

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE EDITION 15



THE NOSES THAT KNOW QFES' REMARKABLE SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS

FIRE SEASON
RISK MANAGEMENT
INTO THE FUTURE

ACTIVITY HEATS UP ACROSS THE STATE
TAKING A STATE-WIDE APPROACH
QFES EMBRACES NEW TECHNOLOGIES

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ON THE COVER

Kay-Anne Sarc and her dog Indiana take a break from training at Whyte Island in Brisbane. Kay-Anne and Indiana are members of Australian Taskforce 1, Queensland's Disaster Assistance Response Team.

Photo: Tess Raby

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Let the editor know what you think about this edition of Response by providing your feedback to QFESMagazine. Editor@qfes.qld.gov.au

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FOREWORDS



KATARINA CARROLL
Commissioner
QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

September was a busy month that started off with the AFAC conference in Sydney. QFES were well represented and our commitment to cultural transformation was recognised with Culture, Change and Engagement's Leigh-Anne Sorensen being presented the prestigious Laurie Lavelle Award.

The annual QFES Household Survey results have been released and provide a snapshot of Queenslanders' preparedness. The results are shared on page 10 and they will help guide our future planning as will the new Queensland Emergency Management Risk Framework. The framework will provide an integrated, consistent and state-wide approach to natural hazard risk management that will contribute significantly to a more resilient Queensland. The new framework is outlined on page 9 and will be an essential tool in disaster management planning.

At this time of year we are most focused on the risk of bushfire.

The season has already commenced and crews have done a wonderful job of keeping lives and properties safe. As always, our crews are working well together to protect Queenslanders. You can read about the wonderful teamwork at a fire near Caloundra on page 4.

The hard work undertaken during Operation Cool Burn has paid off in many communities as they are well prepared for fire season. Despite much higher fire activity compared to this time last year, I am pleased to say that due to the preparations completed the fires have been able to be brought under control particularly well.

This is hectic time of year for QFES with high levels of bushfire activity forecast to continue in coming months. The demanding start to the fire season serves as a reminder for you all to look after yourselves. Ensure you take regular breaks, are well hydrated and support your colleagues to stay safe in the field.

As always, I thank you for your efforts and for keeping Queenslanders safe.

KATARINA CARROLL
Commissioner
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services



DOUG SMITH
Deputy Commissioner
QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

I was pleased to attend the first meeting of the QFES Audit and Risk Committee on Friday 28 July. QFES welcomes the appointment of the independent chair, Ms Sue Ryan, and independent member Mr Glenn Poole. Ms Ryan is a former Deputy Director-General from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and Mr Poole is the former Auditor-General of Queensland.

The committee provides oversight and scrutiny of QFES' risk management practices, internal controls, governance processes and compliance monitoring. The next meeting will be held on 16 October 2017.

A reminder that Nexus training is underway across QFES and is available to all staff and volunteers – so far more than 1439 learners have undertaken Nexus training across the state. Nexus training familiarises you with the software package before it is implemented on 4 December 2017 when home page, recruitment, onboarding and learning will become available to all QFES staff and volunteers.

In closing I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the exceptional work provided by our Specialists in Alarm Services team from the Strategy, Systems, Standards and Performance Directorate. The team is responsible for providing high quality support to ensure buildings prescribed under legislation to have a direct turnout, or those that elect to have a direct turnout, receive an appropriate QFES response if their fire detection system detects a fire. The team manages the fire alarm monitoring service that is provided to more than 6500 premises across Queensland and justifiably prides itself on the delivery of first class effective and efficient services.

DOUG SMITH
Deputy Commissioner
Strategy and Corporate Services



MARK RYAN
Minister
POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Once again Queensland is in the grip of a challenging bushfire season due to low rainfall, hot conditions and the troublesome fuel load left behind by Cyclone Debbie and the flooding aftermath.

There will be little time to catch our breath before we then move into Queensland's storm season with the unpredictable tropical weather events that we have seen increase in number and severity over recent years.

It seems a cruel and unrelenting cycle unique to Queensland, but one we are well prepared for each year.

Indeed, I am always reassured and grateful for the wonderful work QFES does to prepare Queenslanders for the often dangerous bushfire and storm seasons we regularly face.

This does not just involve the physical work and bushfire mitigation efforts required to lessen the impact of a natural disaster but also the educational campaigns and up-to-the-minute information QFES provides to our communities to help keep them safe.

With weather events becoming more severe and unpredictable - seemingly every year - it is imperative that everyone who lives and visits our state is aware of what they need to do when faced with an emergency.

Fortunately, the public's trust in Queensland's world-renowned emergency services and the work you all do is absolute and highly deserved.

Please take care over the coming months.

MARK RYAN
Minister
Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Caloundra blaze signals an early start to fire season

On 18 August hot and dry conditions resulted in a large bushfire taking hold near Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast threatening hundreds of homes and businesses. A well-managed, collaborative response by QFES staff and volunteers resulted in no loss of life or property.

18 August began as a normal Friday but suddenly became a very stressful start to the weekend for hundreds of Caloundra residents as they evacuated their homes. Just after 1pm, a large fire broke out in bushland adjoining the Bruce Highway and crews from the Fire and Rescue Service, Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service were deployed to control the fire and protect the community.

Caloundra Area Commander Geoff Hunter said more than 500 personnel were deployed over three days to manage the fire. “On Friday afternoon, as the blaze quickly moved towards a residential housing estate, I witnessed a great example of the One QFES approach in action.

“Urban and rural firefighters and two helicopter crews worked to fight the fire while SES volunteers offered valuable catering support to firefighters on the ground. Excellent communication resulted in speedy dissemination of information and the efficient deployment of people and resources enabling us to meet the needs of the community during this significant event,” Mr Hunter said.

“The Caloundra fire escalated quickly and we were faced with an emergency situation requiring evacuations in a large residential area. Humidity was under 20 per cent and winds were gusting to 60km/h creating unusually dangerous conditions for residents and response teams.”

Crews reported that properties were well prepared and that Caloundra residents cooperated during the response. “Residents followed instructions to leave quickly and calmly making our job easier,” Mr Hunter said. “As the fire took hold it spread under a bridge and then jumped a noise partition into the Aura housing estate but thanks to great communication between senior officers crews were re-deployed quickly and the homes were saved.”

Mr Hunter praised the FRS, RFS and SES personnel who worked side-by-side to deliver the best possible outcomes for the Caloundra community. “Working as a combined service has great benefits in emergency situations. I think operations are running more efficiently and effectively than they were in the past. I have spoken to other officers who were impressed with our efficient response to the Caloundra blaze along with firefighters who were pleased with communication during the event.”





Photo courtesy of Maroochy River Rural Fire Brigade

A community information session was held soon after the fire and was very well received. The session resulted in a lot of phone calls to Caloundra brigades with locals seeking advice on preparing their bushfire survival plans. “The community will be better prepared in the case of another fire,” Mr Hunter said.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said Australia’s warmest winter on record combined with dry conditions and gusty winds placed much of the state on high alert for a heightened risk this fire season. “Caloundra was our first real reminder that the 2017 season is likely to be a long and busy one. Fuel loads are high after TC Debbie and significant rainfall is unlikely in the immediate future.



“The Caloundra fire also reminded us at QFES of the importance of hazard reduction activities such as those undertaken during Operation Cool Burn. This fire was more easily controlled as the area to the north had been back burnt in recent years. As well as providing a fire break, the area provided a refuge for wildlife seeking shelter from the fire,” Commissioner Carroll said.

“I am extremely proud of staff and volunteers from the RFS and FRS who have worked together to fight thousands of fires that have taken hold across the state this season. Our firefighters are well supported by SES volunteers and administrative staff who all work hard to protect Queenslanders. To all QFES members, your commitment to protecting our communities and the professionalism you display is exemplary.”

2017 – THE SEASON SO FAR

- Firefighters have responded to almost 1800 bushfires since the season began on August 1
- On average firefighters have been responding to around 30 bushfires a day this season
- Bushfire activity has increased almost 80 per cent compared to this time last year

Information as at 20 September 2017



New guidelines strengthen international disaster coordination



Every year a team of 75 highly skilled people and four clever canines descend on Fort Lytton in Brisbane to build a temporary tent city. This sea of canvas becomes their home for four days and forms the Base of Operations for a complex exercise in urban search and rescue.

The people and dogs belong to Australian Taskforce 1 (AUS-1), Queensland’s Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and they regularly take part in exercises that test their capabilities.

AUS-1 is made up of QFES staff and volunteers including fire and rescue officers, engineers, mechanics and doctors. The team can respond to a range of emergency situations and is deployed to crises both in Australia and overseas to help save lives and return communities to normal. Their urban search and rescue expertise is invaluable following earthquakes, cyclones and other disasters.

While the threat of terrorist attacks and the intensity of natural disasters continues to increase, the need for frontline personnel across the globe to be prepared and ready to respond remains vital. The planning and preparations for large scale disasters is strengthened by international coordination of response teams like AUS-1.

This year’s exercise took place from 8-11 August, with a newly developed Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Coordination component being used for the first time. The USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) concept was developed by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to maximise the coordination of search and rescue operations during and after large-scale international disaster response incidents. The UCC concept builds on the INSARAG structured approach to rescue operations.

Chief Superintendent Brad Commens, Team Leader for this year’s exercise, said AUS-1 is due for international reclassification next year so this exercise was a great opportunity to implement the new UCC processes during a full deployment of the Urban Search and Rescue team.

“The Coordination Cell now forms an integral component of our strategic operations. All information from the multi-national teams in the field is reported to the UCC as the single point of truth. Ultimately this increases the efficiency of operations and a better coordinated response should result in more lives saved,” he said.

While the AUS-1 team or components of the team have deployed to 10 overseas disasters and incidents and more than 160 Australian deployments to incidents since 2007 “there are always things we can learn to do better,” Mr Commens said.

Mr Commens said training exercises provide a vital opportunity for staff, volunteer personnel, and the canine team to build practical experience and refresh their search and rescue skills in a real life scenario.



The Command tent forms part of the Base of Operations for the AUS-1 team.



THE NOSES THAT KNOW

The smallest members of AUS-1 (and arguably the cutest) are a number of dogs who live most of their lives as family pets but are some of the most highly trained dogs in Queensland.

Volunteer dog handler Bridget Brown said QFES search and rescue dogs are chosen for their temperament and drive – their desire to work is far more important than their breed.

“The dogs are trained for a minimum of two years and they go through a tough reassessment process every year when their obedience, fitness, agility and ability are put to the test. The dogs have to maintain a very high standard to be part of the AUS-1 team,” Bridget said.

Search and rescue dogs are very fast and highly accurate when it comes to identifying where a person is trapped in a disaster situation. At the recent training exercise that took place at Whyte Island in Brisbane, search dogs located all three casualties in just 13 minutes.

Bridget said “the more experienced dogs often maintain a 100 per cent success

rate – their agility and light-footedness is remarkable. They are taught to climb ladders and move over very loose surfaces with incredible speed and accuracy but we do have to be aware of nose fatigue. We work the dogs in half hour blocks and then they have 10 minute rest breaks because if they develop nose fatigue they could make mistakes. Part of their training is to teach them to switch off in that ten minutes – they always have their bed and water close by and they learn to nap on demand.”

Dogs are an important part of urban search and rescue operations and they are often the fastest method available for locating casualties. They are light enough not to disturb the rubble and their sense of smell is incredible. “They can easily locate people trapped eight floors down in a collapsed structure,” Bridget said.

QFES search and rescue dogs are very well looked after with coats and protective boots provided, plenty of good food and rest breaks. Handlers who are veterinarians are also part of the team. In the absence of a vet, volunteer doctors and paramedics will provide medical treatment to the dogs ensuring these clever canines are as well cared for as any other member of the AUS-1 team.



Kay Anne Sarc and Indiana with Bronwyn Mullins and Zac.



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Risk management takes a state-wide approach

The Community Resilience and Risk Mitigation Branch has developed a new Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework to implement an integrated, consistent and state-wide approach to natural hazard risk management and risk-based planning.

Understanding disaster risk is an essential part of effective disaster management planning. By proactively identifying the potential impacts of hazards, disaster management practitioners can plan the actions to take — what, when and by who — to more effectively reduce impacts and risk.

The new Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework (QERMF) was designed to align local, district and state disaster risk assessments and planning. The QERMF assessment method supports all parties to work together to identify exposures, analyse vulnerabilities and to develop collaborative mitigation and treatment strategies.

Director of Community Resilience and Risk Mitigation John Rolfe said that by combining internationally recognised methodology, scientific data and local knowledge, the framework will significantly enhance Queensland’s approach to disaster risk management.

“Queensland’s Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) are built on the local level where Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMGs) conduct risk assessments and identify which of these risks they can manage, any support requirements they may have and what they identify as residual risk,” he said.

“This risk information is then passed to the Disaster District level where District Disaster Management Groups (DDMGs) look at the residual risk and support requirements of the local governments. Residual risk and support requirements are then passed on to the state if required. This process allows QFES and the broader QDMA stakeholders to support local and district groups in the right areas at the right times.

“Community Resilience and Risk Mitigation staff are facilitating workshops at the local and district levels around the state to support the use of the QERMF in

developing their local and district disaster risk assessments and disaster management plans. Training will also be offered to QFES personnel, QPS Executive Officers and Local Government Disaster Management Officers in the QERMF method.

“It is a maturing process, however we are well on the way to having an integrated, consistent and state-wide approach to natural hazard risk management that will contribute significantly to local, district and state groups working collaboratively to achieve a resilient Queensland.

“I would like to thank the QFES staff members behind the development of the new framework, the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, as well as our many local and district disaster management partners who continue to work closely with us through this process.”

The Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework and the 2017 State Natural Hazard Risk Assessment can be viewed at disaster.qld.gov.au. Click on the Emergency Risk Management link under Disaster Resources.

THE 2017 STATE NATURAL HAZARD RISK ASSESSMENT

Following the development of the QERMF, QFES published a comprehensive 2017 State Natural Hazard Risk Assessment. The assessment was undertaken using the scientific methodology laid out in the framework, alongside the expertise and knowledge of lead agencies, such as Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia and Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI).

For the 2017 report the seven most prominent natural hazards were identified and analysed, including tropical cyclones, riverine flooding, bushfires, severe weather, earthquakes, heatwaves and coastal inundation. Tropical cyclones and riverine flooding remain the hazards whose impacts pose the greatest risk to Queensland.

The Queensland Disaster Management Committee endorsed the 2017 report and the QERMF methodology on 29th August 2017.



HOUSEHOLD SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS QUEENSLAND'S RESILIENCE

QFES has released the latest Household Survey results, providing a snapshot of Queenslanders' preparedness for a range of fire and emergency events.

Earlier this year QFES conducted a state-wide survey and asked Queenslanders to report their opinions and behaviours around smoke alarms, house fires, natural hazards and their perceptions of QFES.

The results have been collated and are now available for staff and volunteers to access.

Survey coordinator Jason Brown, Executive Manager of QFES Data Analytics and Business Intelligence Unit, said the survey results contained valuable information that can help QFES better understand the state of Queensland's preparedness.

"The QFES Household Survey is conducted annually around Queensland and has expanded in recent years to encompass all hazards – that includes house fires, bushfires, floods, storms, cyclones and tsunamis, so this is a tool we can use across all of QFES to improve how we work," Mr Brown said.

"This year we surveyed more than 2000 Queenslanders all over the state.

"For the first time we have collated the results into a dashboard so you can view the data for the whole state or filter it by region, respondent age, home age and ownership status. This allows the user to dive into the results in much more detail to better understand them at a local level.

"Additionally, for each hazard or topic, the survey also asks people about specific behaviours and actions they undertake in preparing for that hazard. So while some communities might be very well prepared for hazards overall, there might be a

few important areas that require more attention and we can target those actions in our community education and campaign activities."

Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing said with QFES more focused on preparation and prevention than ever before, the Household Survey results are a useful tool to help meet the needs and expectations of our communities.

"Alongside our state-wide advertising and media campaigns, we have staff and volunteers working all over Queensland to educate communities about fire and emergency events," Mr Wassing said.

"The data can be used to inform our strategies when working with communities to build their preparedness and resilience.

"It will help us understand their strengths and weaknesses along with the best communication methods to deliver our messages. The survey also allows us to monitor our success on a long-term basis."

The survey report and dashboard can be viewed on the QFES Gateway and volunteer portals.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions on the Household Survey, contact Jason Brown at Jason.Brown@qfes.qld.gov.au.



QUEENSLANDERS' STATE OF RESILIENCE

- 61% of people feel prepared to minimise the impact of and recover quickly from natural disasters and hazards
- Queenslanders feel most at risk of severe storm (65%), cyclones (43%) bushfires (25%) and floods (23%)
- Two in five Queenslanders have changed their daily travel plans because of an increased likelihood of encountering flooded roadways in the past 12 months
- One in three (34%) Queenslanders are aware of the new photoelectric interconnected smoke alarm legislation, while one in two (51%) considered that they would be likely to install interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms in the next couple of years (one in ten claimed to have already done so)
- Around three in five (61%) Queenslanders have an escape plan prepared in case of fire
- Almost two in three (63%) of those at risk of bushfire are aware of the bushfire warning levels
- Community satisfaction with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is very strong with almost nine in ten (88%) satisfied (and two in three (64%) very satisfied).



No more ice rescues for new graduate Ryan

The 101st graduation ceremony on 8 September saw 23 firefighters celebrate their new positions protecting Queenslanders. One of the graduates, Ryan Dubyk, has swapped the icefields of Canada for the eucalypt forests of Queensland.

Standing proudly with 22 other firefighters at the recent graduation ceremony, Ryan Dubyk is already a familiar face to some QFES staff. Ryan, who has been fighting fires in Canada since he was 16 years old both as a volunteer and a paid firefighter, spent one year on exchange at QFES in 2013. He and wife Janna enjoyed the exchange so much they wanted to become a part of the QFES family permanently.

Ryan said the exchange opportunity opened his eyes to the great community of international firefighters. "There are so many good people all over the world. Firefighters are passionate people who care about their communities.

"When I came on exchange I felt so welcome – it was so easy to be accepted by my colleagues and myself and my wife made wonderful friends. We loved the lifestyle here and we find it more relaxed than Canada – we can focus more on our family.

"As I approached 16 weeks of training I thought a lot about being separated from the family and I admit I wasn't looking forward to that but I really enjoyed the recruit course. While the education here is similar to Canada in terms of technique and tactics, there are also some big contrasts. The vegetation is different so wildfires and bushfires behave differently. We also didn't learn to perform ice rescues in Queensland!"

Ryan said the greatest challenge for him was stepping back from his role helping the community, "It was hard to step back for those months I was in training – I always want to be out helping people – but now I realise that with the training, I can give even more to the community. Although I've had ten years on the job in Canada I have sharpened my skills during the QFES recruit course."

Joining Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing at graduation ceremony 101 was His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland, the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Mark Ryan, and the Member for Lytton Joan Pease.

The Governor, the Minister and Mr Wassing congratulated graduates on their dedication and commitment to gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to perform the important role of firefighter.

Minister Ryan said the ceremony was an opportunity to acknowledge the firefighters embarking on a challenging career path to protect the safety and wellbeing of the people of Queensland.

"They will take up positions working for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) in Brisbane,



Minister Ryan, Ryan Dubyk and His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland.



Ryan with wife Janna and children Juleena and Haze.

Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville, where they will help local communities prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies," Minister Ryan said.

Ryan is looking forward to his future with QFES. "One of the things I really like about working at QFES is the availability of all sorts of training and that they demand high standards. Regular training keeps

your skills up-to-date and helps you build an exciting career and I am looking forward to that."

Like previous graduates, Ryan and his colleagues from Recruit Course 101 have worked hard to meet the high technical, physical and mental standards demanded by QFES. Ryan said, "I know I am a better firefighter today after going through the QFES recruit course."

COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

QFES representatives recently joined more than 3000 delegates at the AFAC17 emergency management conference and expo in Sydney. The theme of the conference was: Collaborating for Success – Improving performance in emergency management.



PNG Chief Fire Officer Bill Roo and Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing signed a new Memorandum of Understanding.

With a focus on collaboration to improve our performance, the week-long conference discussed the latest research and practices in collaborative emergency management and natural hazard responses.

QFES Commonwealth Games and Major Events Director Darryl King presented to delegates on interagency and government collaboration for major events, using the Commonwealth Games as a case study. State Operational Coordination Branch Director Neil Francis also presented at the conference, outlining QFES' response to TC Debbie.

While at AFAC17 Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Papua New Guinea (PNG) fire service. The MOU will see QFES continue to work in close partnership with PNG's fire service for the next five years, offering training opportunities and other support.

Culture, Change and Engagement Executive Manager Leigh-Anne Sorensen was at AFAC17 to accept the Laurie Lavelle Award. This prestigious award is given to a staff member or volunteer who has contributed significantly to enhancing the knowledge, skills, operations, performance or public profile in the emergency service sector in Australasia.

Nominated for her commitment, leadership, integrity and personal drive, Ms Sorensen has worked to ensure that the Allison Review recommendations are implemented and will bring about long-term and lasting transformational change within QFES.

Ms Sorensen said she and her team were guided by the themes and intent of the review as well as the organisational transformation and strategic direction.

"We developed the QFES Tertiary Strategy for Cultural Transformation 2017-2020, an implementation plan and the QFES Cultural Dashboard. These developments demonstrate the work being undertaken to support transformational change at QFES and to provide an inclusive, diverse and safe workplace," Ms Sorensen said.

The annual AFAC conference provides an opportunity for delegates to learn from national and international counterparts, as well as contribute to discussions. AFAC18 will be held in Perth from 5 to 8 September 2018 at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Leigh-Anne Sorensen was awarded the Laurie Lavelle Award.



Exploring the future



Technological advances are changing the future of firefighting and search and rescue operations across QFES.

The School of Fire and Emergency Services, in conjunction with private industry, government agencies and various universities, held a joint mini expo at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy in August. The expo was an opportunity for QFES members to see firsthand the capability of new technologies that will support emergency services operations in the future.

Attendees at the expo were able to explore the exciting developments that are taking shape in flight simulation, virtual reality, robotics, remotely operated vehicles and aircraft and state-of-the-art software.

The FLAIM Trainer – a firefighter training simulator – was particularly popular at the expo. The simulator, combined with a patented haptics feedback system, breathing apparatus and heated personal protective clothing, provides an immersive virtual reality environment and unique training experience.

A thermal imaging camera that can be attached to remotely operated vehicles was one of the new tools on display. Advances in thermal imaging will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of search and rescue operations in the future.

As part of our commitment to embracing technology, QFES is conducting trials across the state to investigate the use and value of Remote Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS) (drones) to assist in a range of activities our department undertakes.

There are many scenarios when an aerial view is advantageous. Deploying RPAS over a river can be faster than getting boats on the water, they can determine the size and spread of bushfires quickly and at low cost, and RPAS can search for people missing

in inaccessible bushland with speed and accuracy using thermal imaging cameras.

RPAS are being trialled to assess their possible use supporting firefighting and search and rescue operations. RPAS can be equipped with high resolution video cameras and infrared equipment useful in search and rescue. In some circumstances, RPAS may provide a low-cost, low-risk alternative to traditional air and land searches.

On 2 September Exercise Flight was held on the Brisbane River using RPAS technology in a simulated boat incident. Urban and rural firefighters, SES volunteers and personnel from the Queensland Police Service (QPS) participated in the exercise aimed at demonstrating the benefit of RPAS capabilities.

Exercise Flight successfully demonstrated the benefit and enhancement to field operations that RPAS bring. The aircraft provided a non-intrusive overview of the search area that allowed both the search coordinator and the searcher to quickly gain situational awareness and locate objects in the water. The exercise also demonstrated a successful joint emergency services operation and highlighted systems compatibility between QPS and QFES.

Firmly focused on the future, QFES will continue investigating other technologies that may improve the efficiency and effectiveness of firefighting and search and rescue operations.



OPERATION PARATUS GOES DIGITAL

Preparations are well underway for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) and the QFES Commonwealth Games Office is unveiling some innovative platforms to enhance community safety and streamline operations at the event.

The QFES Commonwealth Games Office (QFES CGO), along with the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) Frontline and Digital Services Division team have been working to develop mobile applications (apps) and other digital platforms for use during GC2018.

The PSBA Geographic Information System (ArcGIS) team has developed the Beacon App. Beacon has been designed to provide a simple visual display of information about Commonwealth Games venues to operational staff on their mobile devices. Additionally, Beacon will allow operational personnel to complete and submit compliance checklists and start of shift checklists via IOS and Android devices or a desktop PC.

Community safety within Commonwealth Games venues is QFES' highest priority, and the app will act as a single point of truth to monitor all venues. This should result in increased efficiencies in communication flows and support the objective of safe and secure venues.

QFES will benefit from the development of Beacon in the future as it can be used for any major events that span multiple locations or regions.

A second mobile application has been developed for personnel deployed to the games to assist with the administrative aspects of deployment. The Deploy app holds information such as deployment rosters, travel arrangements, venue information, event scheduling, meeting points, key contacts, accessing medical assistance, accommodation and catering details, transport timetable, and executive expectations. The app is available on both IOS and Android devices.

Director, Commonwealth Games and Major Events Darryl King said the QFES CGO has also integrated existing systems, including Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch (ESCAD), Electronic Incident Action Plan (eIAP) and Operations Management System (OMS). "The interoperability of these systems will increase the effectiveness of managing venues, resources and personnel deployed to the games," he said.

"A new platform has also been developed within the Operations Doctrine. The Planned Event Management Doctrine Platform (PEMD) is a big win for QFES," Mr King said.

PEMD delivers guidelines for planned events and should result in a consistent standard when deploying QFES resources. QFES regions have been deploying personnel to planned events, throughout the state with regional variations and anomalies. The establishment of PEMD is significant because it will create a consistent delivery model, resolving inconsistencies that may arise. The platform will also capture data from planned events, which will enhance future deployments.

Preparations for GC2018 are progressing well and with access to innovative systems such as Beacon, PEMD and Deploy, staff and volunteers can look forward to a streamlined deployment. Having operational information available at their fingertips should help those involved with Operation Paratus provide residents and visitors a safe and secure Commonwealth Games.

To keep up to date with planning for GC2018 visit the 2018 Commonwealth Games page on the QFES Gateway or email comm.games2018@qfes.qld.gov.au.





Enjoy right now, knowing you'll be right later.

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Energising the SES

Volunteers are set to benefit from a \$200,000 equipment program that will deliver valuable tools and resources to SES groups across the state.

Energy Queensland, through its brands of Energex and Ergon, has partnered with Powerlink to provide funding for a valuable, state-wide equipment program. The funding comes thanks to the renewal of a partnership with Queensland's energy leaders.

Beginning in 2015, the Energy Queensland partnership has provided a wide range of equipment to SES groups. Inverter generators, lighting, chainsaws, pole saws, stretchers, vehicle accessories and resuscitation equipment have all made a difference to volunteers.

SES Local Controller Mackay Regional Unit, Selina Neill, said they received a generator and lighting from the 2016 program. "The equipment has been a valuable addition to group resources. We very much appreciate the support of Energex, Ergon and Powerlink in providing this program to the SES. We've put this gear to good use in activations over the past year."

To apply for funding SES groups can lodge an application through their area or regional office or via the SES portal. SES, QFES, Powerlink and Energy Queensland representatives will then decide on the allocation of funds and dispatch the equipment.



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Volunteers better prepared for storm season

A replica roof in Burrum Heads is providing a safe and practical training environment for SES volunteers.



SES volunteers and local businesses have pooled their resources to build a replica roof that will provide a safe and secure area to conduct job training for roof repair.

The 6 x 3 metre roof sits 30cm off the ground and is a mixture of tiles and tin. It allows volunteers to train in emergency roof repairs on multiple surfaces.

Deputy leader of the Burrum SES group Barb Rice said the practice roof would help simulate real life situations for SES volunteers.

"We will set up safety harnesses and practice tarping or undertaking emergency repairs just like we are on a roof, but we are only a metre off the ground at the highest point. There is a ladder attached to the roof so volunteers can practice getting onto and off a roof safely. I hope to have an antenna and whirly-bird installed in the future so we can teach our volunteers how to tarp around those objects," Barb said.

"Roof repairs are a large part of our work and it is extremely valuable to be able to train new members to work at heights without risk. Members will learn how to perform minor repairs, how to tarp a roof and the skills required to act as ground crew, anchoring the tarp at ground level. There are many different types of roofs and the training roof provides an opportunity for SES volunteers to apply a tarp to different roof shapes and surfaces."

Thanks to the support of local businesses, Burrum Heads is now more prepared for storm season. Barb is hopeful the roof will make group members some of the best trained and prepared SES volunteers in the state.

INFORMING QUEENSLANDERS

More than ever before, Queenslanders are looking to QFES for advice on how to help prevent and prepare for incidents, and for timely and accurate information as we respond to incidents and help communities recover.

The 'trusted source of information' status given to us by the community is not one we should take for granted, nor is it a responsibility we should take lightly. Releasing information to the public is a responsibility shared by all QFES personnel.

To help ensure a standardised approach to releasing information, and ensure roles and responsibilities are clear to all QFES personnel, a new Release of Information Policy and Delegations Matrix, along with supporting standards and procedures specifically related to media and social media, has been developed.

The aim of these documents is to provide all QFES personnel with guidance on the appropriate release of information using a variety of channels, ensuring we continue to communicate and engage with Queenslanders with confidence and clarity, and in line with QFES expectations.

These standards apply whether conducting a media interview, administrating a social media page on behalf of QFES, speaking to a member of the public face-to-face, or communicating in any other way.

In a bushfire emergency clear information and advice is essential and can save lives and property

QFES recently reviewed its bushfire community warnings and implemented a series of enhancements to ensure our communities are better informed during fire incidents.

QFES Media worked closely with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and in consultation with representatives from Fire and Rescue and the Rural Fire Service, to apply research and workshop outcomes in the development of a new suite of community messaging.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stephen Smith said the purpose of the review was to ensure QFES' bushfire warnings were in line with best practice, informed by scholarly evidence, and to ensure the language was simple, more concise, less technical and easily understood.

"The new warnings, which officially came into effect on 21 August, provide clear, action-based information and instructions which ask people to stay informed, prepare to leave, leave or seek shelter," Mr Smith said.

"Timely and accurate public warnings are as important to the communities as anything else we do and I'm pleased to say the community response has already been positive.

"In recent weeks we have seen an increase in bushfire activity and these warnings have been instrumental in helping people make informed decisions to ensure their safety and the safety of their loved ones."

Please take the time to understand the new policy documents and bushfire warnings, which are available through the QFES Gateway and Volunteer Portal.



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First QFES Medal awarded to a special recipient in Rockhampton



Jason Caswell and a colleague in action

Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche awarded the very first QFES Medal to the late Jason Caswell at the Emergency Services Day held in Rockhampton on 30 July, with his fellow firefighting colleagues attending the ceremony.

It was an extra special day for Jason's wife Karen and his children who accepted the newly minted QFES Medal along with Jason's family and friends and a contingent of Rockhampton's finest firefighters showing their support and respect for one of their own.

Karen and their daughters Madison and Darci were presented with the QFES Medal along with Jason's National Medal, also awarded posthumously. Brittany Lauga MP Member for Keppel represented the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Corrective Services Mark Ryan to present the medal.

Jason was doing a final test for his pilot's licence with his flying instructor John Creswell when their ultralight plane crashed at Hedlow airfield, claiming both their lives, in November last year. Jason was a well-respected senior firefighter based out of Rockhampton station at the time of his passing leaving behind his wife and two young children.

Assistant Commissioner for Central Region Ewan Cayzer said Jason was a highly regarded member of the QFES community and had been with the fire service for 11 years — he is remembered by his QFES colleagues as a bloke who would do anything for anyone.

Station Officer Greg Watts said Jason was a professional firefighter who did his job with dedication and commitment and always turned up on shift with a smile on his face.

"His passion was technical rescue and he was an integral member of our vertical rescue, swift water rescue and urban search and rescue teams where he really came into his own as a leader," Mr Watts said.

"Respect can't be bought it must be earned and Jason earned the respect of his colleagues and those around him — he was a genuine good bloke who helped out so many people along the way."

The QFES Medal was created to be awarded to both paid officers and volunteers from all the services including Fire and Rescue Service, Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service.

It replaces the QFRS Diligent and Ethical

Services Medal (DESM) for members of the QFES workforce who have not received a DESM previously. However recipients of the QFRS DESM awarded prior to 1 July 2016 will continue to receive the DESM clasp upon completion of each 10 years subsequent to the initial qualifying service, if this service maintains the integrity, diligent and ethical standards required.



Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche, Karen Caswell, Madison Caswell, Darci Caswell and Brittany Lauga MP, Member for Keppel.



SOUTH EASTERN REGION

South Eastern Region has an increased capability with the official opening of the Ripley and Nerang Technical Rescue Training Facilities.

On Monday 31 July, Mark Roche AFSM, Deputy Commissioner Response and Readiness and Neil Reid, Assistant Commissioner South Eastern Region were joined by Jennifer Howard MP and Jim Madden MP to officially open the Ripley Fire Station's new Technical Rescue Facility. The \$600,000 facility was purpose built to allow firefighters to train in a wide range of emergency response scenarios, including internal search and rescue techniques in a smoke filled environment, the utilisation of specialist equipment like positive pressure ventilation fans (PPVs) and thermal imaging cameras (TICs).

Superintendent Craig Smith Zone Commander West Moreton said, "the facility will assist firefighters in maintaining a high standard of competency to provide a professional fire and rescue service to the community."



On Wednesday 2 August the Nerang Station unveiled its Vertical Rescue Tower that will be used for specialised training.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services Hon Mark Ryan joined QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll APM in opening the new facility at a ceremony held at the Nerang Fire Station. Much like Ripley only days earlier, the Minister and Commissioner reinforced the capability and skills enhancement the new facility would bring. Following the ceremony, the Minister suited up and experienced firsthand exactly what QFES firefighters go through, by descending the tower, harnessed and supported by fully qualified QFES Firefighters.

The Minister said he has much respect for our firefighters and their skills. "I am continually in awe of the skill and ability of our Queensland firefighters, and this demonstration has once again blown me away. They truly are an asset to our state," Mr Ryan said.



Local knowledge assists in Commonwealth Games preparations.

Members from Gold Coast State Emergency Service (SES) and Wasp Creek Brigade Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFS) conducted a reconnaissance operation on the Coomera River in late August for the alternative Commonwealth Games waterway transportation plan.

The operation focused on interoperability between QFES' flood boat teams to develop local knowledge of northern Gold Coast waterways. It also helped identify waterway accessibility to Commonwealth Games event locations and determine timings between collection and drop off points during the event. Lessons learned have been provided to the QFES Commonwealth Games team and will be used to further determine the feasibility of the alternate waterways transportation plan.

Mark Kelly SES Acting Regional Manager said, "Assistant Commissioner Neil Reid, Superintendent Alan Gillespie and I would like to thank all SES and RFS members who participated in this operation. A special thanks goes to First Officer Glen Brooker, Local Controller Jayd Woolard, Acting Operations Support Officers Tracy Ciardi and Adrian Stone who were instrumental in the planning and execution of the operation.

"Assistant Commissioner Neil Reid, Superintendent Alan Gillespie and I have been working together for some time to enhance the one QFES approach within the South Eastern Region, and we will continue to plan operations and training activities which involve all three QFES streams."





SOUTH WESTERN REGION

The Goombungee and Wallumbilla combined Emergency Services Centre is almost complete.

Goombungee will soon have a brand new facility housing both the Rural Fire Service and the SES. The joint Emergency Services Centre was funded by the RFS and Toowoomba Regional Council.

Known as the Wallumbilla Shed, the building is finally at lock-up stage and the crews are now faced with the challenge of fitting in all their equipment. A few teething problems are being experienced but everyone is excited to be a part of establishing such an important facility.



Eight potential Fire Officers, existing Lieutenants and an Acting Captain participated in a two-day command workshop at Crows Nest in August.

The participants represented stations at Crows Nest, Goombungee, Pittsworth, Anzac Avenue and Highfields. Station Officer Dennis Burton from the Warwick Fire Station designed the course and has delivered it in South Western Region for ten years. The course incorporates Command and Control, QFES legislation, QFES protocols and radio procedures at a Level 1 incident.

All firefighters took part in controlling a Level 1 structural fire incident under the guidance of SO Burton with the assistance of SO Cartwright from South West Regional Training.



On 20 August staff and volunteers from QFES and QPS attended the Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival. The festival is an important event on the Toowoomba calendar that celebrates diversity and brings together thousands of community members from many cultures to share their stories and learn from others.

The Emergency Services display included the Fire and Rescue Operations Support Unit, an SES flood boat, a rural fire truck, QPS police car, motorbike and all-terrain vehicle. Blazer the Bear made a few appearances throughout the day and was popular with the children. QFES staff and volunteers enjoyed meeting hundreds of community members and shared important emergency and preparedness messages.





FAR NORTHERN REGION

Horn Island and Hammond Island SES volunteers enjoyed getting outside and taking part in first aid, rescue, storm damage, chainsaw and air observer training last month.

SES volunteers are better equipped to assist their community after participating in a one week back-to-back SES training course. The program was established on Horn (Ngurupai) Island to develop and enhance volunteers' general rescue and storm damage operations skills.

11 volunteers participated in the training, with 10 catching the earliest ferry service to travel from Keriri (Hammond) Island to take part. During the week volunteers joined in a range of activities covering chain saw operations, safety, rescue techniques, tarping after storm damage and sand bagging. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) delivered the Air Observers Training Program to end the week.

The groups have shown pride in their work and dedication to learning, thoroughly enjoying the program delivered by SES Indigenous Capability Officer, Arama Samuel and Volunteer Trainer Wayne Wilds from Far Northern Region.



QFES members welcomed the R U OK Day convoy into Cairns and were featured on The Morning Show on Channel 7.

R U OK Day is a day to remind people to have meaningful conversations. You don't need to be an expert - just a great mate and a good listener. So, if you notice someone who might be struggling - start a conversation.



Exercise Paratus was a multi-agency event that brought permanent, auxiliary, rural, NPWS, DERM, and Mareeba Shire Council workers together to conduct hazard reduction burns.

Approximately 70 participants from a number of different agencies worked well together during a recent exercise on the Tablelands. Main Roads assisted by closing the Kennedy Highway between Mareeba and the Mareeba Airport. This was an important pre-fire season test of processes – a forward control point was set up near the airport, with an Incident Control Centre staffed at the Mareeba Fire Station, and the Regional Operations Centre also activated. Firecom sent staff up for communications in the Operational Support Unit.

It was a great day with some worthwhile insights and a chance for people to get to know one another before the fire season kicks into action.



NORTHERN REGION

Northern Region are ready to inform the community after eighteen volunteers and staff attended the two day Public Information Officer sub-role course conducted in Townsville in September.

The Public Information Officer (PIO) sub-role course taught participants about the importance of keeping communities informed during incidents. They learned about the functions of information and warnings, media, and community liaison roles, and gained practical knowledge through hands-on activities. They formed teams for storm and bushfire scenarios to create and issue warnings and provide information to the affected community in a timely manner.

Melanie Banks, Executive Officer to the Northern Region AC, said, "I now understand how the Public Information sub-roles form a critical component in giving the public information to assist them in making informed and safe decisions during an emergency, and I thoroughly enjoyed the course."



Northern Region and Far Northern Region were invited to attend James Cook University (JCU) Cyclone Testing Station (CTS) when it held its 40th anniversary celebrations on 13 September.

PhD students led a tour of the facility and demonstrated their research, explaining its importance in understanding how to build more cyclone resilient buildings.

Established in 1977, the CTS provides quality product testing and sound technical advice to governments, manufacturers, building industry professionals, insurers and property owners, as well as delivering first class academic research.

At the conference people spoke about the importance of the work undertaken by the CTS and its ongoing research in collaboration with government and industry. This work should greatly assist the Queensland community to mitigate risks and prepare for disasters to increase community resilience.



Firefighter Neal Davidson and Station Officer Trevor Doyle travelled to Los Angeles, California to compete in the 2017 World Police and Fire Games. The bar was set high with the opening ceremony held in the impressive Coliseum that hosted the 1984 Olympic Games.

The World Police and Fire Games (WPFG) are an Olympic-style competition with 10,000 athletes representing law enforcement, firefighters and officers from corrections, probation, border protection, immigration and customs representing more than 70+ countries across the world and competing in 60+ sports.

Neal Davison, who competed in Martial Arts thoroughly enjoyed the events as a competitor and was pleased with his performance. Trevor Doyle competed in Trap and Skeet Shooting and was delighted to come home with two silver medals. Congratulations Trevor and Neal on competing in the games and representing QFES with courage and determination.

This event holds great prestige for departments who travel from around the world to compete with their overseas counterparts from emergency management and law enforcement agencies. The 2019 WPFG will be hosted by Chengdu, China who were there in LA for the official announcement and handover ceremony.





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CENTRAL REGION

On 24 July QFES participated in a multi-agency response to a tug boat emergency at the Gladstone Marina Tug Base.

QFES and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) crews located and rescued an injured crew member located below deck in the engine room of a tug boat vessel.

The casualty was stabilised by QAS crews and then a complex vertical rescue was performed to move the patient from the hull of the vessel to the deck area.

Lessons learned from the exercise will be incorporated into revised emergency procedures.



Members of Springsure SES Group undertook training to build and maintain capabilities.

Volunteers recently completed competency activities for Performing CPR, chainsaw operations, working safely at heights and traffic control operations.

They also received training in core skills including safety, general rescue, emergency lighting, casualty handling, SES task and management system and Office 365 capabilities.

Two Central Region SES training staff travelled from Rockhampton to facilitate the training.



In preparation for managing a major event during the high tourist season, Barcoo Shire Local Disaster Management Group gathered in late August to conduct a functional exercise based on a major flood event within the shire.

Remote Barcoo Shire attracts large numbers of tourists looking for an outback adventure and attending events such as the Bed Red Bash and the Birdsville Races. The popularity of these events is on the increase and they now attract thousands of people to the area, putting pressure on road and other infrastructure within normally small townships.

Local Disaster Management Group members managed car accidents, terrorist activity, power outages and missing persons during the exercise.



NORTH COAST REGION

Rural, FRS and SES held a fundraising barbeque for the QFES Challenge on Saturday 2 September.

Maroochydore SES Group joined forces with RFS and FRS in a sausage sizzle cook up to raise funds for the Children's Hospital Foundation QFES Challenge. It was a fantastic show of support from the staff and volunteers involved with the North Coast Region raising a whopping \$3358. The children were thrilled to sit in the trucks, wear a helmet and play at being a firefighter for the day.



University of Queensland's School of Civil Engineering visited the Maryborough Fire Station to complete a digital scan of the building. Hyne Timber will use the scan to develop a proposal to design and build a new fire station and emergency response centre using sustainably grown engineered timber.

The students used a variety of scanning tools to map and photograph the existing 1950's buildings and surrounds over the weekend of 12- 14 August. UQ's Centre for Future Timber Structures spokesperson, Dr Dilum Fernando, said the scanners are key tools used for the Digital Cultural Heritage initiative at UQ's School of Architecture. The rotating hand-held scanner emitted laser beams to continuously scan the fire station building.

"As the operator walked through the building with the scanner, 2D measurements were converted into a 3D field of view, collecting over 40,000 range measurements in just one second. The scan data is used to create a 3D model of the existing building and to find more innovative solutions for the design and construction process by a range of experts, researchers and students," Dr Fernando said.

"Thank you to the Fire and Rescue personnel who were on site to assist, without their cooperation and support, this unique opportunity wouldn't have been possible."



North Coast Region held a Bushfire Community Information session for local residents on 5 September at the Unity College lecture theatre following the Caloundra bushfires in August.

FRS, RFS and SES crews provided information on the Caloundra fire event that occurred on 18 and 19 August. They also spoke about Prepare Act Survive, encouraging awareness and giving advice on what the community needs to do in the event of a bushfire. The SES Fire and Biodiversity Consortium gave a presentation on fires in the Queensland environment.

More than 50 residents attended the highly successful event with positive feedback from locals.

James Haig was the Master of Ceremonies assisted by Chief Superintendent Michelle Young, Director Regional Operations NCR. QFES received a thank you letter from the community association who were impressed with the information provided about the fire event and safety messages on the night. The bushfire community information session was an excellent example of our services working together to meet the needs of the community.





BRISBANE REGION

Teams from Moggill SES and Western SES Groups, Pullenvale FRS D Shift and St Johns Ambulance St Lucia took part in Exercise MogWest Quake, an earthquake simulation held at the Moggill SES depot on 11 September.

Many people were unaccounted for sparking a search and recovery effort by five SES field teams led by the Incident Management Team. After safety assessments, locating and triaging the casualties, the St John's Ambulance team took over to provide advanced care to some of the injured and unconscious. The Fire and Rescue team also assisted with a difficult extrication when a casualty was located trapped underneath a vehicle.

When the exercise was complete, participants gathered for a much deserved team barbeque. The training scenario was a great example of individuals working together to control the scene and safely extricate, treat and transport casualties. Teams showed their skills and professionalism giving an oversight of the roles and procedures involved in a large scale incident and building on the strength of their working relationships.

A huge thank you to the IC, Wayne Pitt, a valued member of Moggill SES Group, Pine Mountain RFS and St Johns Ambulance St Lucia.



Auxiliary firefighters scaled the cliffs of Point Lookout during two days of intensive training to upskill in level 1 Vertical Rescue techniques.

The Brisbane Region Technical Rescue Training Team travelled to Stradbroke Island to deliver Level 1 Vertical Rescue training to local auxiliary firefighters. Firefighters from Coochiemudlo, Dunwich and Point Lookout Stations devoted a weekend to learning the theory behind these important rescue techniques. Later they put the theory into action, taking part in a series of training scenarios on the cliffs at Point Lookout on Stradbroke Island.

QFES have been involved in a number of real life rescues at the Point Lookout cliffs and this training is essential in providing the techniques for successful rescues in the future. The delivery of this training supports Brisbane Region's ongoing commitment to building on capability for auxiliary firefighters.



Firefighter boots hit the pavement once more for the Bridge to Brisbane charity run, continuing the tradition of raising funds to support the Children's Hospital Foundation and Children's Burns Unit.

Brisbane Region urban and auxiliary firefighters completed the course in full turn out gear including helmets and oxygen tanks in what is becoming a great sweaty Brisbane Region tradition.

The annual event has grown from a team of two to a team of over 30 firefighters. Inspector Richard Gorrie and his friend former station officer David Galvin started the Bridge to Brisbane tradition many years ago. David used his wheelchair to complete the event this year and his daughter joined him to cross the Story Bridge for an extra special photo opportunity. This year the team completed the event alongside two of the Children's Hospital ambassadors, Eli and Josh, inspirational young men who have already overcome much adversity in their lives and were spurring the QFES team on to push through to the finish line.





“With no radios we didn’t know where the other crews were so we just kept on fighting.”

Allan Weiss

It was 1957 when Allan Weiss first joined his local Rural Fire Brigade. 60 years later, the brigade has faced challenges and successes, and Allan has been there to see it all.



Decades of dedication to the Rural Fire Service have made Allan Weiss a well-known face in Brookfield and surrounding suburbs. Allan served as First Officer of the Brookfield brigade from 2000 to 2015 and at age 89, he remains an active volunteer Fire Warden today.

The Brookfield brigade have managed many fires during Allan's 60 years of service in the hilly region in Brisbane's west.

"The most violent fire I ever went to was near Gold Creek Road in the late 1960s. It chased us across a hill and we had to run through a barb-wired fence to get away. The fire came down and across a flat area with a neglected dairy farm. The grass was long and there was a fierce westerly wind. That fire had 30 metre high flames and it went so fast through the tree tops it was unlike any other fire I had seen," Allan said.

His second most memorable fire was also in the late 1960s when a lack of technology and equipment made work more difficult for the crews who worked endlessly to extinguish the flames. The fire lasted a week before the Brookfield brigade was able to stop it.

"We had no radios and we worked very long hours from dawn to midnight. With no radios we didn't know where the other crews were so we just kept on fighting."

Allan's first experiences with fire came in the 1930s when he was a young child and attended fires with his uncle. Allan was

barefoot and armed with just a knapsack spray as he learnt the craft of firefighting. Joel Gordon, QFES Acting Inspector and alumni of the Brookfield brigade, says Allan's experience and passion has been invaluable.

"Having Allan as our First Officer and mentor had a huge impact on my understanding of fire and my ability not only to fight a bushfire, but to engage with the community. I have spent hours and hours sitting in the truck with Allan, soaking up his knowledge of fire behaviour in the district. We are forever grateful and indebted to Allan for his wisdom and the experience that he's given to us all at Brookfield brigade," Joel said.

Members at Brookfield will attest that joining the brigade has not been all work and no play. Long days fighting fires were accompanied by friendly, but competitive, cricket matches – another passion of Allan's.

"I did play cricket down here at Brookfield. I also maintained the cricket pitch for 40 years – rolled it and looked after it – as a volunteer."

Allan insists that a good group of volunteers is the secret to the success of the Brookfield brigade.

"You're working for your friends, neighbours and the district. It's enjoyable to have good company and great workmates with you; it's a great atmosphere knowing you're with decent people and everyone is trying their hardest. We all work really well together."

The majority of Allan's life has been spent giving his time to the brigade and working to protect his community. Allan says the work has been worth it. He insists he has reaped the rewards of camaraderie, bravery and hard work.

Allan now spends more time at home as he has taken on the role of full-time carer for his wife Marcia. "Marcia and the other wives were a tremendous support to the brigade when we were fighting fires. Back in those days it was the local ladies who made sure there was always a cup of tea and a sandwich waiting for us when we returned to the hall for our breaks. I couldn't have kept going without Marcia and now it's my turn to look after her."

Despite his caring duties Allan still tries to help out the Brookfield station as much as possible, remaining a friendly face at the station on top of the hill.

"I'm not going to resign from the fire brigade," he says. "I've been a member since 1957 and I'm still a proud member today."

"We are forever grateful and indebted to Allan for his wisdom and the experience that he's given to us all at Brookfield brigade."



Allan Weiss and Acting Inspector Joel Gordon.

BUSHFIRE COULD BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.



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Taking up the challenge

Staff and volunteers across the state are having fun and raising funds for essential life support machines in the QFES Regional Challenge.

Announced in July, the QFES Regional Challenge is a state-wide fundraising effort to purchase extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) pumps (portable life-support machines) for the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. Life-saving ECMO pumps are used to stabilise children while transporting them by ambulance or aircraft.

At a cost of \$132,000 for each ECMO pump, this fundraising initiative is an essential contribution that will make a real difference to young Queenslanders and their families.

With almost 48,000 people in the QFES community, together we really CAN make a difference. QFES members have come up with a variety of initiatives to raise money in their regions.



Maroochydore SES volunteers joined the QFES Regional Challenge by holding a sausage sizzle at Bunnings. SES volunteers were joined by QFES personnel from Kiels Mountain Rural Fire Brigade, Maroochydore, Noosa and Nambour Fire and Rescue, North Coast Region SES Headquarters and Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing. It was a fantastic display of all our services working together to make a real difference to the lives of sick kids.

Kedron Park have also joined the challenge in style by hosting a 70's inspired Double Denim Day. To earn the privilege of wearing a tasteful double denim outfit, staff donated to the Brisbane Region team.

A charity boxing match was held at the Caloundra RSL to raise funds for the North Coast Region team. The event was well attended with 200 people watching 16 bouts between QFES members and local boxers. Assistant Commissioner John Cawcutt, Acting Assistant Commissioner Kevin Walsh and Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche joined Senior Partnership Manager Sonja Wallis from the Children's Hospital Foundation to watch the action and support the the QFES team. The Caloundra RSL were very supportive as were a number of other local sponsors. An auction at the event contributed to fundraising efforts with valuable items up for grabs including boxing gloves signed by Jeff Horn and framed posters and gloves from other boxing greats.

If each region around the state raises \$20,000 the Regional Challenge will be a

success and we can purchase an ECMO Pump for the Children's Hospital Foundation to help save the lives of critically ill children.

If we can raise \$132,000 by the end of October we will hand over the equipment at the Channel 9 Telethon on 18 November.

To donate you can visit qfes-challenge.everydayhero.com.au, organise a fundraising activity in your workplace or community or sign up to payroll giving.

It feels good to give!



How much have we raised?

North Coast	\$5626
Central	\$4240
South Western	\$880
South Eastern	\$820
Far Northern	\$265
Brisbane	\$217
State Office	\$328
Northern	\$150



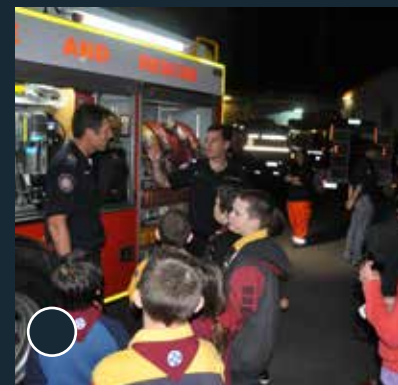
On 14 September QFES staff from many regions took part in R U OK? Day events to help raise awareness about the importance of suicide prevention. R U OK? Day encourages us to take a minute to notice what's going on for our friends, family and colleagues and to ask - R U OK?



27 young cubs from Scouts Australia visited Redcliffe SES where volunteers and firefighters from Kippa-Ring Brigade taught them important skills and safety behaviours they can practice during fire, storms and floods.



Firefighters conducted a vertical rescue training exercise at the Goodwill Bridge. Firefighters abseiled down the bridge to stabilise and retrieve the casualty. The training was part of an annual recertification for firefighters throughout Brisbane Region.



Students from Stanthorpe State High School have completed a Certificate 2 in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations). These Registered Junior Firefighters will be recognised as operational rural firefighters, ready to assist their brigades and QFES in protecting their communities.





QFES personnel were deployed with firefighters from all over Australia to fight out of control wildfires in Canada this year. Between 1 April and 24 September there were 1263 fires with an estimated 1.2m hectares burnt. The Australian deployment lasted 68 days. Everyone has now returned home safely.



Emerald SES unit hosted the Operation Water Rats training event with Maritime Safety Queensland and the Queensland Police Service. The training took place at Camp Fairbairn Outdoor Educational Centre.



Brisbane Region staff, volunteers and supporters joined the Brisbane Pride March to celebrate inclusion and diversity on 23 September. QFES members were joined by Commissioner Katarina Carroll, Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche, Acting Deputy Commissioner Stephen Smith and Assistant Commissioner John Bolger at the rally.



Kedron park staff welcomed some very cute visitors to the grounds to raise money for the RSPCA. QFES staff enjoyed lots of puppy cuddles and gathered information on the wonderful range of services the RSPCA offers to keep tails wagging.



THE BIGGEST LPG DISASTER IN HISTORY

It's thirty years since a huge fireball erupted in the sky above Cairns after an explosion at Cairns Gas Works killing one person and injuring 27 others.

The massive explosion occurred at around 3:30pm on Monday 17 August, 1987 after a liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage tanker caught fire and caused a Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosion (BLEVE) at the Cairns Gas Works. It was one of the largest workplace disasters of the time, killing one person and injuring 27.

Thirty years on, it is hard to believe the toll was not greater when the tanker carrying approximately 40,000 litres of LPG collapsed in the immense heat of the blast. The incident prompted changes in conditions and procedures and brought about the introduction of personal protective equipment (PPE) and trauma support services for firefighters.

A Cairns firefighting crew were among the first on scene training jets of water into the rail tanker in an attempt to cool it down. Unfortunately the water was not enough and the tanker collapsed in the intense heat causing a rupture at one end. The tanker's remaining section was propelled across Bunda Street coming to rest 109 metres away. Amazingly no one was injured by the flying debris, however three firefighters sustained injuries in the subsequent blast after attempting to cool the tanker.

Stephen Reynolds was only seven weeks into his career as a firefighter with the Cairns Fire Board when his crew were called to the scene. Nothing in his training prepared him for this job.

Two firetrucks were turned out from Cairns station with three crew on each, Stephen was among the second crew on scene pulling up behind the first truck just inside the gate. After the accident he spent almost a month at the Burns Ward in Royal Brisbane Hospital with two other firefighters. Following his release from hospital he made a number of trips back to Brisbane for further surgery.

"It is impressive that all three of us who sustained burns in that incident are still in the job as firefighters today — I put that down to the support and camaraderie of the fire service," Stephen said.

When asked if it changed his attitude to safety he said, "It changed my attitude to a few things and made me realise that the job was quite dangerous. It definitely made me more safety conscious.

"There was a big push by the union at the time for improved PPE for firefighters and better protective gear, and training has improved so much over the years as well. It was a very different fire service to the QFES of today with its vastly improved safety procedures and equipment to protect firefighters from the hazards of the job."

The houses on the adjoining land and brewery next door suffered extensive damage from the blast. Flames blew across the top of the buildings and had the workers running for their lives. If the wind was blowing the other way on that day, half of the Cairns CBD could have been wiped out in the incident.

Peter Brkic, an engineer at the Cairns telephone exchange and amateur photographer, took nine photographs of the blast as it was happening. The shots featured the clock from the railway station in the foreground and gave a timeline for the explosion. They proved to be a valuable resource for informing future responses to incidents of this nature.

Safety measures for the fire service have evolved over time to provide much greater protection to those on the frontline protecting the community. Today's firefighters now have the best tools and equipment available to help do what is a very dangerous and difficult job.

QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll said "QFES prides itself on protecting its workforce with high quality PPE, world class training and safety procedures to support operational activities — we have come a long way in 30 years and will continue to provide the equipment, tools and support services our workforce needs to perform the vital role of protecting Queenslanders."

For QFES counselling and peer support services contact:
Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) on
1300 309 508 or email FESSN@qfes.qld.gov.au



Stephen Reynolds

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