF work together on Hazmat exercise

On Tuesday 18 June, crews from Ipswich Command delivered a major Hazmat exercise at RAAF Base Amberley, working in conjunction with the RAAF Fire Service.

FRS crews and the RAAF Fire Service work closely due to their proximity, as well as responding to and attending a number of joint incidents each year. The exercise was designed to demonstrate, test and review procedures in the event of a hazardous materials incident occurring on base.

Crews from Ripley – 648A, Bundamba 643A/643L/643S, the Regional Decontamination Trailer and Professional Development staff – conducted an exercise using both RAAF and FRS fighters to set up the Decontamination Trailer, decontamination showers, and hot/warm/cold zones to safely and effectively combat the incident.

The purpose of the exercise was to put in place procedures, look at interoperability, examine how best to achieve the most successful outcomes and to highlight the level of personnel preparedness and capability needed from the RAAF Base Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), #1 Expeditionary Health Squadron, Environmental Health Officers and representatives from the Defence Fuel Installation.

Game of a lifetime played on hallowed turf

What do you get when you cross QPS, QFES and QAS personnel with a group of determined senior school students who are used to facing the odd hurdle in life? Answer: An awesome game of touch football on the hallowed turf of Suncorp Stadium.

On 24 June, representatives from the services intermingled with students and staff from Queensland Pathways State College to create two formidable teams for the 2nd Annual QPSC and Emergency Services Touch Football Game.

As they faced off, each team made up of players from all parties, the individual stakes were high. No self-respecting firefighter was going to let an ambulance officer past them, and every student dreamed of receiving a crisp pass from a police officer before stepping back inside a teacher to score in the corner.

As the game progressed, policing of the rules descended into some form of self-regulation as a quick headcount revealed one team had 19 players on the field compared to 13 for the other team. A quick mutiny by a few players evened up the numbers and play resumed.

Injuries were limited to one ambulance officer's hamstring (self-assessed and self-treated) and the odd bruised ego after a dropped ball or a lazy missed touch.

The overwhelming post-match sentiment was that it needs to be an annual event.

Many thanks to the staff of QPSC who organised the event, players, and Suncorp Stadium management, who allowed a small touch footy game to become a forever-memorable experience for every person there.



Aerron Patterson, Greg Tomlinson, David Clarke and Derek Walsh are taking part in the Blood Challenge.

QFES teams roll up sleeves for Emergency Services Blood Challenge

If there's one thing that beats saving people from burning houses and crashed cars, it's saving them again when they get to hospital.

Area Commander Derek Walsh is just one QFES member giving blood for the Emergency Services Blood Challenge, which pits firefighters, paramedics and SES against each other to see who can donate the most blood during the challenge period.

Mr Walsh said the reward wasn't in winning the competition but to think emergency services staff were possibly helping to save someone's life in a different way.

"We do a local competition between the Gold Coast and West Moreton zones and that gets combined into the state challenge."

QFES is currently in behind Queensland Police Service's donations – 306 compared to 750. The challenge closes 31 August so call your local Red Cross Blood Bank today!



SOUTH WESTERN REGION

Lockyer Valley Girl Guides report for duty

Lockyer Valley Girl Guides recently attended the Gatton Showgrounds to prepare themselves for storm season with the local SES. The girls learnt how to put together a storm kit in preparation for unexpected weather events.

They had a fantastic night searching the showgrounds for items that should be in their Storm Damage Kits and items that should be left at home.

The girls learnt how to prepare and regularly check their kits with items including food and water, first aid supplies and sanitation, lighting, clothing and important documents in the event of an emergency evacuation.

It was an informative night with the girls learning how to be ready for severe storms and floods. They were all excited to be able to go home and talk to their parents about how to get their homes prepared before an emergency and create their own evacuation plans.



Kitchener Street crew have fun at Toowoomba's Teddy Bear picnic with Blazer Bear

Firefighters and Blazer Bear were invited to the Teddy Bears Picnic in Toowoomba on 1 June.

Kitchener St Station on-shift crew had fun at the picnic and talked to the children about fire safety. The crew also showed off their trucks to the young and young-at-heart and, of course, took their own teddy bear, Blazer, for a day out.



SES crews learn more about community engagement

SES volunteers from across the SWR gathered for a two-day Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) workshop on the first weekend in June.

Over the weekend, volunteers were given guidance on community engagement in the emergency services environment, including community profiling, how to prepare to engage communities, the use of social media, delivering presentations and effective messaging.

The sessions allowed the volunteers to fine tune their public speaking skills and taught them new skills in engaging with their communities.



Emergency Services Day a hit in Toowoomba

A beautiful autumn day greeted the Toowoomba community on 25 May for the 2019 Toowoomba Emergency Services Day at Queens Park.

The event brought community members together to promote the emergency and disaster preparedness messages, as well as encouraging residents to meet and talk with emergency services and relevant support agencies, to prepare themselves and their families for disasters and emergency events.

Agencies were out in force showcasing skills, services, equipment and vehicles, as well as providing community members with practical information and tips.

Exhibitors included QFES, QAS, QPS, Lifeflight, PCYC Cadets, ABC Southern Queensland, Queensland Health, Red Cross Emergency Volunteers, Transport and Main Roads, Toowoomba Fire Brigade Historical Society, Toowoomba Regional Council, Ergon Energy, RACQ, Defence Recruiting, Defence Working Dogs and the Red Cross Blood Service.

Get cracking on blue card applications

Check your letterbox for blue card forms as a mass mailout goes across the state in readiness for the December deadline.

QFES is a strong advocate for the protection of vulnerable people in our community, including children. Part of this advocacy means acting to ensure our department is doing all it can to help keep children safe.

There are more than 30 000 QFES staff and volunteers who need to have a valid blue card.

Human Capital Management Assistant Commissioner Stephen Smith said hundreds of blue card applications were arriving every day.

“Since we announced the blue card campaign on 4 June and had the applications available online, we’ve had a solid response,” Mr Smith said.

“We have received more than 5000 applications but with a target of more than 30 000 by 31 December 2019, there are many staff and volunteers who still need to apply.”

A mass mailout of blue card application forms to staff and volunteers identified as needing a blue card went out in August.

The Australia Post-delivered package contains a letter, frequently asked questions, the relevant application forms, and a reply-paid envelope.

“If you receive the package but have already lodged your application, please disregard it, but for those who still need to apply, please complete it and post it back in the provided reply-paid envelope as soon as possible,” Mr Smith said.

“The blue card team is checking and processing applications as quickly as possible but with the number of applications that need

to be processed before the 31 December deadline, the sooner they’re returned the better.”

However, Mr Smith encouraged blue card applicants to make sure their forms were filled in correctly.

“Some applications are still being returned to applicants because the forms have not been completed in full,” he said.

“One of the most common errors is the organisational declaration being left unsigned so have a close look through your application before posting it off. Any QFES colleague, staff or volunteer, can sign this declaration on behalf of QFES.”

Blue card applications are also available on the Gateway.

Mr Smith said local managers and staff will also be actively making sure that all applications are completed for their local area to ensure everyone who needs a blue card has one by the cutoff.

“This is important because all QFES staff and volunteers identified as requiring a blue card must be issued one to comply with the Queensland Government’s No Card No Start policy,” he said.

“Any QFES staff member or volunteer identified as requiring a blue card who does not have one by the deadline will not be able to work in certain positions within QFES.”

Staff or volunteers can direct all questions to QFES.Bluecard@qfes.qld.gov.au



Many QFES staff and volunteers work with children and young people as part of their duties.



Pulling the jersey on for 9/11

Senior firefighter Cameron Mackenzie had an idea to honour his fallen US colleagues – a footy match about much more than just claiming bragging rights.

The QFES versus Queensland Police Service (QPS) rugby league match is a tradition firmly rooted in a good cause – to honour the emergency services workers who lost their lives in the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks.

Next month, in a first for the commemorative match, the QFES and QPS teams will head to New York to play.

Brisbane senior firefighter Cameron Mackenzie said he knew QFES needed a way to pay tribute to their overseas counterparts, who he considers part of the wider emergency services “family”.

“We all feel any loss; when you hear about firefighters going through anything - losing lives - it sort of hits home for all of us around the world,” he said.

“For them to lose that many, we felt we needed something to formally recognise it.”

Mr Mackenzie said a game of rugby league was the perfect option for two services stacked with natural football talent.

“We have got a lot of pretty good ex-footballers here in the fire service. We knew QPS would have a fair side – we thought we could match them and maybe beat them,” he said.

“It’s really fiery – there’s always a lot of feeling in it. However, everyone also understands why we’re playing.

“On the field we give it our all but afterwards we shake hands and give each other the respect we deserve.”



Firefighter Brendan Dumbrell scores a try during a QFES vs FRNSW match. Picture by: Chloe Tapp

The September match will be the first to go abroad – a big idea made possible by the players’ hard work and determination.

“We’ve always had it [playing in the US] in the back of our minds, but it’s a huge undertaking to get both teams over there. We’ve got a connection over there with a few of the stations and they’re hopefully going to generate a bit of a crowd.

“Running out in front of the people we’ve been honouring for all these years – it’s

going to be awesome. The boys are pumped.”

With a team of more than 20 players, as well as a support squad, competition for spots on the field will be tight.

“I would like to run out for five or 10 minutes. A lot of the guys are in their late 30s or early 40s, so we want to run out over there for the last time and probably throw our boots in the Hudson River afterwards.”

Mr Mackenzie said the trip will also be an opportunity to see some of the 911 memorials first-hand. More than 3000 people, including 343 firefighters and 60 police officers, lost their lives in the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001.

“We will link up with them [Fire Department New York] on 911 and join them for the memorial ceremonies. Anytime we go overseas they welcome us with open arms.”

And as for which team has claimed bragging rights between the two services?

“We started in 2011, so this is the ninth year. We missed a year because of G20 but the good guys are winning seven to one.”



The QFES team huddles at a practice match in the lead up to the big game. Picture by: Chloe Tapp

QFES cadets put their skills to the test

The next generation of emergency services competed in the 2019 Cadet Games, preparing themselves for a future on the frontline.

In the ultimate test of camaraderie, skill and determination, this year's Cadet Games brought together some of Queensland's most talented teens.

Two PCYC Queensland events were held in Townsville and Brisbane, where members of the Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESCP) went up against other teams to compete in challenges such as a vehicle pull, fire building challenge, target games and rob the nest.

The Games are judged by emergency service and defence personnel who volunteer their time to provide feedback and encouragement to the next generation.

QFES' partnership with PCYC Queensland helps to develop and mentor young people

by giving them the skills they need to work in the emergency services field and become young leaders in their communities.

Hughenden Emergency Services Cadet

Brayden Wright has been involved with the ESCP for five years and has attended the North Queensland Cadet Games since its inception in April 2015.

Brayden said being a cadet had taught him team work, communication and leadership skills.

"Being a cadet has given me the opportunity to see what it would be like to work in emergency services, and I've seen first-hand what firefighters, police officers and emergency responders do in their daily lives," he said.

"I have made a lot of friends through cadets and I plan on staying connected with the community and joining emergency services in one way or another."



Emergency services cadets compete at the Townsville Games.

Fundraising Challenge kicks off

QFES members across the state will again compete against one another to raise funds for the Children's Hospital Foundation (CHF) to help sick kids access life-saving equipment.

The 2019 Regional Fundraising Challenge officially launched in July and now QFES staff and volunteers are busy organising fundraising events and activities around the state.

Not only is it a chance to raise funds for a very worthy cause, it's an opportunity for some friendly competition between the QFES regions, including state office, who will all be seeking the title of challenge winners.

Funds raised will go towards the purchase of an Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) pump for the Queensland Children's Hospital. ECMO pumps provide temporary heart and lung support to move blood and oxygen around the body while eliminating carbon dioxide.

Gin Gin Rural Fire Service volunteer Aaron Winderlich knows too well how important these machines are. His daughter Rita, who is now a Child Ambassador for CHF, received life-saving treatment with an ECMO pump after being airlifted from Bundaberg Hospital.

"We need all of QFES to get behind this fundraising so this equipment can be supplied to all hospitals in Queensland," he said.

CHF Child Ambassador William McKillop (pictured at the challenge launch at Kedron with his family) also received life-saving treatment from an ECMO pump after he caught an infection that threatened his life.

Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing urged all staff and volunteers to get involved in such a valuable cause.

"This year we are looking for Charity Champions from each region to drive the local FUN-raising events," he said.

Interested Charity Champions can nominate by emailing Partnerships@qfes.qld.gov.au. Names will appear on the Gateway as the local fundraising contacts for this program. A pack of resources has been sent to all regions' AC office for champions to access.

Check out the Regional Fundraising Challenge gateway page under 'Major Projects and Events' for more information and resources.



At the launch: Assistant Commissioner John Cawcutt, Executive Director Gen Wilcox, Eamonn Lennon, Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing, Kathryn, Tom and baby Will McKillop, Assistant Commissioner Joanne Greenfield, Clinton Neumann, and CHF CEO Rosie Simpson.

QFES joins international disaster response exercise in America

In an Australian first, the Queensland AUS-1 Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) conducted a full-scale deployment exercise to the United States in early June to test the Queensland and Australian capability to respond to an international earthquake disaster.

The Queensland AUS-1 team combined with the New South Wales DART (AUS-2), Emergency Management Australia (EMA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to deploy a 54-person Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team to participate in Exercise Shaken Fury; a simulated earthquake in Indiana.

The team was supported by a six-person Exercise Control team to coordinate continuous rescue activities over the three-day period, working in shifts around the clock.

The exercise required six months of planning and the full mobilisation of the joint Australian DART, including 14 tonnes of rescue equipment from the Queensland USAR Cache, to fly to the USA.

Exercise Shaken Fury was the largest USAR exercise ever undertaken in the United States and was attended by more than 800 personnel from 21 United States jurisdictions, including eight US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) USAR teams.

Exercise Director and QFES lead for the exercise development, Chief Superintendent Brad Commens, said that the success of the exercise was a result of thorough planning and engagement between QFES, FRNSW



and EMA, and the continued engagement of the FEMA management team from the United States.

“The Australian team worked on seven different work sites over the exercise period, testing the capability of QFES and Queensland Ambulance Service personnel, as well as volunteer doctors, engineers, and canine handlers in a dynamic environment that was as close to a real earthquake as possible,” Mr Commens said.

The exercise was attended by Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche and Assistant Commissioner Steve Smith as part of the multi-national observers’ program.

Deputy Commissioner Roche said the successful exercise was an excellent demonstration of the Queensland and Australian capability to respond to natural disasters and earthquake situations in Queensland, Australia, and overseas in support of communities in need.





The Townsville graduating class.

Recruit firefighter training impresses Townsville locals

Townsville is hosting two of five QFES recruit firefighter courses this year, a big win for the northern Queensland city.

Recruit Fire and Rescue Service firefighter training is an intensive 78-day program that sees recruits learn live fire behaviour, road crash rescue, technical rescue and hazardous materials management, before they graduate and take up posts around the state.

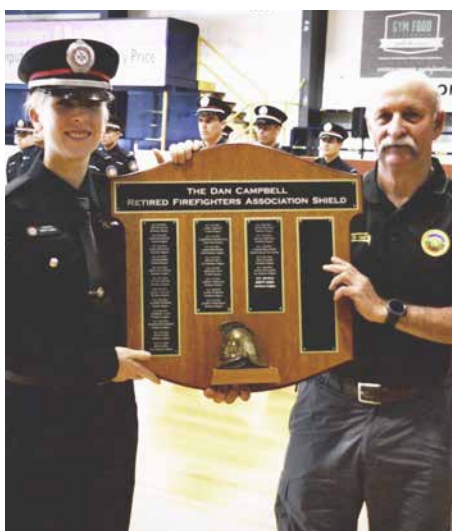
This year around 140 people are due to complete the training, an extra 50 firefighters on top of the usual annual intake.

Executive Manager for the Strategic Training Command at the School of Fire and Emergency Services, Superintendent Ricky May, said to meet the extra demand, it was decided to conduct two of the five courses in Townsville.

“The combined Northern Training Operations Support Complex, which opened last year, has state of the art equipment,” Mr May said.

“This is a combined facility with the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service and everyone has worked together to provide the space and equipment to help deliver these courses.”

Manager Northern Campus, Acting Inspector Michael Bampton, said Townsville locals



Recent Townsville graduate Kristy Samal was presented with the Dan Campbell Shield by Retired Firefighters Association representative David Clifford.

had seen the recruits training and the additional fire trucks around town and had been curious about what was going on.

“Training has been taking place at various locations around Townsville. Reid Park, the home of the Townsville Supercars event, is where recruits hone their skills and drills, pump operation and objective focus operational training,” he said.

“Woodlands Fire Station is the where we

conduct breathing apparatus, confined space and vertical rescue training.”

“Many are surprised by how diverse the training is and what recruits are capable of by the end of the recruit course.”

Mr Bampton said running the recruit courses in Townsville would provide a significant injection into the Townsville economy.

“This campus is supporting local businesses through purchasing local goods and services for the delivery of the course, including equipment, accommodation and meals,” he said.

The first Townsville recruit course graduated in June and the second will follow in October. One of the 26 graduates, Kristy Samal, moved from chilly Canberra a few years ago but now proudly calls Townsville home.

“I was fortunate to be accepted into the course by QFES and even more so when the training school was hosted here in Townsville,” Ms Samal said.

“I love the community here in Townsville and have really enjoyed living here and being given the opportunity to help serve my community.



Northern Region QFES members were recently awarded Certificates of Appreciation from QPS for their assistance at two incidents. In 2018, Zane Hicks, Paul Harvey and Kyle Keighery (pictured) helped police diffuse a life-threatening situation to ensure the safety of a young woman. QFES volunteers were also awarded for their assistance at a car crash on Palm Island in 2017.



Three QFES teams from Cairns and Brisbane competed in the Australasian Rescue Challenge 2019 (ARC 2019) in Dubbo, NSW, from 25-28 July. There were 21 teams from Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. The Brisbane South team (pictured) came fourth overall and won the Best Technical Team and picked up third in the controlled pit challenge. The Brisbane North team also picked up a first in the Time Critical Pit challenge.



In July, D Shift firefighters from Kippa-Ring station participated in a multi-agency exercise with the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard based on the Redcliffe Peninsula. A scenario was developed around a marine vessel on fire.



In June, 31 Air Cadets and 12 guardians from all over the world visited the Petrie SES Group as part of their Australian tour organised by the local RAAF Association Pine Rivers and Sandgate Branch located within the SES Group precinct. This is the third year the group has been visited by the cadets.



Swiftwater rescue technicians recently took part in special training to maintain their skills on the Tully River. The course consisted of three days of land-based training and seven days on the river, covering working with lines, rescue techniques, Inflatable Work Platform handling, search techniques and a night exercise.



More than 30 firefighting and aviation professionals from across Australia, New Zealand and Nauru sharpened their skills during a three-day course at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy last month. Dubbed Live Fire Masterclass, the course brought together national and international representatives in a first for the organisation.



Acacia Ridge B Shift crew helped rescue a dog stuck up a tree. On arrival, Axel the dog was spotted high up in a large mango tree. The owner said Axel was a repeat offender tree climber. Possums are the lure. Armed with a long ladder and dog treats, Axel was successfully removed and returned with a few minor cuts to his grateful owner. The possum was located unharmed.



Fearless volunteers from Guanaba and Mudgeeraba RFBs and Scenic Rim SES Unit completed the gruelling 15th annual 96km Kokoda Challenge last month. The challenge, which attracted more than 800 walkers, raises money for The Kokoda Youth Foundation.



In July Minister Craig Crawford presented medals and handed over an RFS appliance at the Maryborough Fire Station. From left: NCR AC Gary McCormack, Warren McKean, Trevor Doyle, Brett Johns, Tracy Scheffler, Mark McGrath, Justin Watts and Minister Crawford.



Even Paddy the Platypus, the SES Queensland mascot, needs to hone his CPR skills. In June, Paddy and a team of volunteers from the Redcliffe group, along with Redcliffe QAS, conducted public education displays at the annual Grace Lutheran School fete at Clontarf.



Team QFES, led by Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing, participated in the Canungra Combat Challenge in July, the only 'tough mudder' type event held on a military base. Beechmont RFB stepped up to the challenge too.



Firefighters from Airlie Beach visited a very happy and excited young crowd at Scallywags Child Care last month. The kids had a turn with the hose and checked out the truck.

Hangin' up their helmets

ACs Neil Reid and John Watson retire after a combined 74 years in the fire service.

QFES last month farewelled newly retired Assistant Commissioner South Eastern Region Neil Reid after 37 years in the service.

Mr Reid started as a recruit aged 22 at Metro Brisbane Station on 5 July 1982, and he retired exactly 37 years later to the date – 5 July 2019 – but being a firefighter wasn't his original plan.

"I was studying engineering and when I started dating my wife, my father-in-law was a station officer and I thought it sounded like a good career – it sounded interesting and exciting," Mr Reid said.

A lot has changed during Mr Reid's almost four decades on the job, however, the core of firefighting and being a firefighter remains the same.

"Every day in this job is different and that's what the job brings – change and challenges. There are not many jobs where you go to work and find yourself on different tasks each day," he said.

"The last four years in South Eastern Region was a challenge for me that I

enjoyed but I'm proud to have worked on projects that will be a lasting legacy, like the smoke alarm legislation that we were able to get over the line.

"I've been lucky to be part of this process and have the opportunity to help shape the future."

And Mr Reid's advice to new firefighters?

"This is a fantastic job. I have no doubt that as we progress there will be even more opportunity to explore different career paths in the service, so make the most of every opportunity and don't be frightened to have a go."

Specialist Response and Planning Assistant Commissioner John Watson will also retire from QFES early next year, after a long and distinguished career.

Assistant Commissioner Watson joined the fire service as a firefighter in Bundaberg in June 1982.

"When I joined the service in '82, we were part of the Fire Brigade Board, which only looked at the local community," Mr Watson said.

"I've enjoyed watching us evolve into rescue, hazardous materials management and other disciplines of rescue and disaster management.

"It's been a fantastic journey in broadening an organisation into the future and it will continue to change."

After 37 years, the feelings of retirement are mixed.

"I've got mixed emotions. It's strange when you start thinking about what you're going to miss but I'm really looking forward to it – post FRS, family and holidays," he said.

"It's a decision that makes itself. You know when the time is right.

"It's not that I don't love what I do – I'm totally engaged in what I do and will do until the day I leave – but the time is right to do something different. I've got a wonderful family and I think they deserve a bit more of my time.

"I think the organisation is well placed to deal with any emergency and I'll be a very interested spectator from the sidelines from now on."



Retirees: Retiring ACs Neil Reid (left) and John Watson (right) pictured at the Commonwealth Games with DC Mark Roche are looking forward to more time with their families and travelling.

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