

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 12



TROPICAL CYCLONE DEBBIE QFES RALLIES AS ONE

QUEENSLAND RESPONDS:

GOLD COAST 2018:

WARM WELCOME:

STATE DISASTER COORDINATION CENTRE STANDS UP TO TC DEBBIE

THE XXI COMMONWEALTH GAMES LESS THAN A YEAR AWAY

QFES SOUTH WESTERN REGION CONNECTING WITH NEW AUSTRALIANS

- PAGE 9
- PAGE 11
- PAGE 13



CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

QUEENSLAND RESPONDS
SDCC stands up
to TC Debbie

09



GOLD COAST 2018
XXI Comm Games
less than a year away

11



WARM WELCOME
QFES connecting with
new Australians

13



ON THE COVER

QFES Operation Fortitude activities around the state in response to Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Clockwise from top: 1. Gladstone FRS swiftwater rescue technicians Kristal Johnston and Justin Corry cross the flooded Leixlip Creek at Calliope, Central Region (photo: QPS Senior Constable Colleen Smith). 2. SES members from Mackay and Rockhampton conduct evacuations in the Eton area, south-west of Mackay. 3. Clean-up gets underway in North McLean, South Eastern Region. Pictured in foreground is Nicolene Smal from Wasp Creek RFB (photo: Janice Sinclair, Bonogin Valley RFB).

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- » Queensland stands strong against TC Debbie 4
- » Queensland SDCC swings into action 9
- » Willowvale house fire —Strong working relationship gets the job done 10
- » QFES ahead of the Games 11
- » Rural firefighter blazes the trail 12
- » Nexus — investing in our people 12
- » QFES welcomes new Australians 13
- » QFES Peer Support Officers of the Year announced 14
- » Queensland's public safety portfolio celebrates International Women's Day 15
- » Leading the way for women in QFES 16
- » Agreement cements cross-border partnership 17

AROUND THE STATE

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

SPOTLIGHT

- » Profile: Kay Burkin, SES Support Officer Far Northern Region 28

UP TO DATE

- » Local businesses helping QFES help the community 31

COMMEMORATE

- » Six years on — remembering Christchurch 34

FOREWORDS



Katarina Carroll

Commissioner

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the severe weather events that followed presented Queensland's emergency management agencies with a protracted and demanding disaster situation. It was also a defining moment for QFES, with our three services working together seamlessly in support of our community.

Many of QFES' 48,000 strong paid and volunteer workforce are regularly called on to put themselves in harm's way to help others and, as Commissioner, I have a deep sense of responsibility for all of these people.

During the event, more than 1100 QFES members deployed in Northern, Central and South Eastern regions. Many more provided critical assistance behind the scenes, supporting frontline personnel and working with our partners and at all levels of government in the multi-agency Regional Operations Centres, State Operations Centre and State Disaster Coordination Centre. Others ensured QFES maintained business as usual for the rest of Queensland. To each and every QFES member involved in this challenging response, I say thank you.

Many of those deployed were volunteers, who make up a significant part of the QFES workforce and are critical to our service delivery. I would like to thank their families and employers for the support they give them so they are able to dedicate time away from everyday commitments to help fellow Queenslanders in need.

I would also like to acknowledge our colleagues from interstate who came to help. Nearly 140 emergency service personnel from the ACT, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania were deployed to support Queensland's disaster management operations. QFES members will continue to play a key role in recovery planning and operations for as long as it takes for affected communities to get back on their feet.



Doug Smith

Deputy Commissioner

STRATEGY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

As the clean-up from Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the ensuing weather events continues, I cannot express strongly enough my gratitude to QFES staff and volunteers for the dedication, hard work and compassion shown in the weeks leading up to, during and after the event.

We all work hard in our jobs to ensure that the department can deliver effective emergency management capabilities when called upon. Each and every one of us makes an important contribution to the overall success of what QFES achieves for our community and this was more than exemplified during TC Debbie as all staff and volunteers — support and operational — readily adapted to events as they unfolded.

I am personally very proud to work for a department that exhibits the highest standards of preparedness, response and recovery practices and is so well respected at a national and international level. It is without doubt that the hard work and rapid response of our staff and volunteers and their willingness to assist under difficult conditions was integral in saving Queenslanders' lives and properties.

As we move forward and begin preparations for the end of financial year and 2017 Budget Estimates hearings, I look forward to providing you with further updates on the important pieces of work underway within the Strategy and Corporate Services Division.



Mark Ryan

Minister

POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Once again, Queensland has been forced to meet head on another violent storm season, one that has left families grieving for loved ones lost and homes destroyed.

From Bowen and Mackay and the Whitsundays down to our most southern border, Cyclone Debbie and the flooding aftermath cut a devastating swathe down our coastline over a miserable and prolonged period of time. The dedication and skills of our hardworking emergency services teams has never been in any doubt, but the 2017 storm season truly demonstrated the agility and swiftness of your response.

Once again you exhibited a world-leading response to the ever-changing emergency situation, moving without hesitation to implement the well-tested procedures that have made the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services organisation so respected, both nationally and internationally. I am convinced your unparalleled preparation and rapid response saved lives. But more than the professionalism with which you have demonstrated time and time again your unmatched skills and dedication, I saw first-hand your compassion.

Hot, exhausted, dirty, wet and often heartbroken by the distress of your fellow Queenslanders, the sensitivity with which you approached each situation will stay with me forever. It is widely acknowledged that Queensland's emergency response preparations and teams are the best in the nation. Because with each natural disaster that taunts our state, we learn something new.

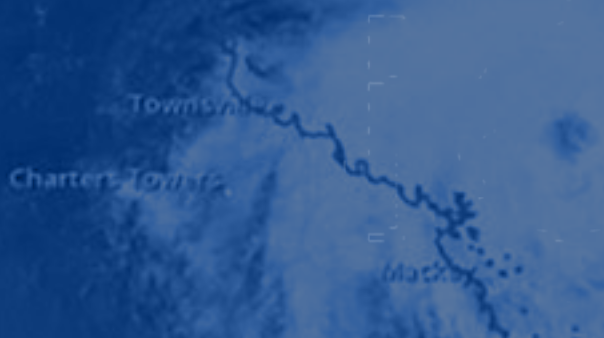
Queensland is the best at preparing, responding and recovering from disasters because we have to be. But, more specifically, Queensland is the best during these times of crisis because of you.

On behalf of every Queenslander, I thank you.



Queensland stands strong against Tropical Cyclone Debbie

In March, TC Debbie hit the Queensland coast causing significant and widespread destruction from the Whitsunday region right down to the state's south-east corner. Even before the cyclone struck, QFES staff and volunteers rallied as one in readiness for what would become a protracted and complex disaster event.



Damage in residential areas of Airlie Beach, Central Region.



Boats overturned at Shute Harbour, Airlie Beach on Tuesday 28 March, the day TC Debbie struck.



Flooding west of Beaudesert, South Eastern Region on Friday 31 March.



Commissioner Carroll briefing QFES members at Logan Village, South Eastern Region before they head off on community recovery tasks.

FRS swiftwater rescue technicians cross the flooded Leixlip Creek at Calliope. Photo: QPS Senior Constable Colleen Smith.

On 24 March 2017, a large weather event that had been building in the Pacific Ocean began to form into a tropical cyclone and track towards the north Queensland coast, prompting the state government to stand-up the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.

In preparation for a potentially significant severe weather event, a major operation was put in motion to pre-deploy QFES staff and volunteers to Far Northern, Northern and Central regions, followed by the strategic deployment of taskforces and specialist QFES Disaster Assistance Response Team units to areas near the expected path of the developing cyclone.

On Saturday 25 March, an intensifying Tropical Cyclone Debbie was classified as a category two and Queensland's State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) stood up. By late in the evening on Monday, the slow-moving cyclone had grown to a category four. Early on Tuesday morning, TC Debbie struck the Whitsunday Islands with wind gusts reaching 263km per hour,

devastating the tourist resorts before making landfall near Airlie Beach at around midday.

TC Debbie maintained intensity over the Airlie Beach and Proserpine areas for a number of hours, battering local communities before being downgraded to a category two. In Mackay, thousands of people had been evacuated to higher ground in anticipation of a storm surge inundating low lying areas.

By Wednesday, the system had dissipated into a severe tropical low, dumping drenching rain on the northern and central Queensland coastlines and hinterlands as it moved south. Residents of Mackay and surrounding areas again faced inundation from both flash and riverine flooding.

Record rain continued to fall in central and southern Queensland. On Thursday, the Queensland Government took the unprecedented step of closing all schools in south-east Queensland, telling people to stay off the roads and stay at home.

By the time the destructive and slow moving system eventually moved off the coast in the early hours of Friday 31 March, flash flooding and fast-rising rivers were threatening many communities. The flooded Logan River in South Eastern Region peaked on 1 April at its highest level since 1974, causing thousands of residents in the Logan, Scenic Rim and Gold Coast regions to evacuate. On 7 April, the Fitzroy River in Rockhampton peaked at 8.9 metres, inundating hundreds of homes and businesses as inland floodwaters reached the coast.

Throughout this nearly three-week period, QFES crews were simultaneously coordinating multiple preparation, response, and recovery activities in different areas of the state to ensure residents were well-prepared and well-supported for the range of emergency situations that arose, including cyclone, storm surges, heavy rainfall, flash flooding and riverine flooding.

CONTINUED...



FRS and RFS at North Rockhampton Fire and Rescue Station before deploying to Mackay.



Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche meets with SES members on the ground in Proserpine.



FRS swiftwater rescue technicians in Bowen, Central Region.



QFES members stack sandbags on the flood barrier built around Rockhampton Airport.



FRS Station Officer Shane Tinsley uploading damage assessment data provided by QFES Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) technicians in the field at Rockhampton.



Proserpine FRS auxiliary firefighter Christopher Harvey, Proserpine SES member Logan Dachs and Carwarral RFS firefighter cleaning up in Proserpine.

The One QFES approach saw the activation of multi-service operational and support teams. In affected areas FRS, SES and RFS personnel worked side-by-side, pooling skills and resources to deliver the best possible outcomes for Queensland communities in need.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the interoperability of QFES services had been a crucial factor in the success of the multi-layered disaster management operation.

“This has been a defining event for QFES, with our services working together better than we ever have before,” Ms Carroll said.

“QFES’ response to TC Debbie and the associated severe weather events clearly demonstrated the benefits the department delivers to the community through our One QFES approach to emergency management.

“We saw improved collaboration, engagement and communication within QFES and with our partners and stakeholders.”

Working together with all levels of government within the multiagency Regional Operations Centres (ROCs), State Operations Centre (SOC) and SDCC, QFES staff and volunteers contributed to the speedy dissemination of critical incident information, the deployment of people

and resources, and the continuity and re-establishment of essential services in affected areas.

Before, during and after the event, QFES staff and volunteers worked around the clock under demanding conditions alongside emergency service colleagues, utility providers and the community to ensure broad-ranging disaster management services were delivered quickly and efficiently to the people of Queensland.

As part of this, specially trained QFES Emergency Management Coordinators deployed to assist local councils, Local Disaster Management Groups and District Disaster Management Groups.



QFES Assistant Commissioners Peter Jeffrey and Neil Reid help with clean-up in North McLean, South Eastern Region.



Brisbane Unit SES members join the clean-up in Bowen, Central Region.



RFS members filling sandbags to protect Rockhampton from the rising Fitzroy River.



Members of QFES Digital GWN Ops Task Force at a mobile Cells-on-Wheels site at Airlie Beach.



SES and FRS members working together to secure a vessel on the Fitzroy River in Rockhampton.

In total, more than 1100 QFES members deployed to affected areas. Just under 11,000 rapid damage assessments were conducted and more than 8000 requests for SES assistance were received.

QFES response crews also conducted 166 water rescues — in many cases almost certainly saving the lives of those rescued.

Throughout this major disaster response, with many colleagues deployed or seconded to emergency response roles, other QFES members were left holding the fort and worked hard to ensure business as usual and service delivery continuity for the department was maintained.

For many communities affected by TC Debbie and associated weather events, clean-up and other recovery activities will be required for many months to come. At a state level, QFES is a member of two multi-agency Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs) — the Human Social FRG led by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the Economic FRG, led by the Department of State Development — which coordinate the planning and implementation of the state’s whole-of-community recovery activities. Regionally, QFES is represented on many LDMG recovery committees, attending forums and meetings that directly contribute to helping local communities get back on their feet.

Commissioner Carroll said the tireless dedication, hard work and professionalism of QFES staff and volunteers was something the department was very proud of.

“This complex and protracted natural disaster has been confronting and challenging. QFES members have worked many long, difficult hours over the nearly three-week operational period,” Ms Carroll said.

“I am extremely proud of the skills, capability and commitment shown by all QFES staff and volunteers in standing together to support and serve the people of Queensland.”



QFES Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing helps with the clean-up in North McLean, South Eastern Region.



FRS swiftwater rescue technicians and 13 SES flood boats were deployed to Rockhampton ahead of the Fitzroy River peak, Central Region.



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Queensland State Disaster Coordination Centre swings into action

Stood-up on Saturday 25 March 2017, the multi-agency State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) remained activated for 17 days, operating around the clock to coordinate Queensland's response to TC Debbie and the associated severe weather and flooding events.

Under the Queensland State Disaster Management Plan, operational control of the SDCC during activations is led by QPS, with QPS Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski serving as State Disaster Coordinator.

During disaster events, a mass of information from around the state is fed into the SDCC from emergency service agencies, all levels of government, utility providers and other disaster management stakeholders operating out of coordinated local and district disaster management groups. Intelligence collated from this by the SDCC is provided to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC), chaired by the Queensland Premier. Members of the QDMC include portfolio ministers, QFES and QPS Commissioners, Directors-General of key government agencies, heads of local government and essential

service providers. During the height of activation, the QDMC meets at the SDCC for briefings daily before a Premier's press conference is held to inform the public of developments, decisions and announcements.

While activated in response to TC Debbie, a core contingent of QFES and QPS personnel and a 400 strong workforce of trained personnel from across government worked in the SDCC, gathering information and developing intelligence; supporting operations and personnel in the field; managing logistics on the ground and producing consistent, accurate and up-to-date reports and briefs as events unfolded.

The SDCC was further supported 24-7 by IT, event management system and geographic information system specialists. On any given day, the SDCC

had anywhere between 60 to 150 people from many departments and emergency services working as one team to provide world-class disaster management support to the people of Queensland.

As the disaster event moved from response to recovery, Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk appointed Australian Army Brigadier Christopher Field as State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) and QFES Chief Superintendent Kevin Walsh as Deputy State Recovery Coordinator to oversee the coordinated cross-government, multi-agency recovery operations and ensure communities recover quickly.

The SRC and Deputy SRC are supported by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, the state's lead agency for disaster recovery, resilience and mitigation policy.



Strong working relationship gets the job done

FRS and RFS firefighters in South Eastern Region are working together to combine their unique capabilities, skillsets and knowledge proving that a job shared is a job halved.



A large house fire in the rural outskirts of the Gold Coast in February was successfully extinguished thanks to the strong working relationship between South Eastern Region's FRS and RFS.

With no reticulated water at the Willowvale house fire, the RFS maintained the FRS appliances' water supply by pumping a nearby dam and travelling back and forth from the closest source of reticulated water to fill tanks. This ensured hose lines could be used continuously on the fire.

South Eastern Region Duty Manager Operations Chris Robinson said the assistance provided by the RFS brigades was crucial in helping FRS crews extinguish the blaze.

"The immediate supply of resources and assistance by the RFS brigades helped achieve a successful outcome at this incident," Mr Robinson said.

Mr Robinson said the FRS and RFS in South Eastern Region had built a strong relationship over many years and regularly trained together.

"There is a strong understanding of each other's capabilities and strengths," Mr Robinson said.

"This has allowed us to develop a relationship where we work seamlessly together."

Regional Manager RFS South Eastern Region Alan Gillespie said the services' collaborative approach to incident response ensures the most appropriate capability is delivered to deal with issues as they arise.

"It underpins so much of what QFES is all about and is a great example of what working together for the community can achieve," Mr Gillespie said.



QFES ahead of the Games



QFES CGO members Ayla Curtis, Glen Arnold and Brynne Dunne showcasing recent all-terrain vehicle purchases ahead of GC2018. Photo: Melyssa Dow.

With less than a year to go, the excitement is starting to build as the Gold Coast community gets ready to host the XXI Commonwealth Games — the largest sporting event ever to be held in the city.

Running from 4–15 April 2018, the XXI Commonwealth Games will include 23 sports being held at venues on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns.

The QFES Commonwealth Games Office (QFES CGO) started planning for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) in January 2015 and is well on track with less than 12 months to go. The first round of venue inspections has been completed by the QFES CGO project team with the second round beginning in May 2017 to ensure venues are ready in time.

Wide area inspections have also commenced this year to identify how the GC2018 environment will affect the delivery of QFES services to the community. The QFES CGO is currently working with QFES regions to plan

around the expected impacts, such as road closures and traffic congestion, and to identify solutions to ensure services are not compromised. QFES CGO has visited all regions and provided an update on the planning for GC2018; they will continue to visit regions leading up to the event and provide further updates as planning is finalised.

The first operational exercises for GC2018 have also commenced with regions recently participating in the QPS-led desktop exercises for the Queen's Baton Relay. These exercises were a great way of understanding the level of involvement required by the region when the Queen's Baton arrives at the end of the year and makes its way around Queensland.

The QFES CGO has recently taken possession of two new all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) which will boost QFES' first response capability at the Games Village and Oxenford Studios. Both of these venues will have large crowds and the ATVs will allow QFES officers to move through congested areas safely. They will also provide legacy benefits with the ATVs being handed over to South Eastern Region and Special Operations at the end of GC2018.

The QFES workforce roster for GC2018 is currently being finalised with opportunities for all services to be part of the deployment. To ensure the department provides an integrated response, the roster includes roles for both paid and volunteer members. In the coming months the QFES CGO will be releasing expressions of interest for key roles in the deployment.



To keep up-to-date with the planning for GC2018 visit the QFES Commonwealth Games pages on the QFES Gateway or email comm.games@qfes.qld.gov.au



Rural firefighter blazes the trail

RFS volunteer Ben Twomey has become the first rural firefighter in Queensland to achieve the national qualification of fire behaviour analyst.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing presented rural firefighter and Principal Information Analyst in the QFES Bushfire Predictive Service Unit (PSU) Ben Twomey with his certificate of qualification as a fire behaviour analyst (FBAN) in March.

Ben is the first RFS member, paid or volunteer, to achieve this highly specialised national qualification and is one of only five FBAN across QFES. New South Wales and Victoria have similar numbers, with other states and territories having none.

The specialist knowledge and services of FBAN mean they are able to be used through all aspects of emergency management including firefighter safety; community and infrastructure impact prediction; evaluation

of various planned burn or firefighting strategies and tactics; prediction of fire spread; bushfire risk mapping and the design of scenarios to support training of incident management personnel as well as community preparedness activities.

FBAN accreditation requires completion of a rigorous four-phase training program that includes practical theory components as well as requisite on-the-ground firefighting experience, culminating in final assessment of demonstrated competence in applying the skills of an FBAN during two real fire events.

Ben said the course was an opportunity to combine his practical knowledge from the fireground with his role in the PSU.



Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing (left) and Manager Predictive Services Unit Andrew Sturgess present Ben Twomey with his certificate of FBAN accreditation.

“I now look forward to applying this knowledge in the State Operations Centre and in the field,” he said.

Ben has been a member of the Ocean View Rural Fire Brigade since 2012 and in 2015 he joined the QFES Bushfire PSU. In his role as Principal Information Analyst he has been instrumental in the development of SABRE, the department’s Simulation Analysis-Based Risk Evaluation fire prediction software program.



Nexus investing in our people

A new, centralised human capital management system will allow QFES to better support and develop its workforce.

Nexus, the new human capital management (HCM) solution for the QFES paid and volunteer workforce, will roll out across the department later this year. As part of QFES’ current evolution, Nexus will transform the way QFES HCM data is collected and handled, allowing the department to better manage staff and volunteer information through one system.

Nexus will deliver new capabilities for QFES’ workforce through integrated modules, allowing for a seamless flow of information to improve our data accuracy and currency, reducing double handling.

Some key features of Nexus will include:

- **Customisable Nexus home page** that will give a central location to easily navigate between Nexus modules.
- **Recruitment and Onboarding modules** that will deliver an integrated and streamlined approach to these processes. Contact with candidates will be through an end-to-end online process and online on-boarding will let QFES engage with and welcome new staff and volunteers to their first day.
- **Learning module** where users can access their learning history, view

in-progress activities and scheduled training events. Online enrolments for courses will also be available, as well as online browsing for courses in the learning catalogue.

- **Health and Safety module** that will introduce a new way of planning, auditing, recording, tracking and reporting health and safety matters.

➤ More information for QFES’ workforce is available on the **QFES Gateway** or via the **SES and RFS portals**.





QFES welcomes new Australians in South Western Region

South Western Region is home to migrants and refugees from around the world, with Toowoomba in particular being a proud, federally designated refugee and humanitarian settlement area and a declared Refugee Welcome Zone.

The region, most notably the town of Stanthorpe, also hosts thousands of backpackers each year who come to work during harvest season. For many migrants, refugees and visitors alike, South Western Region is their first introduction to Australia. In some cases, they have come from countries where they have little or no involvement with government agencies and uniformed personnel are regarded with fear and mistrust.

Assistant Commissioner South Western Region Steve Smith said this was something that QFES — alongside partners QPS, the Multicultural Development Association (MDA), Toowoomba Regional Council, and other local refugee and migrant support services — wants to change.

“Through regular engagement in an informal setting we are developing relationships and building confidence in the uniform,” Mr Smith said.

“At the same time, it is a chance for recent arrivals to learn about Queensland emergency service personnel and their role within our communities and be provided with important safety information — who to call in an emergency, home fire safety and other risks to be aware of.

“This initiative is about carefully targeting engagement with this important but vulnerable group in our community to get the best possible outcomes.”

In February, QFES and the MDA hosted a welcome lunch for refugees and migrants at Toowoomba Fire and Rescue Station with QPS also attending. Such events will continue to be held quarterly, with QFES and QPS alternating as hosts. Each month, QFES FRS personnel also go along to cheer on the youth soccer games held around Toowoomba for new arrivals to build networks across the community. Twice a year, QFES and QPS visits Toowoomba TAFE to share safety messages with the English as a Second Language classes and crews also visit support agencies such as the Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support Services on an as-required basis.

In South Western Region, a new QFES and QPS targeted engagement initiative to build relationships between emergency services and recent arrivals to Australia is helping migrants and refugees feel supported, included and empowered to make decisions regarding the safety of themselves, their families and their property.

Last harvest season, Stanthorpe Fire and Rescue Station hosted two welcome barbecues for backpackers with FRS, SES, RFS and QFES local partner agencies in attendance to provide information about staying safe in the outback.

In addition, an agreement is currently being drafted with the MDA for each new arrival to the South Western Region community to receive a home visit from FRS crews to ensure they know about fire safety in their new homes.

Assistant Commissioner Smith said the initiative is as much about learning from new Australians as it is about teaching.

“We are a better department when we understand the needs of the communities we serve,” Mr Smith said.

“These activities provide an opportunity for crews to be exposed to a lot of different cultures; to learn how to interact with people from different backgrounds, listen to their stories, understand what they have been through and determine what that means in terms of how we can best assist them and deliver effective emergency services.”



Peer Support Officers of the Year announced

Peer Support Week was held 12–18 March and celebrated around the state, culminating in the announcement of the QFES Olga Wilson Award for Peer Support Officer of the Year. This year, the award went to three exceptional QFES Peer Support Officers (PSOs) who were acknowledged for their significant contributions to supporting their colleagues' mental health and wellbeing.

Meet the winners:



Deputy Group Leader Dean Marsden, Coolangatta SES Group

Dean has been with the SES for 15 years and a PSO for six years. Dean was acknowledged for his devotion to supporting QFES members, in particular South Eastern Region SES members following the tragic passing of a fellow SES volunteer.

“The idea of helping someone by listening to and chatting with them to help them cope or deal with an issue or problem is something I find very rewarding. I like to be there if someone needs an ear, a shoulder or even just a hug. I am thankful that I am a part of this network and will continue to do my part for as long as I can.”



First Officer Greg Lincoln, Mt Tamborine Rural Fire Brigade

Greg has been a PSO for almost six years and has welcomed the opportunity to assist people through difficult times, whether critical incidents at work or personal issues. Among other factors, Greg was nominated for his extended and outstanding support to staff who responded to a traumatic incident at Dreamworld on the Gold Coast in October last year. Greg emphasises that PSOs are there for all QFES personnel: “Don't hesitate to ask for support when you need it.”



Station Officer Bradley Stockwell, Rockhampton Fire and Rescue Station

Brad decided to become a PSO in 2005 and says it has given him the opportunity to enhance his relationships with colleagues by listening to and understanding them. In his role as a PSO Brad was deployed to help support personnel during the New Zealand earthquake, as well as cyclones Larry, Yasi and Marcia. For Brad, the need for PSOs is obvious as QFES members are often faced with traumatic or high-stress situations on top of life's everyday pressures.

Woke up this morning, it was raining, slept terribly, kicked my toe on the edge of the bed, cut myself shaving, spilt my first cup of coffee down my shirt, car wouldn't start — flat battery, drop kids to school, forgot lunches, sat in endless queue of traffic, then couldn't get a car park at work, still raining...this is all before I even got to work. Then the possibility of encountering trauma, road traffic accidents, alarms, house fires, chemical incidents, training, work related duties, staff personalities, deadlines, meetings, reports, HR issues and so on. I cannot be the only person who can relate to this sequence of events which are faced daily by QFES staff.

– Station Officer Bradley Stockwell, winner 2017 PSOs of the Year

Congratulations to the following PSOs who were also presented with Peer Support Week Awards:

- Station Officer Christopher Nealon, Cleveland Fire and Rescue Station
- Station Officer Douglas Scott, Enoggera Fire and Rescue Station
- Vicki Hancox, Fire Communications Officer Brisbane
- Veronica (Nancy) Urban, Field Operations Member, Brisbane Southern SES Group
- Jonathon Hyndman, Emu Park Fire and Rescue Station
- Gordon Forrester, Coolangatta SES Group
- Leonard Gleeson, Torquay Fire and Rescue Station
- Leonie Pringle, Coolum SES Group
- Station Officer Brian Corrigan, Wulguru Fire and Rescue Station



Queensland's public safety portfolio celebrates International Women's Day



Panelists Matthew Lawson, Iain MacKenzie, Nicole Gibson and Deanne Gibbon.

Emergency service and public safety agencies QFES, QPS, the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) and the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) came together on International Women's Day to recognise and celebrate the contribution of women across the sector.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan joined QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll, QPS Commissioner Ian Stewart and Inspector-General Emergency Management Iain MacKenzie at the Royal International Convention Centre in Brisbane on 8 March to welcome more than 700 attendees to the 2017 Public Safety Portfolio International Women's Day (IWD) Luncheon.

Following the presentation of agency awards recognising outstanding contributions to the inclusion of women in public safety and emergency services, a panel discussion facilitated by MC and Nine News presenter Melissa Downes explored the event theme of 'innovation driving inspirational change'.

Panel speakers included Inspector-General Emergency Management Iain MacKenzie; Commonwealth Mental Health Commissioner and CEO of the Rogue and Rouge Foundation and Startup Apprentice Nicole Gibson; University of Queensland Associate Director Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Dr Deanne Gibbon and Youngcare co-founder Matthew Lawson.

A leader in diversity, gender and organisational transformation, Dr Gibbon said the most important thing to do when faced with resistance to the inclusion of women in certain roles is to ask 'why?' and counter misperceptions of women in the workplace. Nicole Gibson spoke about the benefits of different leadership styles of men and women, and the advantages not only of female leaders but feminine leadership.

Iain MacKenzie encouraged attendees to focus on everyday opportunities for women.

Speaking after the event, Commissioner Carroll said workplace inclusion and diversity is a key priority for the sector and something everyone can contribute to.

"Women make huge contributions to the delivery of emergency services in Queensland alongside their male colleagues, and I have no doubt this will grow as we continue working together to support and promote the development of women in our workforce," Ms Carroll said.

The luncheon was hosted this year by QPS and raised \$27,000 for the event's selected charity, Youngcare. QFES will host the 2018 Public Safety Portfolio IWD Luncheon next year.

Awards were presented to members of the QFES, QPS, IGEM and PSBA workforce at the Public Safety International Women's Day Luncheon.





Leading the way for women in QFES

The winners of the 2017 QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Awards were announced at the Public Safety Portfolio International Women’s Day Luncheon in Brisbane in March.

Established in 2016, the QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals, teams, initiatives, projects and activities which support, promote or improve the standing of women in QFES.

This year, five QFES members in operational and support roles around the state were awarded for leadership, mentoring and championing change within the department.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said inclusion and diversity are core values of the department.

“QFES is working to create inclusive, diverse and safe workplaces, and an important part of this is acknowledging that both women and men have made exceptional efforts towards achieving this,” Ms Carroll said.

“Congratulations to this year’s winners of these important awards, who have made outstanding contributions to building diverse and inclusive workplaces and I commend them for their efforts.”

The awards were presented by Commissioner Carroll, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan, QPS Commissioner Ian Stewart, Inspector-General Emergency Management Ian Mackenzie and Public Safety Business Agency Acting Chief Operations Officer Rod Wilson.

THE 2017 QFES WOMEN IN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARDS WINNERS:

OUTSTANDING FEMALE LEADER (OPERATIONAL STAFF)

Quinn Cramer

Senior Firefighter, Rockhampton Fire and Rescue Station, Central Region



Outstanding Female Leader (Operational) Award
FRS Senior Firefighter Quinn Cramer

OUTSTANDING FEMALE LEADER (VOLUNTEER)

Christine Reed

First Officer, Bellthorpe Rural Fire Brigade, Brisbane Region



Outstanding Female Leader (Administration–Support) Award
Kay Burkin

OUTSTANDING FEMALE LEADER (ADMINISTRATION–SUPPORT)

Kay Burkin

SES Support Officer, Far Northern Region



Outstanding Female Leader (Volunteer) Award
RFS First Officer Christine Reed

MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Anthony Guse

Station Officer, Kitchener Street Fire and Rescue Station, South Western Region



Champion of Change Award
Janine Taylor

CHAMPION OF CHANGE

Janine Taylor

Principal Advisor, Innovation and Diversity, Human Capital Management



Agreement cements cross-border partnership



A new Memorandum of Understanding lets firefighters on the Queensland–New South Wales border provide faster, more efficient emergency response to local communities.

QFES has joined forces with Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW) to develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support collaborative working arrangements for emergency incident response.

The new MoU addresses the delivery of fire and rescue response capabilities in the area along the Queensland–New South Wales border at Bilinga, Coolangatta and Tweed Heads. It will ensure the communities living there are provided with the best response possible to emergency incidents using the resources of both agencies, applying the ‘invisible border’ principle.

The MoU is supported by a local Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) that allows for the automatic deployment of QFES’ FRS or FRNSW resources to emergency incidents across the state border through established fire communications response procedures. This will see the quickest possible response to emergency incidents across the shared border areas.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the MoU provides an increased and more effective response capacity without being hampered by jurisdictional barriers associated with the state border.

“This MoU further enhances the excellent working relationship between QFES and FRNSW and allows us to continue

to work together to deliver first-class emergency services to our communities,” Ms Carroll said.

“At the end of the day, for the people living in these communities, it is not important which state the firefighters arriving at the scene of an emergency are from — just that they are there as quickly as possible.”

The MAA was formalised at Point Danger on the Queensland–New South Wales border on 17 February 2017, by QFES Chief Superintendent Brad Commens and FRNSW Superintendent Greg Lewis.



QFES Chief Superintendent Brad Commens (left) and FRNSW Superintendent Greg Lewis sign the milestone agreement at Point Danger on the QLD–NSW border.

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Central Region

Central Region Senior Firefighter Quinn Cramer from Rockhampton Fire and Rescue Station was awarded the 2017 QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Award for Outstanding Female Leader (Operational) at an International Women's Day luncheon held in Brisbane in March.

Quinn was nominated for this award for her work establishing a regional communication and mentoring network for full-time, auxiliary and volunteer firefighters to access peers across QFES and Australia to share ideas and resolve day-to-day challenges of inclusion and diversity.

Quinn began her career with QFES as an auxiliary firefighter in Bundaberg before successfully applying to become a permanent firefighter in 2011.

Congratulations Quinn on this significant professional achievement.



After almost 38 years of service, firefighter Bruce Lawrie has hung up his turn-out gear for the last time. Bruce started his career with the Brisbane Metropolitan Fire Brigade on 2 July 1979 and served across North Brisbane until he transferred to North Coast Region in January 2000.

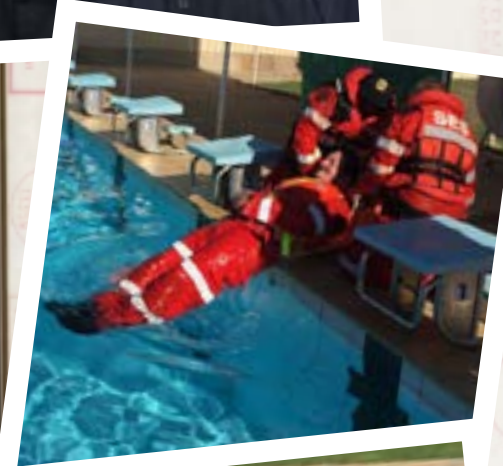
Bruce spent nine years in North Coast Region before transferring to Central Region in February 2009, where he has been stationed at Yeppoon for the past seven years. Bruce has been a valued member of the team and provided solid mentoring and leadership to junior firefighters making their way through the ranks. He also worked as Rockhampton Branch Secretary of the United Firefighters Union.

A morning tea was held at Yeppoon Fire and Rescue Station on Bruce's last official working day, Friday 17 March, with a gathering of close work colleagues who wanted to pay tribute. Bruce was presented with a plaque from his fellow officers and firefighters and received his official service certificate. Bruce's dedication to serving the community of Queensland over his long career should be admired; well done Bruce and all the best in retirement.



Central Region SES Operational Capability Officers Darren Barnicoat and Robyn Schrader along with SES volunteer trainers Larry Richardson (Rockhampton Group) and Leon Burt (Gracemere Group) visited the Longreach Area in March to deliver the Flood Boat Operation Level 1 course.

Members from the Blackall-Tambo SES Unit and Muttaborra and Gracemere Groups attended. Participants were required to undertake a 50-metre swim test, be able to recover a person from the water using a back board and demonstrate the capsize drill. This drill involves tipping the boat, placing themselves in the air pocket beneath the boat, bailing water from the boat and getting themselves back into the boat. Congratulations to all involved.





North Coast Region



In March, QFES and the SEQ Fire & Biodiversity Consortium joined forces to host two information evenings after the recent bushfires experienced at Cooloom for the community to learn more about bushfire, how it is managed in the local area and how to best prepare their homes and properties.

Speakers included QFES' James Haig, Executive Manager RFS Bushfire Mitigation Unit and Joe Cullen, RFS Bushfire Safety Officer North Coast Region. Sam Lloyd from the SEQ Fire & Biodiversity Consortium, Guy Morgan from the Sunshine Coast Council and Senior Ranger Omar Bakhach from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) also presented.

Topics covered included fire danger ratings, what steps the community can actively take to prepare for bushfire, fire in the landscape, QPWS fire management planning and Sunshine Coast Council fire management activities.



Noosa SES Unit Local Controller Stan Ryan retired in March after more than 35 years with the SES.

Under Stan's leadership, the Noosa SES Unit was awarded Operational Unit of the Year and Unit of the Year during SES Week Awards. Stan himself was named Regional Member of the Year and awarded the Minister's Cup, denoting outstanding service and commitment to the SES on a statewide basis. He is also a recipient of the Emergency Services Medal.

Stan has provided training to SES and other emergency service personnel over the years in the fields of operational activities, first aid and chainsaw operation. At the time of his retirement, Stan was the lead chainsaw trainer and assessor for the North Coast Region. In recognition of this a new chainsaw trailer recently commissioned and built to service and deploy across the North Coast Region has been proudly named in his honour.

As well as providing leadership, integrity and unit management skills, Stan has been an operational member throughout his SES career, attending activations for road traffic crashes, land searches and storm damage events. Stan has devoted his life to serving the community in one of the most demanding environments imaginable and is a role model for those following in his footsteps. We wish him all the best for his retirement and thank him for his decades of commitment.



In February, North Coast Region Community Engagement and RFS members partnered with the Red Cross and Sunshine Coast Council to hold a disaster preparedness display at the Sunshine Coast University (SCU) student orientation day.

It was an opportunity to mix with students of all ages and nationalities and create a greater awareness of what they need to do to prepare for emergency events and where to get related information. Further work is also underway for QFES, in partnership with SCU, to target international students and those students who are new to the Sunshine Coast and to make them aware of the risks that they could face.





Brisbane Region

The new Moreton Bay Regional SES Unit Headquarters was officially opened in Murrumba Downs in March.

The large, modern facility will also house the Petrie SES Group and provide a base for its 51 active group members to conduct training, coordinate operational activities and securely store equipment. The project was jointly funded by the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Queensland Government Natural Disaster Resilience grant program and the SES non-recurrent accommodation grant program.

To celebrate the opening of the new HQ, Moreton Bay Regional SES Unit hosted an emergency service expo at the facility for the public to meet their local emergency services and better understand how to prepare for emergencies.



In February, Commissioner Carroll officially handed over a new Type 2 pumper appliance to Woodford Fire and Rescue Station. The new appliance is the first Type 2 in Queensland to be fitted with a compressed air foam system (CAFS) and has been very well received by the Woodford crews.

The handover of the appliance coincided with completion of the station's new training room, breathing apparatus cleaning facility and personal protective equipment storage facility.

Deputy Commissioner Doug Smith and Assistant Commissioner Neil Gallant attended the event, joined by representatives from north Brisbane auxiliary stations as well as local RFS, SES, QAS and QPS members. Special thanks to Station Officers Wayne Brown and Shan Raffel for their work on the implementation and training of the CAFS component.



New RFS crew leaders will be on hand for a number of Brisbane Region brigades following the completion of the region's 2017 Crew Leader Training program.

Crew leaders play a pivotal role in their brigades, providing support with operational and non-operational duties and acting as incident controller or sector commander at Level One incidents. To be eligible for crew leader training candidates must be nominated by the brigade First Officer.

Following an induction evening late last year, where candidates received required learning material to study, two courses were held in February and March at the Caboolture Area Office. Each course comprised a revision evening and a practical evening, culminating in a weekend of further training and a final practical assessment.

The new crew leaders to successfully complete the program are from Bellthorpe, Closeburn, Dayboro, Delaneys Creek, Macleay Island, Mount Mee, Mount Nebo, Narangba, Russell Island, Samford, Stanmore, Toorbul and Wamuran RFS brigades.





South Eastern Region



FRS, RFS and SES have joined forces in the West Moreton Zone (WMZ), conducting fire prevention and preparedness activities in local communities to identify high-risk areas and plan mitigation and education activities.

These activities involve liaising closely with local councils, residents and landholders, and are an example of the importance of QFES' many services and partners working together to achieve improved fire safety outcomes for the community. The unique insight, experience and local knowledge of each service contributes to more informed risk assessments to enhance future operations. The collaboration enables the FRS, RFS and SES to become familiar with each other's capabilities and initiatives and is great opportunity for knowledge sharing across the services.

Some of the areas to undergo familiarisation and risk assessments to date are in the local government areas of Somerset, Lockyer Valley and Ipswich and include Esk, Biarra, Murphys Creek and Upper Lockyer. Pictured here is Aaron Brown, Lockyer Valley SES; David Hogan WMZ iZone Officer, Aaron Sheehan, Murphys Creek RFS; Mark Saunders, Bushfire Safety Officer RFS.



In February, multiple RFS and FRS auxiliary crews responded to a fast moving vegetation fire within Lockyer Somerset Command, with several structures under threat and a timber shed partially involved in fire.

Once the fire had been brought under control, further investigation of the shed contents revealed several unmarked chemical drums, some of which were compromised by the fire. The area surrounding the shed was immediately cordoned off with a further exclusion zone pending further assessment by QFES Research and Scientific Branch.

Despite information provided to QFES that there were no dangerous chemicals at the location, Scientific Officers confirmed traces of highly toxic herbicides and pesticides within the shed area. A short time later, several full drums of these same chemicals were located on site. This situation highlighted to all involved the importance of independent verification of the presence of dangerous chemicals. Thanks to the highest level of adherence to hazardous materials operational procedures, the necessary steps were undertaken to ensure the safety of all personnel at the scene.



The new, purpose-built QFES Tactical Training Facility at Ripley Fire and Rescue Station was completed in the final week of January and is the first of its kind in Queensland.

The facility provides a backdrop to undertake a number of specific training exercises including Technical Rescue Level 1 and Level 2 scenarios; hazardous material exercises; and simulated firefighting scenarios with artificial smoke able to be introduced into any compartment at any time.

The training facility incorporates a fire indicator panel, booster and internal hydrant system, emergency lighting as well as standard lighting, various compartments capable of forced entry, smoke extraction and duress system, and certified technical rescue anchor points strategically located throughout the facility.





South Western Region

It was a special moment for auxiliary recruit Ethan Tanaskovic from Toowoomba's Anzac Avenue Fire and Rescue Station when a visitor arrived at the training facility.

Ethan's grandfather, now retired Senior Firefighter Norm Docherty, came along for a surprise visit and to watch the new auxiliaries put through their paces on the Toowoomba recruit course in March.

Retired since 2001, Norm has fond memories of his time as a firefighter in Toowoomba. Keeping it in the family, Ethan's mum Kelli Docherty-Tanaskovic is also a QFES member, working at Firecom in Toowoomba.

Such a wonderful QFES family moment and so much history of serving the community.



The State Air Operations Unit would like to congratulate 24 personnel from FRS, SES and RFS in South Western Region for the completion of their Air Base Operator training at Tara Airfield in February. With temperatures soaring to 45C on the tarmac that weekend, participants were certainly put to the test.

QFES Air Base Operators are an integral part of responses to fires, disasters and flood, and are called upon to work in all conditions. When an emergency requires an air base to be setup, they can assist with equipment transport, refilling water-bombing aircraft and community evacuations. The One QFES team approach to managing air bases is just another example of how interoperability between QFES services is producing strong outcomes for the Queensland community.



South Western Region SES, RFS and FRS members represented QFES at the Warwick Show's 150th anniversary on 24 March, forming the Guard of Honour for the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) and Lady Cosgrove who officially opened the milestone show.

After the Guard of Honour, FRS crews conducted an inspection of showgrounds before setting up a static display, providing fire safety advice and handing out pamphlets and stickers to the public. Crews then stood by for fireworks and the demolition derby, during which they were required to assist in freeing an entrapped participant from one of the vehicles.



First opening in 1867, the Warwick Show is one of the oldest agricultural shows in Queensland and the pride of the local community.



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Far Northern Region

The Innisfail SES were proud to be involved in the planning and execution of the Innisfail Feast for the Senses Festival's successful Guinness World Record attempt for the longest banana split on 25 March.

Momentously, Innisfail now proudly holds the world record after serving up an incredible 8.04km of banana split — rightfully taking the title from non-banana-growing Pennsylvania in the US. To be eligible for the record, each banana had to touch and be topped with ice cream or yogurt, a fruit and drizzled with various toppings. It also had to be eaten at the end.

While public numbers were lower than expected with Tropical Cyclone Debbie warnings in place, a crowd of around 4000 turned out to help snatch the record and be a part of far north Queensland history.

Congratulations to Innisfail and to all SES members that helped out despite already facing a significant increase in operational activity in preparation for TC Debbie.



A number of SES groups from around Far Northern Region took part in a training day recently at the Cairns SES local headquarters to familiarise themselves in the use of some of the region's operational deployment resources.

Participants rotated through work stations that included the decontamination and rehabilitation trailer, portable automatic weather station and satellite communications (VSAT) trailer to develop their knowledge of the equipment ahead of the major regional SES exercise, Exercise Fools Gold, at Chillagoe over the first weekend in April (postponed due to Tropical Cyclone Debbie operations and deployments).

Training on the day was delivered by Station Officer Shane Bickhoff from Gordonvale Fire and Rescue Station, Cairns auxiliary support officer Steve Lewin and regional ICT officer John Camillleri. 'Train the trainer' sessions have also taken place in recent months, with SES members trained to conduct future training to SES groups.



Far Northern Region technical rescue officers recently carried out routine training at Skyrail Rainforest Cableway in Cairns to practise emergency rescue procedures on the gondola cabins.

A popular Cairns tourist attraction, thousands of people take the 7.5km cableway to the village of Kuranda every day and it is crucial that QFES technical rescue officers have the skills and experience in place to conduct rescues as required.

The training program first involves gondola rescue at ground level, progressing to night rescue and rescue at heights with participants conducting simulated rescues 15 – 20 metres from the ground. Training is held monthly and rescuers' skills are tested in an annual exercise involving simulated rescue at some of the highest points along the cableway, up to 40 metres from the ground.





Northern Region



Rural firefighters from Northern, Far Northern and Central regions and local landowners took part in a Grazing Land Management workshop in Charters Towers in March, delivered by the department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

The workshop was a part of Project 'Keahi' (meaning 'fire') to raise awareness and build on the knowledge of land management practice involving many of our primary producer brigades and remote communities.

Over three days, the workshop covered grazing land ecosystems, weed management and tree and grass balance regimes in relation to fire. On the third day, the team took a field trip to the Wambiana Station grazing trials and talked with landowner John Lyons and DAF staff, seeing firsthand some of the preceding days' theory put into practice.



Following the successful completion of Auxiliary Recruit Training and Education Program (ARTEP) Phase 1, seven Northern Region auxiliary firefighters are ready to join the ranks of the FRS.

The intensive two-week course, held in Townsville in March, covers a number of core firefighting and rescue skills including breathing apparatus training, respond to wildfire, an introduction to hazardous material incidents, road crash rescue and safe work practices. Graduates will now commence duties throughout the north, to be stationed at Halifax, Ayr, Home Hill, Charters Towers and Bowen. Over the next 12 months the recruits will consolidate their training with on-the-job experience and further training to build their skill base.

Congratulations to north Queensland's newest firefighters.



If it's flooded, forget it. A truck driver made a lucky escape after the road train he was driving was swept from a flooded causeway south of Cloncurry. Recent heavy rainfall had resulted in a nearby catchment overflowing, sending huge amounts of floodwater over the road.

FRS swiftwater rescue technicians from Mt Isa and Cloncurry Fire and Rescue Stations and Cloncurry SES members were deployed to rescue the man who had escaped the cabin of the truck and was stranded in a tree. This event highlighted that when it comes to flooded roads, it doesn't matter how heavy the vehicle or how well you know the roads, when people choose to drive through floodwater they are putting their lives and the lives of rescuers in danger.

Well done to the rescue team for a successful outcome in difficult conditions.

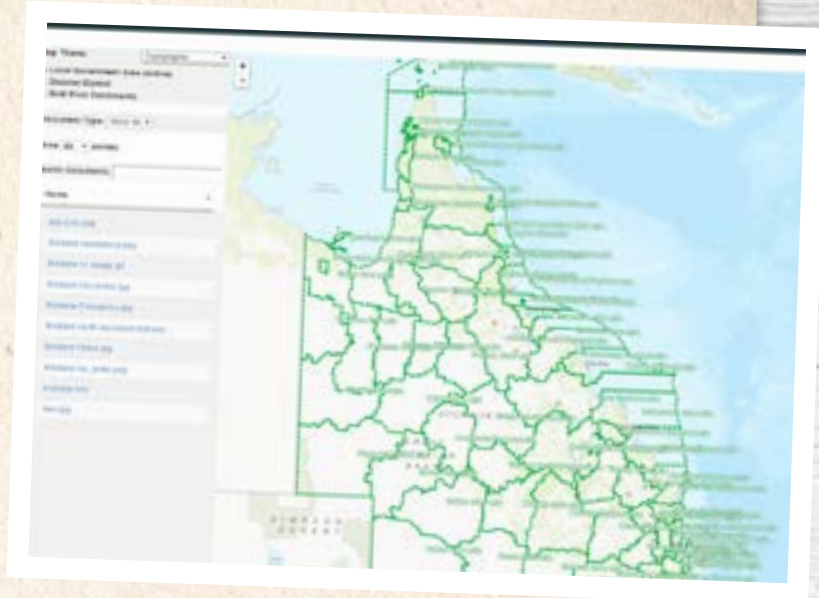


Emergency Management

The Disaster Management (DM) Branch has been designing and developing additional DM Portal enhancements.

These include an interactive map feature for the River Basin Schematics and the Geoscience Exposure Reports, simplified access to documents and discussion notifications.

- The interactive map feature includes a layer for local government areas, disaster districts and river basins. Users will be able to select an area on one of these layers and access the QFES-developed river basin schematics and Geoscience Australia exposure reports.
- When users have been included in a DM Portal discussion they will be automatically notified of any new responses or changes to a discussion. This feature can be self-managed via the subscriptions option in the user menu.



Instructions will be developed for these new enhancements and posted on the DM Portal home page under DM Portal Tips. When these new features are live an announcement will be made on the DM Portal home page, so keep an eye out in the coming months.

The DM Branch will continue to pursue future funding to ensure continual improvement of the DM Portal for Queensland disaster management practitioners to better prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters through ongoing collaboration and sharing of essential information. All disaster management stakeholders are encouraged to request access to the DM Portal via the DM website www.disaster.qld.gov.au/dmportal

QFES is working with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) in a joint initiative to eradicate the outbreak of white spot disease affecting Queensland's prawn farming industry.

In late 2016, an outbreak of white spot disease began impacting the area and to date, seven farms along the Logan River, south of Brisbane have been confirmed as being contaminated with the disease, have been destocked and are undergoing decontamination.


A team of SES volunteers from groups in South Eastern and Brisbane regions are helping educate the public about the white spot disease outbreak in the Logan River area. As part of DAF's community engagement strategy, QFES Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) are holding information stands at boat ramps at Jacobs Well and Redland Bay. Their main task is to ensure the public are informed about white spot and how they can help prevent the spread of the disease into open waters by not using raw prawns as fishing bait.

A QFES planning manager along with geographic information system support has been allocated to the DAF State Control Centre (SCC). The planning manager role, filled by QFES senior officers on rotation, is assisting with the coordination of activity within the planning cell of the SCC.

QFES involvement in this multi-agency response is an example of the department working with its partners to adapt and respond to the varied challenges facing the Queensland community.



“It’s been an incredible 21 years of variety”



In March, Far Northern Region SES Support Officer Kay Burkin was announced as the 2017 winner of the QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Award for Outstanding Female Leader in a volunteer role. For Kay, the award is a high point in what has been a long and rewarding career with the SES.

—By Saskia Tigchelaar

When Kay Burkin was awarded the QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Award for Outstanding Female Leader in a Volunteer Role the citation noted her outstanding dedication, sacrifice and tireless work, and described her as an inspiration to her peers and a mentor to many.

The award came as a complete surprise and an honour for Kay, who has been the SES Support Officer for Far Northern Region for 10 years and an active member of the Cairns SES for twice that time.

“Twenty-one years ago a friend dragged me along to an SES recruitment evening and I kind of just stayed,” she said.

“I had always wanted to do it, but as a young police wife with small children it just hadn’t been possible; by the time I joined, the boys were young adults then and I had more time for me.

“From day one I just really enjoyed it. I loved not being in an office, I loved being out in the field and I got all the courses under my belt — land search, flood boat, chainsaw, working safely at heights, storm damage operations, vertical rescue — all the active stuff and I thought ‘I am never going back to an office’; that didn’t work!”

In 2007 Kay was offered a job as a paid administrative support officer with SES Far Northern Regional Office. A decade later she is now a permanent staff member and SES units throughout the region would be hard pressed to recall how they ever got by without her.



It takes a whole team, and everyone has their strengths

“My role is to support everyone — executives, staff and members — not only from here in the regional office but out in the field as well,” she said.

“I go out to groups and I review their admin processes and members’ paperwork to get them running smoothly with systems in place that are easy to use so they can get their paperwork in and get on with the job of training, activating and getting out in the community.”

Outside of work, Kay still volunteers with the Cairns SES Group as Team Leader Member Support.

“I do the recruit paperwork, uniforms, everything admin — but I do that for all groups in Far Northern Region to keep them on track if they need me,” she said.

This busy and crucial role means that she doesn’t get to do as much of the hands-on field work as she once did but, thanks to a pragmatic and team-focused attitude, Kay doesn’t think twice about it.

“I figure, it takes a whole team and everyone has their strengths,” she said.

“I’m the specialist admin, and the job I do is just as important as going out in the field; it’s just not as much fun!

“I do still get out to some activations and go on deployments. I have been to Tasmania, New South Wales, the Brisbane floods, Cooktown pre-Cyclone Ita, Cyclone Yasi and I deployed to Rockhampton after Cyclone Marcia. Even as staff, I go on deployment and support groups from all over the state.”

At time of writing, Kay had just returned from deployments to Townsville and to Proserpine in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

“It’s what we train for,” she said.

“It’s always different, never the same. It’s been an incredible 21 years of variety.

“Being a part of the SES and being a part of QFES lets me make a difference. I enjoy all of it. I like doing admin and being able to provide that support. I like helping people pre and post-event and educating the community about what they can do, what to expect and how to be prepared.”

When asked about balancing her work and her life, Kay is the first to admit the two areas can blur from time to time. Even when Kay is not working or volunteering with the SES, she is still volunteering in her community, and it is often SES related.

“I help out with the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation’s Cardiac Challenge Cairns to Cooktown Bike Ride, this is my 11th

year supervising a crew of 15 SES volunteers, looking after the radios and providing directional support for vehicles and bicycles at drink stations and overnight stops,” she said.

“For 12 years I volunteered on the Cairns to Karumba Bike Ride run by the Cairns School of Distance Education, looking after the radios and being part of the catering crew.

“The SES has become a big part of my life. My boys are grown up now, and my grandchildren are proud of me — they get excited when they see Nanna Kay on TV or out doing things.”

Kay adores her three grandchildren and spending time with them, and loves to keep her fitness up, attending Cardio Tennis and bootcamp sessions regularly.

Kay also has a passion for travel and — true to her adventurous and energetic spirit — it’s often off the beaten path. Her last holiday was to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. When she got back, she drove nearly 1700km to Birdsville for the Big Red Bash.

“I like to challenge myself, do something a bit different and go to other places to see how other people live,” she said.

“Experience life, don’t be afraid. Everyone tells me I’m mad, but you’ve just got to get out and give it a go.”



Novated Leasing with Toyota Fleet Management

Welcome to Toyota Fleet Management

Toyota Fleet Management (TFM) is delighted to be appointed as an approved Novated Lease supplier under the recently established QGP0026-16 Salary Packaging Novated Lease Panel. Effective **7th November, 2016** Queensland Government employees have access to a new panel of Novated Lease providers selected after a rigorous tender process.

Queensland Government employees are free to select a supplier of their choice from this established novated lease panel whilst the program will continue to be administered through the current salary packaging administrators: Smart Salary 1300 730 366, Remserv 1300 304 010.

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Things to consider

Before you enter into a novated lease, there are a few things you may want to consider.

- ✓ What type of car do you want? (Remember, TFM finances all cars, not just Toyota)
- ✓ Check out your employer's policy on novated leasing
- ✓ Decide how much you want to spend
- ✓ Think about car options and accessories
- ✓ Estimate how many kilometres you'll travel each year (private and business)



Getting Started

Now you're ready to get started, see how easy it is to get an estimate. You can even compare it to a car loan or cash, then start the application process.

Use our Novated Lease Calculator:

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Contact one of our consultants on **1300 888 875**, or email us at qldgov@toyota.com.au

toyotafleetmanagement.com.au/novated-lease/qld-government





Local businesses helping QFES help the community

In the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the true colours of the Queensland community came shining through with a number of organisations stepping up to support emergency services personnel and communities in need.

QFES staff and volunteers working in areas affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie have been overwhelmed by the generous support and compassion shown by local businesses and organisations to help them get communities back on their feet.

The Rockhampton branch of Lawrence & Hanson Electrical Wholesaler emptied their shelves of torches, hand sanitiser, boots, jackets, gloves, batteries and general safety equipment to assist the services in the clean-up phase of the Fitzroy River flooding.

Volunteers from the SES and RFS loaded the back of a ute with more than \$5000 worth of donated gear for distribution to groups and brigades on the ground in Rockhampton.

Branch Manager Pete Mills said helping out in times of need was in their nature.

“You just do your part,” Mr Mills said.

“Gloves were definitely the favourite item. Everyone seemed really happy we could supply boxes and boxes of gloves.”

Some recovery teams literally required a serious ‘leg up’ to get to some pretty high places and Wilmar Sugar’s Proserpine Mill supplied a 15-tonne crane and released several skilled employees to help in the clean-up efforts from Monday 3 April to Friday 7 April.

Wilmar Sugar’s Mackay Region Asset Manager Danny Van der Berg said they were only too happy to pitch in.

“Many of our employees are qualified crane drivers, volunteer and auxiliary firefighters or trained members of the Mill’s Emergency Response Team, so all had very relevant skills to offer,” Mr Van der Berg said.

Wilmar Sugar employees worked alongside the Proserpine SES Group Vertical Rescue Team, members of Cairns and Whitsunday SES Units and the Australian Army to help with fallen trees, tarping and securing rooves on multi-storey buildings.

Volunteer not-for-profit organisation Orange Sky Laundry were also on the move in affected areas providing free washing and drying facilities for emergency service personnel and people in need.

Co-founder Lucas Patchett said Orange Sky Laundry was able to support a number of communities statewide with their mobile laundry service, including Bowen, Airlie Beach, Mackay, Proserpine, Dingo Beach and Midge Point, as well as Beaudesert and Logan in the south-east.

“For residents in these communities who were doing it tough, clean clothes and towels brought some normality back to their lives,” Mr Patchett said.

“We were in a unique position to be able to provide this service. From families who lost everything to SES personnel who were working day and night, we were lucky enough to do more than eight tonnes of laundry in North Queensland alone.”

— with thanks to Leah Hornibrook



Wilmar Sugar’s Proserpine Mill provided a 15-tonne crane to help with the clean-up.



Orange Sky Laundry Co-founder Lucas Patchett and Tim Eggar from Brisbane SES Unit in Bowen.



Lawrence & Hanson Electrical Wholesaler in Rockhampton donated more than \$5000 worth of equipment. L-R: Chris Baartz (SES), Alex Hicks (RFS), Branch Manager Pete Mills and Coen Reid (SES).



FRS, SES and Australian Army personnel with Wilmar Sugar’s Proserpine Mill employees and the 15-tonne crane supplied by the Mill to help with the clean-up.



In March, Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council Paul Antonio officially handed over a new fleet of 10 operational SES vehicles to Local Controller Rob Hall and members of the Toowoomba Regional SES Unit.



Multiple RFS crews from North Coast Region worked alongside Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service units to control a large vegetation fire that burnt for nearly a week in the Coominglyah State Forest south of Monto.



Dayboro firefighters welcomed the official opening of the newly renovated Dayboro Fire and Rescue Station in March. The upgraded facility features an additional engine bay, breathing apparatus cleaning facility, personal protective clothing storage and training space.



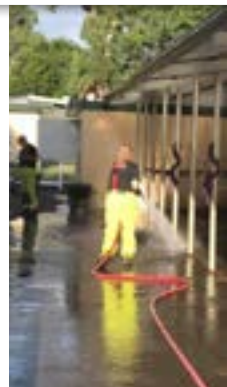
The Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy recently hosted three Korean university students. Despite communication barriers the students were very enthusiastic, with Firefighter Development Unit and Live Fire campus instructors involving the students in a number of different training scenarios.



Ahead of Tropical Cyclone Debbie making landfall on 28 March, members of QFES' Disaster Assistance Response Team were deployed to Northern and Central regions ready to provide swiftwater response, urban search and rescue, structural-collapse response and damage assessments.



RFS Bundaberg Strike Team 1 with crews from Bungadoo, Burnett Heads, Branyan, Calavos, Bingera Weir, Childers and Booyan Rural Fire Brigades headed to Rockhampton in April to support the community in the lead up to the 8.9m Fitzroy River flood peak. Photos: David Spratling



Local RFS and FRS firefighters got to work cleaning out the Beaudesert Race Club for the racehorses to be able to return after the tail end of TC Debbie brought record flooding to the town. Photos: Peta Miller Rose



Members of the Brisbane and Redland City SES Units were deployed to Bowen in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie to help locals with the enormous clean-up effort.



Six years on remembering Christchurch

A memorial has been officially unveiled in Christchurch honouring the people who lost their lives when a magnitude 6.3 earthquake reduced the New Zealand city to rubble six years ago.

Assistant Commissioner North Coast Region John Cawcutt represented QFES at the opening of the Canterbury Earthquake National Memorial in Christchurch, New Zealand on 22 February this year — the sixth anniversary of the devastating Christchurch earthquake that claimed the lives of 185 people from 20 countries.

New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English officially opened the memorial wall, which has the names of those who died etched into the wall's Italian marble fascia.

Australia's contribution to the rescue and recovery effort was specifically acknowledged during the ceremony and a special wreath was laid on behalf of the international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams from seven countries who were deployed to assist: Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Assistant Commissioner Cawcutt said the ceremony was a chance to reflect on the hard work of all involved in what was a particularly challenging and confronting operational environment.

"I was honoured to represent QFES and the 75 members of Queensland's AUS-1 USAR team who worked so tirelessly in such dangerous and difficult conditions in an attempt to rescue those who had become trapped as a result of the deadly Christchurch earthquake," Mr Cawcutt said.

"The national memorial in Christchurch is an enduring tribute honouring the people who lost their lives in that terrible event and it belongs to their families, the people of New Zealand and the hundreds of emergency service personnel around the world who came to their aid."



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