

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 3



FORTY YEARS

THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE IN QUEENSLAND CELEBRATES A SPECIAL MILESTONE

- SUPPORTING VICTIMS: CONTRIBUTE TO A YOUNG BURNS PATIENT'S RECOVERY
- GRUELLING EXERCISE: URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TECHNICIANS PUT TO THE TEST
- HATS OFF: QFES GRADUATES COMPLETE INAUGURAL UQ FIRE COURSE

PAGE 8

PAGE 10

PAGE 15



CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

INNOVATE

Virtual reality aids in training

6



EDUCATE

Two-day exercise tests USAR

10



CELEBRATE

QFES and UQ develop university course

15



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» 40 years strong **4**

INNOVATE

» Virtual reality prepares QFES for the real world **6**

» Push MoLi locates Triple Zero (000) callers **7**

» Making a difference for children with burns **8**

EDUCATE

» 48 hour exercise puts USAR to the test **10**

» Bushfire season underway **12**

» Technology enhances QFES' predictive ability **13**

CELEBRATE

» SES and the Australian Army exchange program in place **14**

» Mural helps QFES and community join forces **15**

» Fire Safety Officers graduate Queensland-first course **15**

» QFES skills needed in Canada **16**

» Deployment to US a valuable experience **16**

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**

INTER-STATE

» Who is the Ultimate Fire Fighter? **27**

COMMUNICATE

» "I only ever wanted to be a firefighter" **28**

UP TO DATE

» SES Week winners announced **31**

» Picture gallery **32**

COMMEMORATE

» A service is born **34**

FOREWORDS



Katarina Carroll

Commissioner QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

It is a pleasure to have on board our two new senior executives, Doug Smith, Chief Strategy Officer (Capability and Performance) and Mike Wassing, Deputy Commissioner (Emergency Service Volunteers). They join Mark Roche, permanently appointed as Deputy Commissioner (Operations and Emergency Management), in the QFES leadership team.

These key appointments will assist in creating the stability that the organisation needs to be able to continue our journey onward as a progressive, efficient and inclusive organisation.

To continue that journey, our transformation through leadership program is progressing with Regional and Head Office leaders forums now being rolled out. These forums are developing the skills of our frontline managers and supervisors to unlock the potential of QFES.

In addition I have launched OpenLine, where I will address questions directly from the workforce in video format. I have always stressed the importance of information flowing freely across our organisation and so far we have had a great response, with questions coming from people across QFES. Remember you can email any questions to OpenLine@qfes.qld.gov.au.

We are heading into a busy month with SES Week on 17 to 25 October 2015. This year's celebrations will mark the 40th anniversary of the SES in Queensland. This is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the SES and recognise the invaluable work of its members.

With the bushfire season well underway, this period is one of the busiest times of the year for QFES. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work and professionalism through this time.



Doug Smith

Chief Strategy Officer CAPABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

With my first opportunity to address all QFES staff and volunteers via *Response* magazine, can I firstly say thank you for the warm welcome I have received.

In my first weeks in this role, I have taken every opportunity to meet those working in the Capability and Performance division. It is my hope to be able to get around and see the rest of QFES shortly.

As the first Chief Strategy Officer for QFES, I understand there may be some questions about what my role will entail.

Primarily, I am here to ensure that support is provided to QFES, in any capacity that is required, which then allows operational people to get on with their jobs. I want to make sure that those who have a job to do have the correct tools and support they require to fulfil their role to the best of their ability.

Particular areas of focus currently include the Government Wireless Network project, HR management capability and any potential applications of the PSBA review.

I am bringing to this role a vast background in all emergency services – I have previously worked across fire services, rescue services, police services and ambulance services around the country and internationally as well.

I envision that my experience in these fields will help me to provide the support that QFES needs to move forward, whatever that support may look like into the future.

I have particular interest in developing the organisation's capacity to adapt to how the landscape for our business is changing and making sure we are at the forefront as those changes dictate the need to evolve.

I look forward to the road ahead as part of the QFES team.



Jo-Ann Miller

Minister FOR POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

We're now well into the bushfire season and it's shaping up to be a very busy time for our firefighters.

With the El Nino weather pattern, this season we're facing above average temperatures and below average rainfall which could lead to heightened fire conditions.

I was pleased to launch the \$200,000 advertising campaign for this year's bushfire season, which educates Queenslanders about the three levels of bushfire warnings.

In the Rockhampton region where there is an increased bushfire risk due to fuel loads from Tropical Cyclone Marcia, Taskforce Marcia has been working with communities at higher risk to prepare for and mitigate the danger.

Work is already underway on the *If it's flooded, forget it* campaign to warn Queenslanders of the dangers of driving through floodwaters. We are proud to be investing \$5 million in this important campaign, which will be launched in November. It is essential that we get out this safety message, especially in light in the tragic loss of five lives in the Caboolture area in May.

I am proud of the excellent service QFES provides to the community and this high standard is certainly continuing with the next generation of firefighters and emergency service workers joining the organisation's ranks. I had the pleasure of attending the graduation ceremonies for our urban firefighter recruits. These men and women will enrich the communities they serve with their diverse backgrounds and skills.



40 years strong



Richard Dock
Noosa Shire Unit,
Cooroy Group

“Cavill Heywood (Livingstone Shire SES Unit, Yeppoon Group) was leading a water rescue training exercise at one time and he had told us all over and over to make sure we remembered to put the bungs in our boats. He pushed his boat out into the water and it immediately started to take on water. He’d forgotten to put the bungs in his own boat. So what else was there for him to do? He just stood to attention and sank with the boat. It was very funny. That is one thing I really enjoy — the rapport with instructors and other members. We have had some fun times.

I have continued with the SES all these years because it is a chance to grow something for the community. A lot of youngsters who join the SES move into the armed services and other forces; their SES training helps them greatly. But a lot of them come back. As an instructor it is great to see the youngsters go and come back, either on deployments as members of the forces or even come back and re-join as volunteers. That is very rewarding.”



Ross Elliott
Ipswich City Unit,
Ipswich Group

“I will always remember one time we were out in Woodend looking for a little boy, I was actually part of the team that found him and handed him back to his Mum and Dad. He was only little, his family lived near the river and he had just wandered off with his dog. We were in rubber boats just paddling up the river — no motors, no noise — and we heard his dog in the bushes; the little boy was actually asleep on the river bank. It was sheer luck.

I love doing it, I love the SES. I have loved seeing it grow — when I first started we had a trailer, that’s it, nothing to pull it with. I enjoy the community aspect and looking after the community. If you don’t have it in your heart, SES is not for you. It’s a great organisation and there’s a real comradeship between members. I’ve made lifetime friendships in the SES.”



Russ Ladley
Ipswich City Unit,
Ipswich Group

“The memory that sticks in my mind the most was my first experience of disaster and it was the Australia Day Flood of January 1974. As a serving member of the then Queensland Civil Defence Organisation, Ipswich Group, I was in a position to see the effect it had on the people and indeed the properties in Ipswich and its surrounds. Our small group worked non-stop for about two weeks before things settled down, something you never forget.

The pride of having served with such an organisation as the SES and having watched the small group develop into what it has become today with a membership we could not have imagined — I cannot help but feel very privileged to have been part of it.”



As the State Emergency Service in Queensland celebrates its 40th birthday, we spoke to some of the members who have been around from the very beginning about what it means to them to be a part of the service that is at the ready when Queenslanders are in need. Here, they share some of their favourite memories from their service.



Mark Brake
Brisbane City Unit,
Eastern Group

“The SES is a chance for me to do community service and put something back into the community. For me it’s about helping people when they can’t help themselves. Many years ago in Cannon Hill we were conducting a search for an older gentleman with dementia. In those days the Water Police lead searches such as these, and they called the search off at about 5pm after we had all been searching a long time and the weather had turned bad. It was a Monday, so it was a training night for us anyway. The SES Groups continued the search as our training exercise and we found the man alive. A couple of years later I was at an ANZAC Day parade and a young man introduced himself — he was one of the man’s grandsons and he thanked us for what we had done.

I have stayed with the SES because I enjoy the community service aspect, and training new members as well. They’re a good bunch to be with. It doesn’t matter where you go, if you’re with the SES you’ll find someone you’ll mix with. We all come from different backgrounds but we’re all the same, we’re all SES.”



Tony Daniel
Redland Unit,
Redland Bay Group

“The high point of my involvement with the SES over the past 40 years was, after so many fruitless searches, personally finding a lady in her 90s who went missing from an aged persons’ facility. An initial bout of disbelief was soon overtaken by arranging for her rescue from difficult terrain.

It may sound trite but “ordinary people doing extraordinary things” in helping the community and other statutory services rings true. For me, it’s the satisfaction of being able to assist people affected by severe weather events or suffering the trauma of missing persons — either the missing person or their relatives — as well as working with like-minded people that has kept me with the SES.”



Terry Chapman
Logan City Unit,
Logan Central Group

“The volunteering ethos has been a strong part of my family over three generations. The SES provides me an opportunity to put something back into the nation that has given so much to us all. Special memories for me are the times when I was deployed to assist after flood and cyclone events. People whose homes were very badly damaged often insisted that they would be OK and asked me to help neighbours and friends who they felt were worse off.

The reason I continue to serve with the SES? I enjoy working with my SES family. They come from many cultures and backgrounds but always share a special dedication and a caring, positive outlook.”

Thanks to Saskia Tigchelaar



Virtual reality prepares QFES for the real world



Computer-generated scenarios such as cyclones, fires, swift water rescues and road traffic crashes are being brought to life on a big screen at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA) on Whyte Island.

In a darkened room within QFES's Simulation Training Unit at the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training, trainees take the driver's seat and become first responders navigating virtual situations projected from computers onto a 14-metre wrap-around screen.



Fire and Rescue Station Officer Adrian Skene said the virtual reality tool enabled personnel from across the organisation to experience simulated emergencies and disasters before facing them out in the field.

"We can build their capability to respond to low frequency, high-risk situations in the safety of a training room," Mr Skene said.

"The first scenario developed was a tornado-devastated suburb for a multiagency training exercise involving the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service Queensland, police and local government.

"Next we created a series of situations for auxiliary firefighters' professional development, including a factory fire, a large wildfire, a road traffic crash involving hazardous materials, a swift water rescue and an aviation incident."



Fire and Rescue Acting Station Officer Rob Hawxwell said the scenarios were based on photos and maps to make them as realistic as possible.

"The situations are modelled on a real suburb north of Brisbane, a stretch of the Bruce Highway and a shopping complex, while the virtual emergency services vehicles are designed from photos of the real thing," Mr Hawxwell said.

"The virtual reality training tool gives us the ability to display a multitude of scenarios at a much lower cost of doing the simulation in the field."

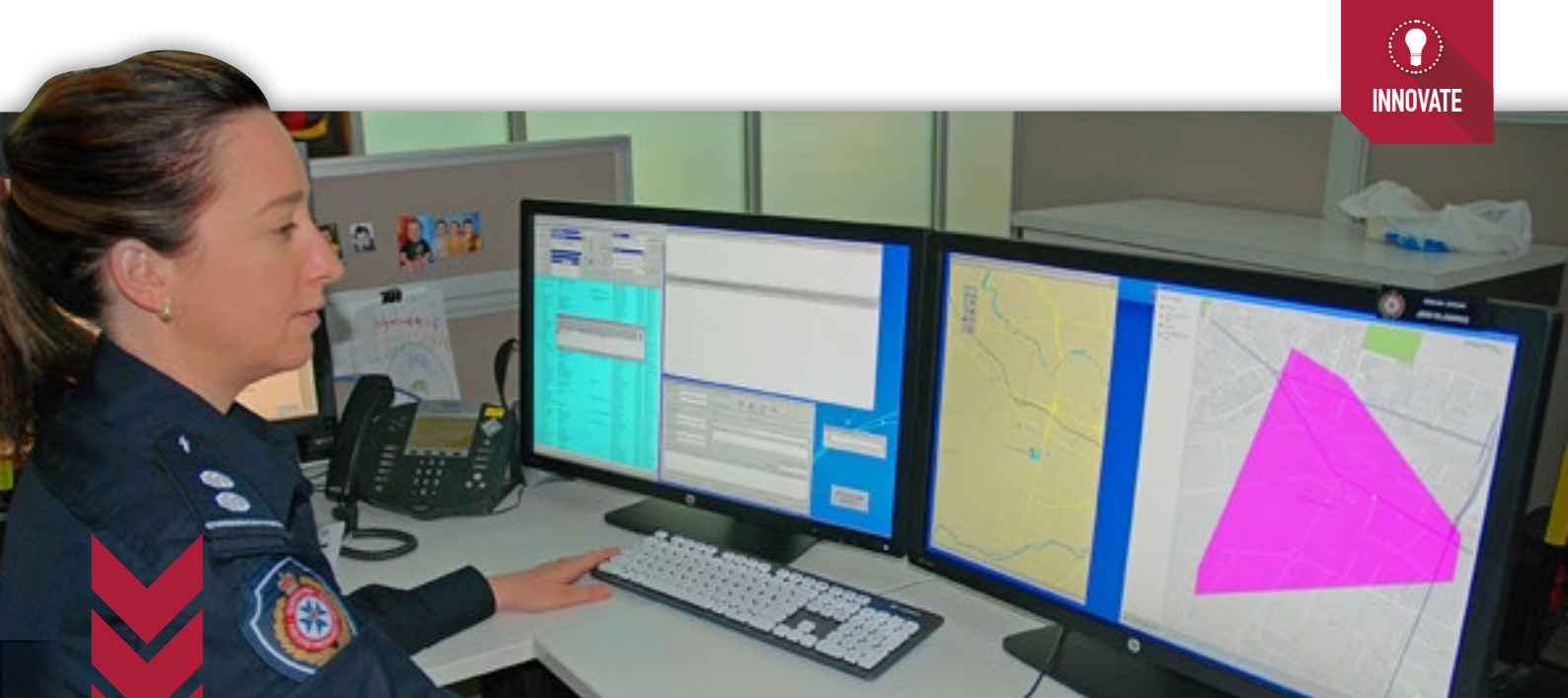
Other virtual situations are being considered to help train QFES personnel and assess their procedures.

"We're talking to police about the possibility of counter-terrorism exercises in preparation for the Commonwealth Games," Mr Hawxwell said.

There are plans to deliver the training tool to the regions using laptops, a projector and voice communications.

Thanks to Alison Middleton





Push MoLi locates Triple Zero (000) callers

Triple Zero (000) callers using mobile phones can now be located by Firecom officers thanks to technology newly-acquired by QFES.

In the event a Triple Zero (000) caller is unable to provide a location, Firecom officers can now use the Push MoLi application to identify an approximate location using information from mobile carrier networks.

The mapping application retrieves longitude and latitude data from network towers to provide a polygon to Firecom officers.

State Fire Communication Supervisor Jessica Blamires said the system went live on 25 August.

“The position of the polygon will be established at the time the call starts,” Mrs Blamires said.

“For urban areas, the size of a polygon varies from 100m to 3,000m in diameter.

“In country areas, the polygon can be up to 70km in diameter as the area is determined upon the location of the towers in the area.”

Mrs Blamires said the technology would be particularly useful in avoiding confusion over suburb names.

“We have a Kawana in the North Coast Region and the Northern Region as well, so with the automatic mapping, we’ll be able to know very quickly which Kawana a caller is talking about,” she said.

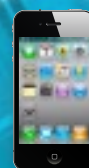
“It will also be very helpful if a caller is along a highway between point A and point B but doesn’t know exactly where they are.”

The Push MoLi application is integrated in the existing CAD system.


Why is it called Push MoLi

PUSH: HOW DATA IS PUSHED THROUGH WITH CALLERS DETAILS VIA TELSTRA

MOLI: MOBILE LOCATION INFORMATION



Making a difference for children with burns



Eleven-year-old Frankie Sanchez-Pedrosa suffered burns in a house fire after Brisbane's superstorm. The Lady Cilento Children's Hospital is doing an incredible job overseeing his recovery. QFES is right behind them, making generous donations that will help to improve treatment for kids like Frankie.

Brisbane's supercell storm last November wreaked havoc across the city, ripping roofs from houses, uprooting trees and dumping hail the size of cricket balls.

Eleven-year-old Francisco "Frankie" Sanchez-Pedrosa was sleeping in his father's bedroom after the storm inundated his bedroom with water and broken glass. With the power out, a candle was lit that would later ignite Frankie's bedding.



In the past year around 170 QFES staff have taken part in this program and I encourage you to get behind it.

As Frankie's father tried to put out the fire, sustaining burns to his own arms in the process, Frankie woke up. Realising he had been burned, Frankie ran into the dark kitchen to put his injuries under cold running water. The kitchen was covered in broken glass from shattered windows, badly cutting his feet.

Frankie sustained two per cent deep dermal burns to his hands, feet and torso, along with deep cuts to his feet. Following a day in the Mater Children's Hospital, Frankie was then transferred to the new Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, where he was the very first patient in the Burns and Trauma Unit.

Frankie received skin grafting to his left hand and right foot in December. He is part of the scar management program and continues to have regular check-ups and treatment at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

Earlier this year, QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll visited the hospital and toured Australia's largest and most advanced paediatric facility.

"I found it confronting to get an understanding of the multiple treatments and operations that young kids with burns go through for many years," Ms Carroll said.

"But the support for families and the service provided by the team at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital is truly amazing."

The hospital is supported by the Children's Hospital Foundation, which funds life-saving medical research, invests in vital new equipment and provides support for sick kids.

Over the years, QFES has built a solid partnership with the foundation, including a payroll deduction scheme which helps children dealing with some of most devastating childhood illnesses and injuries, similar to Frankie's.

"QFES has payroll deduction gifting arrangements available for our staff so that they can support the hospital's Burns and Trauma Research Centre," Ms Carroll said.

"In the past year around 170 QFES staff have taken part in this program and I encourage you to get behind it.

"It would be great to see an increase in the number of staff involved over the next year in support of the terrific work that is being done for kids like Frankie."



If you would like to start the gifting process or increase your contribution, send an email to:

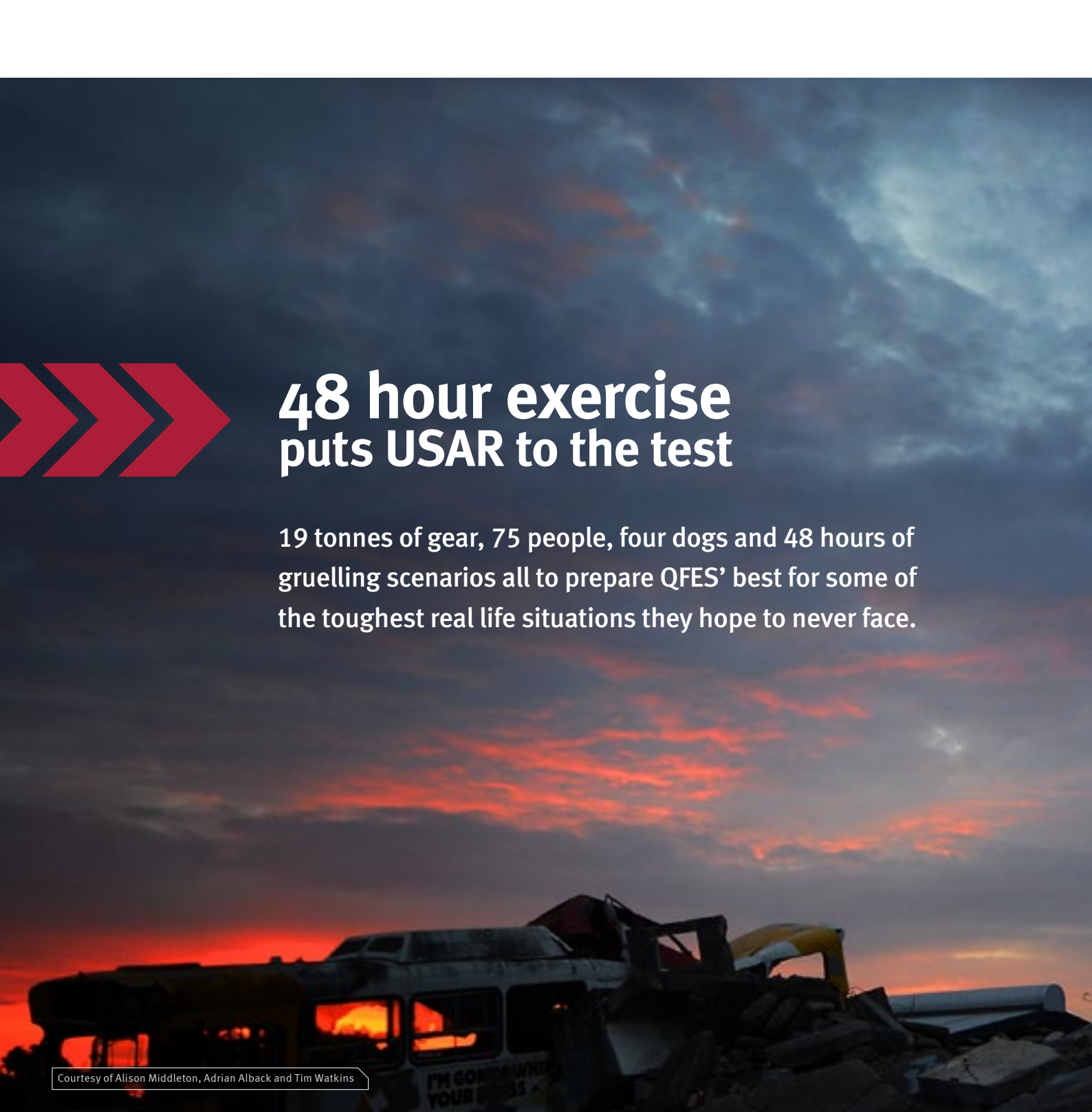
➤ P1QFRSPayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au
(Operational Staff) or

➤ P1DESpublisherservicepayroll@dsitia.qld.gov.au
(Public Service Staff).



48 hour exercise puts USAR to the test

19 tonnes of gear, 75 people, four dogs and 48 hours of gruelling scenarios all to prepare QFES' best for some of the toughest real life situations they hope to never face.



Courtesy of Alison Middleton, Adrian Alback and Tim Watkins





An end-to-end exercise simulating a major earthquake in Japan practiced every skill involved in an Urban Search and Rescue deployment for the AUS-1 Taskforce in August.

The annual 48-hour exercise changes every year to prepare the taskforce for reclassification and ensure their skills are up-to-date in case of deployment.

Chief Superintendent Steve Smith said large scale exercises such as these were imperative to make sure when a real scenario came along, our technicians were ready to respond.

“It’s about maintaining skills and meeting requirements to reclassify. It’s also a learning experience where we pull all the pieces together to make sure our systems are as good as they can be and if any changes need to occur,” he said.

“It’s also about exercising our relationships. In this exercise our partners are Emergency Management Australia and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence. It’s a multi-agency exercise and we are part of the larger team.

“We treat it as an end-to-end exercise including mobilising, medical assessment, equipping the team, leaving the country, flights, Customs entry requirements, tasking with local Emergency Management and then conducting the full exercise.

“The team of 75 includes firefighters, communications officers, HAZMAT specialists, command IT people, QAS paramedics, doctors, contract engineers and volunteer K9 handlers.”

The exercise base of operations was staged at Fort Lytton with the exercises taking place at Whyte Island, testing every rescue capability.

Station officer Will Teen was taking part in the exercise as part of the Alpha team in logistics and said every role in the team was vital.

“In logistics, we’re not out rescuing people, but if you don’t do it right and one person gets sick, everyone could get sick. The team needs the equipment, the water, the food.

“The cache is made up of eight aircraft pallets in a C17 transporter. The cache can be packed down to one truck. We fly with it and set up the base.

“In the first 24 hours, it’s very stressful, to set up the equipment so we can get people working.”

Mr Teen said he chose to specialise eight years ago and said his biggest deployment so far was to Christchurch following the devastating earthquake in 2011.

“I lived in Christchurch for four years so it was a shock to see the devastation but it was a good feeling to go back and try to help.

“It adds another element to the firefighting job and it’s satisfying when you go on a deployment.”





Know your bushfire warnings

The official bushfire season period is well underway, and Queenslanders have been urged to understand the official bushfire warnings that can be issued.

The 2015 bushfire season campaign was launched in central Queensland, six months on from Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

A \$200,000 bushfire season advertising campaign designed to educate Queenslanders about the three levels of bushfire warnings – Advice, Watch and Act and Emergency Warning - began in August.

Central Region Assistant Commissioner Ewan Cayzer said the campaign reminded residents of the need to be extra vigilant due to the additional fuel loads caused by the Category 5 system.

“Regions like Rockhampton are expected to experience a longer bushfire season this year due to drought and El Nino weather conditions,” Mr Cayzer said.

“While we have had a vigorous season of preparation with Taskforce Marcia, there is still an increased risk in this area as there is still a lot of excessive tree debris remaining following Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

“For that reason, it is critical that residents in bushfire prone areas are aware of what the various warning levels mean and how they can be ready with a Bushfire Survival Plan.”

The campaign was launched by Fire and Emergency Services Minister Jo-Ann Miller, Agriculture Minister and Member for Rockhampton Bill Byrne and Member for Keppell Brittany Lauga at an event in Rockhampton.



ADVICE



WATCH AND ACT



EMERGENCY WARNING



“Regions like Rockhampton are expected to experience a longer bushfire season this year...”

Technology enhances QFES' predictive ability

QFES' Predictive Services Unit is using world-class bushfire simulation technology to better predict fire behaviour and in turn, how best to fight it.

State-of-the-art computer programs are helping QFES to fight fires more efficiently by providing more accurate fire behaviour forecasting to decision makers.

QFES' Predictive Services Unit (PSU) is using programs such as Phoenix and the prototype SABRE (Simulation Analysis-Based Risk Evaluation) to determine predicted fire spread from information such as fuel, topography and weather from the fire ground.

These maps can then help decision makers to see what assets are in the line of the fire for more timely and accurate community

warnings and to assist with the most appropriate allocation of resources to tackle the fire.

PSU manager Inspector Andrew Sturgess said the technology was first put into practice in the 2014 fire season, most notably at a large-scale vegetation fire at Ballandean, in the state's south-west.

"The Phoenix technology successfully predicted the spread of the Ballandean fire to within 98 per cent accuracy," Mr Sturgess said.

"These programs are connecting science to the real world in a way that helps QFES

to evaluate risks in a timely and accurate manner and make decisions proactively."

The PSU has also been heavily involved in Taskforce Marcia in the Central region this year to determine the increased bushfire risk following Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

The Phoenix technology was developed by the University of Melbourne and is used in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales.

Phoenix is managed for QFES by Acting Station Officer Russell Stephens-Peacock while QFES Principal Information Analyst Ben Twomey is leading the national development of SABRE.





SES and Australian Army exchange program in place

A new partnership between SES and the Army will lead to sharing knowledge across the services.

Two Australian Regular Army soldiers will make Queensland their home for three months as part of a new exchange program with SES.

Commencing work on 7 September, Sergeants Ken Plant and Brad Sanderson, from units at Gallipoli Barracks, will spend their time at SES working to exchange information and ideas to enhance operational capability.

They will also be working closely with the QFES Doctrine team to support the development of SES Doctrine.

SES Director of Operations Brian Cox said a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 2 September between QFES and Defence for the program to go ahead.

“An exchange program was initially suggested at the Innovation Session held during the QFES Leaders Forum in May and subsequently progressed through the RADAR innovation system,” he said.

QFES support for the idea led to discussions between the SES State Office and Army Career Management in Canberra regarding the possibility of a Defence attachment.

With the Army’s well established and complimentary talent management initiative, the Army Industry and Corporate Development Program, this secondment is the first step to an exchange program during 2015/16.

“We welcome Sergeants Plant and Sanderson to the SES in Queensland and look forward to sharing with them what the SES has to offer and likewise, learning a lot from them as well.” Mr Cox said.



Mural helps QFES and community to join forces

A unique artwork on the walls of the Thursday Island Fire and Rescue Station has provided a range of benefits for the local community.

Engaging the local community, promoting a young artist, combatting vandalism and celebrating Torres Strait Islander culture are all benefits of one mural that graces the wall of the Thursday Island Fire and Rescue Station.

Station Officer Conor Maguire decided to commission the mural first and foremost with the plan to change the community's perception about QFES purpose on the island.

"It was evident the local community throughout the Torres Strait saw QFES as just a government department with a transient employee base. The local people didn't really identify that the station and the service was theirs," he said.

"The Torres Strait has a very unique and beautiful style of artwork not found anywhere else, which they are rightfully proud of and I felt a mural could draw the community into the station and give ownership to the local people.

"Another benefit of the artwork on the station was the prevention of vandalism – once the community became a stakeholder in the station, they became proud of it and are happy to look after it."

The artwork was completed by young Torres Strait Islander artist Antony Mayor, as well as his mother Sandra, and includes splashes of colour, differing from much of Torres Strait artwork which is typically black and white.

The Torres Strait history of pearl diving is represented in the mural with a pearl diver helmet as well as the green turtle, shark and dugong to represent the various islands of the Torres Strait.

"As a result of the artwork, members of the community are more interested in becoming employees of QFES as Auxiliary Firefighters, which was previously viewed within the community as the domain of the transient non-indigenous workforce."



Fire Safety Officers graduate Queensland-first course

UQ and QFES have joined forces to develop a specialised Graduate Certificate course in Fire Safety.

Five QFES officers were among the first graduating class of a new fire safety course offered by the University of Queensland (UQ).

The course was a customised Graduate Certificate in Fire Safety conducted with three weeks intensive face-to-face training, supplemented by case-study based assessments.

There were seven officers in the first course, with two ACT Fire and Rescue Service joining five QFES officers. The graduates were awarded their certificates in July.

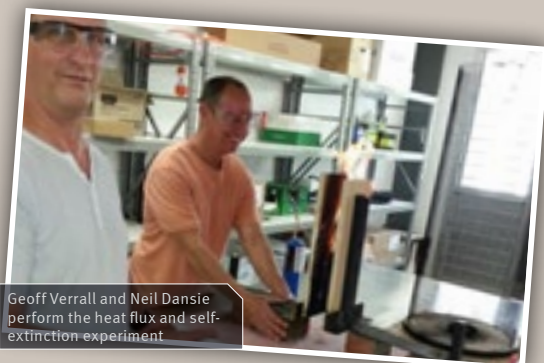
The course was developed specifically for Building Assessment Officers (BAOs) to provide fire safety advice within the building approvals process in collaboration with the QFES Fire Engineering Command and delivered by Professor Jose Torero of UQ's School of Civil Engineering.

Professor Torero has developed similar courses in the UK for the Scottish Fire Brigades, in the USA for the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Fire Arms and for fire services in more than 10 countries.

QFES established a Memorandum of Understanding with UQ in 2013 to support the university in its fire research programmes while UQ supports QFES in educational programmes.

The QFES graduates were Station Officers Geoff Verrall, Murray Clark, Peter Milne, Peter Neilsen and Inspector Neil Dansie.

Thanks to Steven McKee



Geoff Verrall and Neil Dansie perform the heat flux and self-extinction experiment.



Mexican, Canadian and Australian crews at Larne Complex Fire Camp in Alberta.



QFES skills needed in Canada



QFES is welcoming home three staff members who formed part of an Australian deployment assisting with the effort to fight wildfires in Canada. Acting SES Director of Operations Brian Cox was the agency representative in Edmonton, Alberta where he held a liaison role.

In British Columbia, QFES's Ben Sutherland worked as a helicopter coordinator and Graeme Martin as a Fire Behaviour Analyst. More than 5,900 wildfires have burnt almost four million hectares in Canada so far this season, more than double the land area affected by fire last year, which QFES also assisted with.

Deployment to US a valuable experience

When more than 50 uncontained wildfires took hold throughout the west of the United States, Australian emergency services personnel were at the ready to assist.

Emergency Management Victoria coordinated a deployment of 72 personnel, with two from QFES making up the team.

Personnel were located around Washington, Oregon and Idaho to fulfil specialist field-based and leadership roles.

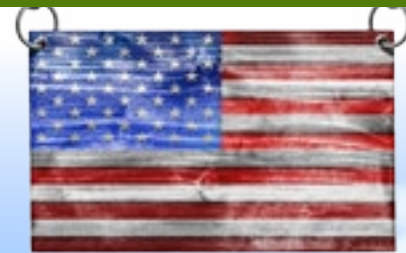
Superintendent Brian Smith was deployed to Washington as a Helicopter Manager in charge of the operation of a Type 3 water-bombing and reconnaissance helicopter.

"I worked with three other Australians and we undertook missions with the helicopter to transport incident control personnel on reconnaissance and fire-line mapping flights and to transport firefighters to where they needed to be," he said.

"It was our job to make sure the helicopter was available for service and that the aircraft and pilot hours were managed correctly."

Superintendent Greg Reynolds was deployed as a liaison for the Australian and New Zealand contingents and travelled extensively throughout the affected regions. He said the destruction caused by the fires was immense.

"The fires were enormous not only in terms of their size and their heat, but also the damage they caused," he said.



"Millions of hectares were burnt; mainly pine forest and wilderness areas but many residential properties were lost too."

Mr Reynolds said the experience had been a valuable one.

"It's been great, we were able to take away some great learnings around fire management and resourcing systems and bring them back to Australia," he said.

"Internationally, there was great respect from all countries involved and it was great to have the chance to work cooperatively to unite and form one team."

Thanks to Saskia Tigchelaar

...we were able to take away some great learnings around fire management and resourcing systems and bring them back to Australia.





Commissioner recognised for achievements

QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll has been recognised in two prestigious awards programs in the past month for her accomplishments in leading emergency services.

Within a week, Ms Carroll was listed one of The Australian Financial Review and Westpac Women of Influence for 2015, as well as the Government and Academia category winner for the 2015 Telstra Queensland Business Women's Awards.

Both of these awards recognised Ms Carroll's appointment as the first woman to be Commissioner of QFES and her previous role leading the Queensland Police Service G20 security operation in Brisbane last year.

Telstra Awards judges said Ms Carroll was reinventing the safety and security space by implementing systems that promote collaboration between different government bodies.

She also received praise for being an accessible leader and a mentor to many women.

"My achievements establish the path for women to achieve as a norm, not as something 'unusual', paving the way for the belief that they too are as capable and skilled," Ms Carroll said.

The national Telstra Business Women's Awards will take place in November.

As one of 100 Women of Influence, Ms Carroll was one of 10 selected as part of the Board and Management category. Category and overall winners will be announced at an event in October.

Bhutan visitors learn from the best

QFES's advanced training capabilities were on display for a delegation of Bhutanese disaster management officials.

International recognition of QFES's training capabilities has continued with a delegation from Bhutan exploring the facilities at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA).

On 20 July, a group of disaster management officials from the south-Asian kingdom viewed demonstrations at the live fire campus, virtual reality training capabilities, and also participated in a full Incident Management Exercise demonstrating how a Brisbane Emergency Response Team (BERT) would set up command and control at a major, protracted incident within the Brisbane urban area.

The visitors were also given a presentation on QFES Urban Search and Rescue capabilities.



The Bhutanese visitors were in Australia as part of a QUT bilateral program to build their knowledge and to learn the processes and procedures QFES and other Australian disaster management agencies employ to manage major incidents.

Chhador Wangdi, Director of the Bhutanese Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, said Bhutan faced threats particular to their own geographic location dominated by the Himalayan mountain range to the north of the country and experienced not only severe weather, but also large earthquakes and the particular threat of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods.

"In Bhutan, we have thousands of glacial lakes and of these we have around 25 that pose a constant threat to lives and infrastructure," he said.

"We monitor these lakes on a constant basis and have a warning system in place to let us know of any sudden changes to their levels which may mean a flash flood heading directly down the valley towards towns and villages.

"The threat is very real and there have been numerous incidents in the past of the lakes suddenly giving way without warning."

By engaging with overseas delegations such as the Bhutan group, QFES hopes to be of assistance by improving the emergency response and recovery procedures in other nations around the world.

Thanks to Mike McAuley



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Central Region

Ten SES staff and volunteers from across Central Region participated in a seven-day Queensland Police Service Search and Rescue course in Rockhampton and Mackay.

This was an opportunity for each service to gain an insight into how the other agency operates, what issues can impact operations and why certain decisions are made.

The course incorporated theory along with several table top exercises and practical navigation and search activities in the field.

The cooperation and camaraderie between the police and SES participants will lead to a greater understanding and more efficient operations in actual searches.

Thanks to Gary Osmand



Banana SES Unit local controller Tim Best has been recognised for his outstanding contribution and dedication to the SES.

Tim attended the recent State Disaster Rescue Competition in Cairns, where he was named the best and fairest judge during the event by the SES competitors.

Tim was offered the chance to represent Queensland as a judge at the National SES Rescue Competition held in Canberra in September.

Tim has a long and distinguished career with SES and his leadership skills have seen the Banana Unit continue to flourish due to relationships built throughout the community and his SES peers throughout the state.

Thanks to Patrick Downing



CQ residents were given the chance to experience the world of emergency services up close and personal at the Get Ready CQ Emergency Services Day held at the Rockhampton Heritage Village.

Being the eighth annual expo QFES has facilitated, the event continues to grow as a valuable Get Ready community engagement strategy.

Following Cyclone Marcia in February 2015, this year's Emergency Services Day saw a heightened interest by patrons in all facets of emergency management.

More than 270 emergency services staff, volunteers and exhibitors joined forces to educate patrons in prevention, preparation, response and recovery.

The day included displays from 40 exhibitors including SES, RFSQ, Fire and Rescue, Urban Search and Rescue, Coast Guard, Lifesaving Queensland, QAS, QPS, local government and RACQ Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service.

Thanks to Julianne Webster-Scott



Photos courtesy of Rockhampton Regional Council and Andrew Weston Photography

North Coast Region

The North Coast Region Emergency Management (EM) team conducted the Seaweed training activity at the Sunshine Coast University Innovation Centre in September.

Around 150 participants attended from the disaster management community including North Coast Region Local and District Disaster Management Groups, Local Disaster Coordinators, as well as a number of south-east Queensland disaster management professionals.

A number of interesting speakers included Iain MacKenzie, Inspector General Emergency Management (IGEM), and Dr Paula Dootsen, QUT, who gave an insight into community perceptions of emergency warnings and messaging and what may influence community decision making and action.

Seaweed provided an opportunity to refresh participant knowledge and understanding of evacuation concepts and processes in a table top discussion based on a major event scenario.

Multi-agency rescue exercise Over the Edge was held in September at Point Vernon.

The exercise involved two mock casualties at the base of the cliff in need of rescue.

Participants had to gain access to casualties, treat and package casualties for retrieval up a cliff face.

The Gympie Fire Station celebrated its 75th birthday earlier this year.

The station is the oldest operational fire station in Queensland and was built and completed during World War II, at an initial cost of £7,000 – roughly \$523,000 in today's money.

At the celebratory morning tea, past and present firefighters and their families attended, as well as the last resident Fire Chief, John Corbett among other local dignitaries.

Thanks to Julie Bruynius



Brisbane Region

On Friday 14 August, two QFES officers took part in the Cerebral Palsy League’s fundraiser, Wheel Make a Change.

Inspector Richard Gorey and Station Officer Ian Moore were locked in a gondola on the Wheel of Brisbane along with 50 of Brisbane’s top executives.

The pair were armed with nothing but their mobile phones and contact lists to raise funds for the league.

In just 30 minutes they contacted stations and seniors officers, raising just under \$700.

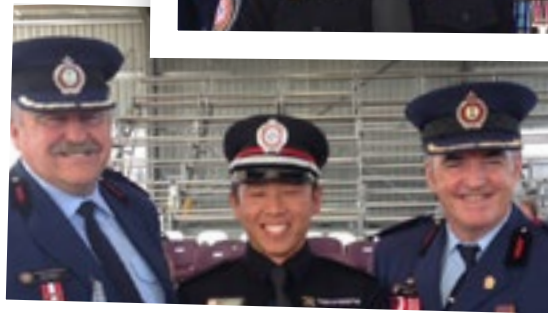
There is still time to donate, so if you would like to help, visit <https://wheel15.everydayhero.com/au/richard-gorey-ian-moore>



Sungu Lee came to Australia eight years ago to learn English and recently graduated Dux of his recruitment training class for QFES.

Sungu’s father was a detective in Korea and Sungu wanted to follow in his father’s footsteps serving the community.

He is currently a full-time firefighter in Brisbane.



The Combined Services Clubs of Caboolture and Morayfield held an awards night in September to present Officer of the Year awards to local emergency services staff.

For Firefighter of the Year, 1st class firefighter Brian Hayes of Caboolture Fire Station took out the prize with Caboolture auxiliary firefighter Lieutenant Alan Britcliffe taking runner-up.

Fred Peters of Stoney Creek Rural Fire Brigade was named QFES Volunteer of the Year while Woodford SES Group Leader Shirley Freeman was runner-up.



South Eastern Region

QFES has farewelled South Eastern Region Assistant Commissioner Peter Beauchamp after more than 41 years as a firefighter.

Mr Beauchamp comes from a family of firefighters who collectively have given more than 170 years of service to Queensland.

His career has seen significant changes from the amalgamation of the former fire brigade boards into a single fire service to the new QFES as an all hazards fire and emergency service for Queensland.

Mr Beauchamp is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Elise and two sons Mark and Adam at his beloved Kirra Surf Life Saving Club.



QFES air wing crews from North Coast, South Eastern and Brisbane regions conducted a three day skills refresher exercise near Fernvale during the last week in August.

As part of the training, QFES Air Attack Supervisors flying in the air attack platform, Firebird 450, worked above the bombing aircraft, HELITACK 417, coordinating precise water bombing on the fire as well as working closely with ground operations.

The crews flew a total of 12 missions over the course of the training period, which refreshed valuable skills that will certainly be put to good use during the fire season.

The training was coordinated to coincide with a 50 hectare hazard reduction burn conducted by four RFSQ brigades near Fernvale.

Eight recently graduated recruits as well as the Fire Investigation Unit participated as well to gain valuable experience.

Thanks to Kerry Weir



South Eastern Region recently conducted joint AAIMS training with Fire and Rescue, RFSQ and SES for the first time.

The first of the integrated training sessions was held at the Daisy Hills SES facility in August. These courses will be run consecutively over six weekends in various locations across the region. Due to popular demand from volunteers, the courses may be extended.

Thanks to Kerry Cumner



Rural fire brigades from across south-east Queensland will benefit from a range of new equipment thanks to continued support by Energex.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll and RFSQ Acting Assistant Commissioner Peter Varley were joined by Energex CEO Terry Effeney, senior fire personnel and local brigade members at the official equipment handover at Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade in September.

The Energex sponsorship of \$75,000 in the 2015-16 financial year is helping provide volunteers with new equipment, which includes portable pumps, GPS navigation systems, generators, flare kits, scene lighting and command and control kits.



South Western Region

South Western Region has commemorated the anniversary of the Charleville truck explosion.

On 5 September 2014, a catastrophic truck crash and explosion south of Charleville injured four QFES firefighters who were responding to the rollover of a truck carrying ammonium nitrate. The truck driver involved in the initial accident including two other truck drivers who stopped to offer assistance were also injured as a result of the blast.

On the anniversary of the incident, the two truck drivers Jimmy Bateman and Tim Bunyan, who provided first aid and initial care and sustained burns due to the explosion, were recognised for their efforts in a small ceremony at Charleville Fire and Rescue Station. QFES firefighters Peter Hackwood, Jake Sullivan, Nathan Thompson and Clinton McCarthy were also recognised for their bravery.

The night was an opportunity to bring everyone together to thank these brave people and also thank their families who have supported each other throughout the past year.

Thanks to Eddie Lacko



QFES were on hand as the community gathered to celebrate diversity at Queens Park for the Toowoomba Languages and Cultural Festival.

The local emergency services collaborated on a display with vehicles and staff and the combined effort from all agencies proved a great success.

The display and interaction helped alleviate the fear some people from non-English-speaking backgrounds can have of government services.

The rural fire truck and police vehicles were popular with kids big and small climbing through them.



This year QFES celebrated 100 years of a fire and rescue service at Dalby.

The event culminated in an open day and display of memorabilia spanning throughout the entire history.

Displays were supported by Fire and Rescue, SES, Rural Fire Service Queensland, Dalby Pioneer Park, Western Downs Regional Council and the Toowoomba Fire Brigade Historical Society.

Over 1,000 members of the public walked through the displays and enjoyed the festivities.

Among those invited were four former long-serving staff, who served a combined 160 years – Lou Morley, Barry Stagg, Cec Woods and Don Ashmore.

The event also recognised the outstanding support shown to the organisation by the primary employers of our auxiliary firefighters.

Thanks to Warren Buckley



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

More funding helps us to do greater things.

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

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

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

Camryn, 3 years, burns

Camryn's story

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

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

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

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

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

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



Far Northern Region

The Cairns SES team who took out the State Disaster Rescue Challenge represented Queensland at the National SES Rescue Competition in Canberra.

The team competed in seven one-hour events over two days.

The competition standard was extremely high, with some teams preparing for up to 18 months for the event while the Cairns team had only a few weeks to prepare.

While Cairns came in at sixth place, they did win the shoring event.

Queensland team leader John Forde was just two points behind the winner for the Team Leader of the Competition Award.

The next SES National Competition will be held in Tasmania in 2017.



QFES' Cairns Road Crash Rescue team completed a rescue demonstration for Year 12 students as part of Road Safety Week.

The mock scenario involved a young driver who had lost control of their vehicle and hit a tree due to texting while driving.

In front of 800 students, the team showed the use of hydraulic cutting equipment and other extrication techniques often used in road crash rescue.

During the demonstration, QFES, QPS and QAS representatives provided commentary on what they had seen during road traffic crashes.

The Cairns Road Crash Rescue team will also be representing QFES at the World Rescue Challenge in Portugal in October.



Northern Region

A firefighting technique adopted widely across Europe has made its way to Townsville, proving useful in saving the 115-year-old Great Northern Hotel earlier this year.

The coldcut™ cobra is a tool that allows firefighters to fight the fire from outside the building by way of an ultra-high pressure extinguishing medium which can bore a hole through any building material, rapidly reducing temperature and the possibility of flashover.

It can prevent oxygen from fuelling the flames further by avoiding the opening of a door or window to make entry.

Currently, Station Officers Greg Forrestal and John Williams are facilitating training in the coldcut™ cobra in Townsville.

The coldcut™ cobra was fitted onto the Bronto aerial appliance, which was turned out to a fire at the Great Northern Hotel in May.

The cobra was used from an external position to reduce fire spread and allow time for a primary search to be conducted and for additional resources to arrive on scene.

The building was 80 per cent free of fire damage and received little water damage, credited to the strategic use of the cobra.



SES in Northern Region has been busy ensuring a solid foundation of skilled SES volunteers and qualified trainers.

A program to get SES volunteers trained up to a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment has seen 10 volunteers successfully complete this training.

This training was particularly timely with storm and cyclone season approaching.

The additional training has resulted in more than 140 members qualified in working safely at heights and with chainsaws.

Who is the Ultimate Fire Fighter?

South Australia’s Country Fire Service (CFS) bushfire season campaign has helped residents to understand the major role they play in saving properties and life from bushfire.

From that humble old lawnmower in the shed, the whipper snipper for cutting back the undergrowth, the ladder and bucket for clearing out the gutters right through to a phone, battery-powered radio and written plan – these seemingly menial tasks could be the ones to save a home or life from bushfire.

This is the message from the CFS to South Australian residents this bushfire season, after last year’s Ultimate Fire Fighter campaign proved to be successful in changing attitudes towards preparedness.

CFS Principal Communications Officer Neil Charter said the campaign was focused on simple, clear information.

“I was standing at the top of a hill surrounded by burnt scrub listening to an emotional story by a policeman about how his family home had survived the Sampson Flat bushfire. The owner said his family listened to the simple preparedness messages that were promoted on television and on the radio and had acted on them prior to the fire,” Mr Charter said.

“It was a very real reminder of why the long hours invested in research, strategy and advertising production are at the front line of protecting the community.

“The objective of the Ultimate Fire Fighter campaign was very much to convert contemplation to action through achievable and familiar tasks.”

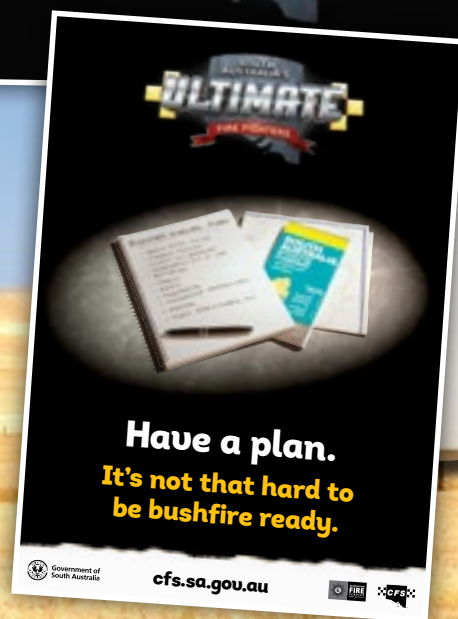
The campaign set out to promote the value of simple household things everyone is familiar with and promote that they may ultimately save lives. The campaign also aimed to shift responsibility back onto the community.

Outside of the traditional multi-media campaign channels, the CFS also engaged a number of below-the-line community tactics including posters, shop counter cards, coffee cups as well as coasters for pubs and clubs in order to increase awareness. This was supported by a Community Engagement Officer personally delivering materials and engaging local business, sporting groups and associations in conversation, which in many cases led to greater participation.

Post-season evaluation revealed target audiences had responded well during the season and contemplation had increased substantially to action.


In 2015/16, the CFS will continue their promotion of simple achievable messaging with the Ultimate Fire Fighter campaign.

For more information on the CFS Bushfire Ready Campaign visit www.cfs.sa.gov.au






“I only ever wanted to be a firefighter”



Seemingly born to be a firefighter, Mark Roche followed his father's footsteps into the fire service, joining as an auxiliary at age 18. When he joined permanently the following year and began shift work at the Ipswich Fire Station, he never envisioned he would one day be Deputy Commissioner of a statewide fire and emergency service.

By Stephanie Masters.



When Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche joined the Ipswich Fire Board as a recruit, the only ladders he dreamt of climbing were on fire appliances. Getting to be a Station Officer one day? Maybe it was possible.

Growing up, Mark's father was a Fire Officer in Ipswich, so firefighting was familiar from the very beginning, as was getting in and helping out within their community.

“I didn't necessarily grow up thinking I always wanted to be a firefighter, but it was not necessarily a big jump for me to go into that field.

“I wasn't going into the unknown, I understood the role, I understood emergency services' role in the community.”

Joining as an auxiliary in 1979, Mark completed his permanent recruit course the following year after the opening of the newly completed Bundamba Station – the third station servicing Ipswich at the time.

Now as Deputy Commissioner (Operations and Emergency Management), Mark says his career movement has come down to two things: taking opportunities and a lot of hard work.

“Ipswich was a very active station and while I always thought of this as a career, not a two- or three-year job, I only ever wanted to be a firefighter.

“Even my progression through to Sub Station Officer and Station Officer was more about the opportunity arising.



At no stage did I expect to be an Assistant Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, but when you come to a fork in the road, you have to take the opportunity.

“I didn’t have any long term goal of being a senior officer or executive, but through making decisions to develop my knowledge and skills in a job I loved, I took the opportunities when they arose”.

“I worked with a lot of great Assistant Commissioners and watching their style of leadership probably gave me the opportunity to progress further.”

With almost 20 years as a senior officer, the concept of a 9 to 5 job is almost foreign, but a few rounds of golf help to combat fatigue.

“I will normally get up at 5.20am, I’m on the road by 6.10am, get home around 6.30pm to 7.00pm, and when I’m at home, I’m looking at the iPad or the phone and have my finger on the pulse of what’s happening around the state. I just accept that is part of my job,” he said.

“When I’m away from work, I do play golf every Saturday with my 82-year-old father, and that’s to ensure it keeps me and him sane. I’m not a good golfer, but I still get out there to take my mind off work.

“I’ve worked across the whole gamut of this organisation and I have not yet woken up thinking I don’t want to go to work today, and I hope I never do.”

While Mark is proud of the many changes and achievements for QFES up to this point, he says there is still a way to go to reach the pinnacle of what QFES is capable of.

“We’ve opened our eyes to the whole world, we’re now more involved in all the technical rescue streams, and the level of competency of our staff is beyond a doubt, quite significant.

“At no stage when I joined this organisation did I believe I would be under the same department as SES or Emergency Management and now with the larger department, I think that has opened my eyes and many others to the potential QFES has.

“I want to bring this organisation to the highest level of operational capability across all of QFES, whether it is grass fires, vehicle crashes, storms, cyclones; what I like to see is everybody working together as a network supporting our community.

“My hope and expectation is that we’re not restricted by how we’ve done business in the past and while we are very much a response agency, we need to be looking at the whole concept of what a community needs before, during and in recovery after an event.”

As a leader, Mark says his philosophy is simple.

“I always believe people are out there to do their best. It is about giving people guidance but letting them do their role and progress to the best of their ability.

“I don’t live by any specific motto, but a lot of the time when I talk, I talk about my expectations and I say don’t look at a problem, look at an opportunity for remarkable success.

“At no stage did I expect to be an Assistant Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, but when you come to a fork in the road, you have to take the opportunity.

“Somebody has to be in the role leading the department or division or unit, but it’s not just one person.

“There are so many quality people supporting me and involved in the QFES team and I have had that every step of the way.”



Information & Warnings

What do warnings mean?



ADVICE

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WATCH & ACT

Fire is heading toward you, conditions are changing and you need to take action now to protect yourself and your family.



EMERGENCY WARNING

You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire.



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SES Week winners announced

The annual SES Week State Award winners were acknowledged for their incredible contribution to Queensland.

The 2015 Queensland SES Week State Awards were held in Brisbane on 25 October, recognising some of the best of the SES.

This year the Minister's Cup for Member of the Year was awarded to Kat Stewart of the Brisbane City Unit's Eastern Group.

Kat joined the SES only last year and was nominated for her exceptional passion and enthusiasm in all areas of the SES, no matter how big or small.

In addition to her commitments to Eastern Group Kat is also a valuable member of Brisbane's Operation Group.

Kat has worked consistently to enhance her effectiveness within the SES through her own skills development, by volunteering as New Member Liaison and by tirelessly working to assist existing SES members wherever she can.

The North Burnett SES Unit took home the 2015 Commissioner's Cup for Unit/Group of the Year for the Unit's dedication and commitment to the SES in activations, training and community involvement for the betterment of the SES.

Northern Region Taskforces Alpha, Delta and Kilo took out the Assistant Commissioner's Shield for Operational Response of the Year.

The three Taskforces were nominated for their critical support of the communities in the Rockhampton and Yeppoon area after the impact of Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

The combined response and commitment by each of the Taskforces was described as phenomenal and a credit to the volunteers, their leaders and their trainers.

SES Assistant Commissioner Peter Jeffrey congratulated the recipients and thanked them for their outstanding contribution to the SES and to the community.

"It is with great pride that I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the winners of this year's SES Week Awards," he said.

"Their commitment to supporting the Queensland community is truly outstanding.

"SES volunteers take time away from their families, their jobs and their lives to ensure the safety, security and resilience of the wider community in times of crisis, and the significance of their contribution cannot be overstated.

"The award winners are indicative of the commitment and passion exhibited throughout the State Emergency Service.

"The opportunity to recognise a few exceptional volunteers is our way of recognising the invaluable contribution of all volunteers to the State Emergency Service and the communities of Queensland."

Thanks to Saskia Tigchelaar



WHAT: Presentation of Australian Red Cross Red25 Emergency Services Challenge awards

WHEN: 7 September 2015



RT @QFES_chief: Very proud of amazing result achieved by #QFES in #Red25 Blood Challenge. 2nd place w/ 372 donations ow.ly/RRz4t



WHAT: Community engagement with students at Beaudesert

WHEN: 4 September 2015



qldfire Beaudesert fires turned the truck into a classroom last week, teaching these #firesafekids some fire ed! 🚒

WHAT: Air Operations training in Kingaroy

WHEN: 11 September 2015



Did you know, planes don't put out fires? With every aircraft is a dedicated team of personnel trained specifically to provide aerial support to ground crews on the front line.

Local rural brigades, auxiliaries, SES and state air operations were #spotted at #Kingaroy airport this morning for the re-accreditation of the airbase's managers and operators. #everydayheros #Teamwork








WHAT: SES taking part in and assisting with Bridge to Brisbane
WHEN: 30 August 2015



WHAT: Barbecue thanking volunteers assisting Joe Torrisi and Michael Beck
WHEN: 5 September 2015

Follow us on social media and share your photos with us:

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-  Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES
-  @qldfire

A service is born



For 40 years the SES has been there for Queenslanders in times of crisis, and it is hard to imagine our State without them. But in fact, the foundations of the SES began long before 1975.

By Saskia Tigchelaar.



In 1962 Queensland's earliest formal, large-scale emergency response capability was born.

The Civil Defence Organisation (CDO), as it was then known, was established to provide an emergency response in the event of a nuclear war – considered at the time to be the greatest threat facing Australia.

It would be nearly 10 years before the first major emergency requiring mobilisation of the CDO, and it was not due to nuclear attack.

Tropical Cyclone Althea hit Townsville in 1971, killing three people and devastating the Townsville region.

The CDO responded and proved invaluable in helping the community get back on its feet.

In this capacity, the CDO was called on again in 1973 after a tornado tore through Brisbane and in 1974 in the wake of large-scale flooding in Brisbane.

It became clear that a group of trained and equipped volunteers who were available to mobilise at short notice and respond to a range of emergencies was vital to the security of Queensland communities.

As a result, in September 1974 the focus of the CDO in Queensland shifted to one of emergency response and disaster relief and it was redesignated the State Emergency Service (SES).

In 1975, the State Government passed the *State Counter Disaster Organisation Act* and

the revised function of the SES was formally legislated.

Increased government funding and support allowed the SES to buy more equipment, train more volunteers and employ more staff.

Since then, the function of the SES in Queensland has continued to grow; today there are 5,900 active members operating out of 316 groups across seven regions.

They have delivered crucial assistance in countless storm emergencies, missing person searches and environmental disaster situations and have been deployed throughout Australia to assist with emergencies in neighbouring states.





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