

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 5



QFES LEADERS

MEET THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM

SAFER RESPONSE:

VOLUNTEER-DEVELOPED APP AWARDED FOR INNOVATION

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THE RESILIENTS:

ANIMATED SERIES ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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Address: Response magazine, Media and Corporate Communications Unit, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4001
Editor: Stephanie Masters
Phone: 07 3635 3314
Email: Magazine.Editor@qfes.qld.gov.au
Advertising: Leah Homibrook
Phone: 07 3635 3417
Graphic Design: Nejen Creative
Email: design@nejen.com.au

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Katarina Carroll

Commissioner

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Welcome to the first edition of Response for 2016.

With the first month of the year already over, we have hit the ground running to continue the fantastic achievements of QFES last year. I reflect on some of those achievements and set out my goals for this year on the next page.

The beginning of this year has seen a deployment of QFES staff and volunteers to Waroona to assist our Western Australian counterparts with the tragic bushfires they have experienced.

While these bushfires have been devastating for the communities in WA, I am proud that we have such capable specialist personnel who are able to assist when it is needed most and represent QFES to the highest standards.

I have also had the opportunity to travel to Charleville, Longreach, Cloncurry and Mt Isa with our new Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Bill Byrne, which was a great chance to show what QFES is doing and achieving in this part of the state.

In February I was able to head back to my home town of Innot Hot Springs where I was privileged to be able to handover a new vehicle and also open the Battle Creek rural fire shed. This vehicle was named in honour of Margie Clark, who tragically lost her life in the Ravenshoe café explosion last year and had dedicated much of her time to volunteering for the Rural Fire Service.

These chances to get among the staff and volunteers that make up this incredible department is a part of my job that I thoroughly enjoy and I believe it is so important to be able to see, in person, the fantastic work of our people. While that work continues as it always has in most communities, I took some time to see Joe Torrisi and Michael Beck, who were injured last year in Ravenshoe.

Six months on, both Joe and Michael have come so far in their recovery but it is still vital to offer our support to them, their families and the extended community which was significantly impacted.

It is important we remember that the effects of incidents are not over once we have left a scene.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead.



Mark Roche

Deputy Commissioner

OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

I don't think QFES could be better placed to start 2016.

With all Assistant Commissioner positions now permanently filled, it promotes consistent leadership within the QFES structure. This permanent establishment of people in place will bring stability and new skills to the regions, supporting the QFES focus on the best possible service to Queenslanders.

Prior to Christmas, five Chief Superintendent appointments were also announced. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the successful Assistant Commissioners and Chief Superintendents, and wish them all the best in their new roles.

From 21 December until 11 January, the SDCC Watch Desk monitored some 204 weather warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, including severe weather, thunderstorm and flood warnings.

On Christmas Eve, the Northern Territory Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre indicated a high likelihood of a tropical cyclone in the western Gulf of Carpentaria on Boxing Day. This system decreased in intensity but continued in an easterly direction, causing heavy rainfall across northwest parts of the state, and high tides in the Gulf district.

The SDCC Watch Desk, in conjunction with the BoM representative, hosted daily teleconferences with key disaster management stakeholders to discuss the monsoonal trough development. QFES regions prepared and responded by allocating and pre-positioning human and physical resources across the state in anticipation of developing emergency situations.

QFES successfully partnered with stakeholders, including LDMGs, DDMGs and other government agencies, working together to respond to communities' needs for assistance throughout the event. A big thanks to all those involved.

On a sadder note, QFES had its first fire-related death for 2016 on 7 January as a result of the Tattersalls Club Hotel fire in Pittsworth.

Upon commencing firefighting, responding crews were faced with a large fireball which hampered any opportunity for internal attack. The QFES crew fought the blaze under stressful circumstances, and are to be praised for their efforts.

This tragic event impacted the small community, and was felt by many wide-spread communities throughout Queensland. Thanks must also go to all personnel that responded and supported the community in the days that followed.

Best wishes for the start of 2016.



Twelve months on from Katarina Carroll's arrival at QFES, she looks back on what has been achieved in the year and where the department is headed from here.

Looking back, looking forward

The first twelve months of Katarina Carroll's Commissionership have been nothing short of a whirlwind.

Hitting the ground running, Ms Carroll was welcomed by Tropical Cyclone Marcia in February – an event which only solidified the notion that many services and capabilities working together under one department provides the best emergency response for the community.

"12 months on and having been through events like Marcia and (Tropical Cyclone) Nathan, I'm confident QFES is well on the way to providing a very seamless response in disasters; be it storms, cyclones or any emergency where we are at the forefront," she said.

While the weather may have had other plans, the Commissioner's goal for QFES was stability and laying a foundation for its future as a department.

"We're incredibly lucky to have everyone fall under one department, reporting directly to a Minister, so that we can make recommendations to government and influence policy outcomes for community safety," she said.

"I've seen a big shift in the recognition across the services. It is so important for us to recognise each other and when we do, it can be truly powerful.

"There is a swell out there and people do want to be part of this great department that is QFES and although everyone is proud of their service, people are also proud to contribute to what makes this such a strong department."

Stability also came in the form of permanently appointing the three Deputy Commissioners and filling Assistant Commissioner and Chief Superintendent positions.

"There was uncertainty, inconsistency and it's difficult for people to own their decisions and workplaces when that happens.

"It's very difficult to take an agency forward when so many people in senior positions are relieving and now we should have a stable position to hold us in good stead over the next few years," she said.

"The key to leadership and management is getting the right people in the right place and I've spent a lot of time thinking about who needs to be where and also about developing our future leaders."

"The year 2016 will see some of 2015's groundwork come to fruition, including the implementation of the PSBA review recommendations," Ms Carroll said.



The year 2016 will see some of 2015's
groundwork come to fruition.



“The PSBA review handed down in February made recommendations to bring a number of PSBA services into the QFES fold, intended to improve efficiency and give greater control back to QFES.

“These functions include operational functions, strategy, recruitment, education and training, local workplace health and safety, employee engagement, ethical standards, media, ministerial services and cabinet legislation liaison.

“We already work closely with the people performing these roles and having them as part of the official QFES family will benefit us greatly.”

“QFES is a great place to work, it's exciting, it has great people and we've come a long way along the continuum of creating a healthier workplace and our values are a big part of that.

“Community-first, inclusiveness, diversity and respect – all of those things should be guiding who we are.”

Goals for 2016



Doug Smith Deputy Commissioner
CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER

My goal for the division in 2016 is to build on the tremendous work and goodwill shown in 2015 to make QFES a very desirable employer of choice for full-time and volunteer workers with clear organisational future directions and governance. With an agreed, common future direction and a solid governance framework in place, we have great potential as a department to grow on our successes to date, while continuing to provide world-class fire and emergency services.



Mike Wassing Deputy Commissioner
EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

I am looking forward to actively working with the whole QFES team including Rural Fire and SES Associations, sister volunteer emergency services, local government, and other partner organisations in improving the safety of our communities we support. In particular I am focussed on recognising and respecting the value of volunteers within emergency services as well as prevention and preparedness activities that build on community capability and understanding of their local risk environment whether that be storm, flood, bushfire or other. I hope to achieve a team that feels safe, is well trained, empowered, is able to effectively utilise our full capabilities and operate with mutual understanding, respect and trust.



Mark Roche Deputy Commissioner
OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

I believe 2016 will set QFES with a solid base to build consistency in leadership. I want to achieve a department where our personnel are supportive of a diverse and inclusive culture, where we openly commit to making a real change in our workplace. I want to achieve continued development of our operational capabilities where QFES is rightly situated as a pivotal member in emergency management. Where QFES provides innovation through service delivery because we are best suited, not necessarily because it is something we did in the past. Where QFES takes a greater accountability in the recovery phase of major incidents by ensuring we provide our community with the level of support they need in all facets of an incident.



Katarina Carroll
COMMISSIONER
QUEENSLAND FIRE AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES



Mark Roche
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT



Wayne Weston
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
FAR NORTHERN REGION



Steve Barber
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
NORTHERN REGION



Ewan Cayzer
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
CENTRAL REGION



John Cawcutt
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
NORTH COAST REGION



Neil Gallant
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
BRISBANE REGION



Neil Reid
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
SOUTH EASTERN REGION



Stephen Smith
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
SOUTH WESTERN REGION



Steve Grant
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Mike Wassing
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
EMERGENCY SERVICE
VOLUNTEERS



Doug Smith
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER



Peter Jeffrey
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE



John Watson
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
SPECIALIST CAPABILITY
AND PLANNING



Tom Dawson
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
RURAL FIRE SERVICE
QUEENSLAND



Russell Neuendorf
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OPERATIONAL SERVICE
IMPROVEMENT AND
PERFORMANCE

The QFES Senior Executive Team



Staff and volunteer engagement focus of new committee

The QFES Communications Standards Committee will ensure the department's communication with staff and volunteers is regular, consistent and relevant.

The new committee was endorsed by the QFES Board of Management in December and will work to align the current communication and engagement processes with the standards expected in a contemporary business environment.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the Board of Management had formed the committee to address inconsistency and inefficiency in the delivery of information to staff and volunteers.

"Having effective two-way communication between the executive and the workforce is a key marker of successful business and we recognised our model needed to improve," she said.

"The end product from the introduction of this committee will be more consistent communication and a reduction in the duplication of information, activities and mixed messaging."

Media Director Troy Davies will chair the committee, which consists of representatives from all divisions and services in the department, including volunteers.

Mr Davies said the committee would be responsible for the development and implementation of communications standards across QFES and provide oversight of communication activities across the department.

"The committee will establish guidelines, policies and procedures that will ultimately make the work of getting a message out across the department easier for all.

"The committee is not a gatekeeper as such, but is there to make sure that what is being disseminated is consistent with the standards that are in place and are aligned with the goals of the department.

"We have brought people together from right across QFES to ensure that all brands are represented and continue to be recognised."

The committee had its first meeting on 20 January and will meet again in March 2016.

The committee will report directly to the Board of Management.



ID cards rolling out

The QFES Project Management Office (PMO) is wrapping up phase one of the rollout of new QFES identification cards.

About 550 cards have been distributed across the state to Fire and Rescue officers who are Authorised Fire Officers of Station Officer rank and above.

Phase two is currently being planned and has the potential to include the design, printing and distribution of identification cards for the remainder of QFES staff and volunteers.

The cards carry the person's name and relevant identification particulars as well as a headshot and have been modelled on ID cards issued for the G20 Summit in 2014. The cards are current for five years from the date of printing.

If you are an Authorised Fire Officer at the rank of Station Officer or above and have submitted your details and image to the PMO, but have not yet received your identification card, please contact the PMO on 1300 QFES PMO or via email on PMO.Support@qfes.qld.gov.au



QFES shows off innovations

QFES hosted a Whole-of-Government Innovation Champions Network meeting, putting our best ideas on display to all departments.

Delegates from the innovations teams of every state government department were hosted by QFES at the Kedron Emergency Services Complex late last year.

The Whole-of-Government Innovation Champions Network meets regularly to share and learn from other departments, foster collaboration and leverage ideas and expertise.

The group were welcomed by Deputy Commissioner Chief Strategy Officer Doug Smith before a tour of the State Disaster Coordination Centre.

Following the tour, the Predictive Services Unit discussed its latest technology SABRE, the INCSnap app was demonstrated and the SES TAMS was also showcased.

Channels such as the Innovation Champions Network meeting allow QFES to work with other agencies in the innovation arena.

QFES Gateway launched

The QFES workforce is now able to enjoy easier access to organisational information and updates with the recently launched staff intranet, the QFES Gateway.

The dynamic, new-look site was designed to be easy to navigate and provide an all-staff resource that is current and reliable.

QFES Gateway will undergo regular reviews and updates to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the department and users.

There are many key features within the QFES Gateway like the News Hub, including video capability, centralising the department's news and updates.

The Gateway has an improved search capability, as well as an image library that all staff can upload photos to and share what's been happening around the state called Snapshot.

The site provides visibility of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, enabled via the social media feed, for improved information sharing and the QFES events calendar where all staff can add events and key dates.

The Gateway will also make it easier to distribute Expressions of Interest (EOI) with a database to replace the current email distribution



method. Functionality to set-up alerts will be available to staff who wish to continue to receive EOI notifications to their email.

The improved site navigation also links in to the services provided by PSBA.

An interactive PDF is available showcasing what's changed, what's new and what's coming soon which can be found on the Noticeboard on the site's home page.

The QFES Gateway will be centrally managed through the Community Engagement Partnership Management Branch. All enquiries and feedback can be forwarded to QFES.Online@qfes.qld.gov.au

App provides safer response for volunteers

A Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade volunteer has developed an app to provide a safer and more efficient response for volunteers.

Mark Hessling was awarded a QFES Innovator Award by the Commissioner for his invention of the Turnout Response System smartphone app, which assists volunteers in indicating their availability to respond to an incident.

A member of Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade for three years and working in the IT industry for 30 years, Mark developed the software in his own time after receiving support from his brigade to develop the idea around two years ago.

The app can be used by officers to deliver the details of an incident page directly to volunteers' phones, and for volunteers to

indicate whether they can respond with the touch of a button. The app can also estimate the time of arrival for each volunteer.

This allows the officer to quickly communicate to Firecom how many crews can respond without making multiple phone calls.

"It's made responding safer as you just hit two buttons on your phone as you're leaving your house and that's all you have to do," Mark said.

"You can see who else is coming and how long before they are going to get to station so you know how many trucks you need or what you need to get ready, because often if you're the first one to station you're wondering if anyone else is coming.



"I've continued to develop the app and make changes according to feedback and now for our brigade it's an indispensable tool."

Other brigades including Closeburn and Beechmont are using the app, and the software is free to download from trs.sf.net



Prioritising exercise a key to improved health

Is it a goal of yours to become more fit and healthy? QFES is committed to assisting its personnel to lead a healthier lifestyle.

As average work hours are going up for Australians, finding time for exercise in a busy schedule could have the greatest return for your efforts.

Studies have estimated only 54 per cent of Australians participate in enough exercise to reap the health benefits, with the most common excuse being a lack of time.

In combination with a healthy diet, regular exercise can assist in improving heart and lung health, mental health and immunity and finding a stable weight range.

With three to four 30-minute sessions of moderate intensity exercise a week, your health will improve.

If you really want to make a difference to your fitness levels, increasing the intensity to vigorous exercise and stretching sessions out to 45 or 60 minutes will do that.

Managing your time effectively will help you to find space for these sessions in your routine.

By organising your daily tasks according to the time management quadrant system (pictured), you can become more efficient with your time.

While Quadrant 1 is the most urgent, the priority should be on Quadrant 2 tasks which will help you get ahead and remain organised. If you put exercise into Quadrant 2, it will soon become part of your routine.

Another way to fit in your physical activity is to increase your incidental exercise, or in other words, do tasks in a way that increases your movement.

Active tasks including cooking instead of driving to get takeaway, mowing lawns instead of hiring a gardener, hand washing the car instead of using an automatic car wash and spending an hour at a shopping centre instead of online shopping would burn more than 3,500 more kilojoules.

Making social occasions more active like playing tennis or going for a walk with friends can also help to add variety to your routine and provide a support network.



Find out more about your health by attending a Healthy, Wealthy and Wise expo near you. Register at www.hwwexpo.com



QFES undertaking annual audits

As part of good business practice, QFES will target complaints management, the management of overtime and RFSQ station readiness in its annual internal audits.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said these audits would be conducted by an independent provider and would provide recommendations for the department to implement.

“The complaints management audit will look into how complaints have been managed across QFES,” she said.

“Issues that have previously been identified include the time taken to deal with complaints, disputes regarding resolutions, transparency in decision making, and the lack of oversight and visibility of an end-to-end process for how these complaints are managed.

“This will be examined within both the paid and volunteer workforce.”

Ms Carroll said looking into the management of overtime was required to ensure the health and safety of the workforce.

“A key part of this is managing fatigue and ensuring there are processes in place to effectively monitor, control and avoid excess overtime that may put you at risk.

“It has been identified that overtime accrued each year within QFES far exceeds what is considered sustainable for our department.

“Audit recommendations, coupled with new QFES initiatives relating to flexible work options and the implementation of a reserve roster, will allow us to shape our business processes in support of a more sustainable service.”

Auditors will also look at the application of guidelines across the state in relation to RFSQ station readiness.

“Given the wide variety of functions and callouts RFSQ stations provide around the state, this audit is also looking to identify stations or brigades of excellence in their specific fields that can serve as a model to other brigades,” Ms Carroll said.

“The information will be evaluated and will continue to build on the learnings gained during the Station Readiness review conducted over the 2014-2015 financial year.

“I would encourage everyone to participate in this process as it will provide us with a better foundation for QFES into the future.”

Join The Resilients

A series of short animations called *The Resilients* is encouraging residents to become more self-sufficient in preparing for storm and cyclone season.

The Resilients comprises five online animations informing the public of basic steps that can be taken to prepare for severe weather.

Topics covered in the series include making an emergency plan, preparing the home, making an emergency kit and when to call for help.

The clips were posted on the QFES Newsroom and shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The series was developed by QFES Media and PSBA Media Content.

See the clips at www.newsroom.psba.qld.gov.au





VCEs go from strength to strength

Five years have passed since the RFSQ Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) program was first introduced and now more than 400 RFSQ VCEs are operating across Queensland.

Since the VCE program began, the role has been recognised with a Minister's Award for Excellence and a Highly Commended Award in the Queensland Safer Communities presentations.

The role was originally based around bushfire preparedness and the Permit to Light Fire system and was seen to be an avenue for volunteers that could no longer take on operational duties.

However, it has evolved into a role within brigades that encompasses community engagement before, during and after incidents.

An SES VCE program, which focusses on engaging with the community in relation to severe storms and flood preparedness, has also been running as a pilot program across Queensland for the past three years.

Launched in South Eastern Region in 2012, it aims to achieve similar positive results as the RFSQ VCE program and with over 120 SES members trained as VCEs, it has been well received by volunteers.

The VCE program is helping Queensland residents to better understand their risk, and to put strategies in place to address that risk.

The role is a position that volunteers apply to join, the same as they would for a role with Air Operations or Volunteer Bushfire Investigators.

VCEs are actively helping to make Queensland communities a safer place to be and have proven themselves to be a vital part of response to incidents.

VCEs add to the capability of the SES and RFSQ across Queensland and provide a great opportunity to work in partnership to ensure the community is empowered to prepare for all that the Queensland weather throws at us.

For more information regarding the VCE role please contact your local Bushfire Safety Officer for RFSQ or Area Controller for SES.

Thanks to Peta Miller-Rose and Melissa Messenger

Reserve roster to provide alternative employment options

In consultation with union bodies, QFES is implementing a reserve roster comprising full-time, part-time and casual firefighters and station officers.

The roster is designed to provide alternative employment options other than the 10/14 roster and is designed to address concerns around unsustainable overtime in QFES.

Station Officer Joe Ryan is managing the implementation of the reserve roster and said it would assist in maintaining service delivery and managing staffing levels.

“Preparations are in place for a trial of the reserve roster to rollout as soon as possible within Brisbane and North Coast regions with the further state-wide rollout to follow once the initial stages have been evaluated.

“Information on how the roster will work has been made available on the core skills training program and information packages are available for interested staff.

“Expressions of interest will continue to be sought and the roster will be managed regionally.”

For an information package, contact Joseph.Ryan@qfes.qld.gov.au



QGC funds equipment for rural brigades



Ten RFSQ brigades in the Darling Downs have received more than \$140,000 worth of equipment funded by partners QGC.

An extension to the partnership between QGC and QFES has provided slip-on and trailer units and 10 iPads to brigades in the Darling Downs.

The iPads will allow the brigades to use INCSnap to capture and access real-time data, images and video to quickly disseminate information to the public.

QFES Acting Inspector and Manager of Operational Support John Welke said

the latest funding from QGC would bolster brigades' capability to respond to emergencies.

"Having fast access to accurate and real-time incident information is crucial to coordinating successful emergency responses," Mr Welke said.

"This enhances their ability to access and provide critical information during natural disasters and other emergency situations," he said.

In the past three years, QGC has invested more than \$620,000 across QFES including the RFSQ in the Western Downs region

through the provision of firefighting and rescue apparatus, a 7,000-litre water tanker, six trailer units and 13 slip-on units for utility vehicles, as well as a program to reduce communication black spots across south-west Queensland.

QGC's Field Operations Manager Angus Hetherington said the relationship was mutually beneficial.

"As well as our commitment to being a responsible neighbour, QGC is also a member of the communities that our friends in the rural fire brigades protect, and we naturally support one another," Mr Hetherington said.

Partnership delivers for SES volunteers in Maranoa

Maranoa SES groups will soon be even better equipped to help the community thanks to a \$10,000 funding commitment from Powerlink Queensland.

Powerlink, the electricity transmission provider in Queensland, recently joined forces with Energex and Ergon Energy to provide equipment to SES groups.

SES Assistant Commissioner Peter Jeffrey said the equipment would be put to good use in the region which is no stranger to severe weather and flooding.

"This special collaboration between the SES and the energy corporations will help give local communities the support they need at the time they need it most," Mr Jeffrey said.

Powerlink Chief Executive Merryn York said \$10,000 was earmarked to go directly to SES units in the Roma, Wallumbilla, Surat, Mitchell and Begonia areas of Maranoa.

"The funding will allow local SES groups to purchase important equipment and further boost the support they provide to the local community during times of need," Ms York said.

"Powerlink is close to completing a sizable extension of its network in this region and we wanted to support the SES as another way of giving back to the Maranoa community.

"Our staff have seen firsthand the vital work of SES volunteers during severe weather events. We are proud to be able to assist them through this partnership."

Applications are now open for the Energex, Ergon and Powerlink SES Equipment Program which will provide up to \$200,000 worth of equipment items to SES Groups throughout the state.

For further information on the equipment program visit <http://bit.ly/1PeT2gT> or contact SES logistics on 07 3635 3434 or SES.Logistics@qfes.qld.gov.au

Aerial operations crew shortlisted as best in the world

The rescue of six people from the Green Lantern rollercoaster at Movie World last year earned the rescuers an international award nomination.



The aerial operations crew involved in an elaborate rollercoaster rescue on the Gold Coast last year was shortlisted for the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Award, honouring exceptional accomplishments of fire departments around the world.

On 15 March 2015, crews responded to Movie World to assist in an evacuation of six passengers on the Green Lantern ride.

South Eastern Region Aerial Training Officer Peter McMillan said the complexity of the rescue required firefighters to think creatively and swiftly to ensure the safety of the passengers.

“The first action, after reassuring the passengers, was to secure the carriage to the track.

“One firefighter harnessed himself to the tracks in an elevated position in front of the carriage and acted as the entertainment for the passengers to distract them and to reassure them while all the rescue work was going on behind and beneath them.”

What followed was a series of complex problem solving techniques, including overriding the operating system of the aerial appliance, to safely retrieve the passengers within four hours.

Mr McMillan said while QFES and Movie World had worked together for 12 years to exercise technical rescues like this one, it was the first time a real rescue of this nature had been performed.

“Exercises are conducted at Movie World twice a year and the Green Lantern was used for an exercise only three weeks prior to the incident so crews knew the best location for setup to carry out the rescue.

“There was a coordinated multi-agency approach to the incident involving QFES, Police, Ambulance and Movie World staff, which ultimately resulted in a successful rescue with no injuries to the trapped passengers.”

QFES was one of 11 finalists representing nine countries, however the top award was taken out by a group of Brazilian firefighters who fought a shopping mall fire in a heritage building keeping damage to just 20 per cent of the building.



Awards shine spotlight on QFES' finest

The 2016 Australia Day Achievements Awards celebrated the QFES staff, volunteers and community supporters who display true Australian values in their work.



More than 100 people were recognised with Australia Day Achievement Awards in seven QFES ceremonies held across the state.

Examples of the work being recognised varied from exceptional leadership to commitment to training new members, engaging local communities and developing new and innovative ideas.

The common theme was people going above and beyond what was required or expected of them and many were rewarded for their efforts in response to Tropical Cyclone Marcia last February.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the Australia Day Achievement Award was one of the highest individual acknowledgements of service to our community.

“The Australia Day Achievement Awards are one way for us to give thanks to a group of talented, dedicated and invaluable people who not only achieve outcomes that benefit our department but the community at large,” she said.

“These awards are reserved for those people whose efforts can often go unrecognised but ultimately contribute to achieving a capable department that is operationally excellent, a trusted service and a great place to work and volunteer.

“Our department has such a wide variety of responsibilities to the community, and the work that has been rewarded shows how each of our people is key to QFES being one of the best fire and emergency services in the world.”



Among the award recipients was Palm Island's Ilikena Dabea.

Whether it's rebuilding the Palm Island Rural Fire Brigade or leading the Palm Island State Emergency Service, Ilikena Dabea's dedication to supporting the Palm Island community earned him a nomination by RFSQ Area Training and Support Officer Helaine Clerk.

"Ili is the backbone of the Palm Island community and with the support of his family, has rebuilt the local brigade in recent years to increase its membership and operational capability," Ms Clerk said.

"Ili has also reinvigorated the Palm Island State Emergency Service, where he has been appointed as SES Controller.

"When he's not running the local convenience store, Ili provides emergency services coverage year-round to the Palm Island community in his volunteer roles, a service that is dedicated to protecting and saving lives.

"It's great to recognise him and let him know his hard work is very much appreciated."



A number of appreciation certificates were also given out to other agencies, community groups, donors and local media for their work in supporting QFES.

Ms Carroll said award ceremonies like these were always a proud moment to be Commissioner.

"Working alongside people who are committed and excited by their role in helping QFES achieve its goals is what makes me so proud to lead this department," she said.

"I personally wish to congratulate all recipients, and thank you on behalf of QFES for your commitment and effort."

Ms Carroll also thanked sponsor QSuper for their continued support of QFES and the Australia Day Achievement Awards.



National recognition for all services

An SES local controller, an RFSQ first officer and a Fire and Rescue station officer have all been awarded one of the most prestigious honours.

Three QFES personnel have been awarded as part of the National Australia Day Honours.

Somerset SES local controller Andrew Bickerton, Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade first officer Fabian Stangerlin and Fire and Rescue station officer Bruce Trickey were each recognised for their commitment and dedication to the emergency services and the people of Queensland.

"I am delighted that these dedicated individuals have been named recipients of the Emergency Services Medal (ESM) and Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) respectively, gaining national recognition for their commitment to Queensland communities," Ms Carroll said.

Mr Bickerton received the Emergency Services Medal (ESM) for his ability to serve the community while fostering growth and development among his colleagues through training and development as well as activations and deployments.

Mr Stangerlin and Mr Trickey both received the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for their dedication to capability and operational development and training, respectively.

Mr Stangerlin was recognised for his development of new opportunities with the Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade, particularly in developing the large animal rescue capability and in developing the QFES flexible habitat.

Mr Trickey was recognised for exemplary leadership in the development and implementation of training initiatives to support station officers.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll congratulated the officers for their distinguished service and ongoing commitment.

"I know those who have been honoured are already highly respected among their peers, but it's wonderful to now see them receive such prestigious national recognition," she said.

"Their professionalism and commitment is second to none and I thank them for their invaluable dedication to serving QFES and protecting their communities."



Celebrating those who serve our communities

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

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

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



1300 360 750



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Brisbane Region

The Moreton Bay Region SES Unit has received five new all-terrain search vehicles (ATV).

The vehicles were handed over at an award ceremony late last year to replace quadbikes.

The ATVs have a side-by-side configuration and an equipment carrying tray and will be used in land searches where vast areas have to be covered quickly.

With a total cost of \$85,000 the Polaris brand vehicles will be positioned at Redcliffe, Bribie Island, Caboolture, Petrie and Arana Hills.



Swift water rescuers from Brisbane and South Eastern regions joined for a training exercise at Wivenhoe Dam in December.

The training gave rescue technicians a chance to practice and enhance their skills ahead of the storm season.

The technicians underwent various rescue scenarios in the water at the spillway.



The new IVECO CAFS/Swift water pod response appliance is now up for duty.

This appliance, 525E, was designed in Brisbane and will be trialled over the next 12 months.

It is expected following this, further appliances will be built for the region and state.

The appliance will be located at Caboolture Fire and Rescue Station, however it is likely to move to the new Petrie Fire and Rescue Station once the building is completed.



South Eastern Region



In December, emergency services responded to reports of a 17-year-old boy who had fallen up to 15 metres off the rocks at Cedar Creek Falls and sustained head injuries.

The initial response was provided by Tamborine Mountain and Canungra auxiliary crews with technical rescue support from Beenleigh. As the incident developed, the multi-agency response grew to include QPS, QAS as well as Tamborine Mountain RFB and Tamborine Mountain SES.

The incident was a protracted technical rescue requiring patient stabilisation prior to retrieval. After two and a half hours, the patient was safely stretchered out of the ravine and transported to Gold Coast University Hospital.

The incident was a great example of the interoperability of emergency services, in particular the team work demonstrated by local QFES crews.

Thanks to Chris Robinson

Following a number of recent house fires in Logan, South Eastern Region continues to engage with a diverse range of community groups in the local area.

On 5 December, Acting Inspector Paul Simmons and VCEs Geoff Richardson and Mathew Cutbush attended a function at Logan Gardens organised by resettlement agency ACCESS Community Services and attracting 250 local Somali people. On the day, 70 smoke alarms were given out to these families and the interaction with QFES staff was great. Interpreters were on-hand to provide relevant fire safety information to the group.

Key discussion points included QFES and the service we provide, the types of events that may occur in their community, how residents and community groups can prepare for an event, what actions people should take during an event and who to contact for assistance and how. The Somali elders were rapt with the event and QFES staff were invited to stay, eat lunch and socialise with the group.

Thanks to Paul Simmons

To help celebrate 50 years of career female police officers and 20 years of female firefighters, South Eastern and Brisbane Region staff and volunteers came together at the Queensland Police Service Academy in December.

It was a great opportunity to display the diversity of QFES as a department and discuss in detail the variety of roles available and the interest in our service was overwhelming.

The opportunity was also used to provide vital community education messages and to assist our communities to be better prepared for storm, flood, cyclone, bushfire and home fire safety.

It is duly noted that female RFSQ volunteers have been proudly serving the community for more than 20 years and are also acknowledged for their commitment and dedication.

Thanks to Peta Miller-Rose



South Western Region

A love of volunteering has brought Nick Kuhn and Sarah Williams together forever after the pair married in November last year.

First meeting as emergency services cadets at Clifton and Inglewood, Sarah moved to Allora and joined Clifton SES while Nick joined the Nobby Rural Fire Brigade.

It is understood love bloomed when Sarah also joined the Nobby Rural Fire Brigade, while Nick has subsequently joined Clifton SES as well.

Many of their volunteer friends were in attendance at the wedding to wish them all the best for the future.

Thanks to Karen Wilkinson



Five medals were awarded to firefighters and volunteers at a ceremony at Warwick Fire and Rescue Station in January.

Two appliances were also handed over to Warwick Fire and Rescue Station and Dalveen Rural Fire Brigade.

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Bill Byrne presented the medals in front of about 40 representatives from Fire and Rescue, State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service.

Diligent and Ethical Service Medals were presented to volunteers William Humble, James Massy, Roni Bau and firefighter Brad Davie.

Senior Firefighter Michael Coombes was presented the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal in recognition of his deployment to Christchurch in 2011 after the devastating earthquake.



South Western Region assisted the Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport with its very first international arrival of a 747 Cathay Pacific cargo flight.

Along with 20 SES personnel who provided crowd control and road safety throughout the airport, Fire and Rescue appliances and crews from Toowoomba assisted Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) from Brisbane with immediate Aircraft Crash response support.

The event was witnessed by about 1,000 invited dignitaries and guests while a significant number of the community witnessed the aircraft land from a designated area supplied by Wagners.

Toowoomba Fire and Rescue crews were provided with training by ARFF prior to the aircraft's arrival.



Far Northern Region

Atherton firefighters completed high-angle rescue training on the rooftop of the Atherton hospital.

In the exercise, the firefighters descended down the side of the building, practicing commands and signals and using various harnesses and ropes.

Station officer Brad Fleming said the training was often most useful for swift water rescue and was used to go over creek beds or waterfalls.

The officers completed their competency in high-angle rescue for the year.

High school students had the opportunity to play the role of injured patients in a multi-agency road crash rescue demonstration at Mossman State High School.

Five students were selected to play victims, complete with make-up simulating cuts and burns, and acted out the scenario of the emergency response, allowing emergency services personnel to demonstrate to the rest of the class what is involved in road crash rescue.

QFES personnel were joined on scene by Ambulance, Police and even the Cairns QGAir rescue helicopter to complete the demonstration which played out a scenario of a driver with three passengers hitting a motorcyclist after texting while driving.

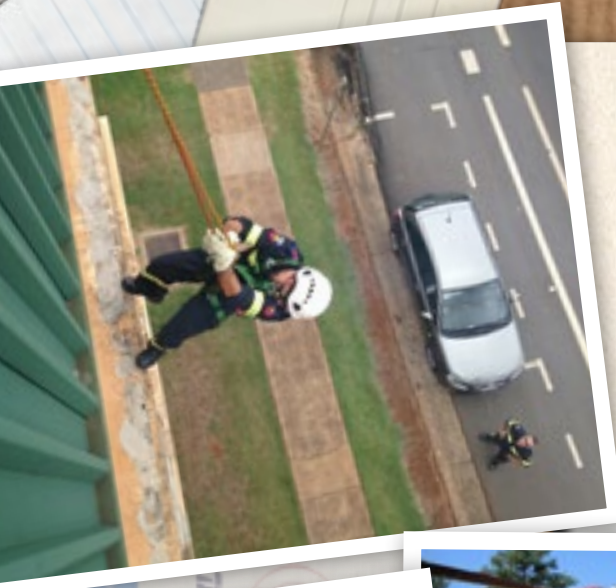
Auxiliary firefighter Andrew Petrack said some students were in tears watching the scenario, which was hopefully a sign the message had cut through.

Far Northern Region SES is trialling weekday training in an effort to make training more accessible and convenient for members.

The first trial of weekday training was a storm damage operations course at Edmonton.

It is hoped the initiative will make it easier for shift workers to attend training, as well as others who may find it difficult to attend on weekends.

The extra training times also increase the total amount of training that is offered to members and gives them greater flexibility in fitting training around their busy schedules.



Northern Region

Disaster management personnel from across north Queensland put their skills to the test in a joint major exercise in Oonoonba, Townsville.

Exercise Trojan Horse saw staff and volunteers from QFES, Police, Ambulance, Queensland Rail, Ergon Energy, Queensland Health, Townsville City Council and the Australian Defence Force join forces to respond to a simulated catastrophic event.

The scenario was a simulated major road and train crash, resulting in multiple casualties, hazardous materials management and large-scale evacuations.



Northern Region QFES are developing strong relationships with their QPS counterparts via an information session for QPS recruits.

Fire and Rescue were recently invited to present to QPS graduates at the North Queensland Police Service Academy in Townsville.

The idea behind the session was to provide the recruits with a clear understanding of QFES and its capabilities, as well as developing stronger working relations and reinforcing interagency co-operation.

Topics covered included: the history of QFES; roles and responsibilities; working together; legislation; extinguisher information. The session was followed by a Q&A and a display of QFES appliances.

Feedback on the session was positive and it is likely sessions will continue with future recruit courses.

Thank to Jock Crane



Townsville and Burdekin SES flood boat crews paid a visit to the Townsville Fire and Rescue Station where they shared information on flood boats and Inflatable Work Platforms (IWP).

The swift water technicians demonstrated the IWP they use, what sort of PPE they wear, the levels of swift water training for firefighters, the trailers they have set up for rapid deployment, how many technicians they have on shift and how they get more in when needed.

The flood boat crews spoke about the capabilities of the boats, looked at where and how they can transport the IWPs, showed what the boats can carry and explained about the safety brief they give anyone who enters the boat.

Following the session, a commitment to practical training together was made.

Thanks to Daryl Camp





**RURAL FIRE BRIGADES ASSOCIATION
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Representing Rural Fire Brigades across Queensland.

The RFBAQ is fully self-funded with no brigade subscription and no Federal, State or Local Government money. Our income is generated by fundraising through our Contact Centre which sells Art Union tickets, takes tax deductible donations and brigade specific donations.

In Queensland it would be very hard to find another organisation that does not charge membership fees, subscription, dues or some other levy to fund its primary functions; which for us is lobbying on behalf all Rural Fire Brigades.

In addition to this, the RFBAQ provides grants to brigades and volunteers in need from the money that it raises. Again, it would be very hard to find a representative organisation that gives so much back to its membership while only asking

that members participate in the representative electoral process.

In the last financial year the RFBAQ has paid almost \$200,000 in grants to brigades with another \$57,000 of approved grants to brigades awaiting supplier invoicing. In addition to these grant payments is another \$18,000 of brigade specific donations (where 100% of the donated money reaches the specified brigade).

This is a record amount of funding from the Association to brigades.

The vast majority of our income is derived from people purchasing Art Union tickets in the 5 Art Unions that we run throughout the year. Less than 25% of all RFBAQ revenue is derived from donations.

With 80% of the state in drought and the significant downturn in

the mining sector, the RFBAQ has along with many other charities and business has seen a downturn in income. This is coupled with brigades increasing the number of grant applications to the RFBAQ as they are also facing the same fundraising challenges.

The RFBAQ communicates through mail outs, website and FireLine emails. I would encourage everyone who has an interest in Rural Fire to register to receive email updates through the RFBAQ website subscription or call Jessica in our office on 07 5480 5130.

Justin Choveaux

**Apply now
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Safety Equipment Grants**

Rexel Holdings Australia has partnered with the RFBAQ to provide 100 safety packs to Queensland's most in need Rural Fire Brigades.

With each pack valued over \$250 the grants will focus on brigades with appliances, with or without a shed or station, and brigades with little or no levy income. Each safety pack consists of:

- » Robus 10W Rechargeable LED Flood Light (RLEDF10WRCAU-CW)
- » HPM 5 outlet power board (D105/5TRPA)
- » Energizer Intrinsicly Safe torch (MS2AALED1)
- » Energizer Alkaline Industrial AA batteries (EN91)

To apply simply fill in the form available on the RFBAQ website at <http://www.rfbaq.org/grants>, or contact the RFBAQ on **07 5480 5130** or email support@rfbaq.org.

Grant application forms need to be in by **Friday, 29th April 2016** to the RFBAQ at 101A Mary Street, Gympie Qld 4570 or support@rfbaq.org.



PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS ONE SAFETY PACK, ONE APPLICATION PER BRIGADE

The RFBAQ would like to thank
Rexel Holdings Australia for their support.



**HOLDINGS
AUSTRALIA**

Central Region

Auxiliary captain Alister Lawrence has celebrated 40 years of service to QFES and the Clermont community.

A celebratory barbecue was held to honour Alister where he was presented with a plaque displaying the various past emblems of Queensland's fire services prior to QFES' establishment as well as a certificate.

Amid the celebrations, there was a real structure fire call out, which temporarily halted the celebrations for 45 minutes. The celebration was attended by around 50 people including past and present firefighters.

Alister began in the fire service when he was offered accommodation in the flat at the back of an old station in return for keeping it clean and tidy.

He was invited to attend Thursday night drills and has been going ever since.



Mackay B Shift firefighters paid a visit to the Mackay Base Hospital children's ward on Christmas Eve to wish the staff and patients well and spread some Christmas cheer.

The crew enjoyed the experience and Blazer even went along for the visit. The crews delivered gifts of colouring books and pencils to be used in the ward.



Six high school students have completed a Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations) with the assistance of Thangool Auxiliary Captain and Thangool Rural Fire Brigade First Officer Don Baldwin.

Don instructs the group of Year 11 and 12 students each week at the Biloela State High School.

The students who have been participating in the course must complete a number of theory lessons and practical exercises during the school year.

Through the year the students have learnt about brigade safety, teamwork, firefighting equipment, communications and wildfire response.

There is no cost to the students, parents or the school as all resources are provided by the RFSQ and supported by the voluntary services of Thangool RFB and the RFSQ Rockhampton Area Office.



North Coast Region



A joint training session was held at Bundaberg Fire Station with C shift firefighters and 14 local Bundaberg SES members.

The training involved an improvised rescue from heights technique called a vertical two-point suspension to lower a casualty from a two or three-storey balcony.

Members thoroughly enjoyed the activity and are looking forward to similar shared training activities in the future.

SES Volunteer Community Educators took to the shopping centre in Maryborough to share their safety messages.

A display was set up with important Get Ready information to help shoppers prepare themselves for an emergency.

The display also included demonstrations by SES members of some of their skills and techniques.

Thanks to Marshall Krueger

When Dennis Bonnell was a young man, he would head down to the Cooroy Fire Station whenever he heard the siren calling the firefighters to station just to see what was happening.

The Captain decided Dennis would be better off on the truck rather than watching it drive away and asked Dennis to join the service.

When Dennis first started with the Noosa Fire Brigade Board, training was basic and call outs were few. Now with a crew of 11 well-trained auxiliary firefighters, Cooroy Fire and Rescue Station firefighters attend over 150 incidents a year.

As Captain, Dennis has not only overseen the training of his team, he has also actively recruited most of them. Testament to the respect the firefighters and indeed the whole community have for Dennis is the average duration of service for Cooroy firefighters: an incredible 23 years.

The last firefighter was recruited 12 years ago and he is still known as the rookie.

Over 41 years uniforms, equipment, training, appliances and technology have all changed but one constant has been Dennis's commitment and enthusiasm for the job. Dennis retired from QFES at the end of October 2015 when he turned 65.

He will continue to run his family business and continue helping the community he served. He may even occasionally head down to the fire station just to see what is happening.

Thanks to Kent Mayne



QFES assists WA colleagues

A contingent of six QFES personnel formed part of a larger deployment to Western Australia to assist with significant bushfires in Waroona and surrounds.

Six QFES personnel arrived home safely following a seven-day deployment to Western Australia in support of the Waroona bushfire emergency.

Western Australia's Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) made a request for assistance on Tuesday, 12 January and personnel from Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and South Australia formed a team of 62 to meet the request.

The request was coordinated by New South Wales and by the afternoon of the same day, the QFES representatives were on their way to Perth.

The QFES staff and volunteers included Tony Johnstone, Kent Barron, Peta Miller-Rose, Liane Henderson, Alan Gillespie and Mark Doble.

The specialist roles they completed included aviation, logistics, incident management, fire behaviour analysis and public information roles.

The individuals offered valuable support to local agencies in suppressing the large bushfire, which caused significant damage and community disruption in the areas of Waroona and surrounds.

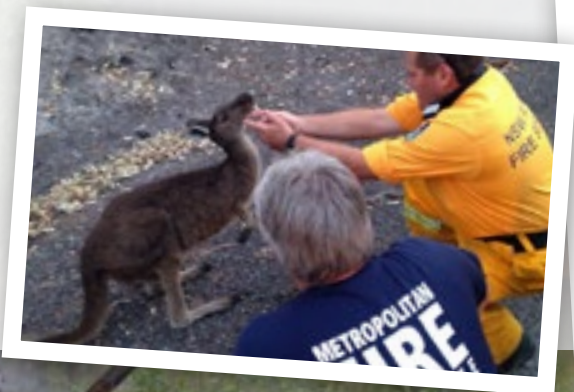
Taskforce Leader Tony Johnstone said the team was highly respected for their skills and experience.

Peta Miller-Rose said it was good to see many agencies from across the country come together for the community.

"We got to work with the two local volunteer stations at Yarloop and Waroona and the aim was to support those that had been going since the ICC started and give them a bit of respite," she said.

"We worked with people from NSW, SA, ACT and representatives from the Western Australian equivalents of the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue, SES and Parks and Wildlife.

"Everyone was in it together and there for the community, we built some wonderful relationships and some really good networks."





“Protecting the community: what better purpose could you have?”

With a passion for protecting the environment and communities, James Haig is excited to be in a new role with the Rural Fire Service Queensland after many years working with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Toowoomba. *By Stephanie Masters*

Bringing years of experience in land management to the new role of Executive Manager, Bushfire Mitigation, James Haig is ready to start putting some ticks on his list of goals.

Previously holding the role of Principal Ranger Technical Support for QPWS South West Region based in Toowoomba, James has worked closely with the RFSQ and QFES at large in protecting natural heritage and is no stranger to the fire ground.

In the newly-created RFSQ role, James will bring a state-wide focus to mitigation activities, forging strong bonds with landholders and other key land

management stakeholders to ensure that bushfire hazards are reduced as much as possible.

“We need to do more in mitigating the risk before an event happens and while fuel hazards have to be managed by the landowner, QFES has a key role in leading and coordinating that,” he said.

“I have already been meeting with a lot of our stakeholders to build a system around how we work with other agencies to deliver strategic bushfire mitigation and say ‘This is a priority for us, how can we help you?’

“There is an awful lot of good work happening already and there is a huge amount of knowledge already with our volunteers and staff and we need to

make sure that we give them the best tools to help them in their planning so that’s another key aspect of what I’m trying to do.

“The worst thing you can have as a manager is unfulfilled potential in your team.

“I want to listen and get out and about and meet some of the brigades to see some of that potential first-hand as well.”

His past work has taken him to places like London Zoo and Wilsons Promontory but on the fire ground at Ballandean in 2002 was when his interest in fire was cemented.





I'm a people-person and I'm really looking forward to meeting as many people in the department as I can.



James considers himself lucky to have a job that is actively involved in protecting the environment and communities.

“After I studied biological science in Victoria, I worked for a marine research organisation but after a few months I decided I wanted to be in something more applied and academia wasn’t for me,” he said.

“I started working as the most base grade ranger you could possibly have and I was always interested in fire. From an environmental view, it’s one of the systematic tools that we have to manage our environment.

“I liked to get out there and have a go in terms of fire management, I enjoyed getting out on the fire line, responding to

a wildfire as a ranger and it made it easier for me to make decisions as a manager by understanding what those on the ground were dealing with.

“We’re very lucky that we have a job that is intrinsically very valuable.

“Protecting the community of Queensland and looking after people, and protecting them from hazards even when they don’t understand the risk; what better, more worthy purpose could you have than that?”

James described himself as having a very positive outlook and outside of work he enjoys playing music with his family, running marathons, being outdoors gardening and fishing, and travelling the world.

“I like to do things that are a new challenge every now and then, it keeps you alive,” he said.

James said he was particularly glad to join QFES while the department is growing and changing.

“I knew a lot of people here already and have worked closely with QFES for many years and never met anyone in the organisation that I didn’t like,” he said.

“It’s an exciting time for QFES and that’s a good time to join too, there are a lot of interesting challenges ahead.

“But most of all I’m a people-person and I’m really looking forward to meeting as many people in the department as I can.”



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Registrations closed for Bike 4 Burns 2016

To celebrate the 10th year of Bike 4 Burns, QFES has invited Fire and Rescue NSW to join forces to raise funds for burns research in their respective states.

This year Bike 4 Burns riders will aim to raise at least \$65,000 to total half a million dollars raised for the Children's Hospital Foundation in 10 years.

A nine-day ride will begin on 9 May at Berowra, on the northern outskirts of Sydney, and follow the New England corridor.

The ride will conclude in Brisbane at the grounds of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

About 25 to 30 riders from Fire and Rescue NSW are expected to join QFES riders on the same route for their 11th year of a similar event.

Most of the route will see riders complete an average of a 100 kilometres a day with no rest days.

Information on how to support QFES riders will soon be available.

Team returns from Nepal

A small team of QFES personnel and their families recently returned from a trip to Nepal supporting the Children's Welfare Centre in Godawari.

In addition to providing the centre with much needed resources they also spent their time with the children teaching them new life skills and enjoying their culture.

Never letting an opportunity for fire education pass them by, Chief Superintendent John Gresty, Kerry Gresty and Sally Steward also took time out to educate the staff of the Waterfront Hotel in Pokhara in kitchen fire safety, first aid and fire evacuation.

The team also built a relationship with a local Kathmandu fire brigade where the firefighters excitedly received donated fire t-shirts from Steve Bunney, Peta Miller-Rose and Heidi Parkinson.

With just three outdated and partially working fire trucks to service 2.1 million people, there is a continued need for support.



Having experienced the hardships of Nepal and falling in love with the people, the team continue to assist in consultation with their support team in Nepal.

Brisbane charity Children's Aid International supports the Children's Welfare Centre and arranges fundraising and tours every year.

For more information, contact Kerry Gresty on kerryn.gresty@qfes.qld.gov.au



The Ipswich community celebrated 150 years of fire services in the city with a special event to commemorate the milestone.



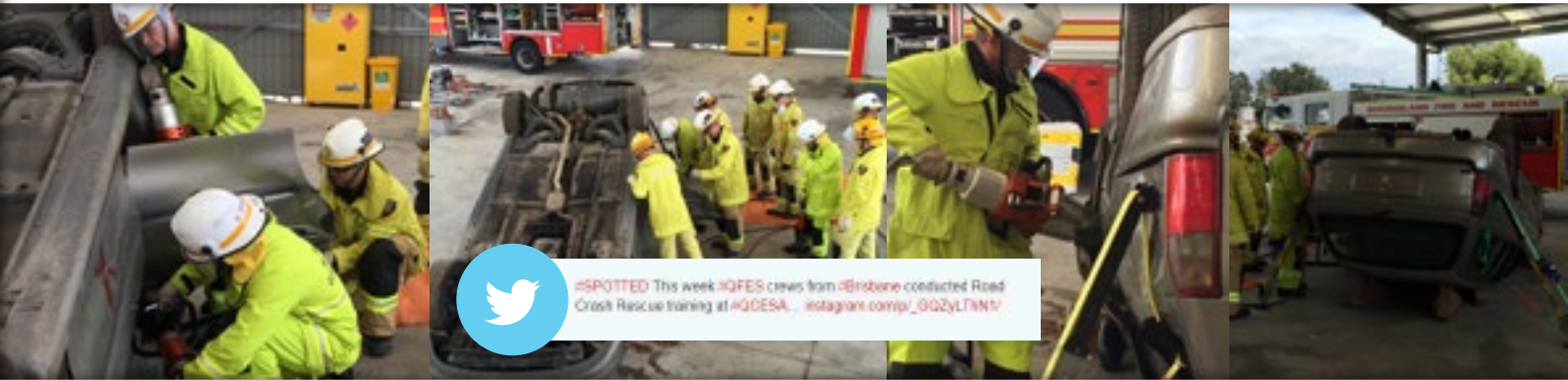
Bunnings Warehouses across the state held sausage sizzles to benefit SES groups and rural fire brigades



QFES personnel were invited to Victoria by the Country Fire Authority to attend a familiarisation day for their two Large Air Tankers (LATs). The aircrafts are based at Avalon in Victoria but could, if requested, attend large scale fires in Queensland.



SES members joined with local Fire and Rescue and RFSQ crews to work with contracted aircraft for air operations familiarisation and training at South West Region.



Tara crews finished the training year with a bang with 30 members of Fire and Rescue, RFSQ, Police and Ambulance attending a mock incident for a joint training exercise.






Volunteers from Ripley Valley RFSQ and SES came together for first aid training. Pictures: Nadine Andersen



North Coast Region firefighters conducted a major exercise involving a mock scenario where a semi-trailer had collided with a utility. The truck was carrying chemicals which had to be dealt with, while at the same time crews had to perform rescues to release trapped people in the utility.

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-  @qldfire

QFES reflects on 2011 flood anniversary

The five-year anniversary of the devastating 2010-2011 summer is an emotional milestone for many QFES personnel who responded to some of the most tragic events the state has seen.



The weekend of January 10 marked the fifth anniversary of the 2011 floods that devastated parts of south-east Queensland and saw QFES battle unprecedented conditions to respond to communities in need.

By 11 January 2011, three-quarters of Queensland had been declared a disaster zone following a series of floods that hit the state beginning in December 2010.

Monsoonal rains brought by Tropical Cyclone Tasha, which crossed the north Queensland coast on 25 December 2010, exacerbated floods already impacting areas of central Queensland and later devastated communities in Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley, Ipswich and Brisbane.

Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche said thousands of QFES staff and volunteers were engaged in flood response efforts between 1 December 2010 and 28 February 2011 as a result of monsoonal rains.

“Forty-seven swift water rescues were performed in south-east Queensland alone on January 10 and 11,” Mr Roche said.

“Not a day goes by without a reminder of the destructive fury of those floods and the tragic loss of lives.”

As the south-east mopped up following the floods, all eyes turned to the north where Tropical Cyclone Anthony crossed the coast at Bowen.

While it caused only minor damage, it was followed by Tropical Cyclone Yasi, which crossed the coast at Tully on 2 February leaving 650 properties uninhabitable and a further 2,200 damaged.

During the 11 weeks following Christmas 2010, about 112,000 calls were made to the SES 132 500 hotline.

Mr Roche said Queensland would continue to face natural disasters and QFES was committed to ensuring personnel and community members were well-prepared and well-informed.

“Our emergency services personnel are some of the best in the world but we will ensure the lessons from the summer of 2010-2011 are never forgotten,” he said.

“We must continue to support and build organisational and community resilience to these extreme events.

“Our focus has been on stronger coordination, improved interoperability and strengthened capacity to provide an integrated response.

“Queenslanders can be confident that when these events happen – no matter where they happen – communities will benefit from having well equipped, well trained, capable and responsive emergency services.”

Thanks to Shannon Sagaidak



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RESPONSE
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Start preparing your Plan B now at www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety



www.qld.gov.au/floodwatersafety

