

# RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 4



IF IT'S FLOODED,  
**FORGET IT.**



## WHAT'S YOUR PLAN B?

NEW 'IF IT'S FLOODED, FORGET IT' CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF

**MEETING DEMAND:**

MODEL HELPS PREDICT DEMAND AND RESOURCE CAPABILITY

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**GET HEALTHY:**

EXPO SERIES OFFERS FREE HEALTH AND WELLBEING INFORMATION

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FIRECOM RECRUITS CELEBRATE MANY FIRSTS FOR QFES

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# FOREWORDS



**Katarina Carroll**

## Commissioner

### QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The end of the year is quickly approaching and there has been a lot of work carried out both operationally between bushfire and storm season, as well as in transforming the organisation at large.

We have recently announced a new streamlined recruitment process for Fire and Rescue for 2016 and applications are now open after closing quite some time ago.

The Innovation and Transformation Unit has also been working feverishly to get around the state to follow up the surveys completed earlier this year with more in-depth focus groups and meetings with our workforce. Undertaking these surveys was a big priority when I started with QFES and now that we have the data at our disposal, we want to delve deeper.

By the end of the year, focus groups for Regional and State Offices will be completed with further meetings at stations and Firecom centres to continue.

Recently the five Assistant Commissioner vacancies were advertised and I envision these to be filled in the near future.

We also recently recognised a huge milestone for fire services in Queensland, with 150 years of firefighting celebrated in Ipswich. Can I thank everyone for their commitment and dedication to protecting their community and being an integral part of their community, and with that in mind, I wish to thank all those in QFES who will be working over the Christmas and New Year period.

Best wishes to you and your families at this special time of year.



**Mike Wassing**

## Deputy Commissioner

### EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

In my first few months as Deputy Commissioner I have first and foremost been getting to know QFES as an organisation and of course the Emergency Services Volunteers division.

As an organisation made up of multiple services, it is my role to advocate for and represent our volunteers, ensuring that volunteers are respected, recognised and valued.

Among our Emergency Services Volunteers division, there is such diversity, and this is both a strength and challenge.

Our volunteers are a reflection of the communities we serve and as such both our volunteers and those communities have different needs, skills, knowledge and levels of resilience.

Regardless, it is without doubt that all of QFES, volunteers included, are part of this organisation with the same intent and objectives and that is with the community's safety as the main priority.

We speak a lot about collaboration, and while we are made up of individual services, our whole agency exists to build and support community resilience and we must do that together.

Volunteers bring things that aren't taught on training nights – local knowledge, skills from their regular workplaces, community relationships – and so it's important that at every level, volunteers are engaged and consulted when it comes to decision making for QFES.

It is timely to remind everyone that while this is traditionally a busy time operationally, it is important to ensure time is also spent with family and friends over the holiday period.


Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.





# What's your Plan B?

A renewed 'If it's flooded, forget it' campaign has rolled out ahead of the worst of the summer storm season, urging motorists to be prepared with a Plan B.



No matter who you are, no matter what you drive, the moment you decide to push through floodwater, you give up control.

This is the message behind the \$5 million 'If it's flooded, forget it' road safety campaign which began on 15 November.

The new advertising will appear on screens, on the radio, online, in newspapers and on billboards into mid-2016 to get the message across.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the campaign had been based on telling research which identified why drivers take the risk.

"A comprehensive survey of driver attitudes across Queensland revealed many drivers did not understand the risks when driving into floodwater and they often feel pressured to do so by other drivers or their own strong desire to get home," Ms Carroll said.

"Thirty-six per cent of males and 23 per cent of females admitted to driving through floodwaters when they shouldn't have and the pressure for people to get home or to get to work was a key factor when they made this decision.

"The campaign challenges motorists to have an alternative plan and change their attitudes and behaviours when faced with flooded roads.

"It's vitally important we all plan ahead when extreme weather is predicted."

In addition to the advertising campaign a new crowd-sourced Flooded Roads Map is also now available, collating information on commonly-flooded roads with the aim of assisting Queenslanders to prepare a Plan B route to work or home well in advance.



**IF IT'S FLOODED,  
FORGET IT.**



“The message to all drivers, including you and your family members, is to have a Plan B ready long before you find yourself facing a flooded road,” Ms Carroll said.

“Your Plan B should include identifying alternative routes around flooded crossings, knowing the safest options for using the roads while you wait for the water to recede, and making arrangements with your family and friends for collecting the kids from school – your Plan B could mean you stay at work or at home until the weather event has passed.

“We know that the ‘If it’s flooded, forget it’ message is recognisable in communities and people know the phrase, but we need to ensure that it’s translating to real actions when drivers are faced with water on the road.”

Ms Carroll said the aim of the campaign was to reduce the incidence of motorists entering floodwaters which in turn would reduce the need for swiftwater technicians to enter a dangerous rescue scenario.

“Our swiftwater technicians are all highly skilled and are dedicated to protecting the community when they need to, but the more the public is educated about floodwater safety, the less our technicians will have to put themselves at risk,” she said.

The campaign was developed by PSBA Media in collaboration with QFES, Transport and Main Roads, Local Government, Education QLD, Department of Premier and Cabinet and other stakeholders.



Visit [www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety](http://www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety) for more information on the campaign and the Flooded Roads Map.



## New modelling tool predicts resourcing needs for QFES

A tool designed for QFES in partnership with PSBA is helping the organisation plan resourcing more efficiently both now and into the future.



Harvesting the knowledge and experience from responses to past incidents has helped develop a new tool to assist QFES decision makers in allocating resources in the future.

The Demand and Resource Model is being rolled out to strategic and operational personnel across the state following an eight month period of development and testing.

A PSBA project team worked in close partnership with QFES and model developer Strategenics to create an “evidence base” that would be able to inform future resourcing decisions.

This evidence base was created by sourcing stories from QFES personnel about real-life scenarios they had encountered, ensuring the data was current and reflected QFES’ core business requirements.

The aim of the model is to inform decisions on the most appropriate location and allocation of resources to deliver public safety outcomes.

The model can also show current and future demand scenarios, assisting QFES to identify and analyse opportunities to continually improve performance and optimise service delivery.

For example, a number of scenarios can be run as supporting information for decision making on changes to a station’s location and crewing. With further development there is potential for this model to show the impact on emergency response times.

There is also capacity for the model to test the impact of current and future drivers of QFES services such as fire seasonality and the impact of population growth in the urban environment.

# New PIO training rolled out

A renewed Public Information Officer (PIO) training package is being rolled out across QFES to improve communicating with the public during incidents.

As the community's thirst for frequent information has changed with the advent of online news, social media and smart technology, the PIO role has become more important than ever before.

The PIO is a crucial function in Incident Management Teams (IMT), overseeing community liaison, information and warnings and media.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said she believed filling the PIO function was as essential as all other operational roles at an incident.

"I truly believe excellent engagement and communication can save just as many lives as the exceptional response on the ground," she said.

"I have an expectation that the PIO role is filled as early as all the other roles because getting that messaging out is essential."

Incident Management Development Unit Inspector Kevin White said in the past, the PIO role had been under-utilised at incidents.

"With the introduction of AIMS fourth edition, this has changed and there is a clear expectation that the PIO function will be filled, trained and exercised," he said.

"We have revamped the PIO training bringing it in line with other functional roles."

QFES Media Director Troy Davies said PIOs and QFES Media had to work together to better inform communities.

"Communities want to know what we're doing operationally but more than anything they want to know what they need to do to keep themselves safe," he said.

"They expect up-to-date and accurate information at their fingertips day and night.

"The QFES Media team plays a significant role in providing information but we can't be at every incident and we can't do it alone, we need the support of local operational staff.

"By working together we can provide the community with the information they need to stay safe."

If you would like to express interest in undertaking PIO training, contact your regional Fire and Rescue Manager of Professional Development.

... excellent engagement and communication

can save just as many lives

as the exceptional response on the ground.





# GWN goes live

**South Eastern Region has seamlessly transitioned to the Government Wireless Network as the first emergency service in the region on the network.**

GOVERNMENT WIRELESS NETWORK



Following three years of planning and preparations, QFES successfully transitioned 270 vehicles in the South Eastern Region onto the Government Wireless Network (GWN).

The region was the first emergency service to fully transition and did so with no major issues reported.

The Queensland Ambulance Service followed the next day, with the Queensland Police Service transitioning the following week in the South Eastern Region.

The network has stood up to testing in significant events including the Fernvale storms, a large structure fire at Gatton and also the Gold Coast 600.

South Eastern Region Director of Regional Development Greg Tomlinson said the day would be remembered as a significant day for QFES and particularly South Eastern Region into the future.

“Years of preparation and planning went in to this milestone event, with a number of Queensland government departments, Telstra and Motorola collectively coming together to provide the future of emergency services communication in south-east Queensland,” he said.

“The South Eastern Region team supported by the QFES GWN and State Fire Communications Branch teams were meticulous in the transition, with staff

strategically placed across the region to ensure a smooth and supportive transition.

“As the first stations and brigades officially came online, anticipation mounted awaiting the first digital dispatch and response.

“A cat stuck in a drain may not have been the most exciting of turnouts, but it was a “purrfect” outcome for so many involved in the project.”

Feedback for the network’s performance has been overwhelmingly positive so far.

The GWN team is now preparing to transition the Brisbane Region in December, with Northern Region and South Western Region to follow in late January to early February.



# QFES gets Healthy, Wealthy and Wise



QFES had the highest representation at the inaugural Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Expo in Cairns, open to Queensland Government staff and volunteers to assist in making healthy lifestyle choices.

QSuper has supported a series of 10 health and wellbeing expos over the coming year in regional centres across the state covering physical, nutritional, mental and financial health.

Earlier this year it was identified in the Commissioner's Future of QFES Survey that at least 50 per cent of respondents wanted to be fitter and healthier.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the expo series was a good avenue for staff and volunteers to take part in group fitness classes, cooking demonstrations, health assessments and positive parenting seminars.

"The health, wellbeing and safety of our people is of the highest priority to QFES and I encourage staff and volunteers to take what they can out of these expos to help improve their lives," Ms Carroll said.

"Research suggests that employees who have appropriate opportunities to participate in health and wellbeing activities experience fewer workplace injuries, reduced absenteeism, improved productivity, engagement and morale so it's a win-win for everyone when people are happy and healthy."

PSBA Safety and Wellbeing Director Colin Anderson said the first two expos in Cairns and Brisbane were highly successful.

"There are eight more expos planned next year in Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Hervey Bay, Rockhampton and Townsville," he said.

"In addition, there are plans for this program to be run again in 2017 and 2018."

➤ For more information visit the Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Expo website at [www.hwwexpo.com](http://www.hwwexpo.com)





# QFES and QGAir join forces

QFES and QGAir have conducted joint training in winch rescue in the lead-up to the summer storm season.



Around the state, technical rescue officers are working closely with the Government air wing in familiarisation exercises to brush up on their skills.

Brisbane Region Technical Rescue Coordinator Doug May said more than 20 officers from Brisbane and South Eastern regions received training in the Bell 412 Rescue 500 aircraft at the Archerfield base in October.

“Our officers are trained annually in winch and aircraft familiarisation to complement their technical rescue skills,” he said.

“Officers could be winched into a number of

rescue situations including vertical rescue and swiftwater rescue, and even now into road crash rescue situations where local services are unable to respond.

“We cross train with QGAir rescue crews and offer them training in swiftwater rescue while they assist us with winch rescue training.”

QGAir Senior Aircrew Officer Greg Beer said the annual training was beneficial for both agencies as well as the public.

“Ultimately the joint agency response to a flood emergency or rescue situation benefits the wider general community of Queensland,” he said.

The training included being winched in and out of the Bell 412 aircraft as well as a contracted Dauphin aircraft from McDermott’s which will assist QFES this season in pre-deploying air resources ahead of severe weather activity.

The officers also recently practiced swimming in PPE and boat handling.

Roma Street Station Officer Greg Duncan said it was important to train in these skills regularly, as every shift was unpredictable.

“You never know when you’re going to be called upon,” he said.

“Out of the blue you could arrive at work and end up on a helicopter, and it’s not the kind of thing you can just do for the first time once you’re on the job.”



## Power corporations band together »» to assist SES ««

State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers will reap the benefits from an historic sponsorship deal that will see the state’s three electricity network corporations partner to support the SES in Queensland.

SES volunteers joined representatives from Energex, Ergon and Powerlink to officially launch the \$200,000 partnership at the Brisbane RNA showgrounds in October.

The sponsorship deal, which is the first time that the three electricity network corporations have worked together to support a volunteer-based organisation, will fund new equipment for SES units throughout the state.

Deputy Commissioner Emergency Services Volunteers Mike Wassing thanked the three energy corporations for their support.

“Queensland’s 5,900 SES volunteers pride themselves on being there for the community when disaster strikes,” Mr Wassing said.

“On many occasions our volunteers work side-by-side with operational personnel from Energex, Ergon and Powerlink to assist vulnerable members of the community.

“That frontline teamwork and collaboration between the agencies during operational responses has inspired this special funding.

“With this sponsorship our SES volunteers will be able to purchase important equipment to further enhance their response to severe weather events in Queensland.”

Energex CEO Terry Effenev, Ergon’s Chief Executive Ian McLeod and Powerlink Queensland Executive Manager of Stakeholder Relations and Corporate Services Michelle Palmer were present at the launch of the partnership and all agreed the deal would further enhance the great working relationship between the SES and the corporations to support Queenslanders.





## Retaining volunteers a priority

Author Sally Steward imparted the lessons she has learnt in volunteer recruitment and retainment in a special presentation to QFES personnel.

The difference between recruiting and retaining quality volunteers was explored in a presentation hosted by the Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command (VESTC) in October.

Sally Steward, author of *Emergency Service Volunteers: How to get them and keep them*, has joined the VESTC team for 12 months and presented a session based on her book to an audience of QFES personnel at QCESA.

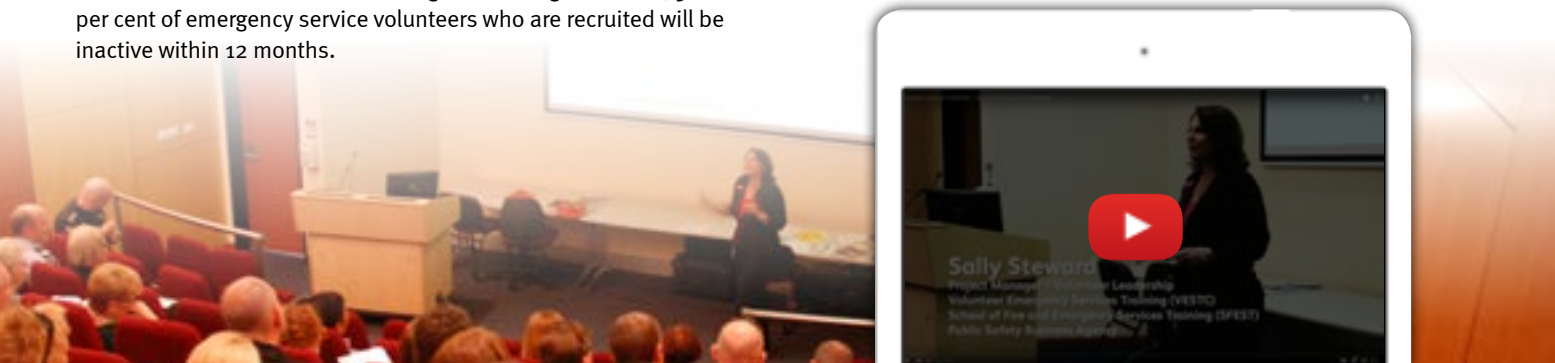
Ms Steward cited research indicating in some organisations, 50 per cent of emergency service volunteers who are recruited will be inactive within 12 months.

“Any organisation that relies on volunteers to operate has a huge task when it comes to recruiting, retaining and leading them effectively,” she said.

Ms Steward said part of the key was in developing effective volunteer leadership.

“Volunteers are far less tolerant of poor leadership than they would be in paid occupations so we therefore need to address this issue, and develop leadership skills so that we can maintain volunteer capacity.”

To see the full presentation, visit <https://youtu.be/uOjx17cKBTY>



## TEM completes mitigation schedule with help from RFSQ



Training and Emergency Management and rural fire brigades have worked together to reduce bushfire risk.

A partnership between RFSQ volunteers and TEM has enabled TEM to use the existing skills and experiences of volunteers in its schedule of hazard mitigation activities.

During the hazard mitigation season these burns can offer a revenue stream to rural fire brigades by hiring out one of their appliances with a crew.

These burns are not just a chance to raise funds for their brigade but also provide invaluable experience for the volunteers fighting fires in a highly controlled environment.

Fire and Rescue firefighters who may attend are also able to experience a hazard mitigation burn, which is outside of their normal scope of firefighting experiences.



If your brigade is interested in assisting the TEM Burn Teams please give TEM a call on **1300 650 028** or visit <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/training>

# Firecom recruits graduate new course

The first group of Firecom recruits to undertake a new centralised Firecom Recruit Course has graduated with impressive results.

Seven Firecom Recruit Course graduates are the first to come through a new 14-week course and have done so with a 100 per cent pass rate.

A number of firsts have been celebrated including the first official graduation ceremony for Fire Communications Officers, which took place in November to acknowledge the seven graduates.

The new recruit course has been centralised to provide a standardised benchmark for training across the state, improve the mentoring and support for recruits and boost interoperability across Firecom centres.

The training includes intensive study and weeks of practical experience including taking over Triple Zero (000) calls at Firecom Southport.

This first graduating class will be deployed to Firecom centres in Rockhampton, Kawana, Toowoomba and Townsville, and the next recruit course will begin in April 2016.



# INCSnap wins allocades

QFES' INCSnap tool has attracted another award, taking out gold for location-based apps at The Smarties APAC awards.

The QFES INCSnap application has secured gold in an international mobile marketing awards scheme which honours innovation, creativity and success.

In The Smarties APAC awards, INCSnap was competing against apps developed across the Asia-Pacific region and took out its category for location-based apps.

Since its development last year, the INCSnap mobile phone app has allowed operational staff with QFES iPhones to provide images and videos from an incident to off-site decision makers in Incident Control Centres or Operations Centres.

In addition to operational support, INCSnap has allowed greater communication with the community via social media, as images

posted on QFES channels provide a timely picture of what is happening so residents can make a decision about their own course of action.

Out of 12 categories in The Smarties APAC, four Australian apps took out gold, including INCSnap.





# EVP project receives Hall of Fame award

The Emergency Vehicle Priority (EVP) project, which enables approaching fire and ambulance appliances to change traffic lights to green, has won an international Hall of Fame award.



The EVP system used by QFES since 2012 has been recognised at the Intelligent Transport System World Congress in Bordeaux, France.

Launched on the Gold Coast three years ago, the system detects emergency vehicles with lights and sirens approaching enabled intersections and changes the traffic light to green before it arrives if safe to do so.

This system halts traffic coming from different directions in a more natural pattern, improving safety for road users and ultimately cutting minutes off emergency response times.

Now available on the Gold Coast, in Bundaberg, North Brisbane, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast with 754 intersections and 67 fire appliances enabled, more than

22,000 green lights were given via EVP to fire appliances in 2014-15.

The system has attracted a number of awards at a state and national level and as a result of securing the National Intelligent Transport System Award last year, EVP was nominated by ITS Australia for consideration for the worldwide ITS Achievement Awards.

The awards were presented in October in France and the system received the Hall of Fame award for the Local Government category.

The project is delivered by PSBA and Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) with co-funding from QFES, Queensland Ambulance Service and TMR.

## Emergency Vehicle Priority Project



## QFES and MFB work together on training

**A trip to a new fire training facility in Victoria ended in benefits for both QFES and the Melbourne Fire Brigade (MFB).**

When two QFES Live Fire Recruit instructors went to visit MFB's new Craigieburn fire training facility, it was the beginning of a valuable information-sharing partnership.

Station Officers Sven Diga and Matthew Quinn observed the recruit training package offered by MFB to compare it with what is on offer with their current QFES recruit training package.

Mr Diga said he was impressed by the amount of passion displayed by the MFB instructors in producing a high quality product.

Demonstrations at the new facility included compartment burns, Petrochemical and USAR training.

"The MFB's training facility was a great eye opener for the future of firefighter training," he said.

"With the shared information, we will be able to use the formats from both recruit programs and produce quality firefighters in Queensland and Victoria."

## Wafa gets muddy

**Queensland firefighters representing Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc (Wafa) have taken part in the Miss Muddy women's obstacle course series.**

Queensland's female firefighters have proven they're not afraid to get their hands dirty participating in the Miss Muddy series.

QFES Acting Superintendent and Wafa Vice-Chair Michelle Young travelled to Sydney in September to take part while RFSQ Area Training and Support Officer Helaine Clerk entered a team in the Townsville event.

"Miss Muddy is a challenge which incorporates many of the attributes of firefighting: physical fitness, agility, mental toughness and, of course, team work," said Ms Young.

"It was great to see the different services work together as one; crossing borders, brigades and states with seamless integration, enhancing and promoting all of the services involved.

"Diversity and inclusion were the real winners on the day."

Fire and Rescue NSW Station Officer and Wafa Chairperson Bronnie Mackintosh said Wafa had partnered with the organisers of Miss Muddy, offering a chance to promote awareness of opportunities to work or volunteer in firefighting to more women.

"Having a presence at the Townsville event was incredibly successful and we are looking forward to enhancing these opportunities at future Miss Muddy events, not only in Queensland, but across Australia," Ms Mackintosh said.

Wafa is a not-for-profit organisation supporting women in, or considering a role in, the firefighting industry.



➤ To find out more about Wafa, visit [www.wafa.asn](http://www.wafa.asn).

## North Coast Region



Firefighters from Noosa Fire and Rescue Station were part of the annual Noosa Camp Quality camp for children who are battling with cancer.

Every year the on-shift crew pay the children a visit for a chat and to hand out stickers and other fire safety goodies.

The children got a tour around the fire appliance and had the chance to use the hoses.

The firefighters were proud to be able to support such a worthwhile cause.

*Thanks to Merv Bonnell*



The Get Ready Emergency Services Expo was held in October along the Kawana lakefront as a lead-up to the official launch of the 2016 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games.

The expo aimed to increase community preparedness for emergency events, as well as promote the various emergency services.

There was a variety of displays and demonstrations from QFES as well as other emergency agencies.

The SES showed how to sandbag, the Fire and Rescue command vehicle Sierra was on display and the kitchen fire and bushfire simulators attracted a lot of interest.

Blazer the fire mascot was a hit with the children as always and prizes were available for the community who attended each display.

The Games launch that followed also involved our services as the torch was lowered by rescue helicopter and an SES boat provided a guard to the shore where representatives from the SES, RFSQ and Fire and Rescue marched with the torch and local paralympians into the stadium where the cauldron was lit.

*Thanks to Julie Bruynius.*





## Brisbane Region

### The Bribie Island Combined Emergency Services Expo was held on 11 October at Volunteer Marine Rescue.

Around 5,000 people attended to watch demonstrations from QFES, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Volunteer Marine Rescue, Maritime Safety Queensland among other agencies.

The annual expo kicked off Get Ready Week – the state-wide campaign aimed at preparing Queenslanders for extreme weather events.



### A group of Brisbane firefighters have taken a decommissioned fire appliance on its 10th run in the XXXX Gold Variety Bash raising more than \$15,000.

The OV Fire team including David Lloyd, Lawrence Bell and Graham Bridges drove 6,000km from Cairns to Kingfisher Bay in this year's bash.

David Lloyd and the OV Fire vehicle were given "legend" status after completing 10 consecutive Bashes.

The crew even had to use their firefighting skills to assist with a car rollover during the Bash.

They even made some pit stops at schools to talk to students about fire safety.

The OV Fire team contributed to \$1.1 million raised by this year's Bash and plan to be back again next year.



### Brisbane Unit SES ran Exercise Synergasia to practice their skills in incident management across four Incident Control Centres leading into storm season.

Each of the four ICCs had to manage 300 SES tasks during the exercise, which is not an unrealistic number during the summer storm season in Brisbane Region.

The exercise was completed over three phases.





# Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Expo Series

## Free health and wellbeing expos for public servants

Cairns | 20 October 2015

Brisbane | 19 November 2015

Ipswich | March 2016

Townsville | March 2016

Sunshine Coast | April 2016

Hervey Bay | April 2016

Rockhampton | May 2016

Logan | May 2016

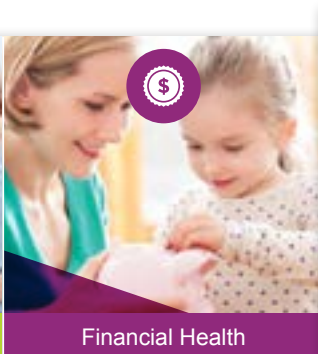
Gold Coast | June 2016

Toowoomba | June 2016

Register your attendance at [www.hwwexpo.com](http://www.hwwexpo.com)



Nutritional Health



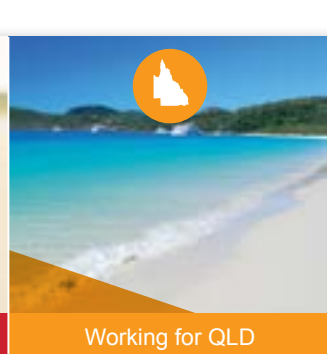
Financial Health



Mental Health



Physical Health



Working for QLD

## South Eastern Region

The Gold Coast 600 has been run for another year through the streets of Surfers Paradise, with almost 200,000 patrons attending the event.

QFES provided additional fire cover to the built environment within the event, with 22 staff dedicated to the event each day.

Additional support included the forward staging of the Oscar hazardous materials response appliance at Helensvale and additional appliances at Surfers Paradise Fire and Rescue Station each day.

The major event was coordinated as a multi-agency response, with QFES, QPS, QAS and City of Gold Coast effectively coordinating any incidents from police headquarters.

The event requires four months of planning for QFES each year.

*Thanks to Brad Commens*



On the afternoon of 27 October the small township of Fernvale west of Ipswich was hit by a storm super cell.

The storm lasted just 20 minutes however its ferocity brought down hundreds of trees and power lines, took the rooves off seven homes and disabled local phone services.

Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade, Fire and Rescue appliances and SES units from Lowood and Esk arrived very quickly after the storm had passed.

The newly switched-on GWN communications was the only communications that was working at full capacity due to the local infrastructure damage.

SES was also able to test their new Task and Management System (TAMS) for logging requests for assistance more efficiently.

Crews focused on ensuring the residents were safe overnight before a number of strike teams arrived the following morning to start the clean-up operations.

Fire and Rescue conducted damage assessment on foot while air operations assessed the extent of the situation from the sky.

All agencies integrated seamlessly over the three days of operation with a common focus and direction to assist the community.

*Thanks to Greg Tomlinson*



## South Western Region

**Five Warwick firefighters have completed a road crash rescue course and expanded their skills when it comes to traffic incidents.**

The final training included a number of scenarios requiring them to stabilise a vehicle, access patients from under a car, a car on its side or inverted and relocate vehicles.

The firefighters practiced the use of hydraulic cutting equipment

**Volunteer scientific officers from around the state converged in Toowoomba for a training session in November.**

Scientific officers are skilled scientists in other fields and volunteer their services to QFES to assist in hazardous materials incidents requiring significant scientific knowledge.

A number of these volunteers were also awarded with the National Medal for long service.

**Dalveen Rural Fire Brigade recently hosted representatives from eight Warwick Group brigades for a visit from Deputy Commissioner Emergency Services Volunteers Mike Wassing, some travelling more than 90 minutes.**

First Officer Rob Hockings said while at Dalveen, Mr Wassing was able to see first-hand the engagement the brigade had with its community, including a group of primary school students who came to inspect the visiting fire appliances.

“We encourage the children to read the Fire Danger Rating sign on their way to school in the morning and the teachers know if we are out maintaining our appliances, the children can come down and talk to the members,” he said.

“Then they go home and talk to the parents about what they saw, and that’s a way for us to improve our engagement because we have a big focus on educating as well as protecting the community.”

Mr Wassing commended Dalveen Rural Fire Brigade on its example as a community-led and community-focussed brigade.

The brigade maintains partnerships with the neighbouring hall committee, school committee and local business and communicates with residents via text messages, hand-delivered monthly newsletters and social media among other initiatives to recruit and retain volunteers.

## Far Northern Region

Community Engagement Officer Christine Harris and auxiliary firefighter Dwain Guivarra attended the Napranum NAIDOC Festival on 30 October to engage with the community on disaster preparedness.

Get Ready resources and an example household emergency kit were on display and a questionnaire was offered to patrons on home fire safety including smoke alarms.

The main hazards in the community included storm, cyclone and flooding and awareness was also raised with children regarding not swimming in flood waters.

This was a well-supported event with about 800 people in attendance.



When brothers Sean and Daniel McGuinness recently received National Medals, it made for three generations of medal recipients in the McGuinness family.

Their grandfather was awarded for 38 years with Queensland Ambulance Service while their father received the medal for 37 years, also with QAS.

The brothers, SES members at Trinity Beach and Cairns, received their medals during SES Week.



The annual Kuranda Festival Fair in October was an opportunity for QFES to interact with the community and spread some important safety messages.

The community event was attended by the auxiliary firefighters from Kuranda who shared information regarding disaster preparedness, bushfire preparedness and home fire safety.

Of course, Blazer was on hand to assist in getting the message out as well.



## Northern Region

### Recent fires in Townsville required assistance from Incident Management Teams and Strike Teams from outside the region.

With several communities in the Townsville area impacted by fire or smoke and a very high fire danger expected to continue, Public Information Officer John Harrison decided a community engagement strategy was needed to remind the community to be prepared.

This scenario provided a great opportunity to deploy SES and RFSQ together to provide community information and assistance during this time.

Working closely with the Bushfire Safety Officer, the most at risk properties were targeted first.

Acting Bushfire Safety Officer Gordon Yorke said while ready to respond to fires, Strike Teams doorknocked and provided information to several communities that were impacted by fire and neighbouring areas of high risk assisted by local brigades and Volunteer Community Educators.

### Northern Region is undertaking an innovative project in collaboration with the Palm Island local services to engage unemployed residents in a work experience program.

With limited opportunities for employment on Palm Island the project provides a unique opportunity for Islanders to build new skills, gain experience and confidence to transition into the workforce while giving back to their community.

Project participants will be engaged in emergency service training, as well as community mitigation and resilience activities where they can actively contribute to their community.

The aim is for Palm Island to have a robust, well-trained emergency service capability with improved capacity, while building a more resilient and safe island community.

*Thanks to Paul Cannon*

### A fire training facility for Northern Region has now been completed offering more local training opportunities to the region.

In 2013 the region began the initial stages of constructing a training facility, which has now become a reality.

The training facility provides a multi-functional training environment to support professional development of emergency service personnel and enhance QFES operational capability.

It has the capability to provide training in vertical rescue, confined space rescue, road crash rescue, breathing apparatus and hazardous materials among other specialist training opportunities.

*Thanks to Jock Crome*



## Central Region

### Glenden Fire Station has received a new bushfire attack appliance thanks to a generous donation from Newlands Coal.

A decommissioned four-wheel drive was donated to the brigade and was worked on by brigade members to bring it up to standard.

The vehicle will be used to fight off-road fires that are hard to access in larger fire appliances.

The handover demonstrated the benefits of good working relationships in local communities.

*Thanks to Reece Swanson*



### Two Central Region officers were chosen as guest speakers for the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) 2015 conference earlier this year, educating peers in their areas of expertise.

Director of Regional Operations Jeff King was invited to speak on the challenges and lessons learned from the QFES involvement in the G20 Leaders' Summit.

Emergency Management Area Coordinator Alan Hatcher spoke regarding the recruitment of volunteers into the SES and the results of a survey asking about possible physical or psychological selection criteria for recruitment.

Queensland will host the next AFAC conference in 2016.



### QFES in conjunction with a number of partner agencies conducted a pre-season meeting with Livingstone Shire Council to discuss cyclone shelter preparedness for the coming season.

The meeting fostered discussion around capability and expectations between the agencies and was an opportunity to discuss shelter lockdown and maintenance procedures.

Similar meetings were also held in Mackay, Proserpine and Bowen.



### Three Rosedale State High School students have qualified in Cert II – Public Safety (Firefighting Operations) following a partnership with local fire services.

Central Region RFSQ staff, Agnes Water Fire and Rescue Station and Miriam Vale Rural Fire Brigade teamed up to educate the students in fire safety and control.

Following their valuable training, the students qualified and can now assist in protecting their local community on the fireground.

*Thanks to Julianne Webster-Scott*



# Thanks to you we're working wonders for kids with burns



The Children's Hospital Foundation would like to thank you for helping sick kids through your support each pay day. Your regular gift provides funding for the Burns and Trauma Research Centre at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

Every dollar you give helps burns patients like Camryn heal faster and go home sooner.

**\$10** will print and laminate pain scales for use in research.

**\$20** will fund a PhD student for an hour and a half to conduct clinical research.

**\$40** will fund a senior research assistant for an hour to collect data in theatre to work out what dressing is best.

**\$50** will assist extension and improvement of the Queensland Paediatric Burn Registry to identify specific injury patterns that need to be investigated.

## More funding helps us to do greater things.

With your help our researchers can continue to unlock the secrets of faster healing and better management of pain, stress and other psychological scars from burns and trauma.

If you are able to provide us with greater support each pay day, please contact your Regional HR Consultant or email [P1QFRSPayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au](mailto:P1QFRSPayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au) for operational staff or [P1DESPublicservicepayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au](mailto:P1DESPublicservicepayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au) for public service staff.

You can also complete an Authority to Change Banking Deductions Form and send to Payroll.

*Camryn, 3 years, burns*

## Camryn's story

Nicole and Russell and their two young children Jack and Camryn, set off for Stradbroke Island for a camping trip with some other families in October 2013.

It was the family's first camping trip and their first holiday for the year. After they set up their tents Nicole took Camryn down to the water for a swim. On their way back, Nicole stopped to talk to a friend while watching Camryn walk towards her Dad at their campsite. All of a sudden, Camryn was screaming.

Camryn was just two years old when she walked onto a campfire that had been covered with sand.

"I rushed her into the surf and called for help. Thankfully Camryn was put into the capable hands of doctors and medical teams who truly understand the lifelong trauma that burns can cause."

Camryn was off her feet for five weeks and continued to have further treatment afterwards including wearing a compression bandage for two years, 24 hours a day.

Brave Camryn was able to return home, but like many children with severe burns, her treatment has continued – and will continue – for many years.





## Storm Season highlights SES roles

The New South Wales State Emergency Service (NSW SES) is the star of a new six-part observational documentary series called *Storm Season*, airing nationally on Network Ten.

The series premiered on 1 November and will air until mid-December but is also available online via Tenplay.

The show was made possible through NSW SES Principal Partner NRMA Insurance and takes the viewer behind the scenes of the emergency response, telling the stories of the brave people who comprise the 10,000 volunteers in NSW and more than 40,000 nationally.

The stories covered are as diverse as the backgrounds of the volunteers who respond to them, and include flooding in outback New South Wales, severe storms in Sydney, road crashes, flood rescues, lost and missing persons and the response to the April 'superstorm' that devastated parts of the Hunter and Central Coast.

The show also takes viewers behind the scenes to view flood rescue training and to see the workings of the State Operations Centre in Wollongong.

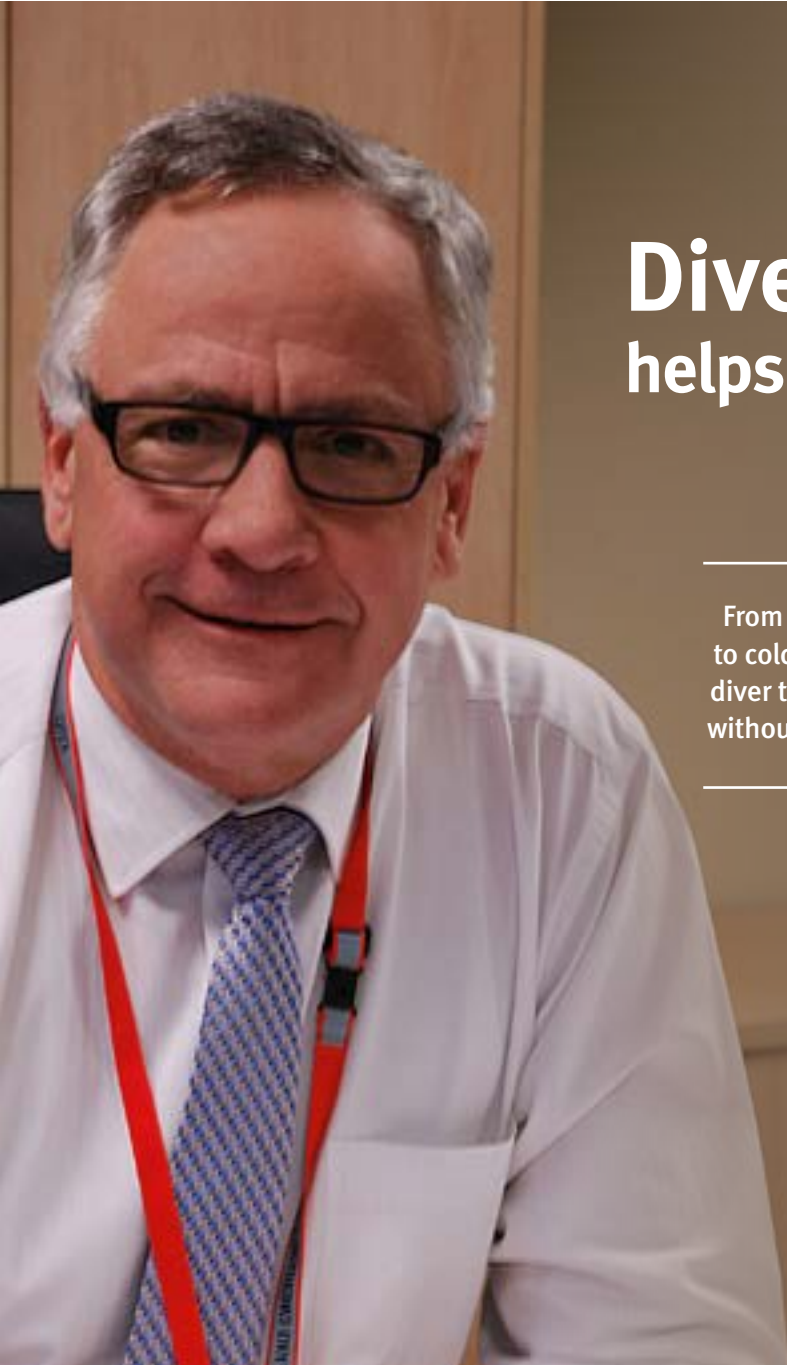
The show is expected to provide a number of benefits not just to NSW, but to State and Territory Emergency Services nationally.

These benefits include a greater awareness of the roles of the SES, member pride and enhanced retention, better public understanding and improved adoption of safety and preparedness actions as well as increased SES volunteering enquiries nationally.

Catch up on episodes at [www.tenplay.com.au](http://www.tenplay.com.au)

*Thanks to NSW SES*





# Diverse background helps Doug support front line



From cyclone response to riots, from Commissions of Inquiry to cold case DNA matching, from recovering bodies as a police diver to Chief Strategy Officer of QFES – Doug Smith’s career is without doubt a unique tale of diversity. *By Stephanie Masters.*

In a battered Akubra, fingernails clogged with dirt and a lengthy to-do list of farming chores, Chief Strategy Officer Doug Smith’s distant neighbours would probably have a hard time guessing the job he drives to every day from Delaneys Creek.

And his corporate colleagues might not recognise him either surrounded by pigs, chickens and cattle. But this contrast is less surprising once the variety of his career and life is understood.

“One thing my time in different places and roles has taught me is the vitally important need to work cooperatively with the community...



Spending most of his childhood in the Northern Territory, Doug joined the Victorian police as a cadet in 1973 at age 17, following a few family friends into policing.

“I always had an interest in policing as an occupation, not so much the sort of policing in television, but the reality of police work was very familiar as the family had a lot of friends in the Northern Territory who were police officers,” he said.

He found himself back in the Territory in 1974 assisting in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy and the next year moved to Queensland chasing the warmer climate.

Operationally, his roles at QPS varied from diving with the water police to collect bodies and evidence to working in the stock squad in Roma until he began working on events like the Commonwealth Games in 1982 and the World Expo in 1988.

With a strong involvement in the Fitzgerald Inquiry, Doug says these kinds of roles helped him to appreciate the background work that allows frontline staff to do their jobs.

“I think anyone who enters these sorts of occupations – firefighters, ambulance officers, police – they join for the job and the task itself,” he said.

“I don’t think you’d ever meet too many young people who would say ‘I want to be a firefighter to become the Commissioner of the fire service’ but as your career develops, you realise the task of doing the job needs people to manage it and make it happen and you have a greater appreciation of the policy settings that need to be in place.



“The realisation dawns on you that things just don’t happen for you to be able to do your job, and you could make a difference in a leadership role for those who do the job.”

In 1997, Doug was back in the Northern Territory again as Assistant Commissioner of the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services and also spent four years in the Solomon Islands working for the Australian Government to reform the local services following civil war.

Thinking it was finally time to start on the dream of the farm, Doug came back to Delaneys Creek when he was approached with a new challenge as CEO for Crimtrac, delivering all kinds of information and data to Australia’s law enforcement services.

“I really enjoy the challenges and appreciate the challenges that are given to me in things that need to be done.

“You find a situation that’s put before you, and like an investigation, you look at the way of solving it and I love to be involved in making a difference and leaving a legacy.”

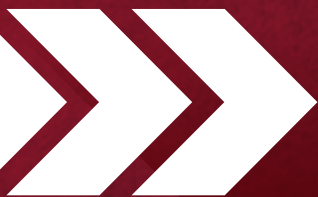
That same mentality is what led him to his current role at QFES.

“They’re the sorts of things that really do attract me and I look for those opportunities and when they’re given to me I take them,” he said.

“You’ve got to enjoy what you’re doing, and as long as I enjoy what I’m doing, I’ll keep doing it.

“As our roles inevitably bring us into contact with people take some time to get to know them. And finish everything you do with a kind word whenever you can. You will be repaid many times in the most surprising of ways.”





## From humble beginnings to a voice for volunteers



Behind every step of Mike Wassing’s career, has been a desire to learn, improve himself and “have a crack”.

It was what led him to sign up as a volunteer to Dromana Fire Brigade, south of Melbourne, when he met some volunteers working in a supermarket next door to their station.

At the time, he was studying a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management and was looking to network in a different community outside of sport.

“The officers in the brigade were generally very inclusive and it was great training and a good way of keeping busy,” he said.

“I finished university and worked for the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands on a rappel crew, for remote firefighting from a helicopter but based on the fact that I enjoyed volunteering in emergency services, I decided to make it a career and joined the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in 1990.”

Mike set his sights on being in charge of a CFA region – equivalent to an area for RFSQ – and achieved this goal in his mid-twenties.

A passion for people, good leadership and a genuine love for the job has kept him moving, taking opportunities as they were presented.

“For me, I describe this industry as a people business, whether it’s the people you’re on shift with or the people we’re there for in the community,” he said.

“We can have the best trucks and stations but ultimately without the people and an understanding that we’re community-based and community-focused, then it doesn’t matter how good your gear is, it becomes less relevant.

“I’ve been fortunate to work for a number of leaders that have given me the opportunity but also inspired me to get out of my comfort zone, because sometimes you need that little bit of a push or encouragement.”

His background as a volunteer has placed him well for his current role in support of tens of thousands of volunteers statewide.

“My job is based around the support of volunteers so that means work often takes place after hours or on weekends because we need to be available when they’re available. I think that’s really important.

“As much as we’re in a serious business, at the end of the day all of us whether you’re a volunteer or paid, a firefighter or the Deputy Commissioner, there has to be an element of enjoyment of coming to work and I find balance is not about the hours aspect but making sure you’re happy with what you’re putting in at work while supporting your family and friends.”

The same drive for learning new things that has seen Mike’s career progress also saw him break hands, ribs and teeth while mountain biking, which is one of his hobbies outside of work.

“I may have been over ambitious on the bike at times,” he admits.

He also enjoys keeping active, especially in the pool with his three daughters, has helped to build two homes and has goals of improving his golfing game and dabbling in photography.

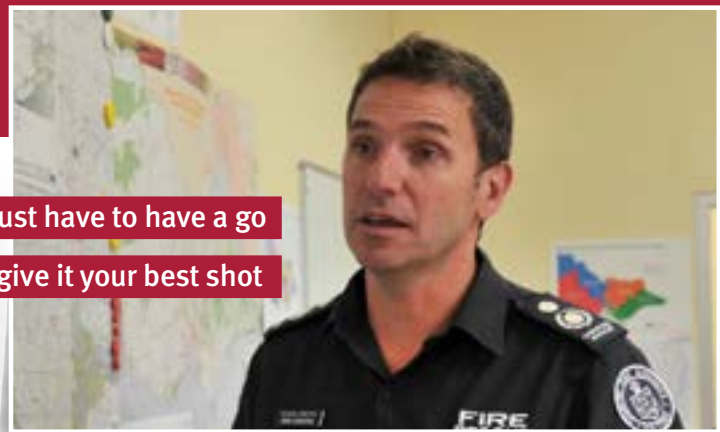
“Aspirationally, I don’t consider myself good at these things but I like to have a crack at things I can’t do or haven’t done and see how it goes – there’s a whole range of things on my bucket list,” he said.



From volunteer firefighter to Deputy Commissioner, Mike Wassing’s career is far from what he would have expected when he met some emergency service volunteers while bagging groceries as a uni student. *By Stephanie Masters.*



You just have to have a go  
and give it your best shot



# stop bushfire arson



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know something,  
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Rewards are paid for information leading  
to arrests, and you can remain anonymous.





## Buy a snag and support volunteers

Volunteer emergency services will benefit from the Aussie Day Weekend Fundraiser BBQ held at all Bunnings nationally in January.

On Saturday 23 January, funds raised by the Bunnings sausage sizzles will go directly to support a local Rural Fire Brigade or SES unit.

Typically the long weekend is a busy period for DIY-ers and Bunnings shoppers will be encouraged to support volunteers by buying a sausage and the event has been a success in previous years.

## Marathon effort from Eric



...there was me with running shoes that hadn't been used in two years.

Kemp Place senior firefighter Eric Atkinson took a last-minute offer to run in the famed New York Marathon and impressively ran the entire 42km course with zero training.

Originally flying to New York to accompany his partner with the Nova 106.9 breakfast crew, another competitor had to pull out of the race and the position was offered to Eric with just two days spare.

“People that know me know that I love exercise but hate the thought of running, so when I got offered a chance to run the New York Marathon it was always going to be a dare,” he said.

“As I lined up on the start line I was surrounded by people with multiple watches on and paper bands showing what time they should be at a certain mile marker and everyone had some sort of compression clothing on and then there was me with running shoes that hadn't been used in two years.”

Despite having little time to prepare, Eric made it through the marathon without walking.

“The nerves ended as I came off the Staten Island Bridge and met the first crowd of people including the bands (but) the 30km mark had me in the hurt locker and I needed to dig deep and just work on one mile at a time,” he said.

“I never wanted to quit, but for the last 12km of the race I was fighting the urge to walk.

“Hitting the finish line was an amazing sense of achievement not just to the boys that laid down the dare at Kemp Place fire station but also myself.”

While he said the marathon was an amazing experience, the running shoes would not be seen again any time soon.



Technical rescue officers practiced various swiftwater rescue techniques in the pool at Kedron including swimming in PPE and patient retrieval in the lead-up to storm season.



QFES staff took part in The Walk to Fight MS to help people living with multiple sclerosis and raise awareness of the condition. The "Fireflies" team raised \$3000.



RFSQ and SES in Chambers Flat worked together to share techniques and skills at a special interservice training night.



On the #SunnyCoast today? Head to Kewana lakeside to take in the action at the #Emergency Services Expo 2-3pm-6pm [ow.ly/9dAw7F](https://www.facebook.com/qfesa)



On October 10, QFES recognised Firefighters Remembrance Day, honouring fallen colleagues past and present with ceremonies held in every region.





gltire There were smiles all around today when #Howard, #MaryGough and #Terrey/Say SES groups received four new vehicles from Fraser Coast Regional Council. Pictured at front: Fraser Coast Regional Council Mayor Gerard O'Connell, SES Local Controller Bob Beam and CI Roll Light.



acPFES staff and volunteers joined their comrades in blue at the Ovey Police Academy recruitment day today. It was a great opportunity to share information about joining rural brigades and HUS units, as well as provide an insight into the life of an auxiliary or career firefighter. #recruiting @frasercoast



SES members in Toowoomba were able to assist RFSQ during recent bushfires by refilling water bombing aircraft, allowing trained rural fire volunteers to return to the fire front.






SES Week was officially launched in Bundaberg and ran from 17 – 25 October celebrating SES volunteers around the state.



The Rocksberg Moorina Rural Fire Brigade celebrated 25 years of service to its community. Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing presented the brigade with a commemorative plaque to acknowledge the milestone.



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-  Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES
-  @qldfire

# Ipswich reflects on 150 years of firefighting

As the Ipswich community celebrates the milestone of a century and a half of firefighting in its city, we look back at one fire incident that is said to have changed the city forever.

Reids Department Store was a fixture in the Ipswich town centre; a heritage building that was “the heart of the town”.

Around 1.30am on 17 August 1985, a call was received that smoke was visible coming from the store.

Crews turned out, including now Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche, however what they were about to find was far beyond what they expected.

“We came down Brisbane Street and we could see the horizon was on fire,” Mr Roche said.

Station Officer Ashley Jones recalls the incident too.

“As we came through the intersection, there was a lot of black smoke billowing out and as we approached, a couple of glass doors blew out,” he said.

“What we hadn’t realised was when the glass had broken it had drawn in a lot of fresh air and the building had gone from smoke showing to fully involved in a few moments.

“There were 20-foot flames billowing out from above.

“Nearly every hose in the area was used that night.”

Retired District Officer Michael O’Connor said the best they could hope for was for the fire not to spread to other buildings, which they achieved.

“It seemed like the more water we put on it, the bigger it got,” he said.

“Flames were leaping out everywhere. I said ‘Make sure it doesn’t go anywhere, we can’t save it’.

“All we could do was contain it.”

Mannequins burnt in shop windows, paint tins exploded and crowds of people gathered in the streets, silently watching the building burn.

In the daylight, Bell Street looked like a war zone, the face of the town clock had melted and the headlines praised the efforts of the crews who did all they could.

“It goes down as one of the fire incidents that really did change the city of Ipswich,” Mr Roche said.

The Reids Department Store fire is explored further in the first episode from season two of *Back to the Brass Helmet*, a four-part series focusing on Ipswich’s fire history to celebrate the milestone of 150 years. See the videos on the QFES Newsroom at <http://newsroom.psba.qld.gov.au>



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**RESPONSE**  
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# NEVER DRIVE THROUGH FLOODWATER



Summer in Queensland means storms. Sometimes that means flooded roads.

No matter who you are, how late you are, or what vehicle you're driving, it's never safe to enter floodwater.

Even if it looks calm, no one can predict what flowing water will do or what's happened underneath.

The road might have dropped or washed away. The floodwater may be deeper or faster moving than it appears.

What looks safe can quickly escalate into dangerous conditions. Even shallow water can be powerful enough to catch your tyres and sweep you away in a matter of seconds.

Start preparing your Plan B now at [www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety](http://www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety)



[www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety](http://www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety)

