

RESPONSE

RESILIENT AND READY FOR THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE EDITION 36



Operation Paia Truks

Supporting our
Pacific neighbours




CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AWARDS
Celebrating female leaders
4



OPERATION PAIA TRUKS
Supporting our neighbours
7



COMMISSIONER'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
Top honours for virtual reality training
13




ON THE COVER

Five fire trucks donated by QFES were loaded onto the HMAS Choules to be transported to PNG.

RESPONSE is a bi-monthly magazine produced by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Contributions and feedback are welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity and clarity.

QFES appreciates the support of advertisers, but does not necessarily endorse or evaluate advertised products, services or vendors, nor any of the claims made by advertisements.

Address: Response magazine, Media, Communications and Online Branch, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4001
Editor: Jarryd Luke
Phone: 07 3635 3314
Email: Magazine.Editor@qfes.qld.gov.au
Advertising: Martyn Hewett
Email: mkhewett@bigpond.com
Graphic Design: Dexart Graphic Design
Email: dexartgraphicdesign@gmail.com

» International Women's Day Awards	4
» QFES donates fire trucks to PNG	7
» Floods response	9
» K9 squad training	10
» Operation Cool Burn	12
» Commissioner's Awards for Excellence	13
» Driverless vehicles research	14
» Marine Rescue Working Group	15
» PSBA transition	17
» Emergency Services Cadets	18

AROUND THE STATE

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

STRATEGY

» Cutting red tape	28
» FleetWave	29

COMMUNITY

» New AFL team	31
----------------	----

GALLERY

SPOTLIGHT

» PSO of the Year	34
-------------------	----

FOREWORDS



MIKE WASSING
Acting Commissioner

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

At QFES, working together across our department and with our community and partners is the key to keeping Queenslanders safe.

I am proud of the way everyone has stood together through recent challenges, from the bushfires and floods to the COVID-19 lockdown.

As a team, the values that bind us and underpin everything we do are respect, integrity, courage, loyalty and trust.

They bear repeating because when we face our most difficult challenges, they will steer us through.

As a volunteer and staff workforce, your professionalism, teamwork and dedication during the recent floods in Queensland and NSW are proof of this.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of everyone who helped support the community through the floods, from the frontline to regional coordination and state support.

Members from every service answered more than 1400 calls for assistance in Queensland.

About 130 SES members and FRS swiftwater technicians journeyed south to lend a hand to our colleagues in northern NSW.

It was a huge effort that could not have been achieved without our services, partners and community working as one.

The Bureau of Meteorology has officially declared La Niña to be over, but we remain vigilant, and already our preparations have begun for the next bushfire season.

Here in Queensland, one hazard gives way to another, but our community, with QFES behind them, stands ready.

To ensure we deliver these essential services with all Queenslanders in a sustainable way, we must continue to work smartly and efficiently, in this current challenging environment.

At the core of our approach remains our shared purpose irrespective of your service or function within the department, or whether you are volunteer or paid, or whether you wear a uniform or not. Every one of you contribute every day to the safety and well being of Queensland communities as well as each other.

Some adjustments to the way we work will need to be made, but we have always prided ourselves on our adaptability, and I have every confidence that we will meet this challenge.



ADAM STEVENSON
Acting Deputy Commissioner

STRATEGY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

I recently had the privilege of welcoming PSBA staff members who have transitioned to QFES through both in-person and online inductions.

Thank you to all the new members of our QFES family for helping make this an even greater place to work. We have been working hard to make your transition as smooth as possible.

It's a pleasure to have you on board, and I am confident that together we will provide the best possible service for our community.

As you're aware the Commissioner recently announced some changes to the directorates within the Strategy and Corporate Services Division (SCSD).

While some changes have had to happen quickly to accommodate functions being transitioned from PSBA, the Commissioner has agreed to extend the official commencement date of a SCSD realignment to 1 July 2021.

Having this extra time will enable us to undertake a full engagement process with all staff impacted by the changes as well as consult with those indirectly affected.

Over the next few months the Commissioner will continue his regional visits to hear more about people's experiences working and volunteering for QFES. These conversations are important to QFES and our priorities into the future, so we can be the best we can be for our community.

It's now been several months since the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements released its final report on 30 October 2020, which included 80 recommendations.

Good progress is being made on these recommendations and Queensland is working with the Commonwealth and its state and territory counterparts to progress those prioritised by the National Federation Reform Council. These include:

- the Australian Warning System
- the Australian Fire Danger Rating System
- nationally consistent pre-agreed disaster recovery funding arrangements
- a review of the path to expeditiously deliver the Public Safety Mobile Broadband
- making substantial progress to reform fundraising laws
- making substantial progress to improve natural disaster risk information to support decision-making such as land-use planning for new development, and the construction code.

The Commonwealth, Tasmanian, Australian Capital Territory and Victorian Governments have released responses to the final report, and the Commonwealth has started to implement a number of recommendations. Our organisation will play a critical role in implementing the recommendations supported by the Queensland Government, and while this is a big job, QFES, as always, will rise to meet the challenge.

Celebrating women in emergency services

QFES hosted this year's Public Safety Agencies International Women's Day to celebrate the inspiring women in our organisations and encourage conversations about gender equality.

People from across the state tuned in virtually to hear a panel discussion exploring the United Nations theme of 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'.

Staff and volunteers were recognised for their outstanding contributions to embracing gender equality and promoting the rights and wellbeing of women in QFES.

Mentor of the Year

Cassandra Sorensen has held many positions in the Poison Creek Rural Fire Brigade, including six years as First Officer and 10 as Volunteer Community Educator.

"Our brigade has a strong connection with the community and we work together with neighbouring brigades and auxiliary firefighters," Cassandra said.

"We've had an influx of new members over the last 12 months, and it's been great getting to know them."

A teacher during the day, Cassandra also mentors the Cooktown Cadets. She recently delivered training to local young people for the Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management in partnership with the Rural Fire Brigade Association Queensland and the Rural Fire Service (RFS).

On top of this, Cassandra is a carer for Wildlife Rescue Queensland. She looked after injured flying foxes at the end of 2018, when a record heatwave in far north Queensland killed about one third of their population.

"When I first joined the brigade 16 years ago, Training Support Officer Jamie Haskell became my mentor and offered me training courses to develop my skills," she said.

Despite this, Cassandra was overlooked for an officer position, which was given to a male brigade member who hadn't



completed any training.

"I think things have definitely changed since then, especially within our brigade, where the younger members don't have those attitudes," she said.

Champion of Change

Acting Inspector Paula Douglas from Toowoomba Command has championed fairness, equity and inclusion during her 13 years as a firefighter.



"I enjoy feeling a greater sense of purpose in helping the community," Paula said.

Paula helped develop the Frontline Women's Network to support female firefighters.

"Our former Assistant Commissioner Michelle Young started the process and I created a plan to develop a network within the permanent female firefighter ranks," Paula said.

"We meet quarterly to discuss current issues and how to create change. The network has supported a lot of meaningful conversations and we're working to expand it into a whole-of-QFES women's network."



As she has risen through the ranks, the physical challenges of responding as an operational firefighter have been replaced with the tactical challenges of managing incidents.

“There’s a lot of variety in working for QFES,” she said.

“I think leaders tend to do well when they apply their operational knowledge in a compassionate and respectful way.

“Leadership is about inspiring others to take ownership and be empowered.”

Outstanding Female Leader – Corporate Support and Administration

Jody Rossner has developed a diverse workforce by training QFES and whole-of-government staff in the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).



“While the SDCC provides support to the Local and District Disaster Groups,” Jody said, “I like to think of us as the pit crew supporting these groups.

“I enjoy working with other agencies because it gives me an understanding of how everybody has a role and how everyone can work together.”

When the SDCC was activated in February 2020 to manage the pandemic, Jody developed the SDCC processes for hotel quarantine in Queensland.

“We had to make up processes on the fly for things we’d never done before,” Jody said.

“We still have two to three thousand people a day in quarantine.

I enjoy feeling a greater sense of purpose in helping the community.

Paula Douglas

There’s a large cohort of about 40 000 people who are registered to come back into Australia, including fruit pickers, miners and air crews.”

Her other achievements include working with the State Air Operations Unit to develop the QFES Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) capability and being part of the 2032 Olympics Costing Team that costed out the services QFES would provide for the games.

“With my style of leadership, I like to lead by example,” she said. “I’m very much a team person. Everybody in a team has a different skill set and something to offer, so I look to work with each person and make sure everyone is supported.

“It’s great to see that we have more women contributing to QFES and the SDCC – everyone has something to offer.”

Outstanding Female Leader – RFS

For more than 20 years, Kyra Hill has been with the Karumba Rural Fire Brigade in the Gulf of Carpentaria.



“I was humbled and delighted that QFES would recognise me for my work out here,” Kyra said.

She showed leadership when she successfully encouraged all brigade members to apply for their Blue Cards so the brigade could continue to meet operational requirements.

2021 award winners

Outstanding Female Leader – FRS:

Lynette Roveglia, Captain, Forrest Beach Fire and Rescue Station

Outstanding Female Leader – RFS:

Kyra Hill, Secretary, Karumba Rural Fire Brigade

Outstanding Female Leader – SES:

Julie Dance, Local Controller

Outstanding Female Leader – Corporate Support and Administration:

Jody Rossner, Senior Program Officer, Exercise Coordination Unit

Mentor of the Year:

Cassandra Sorensen, First Officer

Champion of Change:

Paula Douglas, Acting Inspector, Toowoomba Command

Kyra is also a member of Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Director of the Karumba Children's Centre.

"People power really makes a difference," she said. "Whether it's writing grant applications or looking after admin, you just make it happen."

"Our remoteness can make training difficult, but for the most part we're very lucky, and there's a strong understanding in town that when the call goes out, volunteers need to go off and get things done."

"We're surrounded by a lot of scrubland, so we do a lot of backburning."

"This is a small fishing town, and it doesn't matter what your gender is, as long as you're ready and willing to do the job. We have so many strong women here."

Outstanding Female Leader – SES

Julie Dance is an advocate for equality in the State Emergency Service (SES) and has greatly increased the number of women members in the Georgetown SES Unit.

She has been with the SES for more than 20 years, including 10 years as Local Controller, and organises events and training for the RFS and SES.



"Receiving the award was certainly unexpected and my whole team cheered when they heard the news," Julie said.

"Working with other members who are friends, neighbours and colleagues brings us all together for a good cause."

"We cover a huge area with very harsh terrain. Communication services are non-existent outside townships, so it's hard to speak with other team members once we're on the road."

Julie works hard to foster an atmosphere where all members' contributions are valued.

"My style of leadership is more about support and encouragement," she said. "We have a good mix of people in our team and we weave together very well."

Julie said recognising women with the awards helped encourage more women to be involved in the emergency services.

"QFES has come a long way in terms of equality. Women are empowered to know they can make big contributions and feel they have much to offer."

Outstanding Female Leader – FRS

Lynette Roveglia goes above and beyond the call of duty as an Auxiliary Captain, and dedicates her time to mentoring new recruits.



"I went to the ceremony to support everybody else, and then out of nowhere they read my name out," Lynette said.

"I think awards like this are great because they recognise people's hard work and dedication, but there are also a lot of people in the background who don't necessarily get recognised."

"In our role, you can't do this job on your own. When you've got a good crew behind you, the job is a lot easier."

Lynette has been with QFES for 32 years and is now the Auxiliary Area Training Coordinator for Northern Region.

"I like meeting new recruits and watching them develop and progress through the ranks," she said.

"The main challenge we have up here is the distances we have to travel – thousands of kilometres between towns – so we often use Teams to support training."

"As a mentor, you've got to gain their trust and respect and understand everyone's needs so they feel comfortable approaching you."

"I love my role at QFES, and I encourage anybody looking for a challenging job to consider becoming an auxiliary firefighter."

“QFES has come a long way in terms of equality. Women are empowered to know they can make big contributions and feel they have much to offer.”

Julie Dance



QFES worked together with the ADF to transport the trucks.



The trucks travelled to PNG via the Whitsundays.

Operation Paia Truks

QFES has shipped five fire trucks across the sea to the Papua New Guinea Fire Service (PNGFS) in the spirit of friendship and collaboration.

The nine-month Operation Paia Truks (fire trucks) project was completed with the delivery of five ex-service Type 2 fire appliances to Port Moresby in February.

QFES engaged with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to transport the trucks to PNG, resulting in loading them aboard HMAS Choules using the ship's cranes.

The trucks' six-day journey took them via the Whitsunday Islands. Also included in the equipment donation were 16 new breathing apparatus (BA) sets and spare cylinders, provided through a funding grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and 150 sets of firefighter protective clothing from QFES.

Commissioner Leach, who officiated the handover to the ADF, said it was a pleasure for QFES to gift the shipment to the PNGFS.

"They are good quality ex-service appliances with a comprehensive inventory of firefighting and road crash rescue equipment," Mr Leach said.

PNGFS Chief Fire Officer Bill Roo expressed his appreciation for the donation.

"I am excited and lost for words, but from the bottom of my heart I thank you for all the effort, and energy you have put into this successful project," Mr Roo said.

"I also take this time to thank Commissioner Leach for the heartfelt decision he made to donate those trucks to the PNGFS."

Australia has a long and productive relationship with PNG, including Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between QFES and PNGFS since 1992.

During the Black Summer bushfires, PNG supported Australia by sending 100 members of the PNG Defence Force, who helped reconnect isolated communities in the Gippsland region by clearing roads and debris. They also boosted morale by sharing songs and culture.

Project lead Chief Superintendent Brad Commens said the trucks and equipment were the largest single donation to PNGFS since the start of the MOU 29 years ago.

"A project like this is only possible through the commitment of multiple partners, both within QFES and, in this case, with DFAT and ADF," he said.

"With appliances and equipment provided by QFES, BAs and appliance refit funded through DFAT, and transport provided by ADF, we have shown the effectiveness of joint civilian-military operations."



The handover of the trucks and equipment at Port Moresby.

THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR.

For a subsequent psychology visit*...

Emergency Services
Health pay up to

\$237.30*

with an annual
maximum of \$850*

Combined annual maximum with counselling

Rolling Extras

BUPA pay up to

\$89.00*

with an annual
maximum of \$750*

Top Extras 90

Medibank pay up to

\$80.10*

with an annual
maximum of \$500*

Top Extras 90

Not even the best marketing, special offers or gimmicks can hide the evidence. Emergency Services Health is the best health cover for firefighters and their families.

CALL IT IN – 1300 703 703



COVER LIKE NO OTHER



Emergency Services Health brought to you by Police Health Limited ABN 86 135 221 519 A restricted access not-for-profit Private Health Insurer
© 19/01/2020 * Subject to waiting periods and other conditions. Annual Maximum comparisons correct as of 1 October 2020, published on
privatehealth.gov.au.

ADVERTISEMENT

Rising waters

As floodwaters rose across south-east Queensland and northern NSW, QFES members answered calls for help and worked with our community and partners to keep people safe.

The floods inundated homes and surged over roads, leading to more than 1400 calls for assistance in Queensland. State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS) Volunteers and Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) swiftwater technicians were quick to respond.

Once the situation in Queensland was under control, about 170 QFES members also packed their bags and boats and travelled south to support emergency services in NSW.

They lent a hand as part of the huge flood response in Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle and around Western Sydney.

Jared Taylor, SES volunteer and media contact for the Queensland State Emergency Service Volunteer Association Inc, was deployed with an SES taskforce to Port Macquarie and Taree in NSW.

“There was so much devastation and a lot of people who needed assistance,” Jared said.

“The floodwaters rose very quickly, and people were caught off guard. I was surprised by the sheer amount of water that had gone straight through houses and wiped everything out.

“My team found a shipping container that had floated down the Manning River, struck a bridge and come to rest between two houses.

“Garages were ripped apart. One resident said they’d removed two-and-a-half tonnes of damaged items and expected another three tonnes to be taken away.”

Jared’s taskforce assisted with a wide range of tasks including storm damage, heights work, public relations, reconnaissance, and tasks using flood boats including rescues and evacuations as well as food and medical resupplies.

They helped the Port Macquarie SES Unit restock their shelves and distributed goods to community hubs where people could pick up clothes, food and other essentials.

“One QLD SES team was sent on a particularly challenging task to assess damage and people’s wellbeing in a remote valley cut off by floodwaters,” Jared said.

“The community was so grateful we’d come down from Queensland to help. They were very humbled and overwhelmed to have our assistance.”



Queensland SES crews at the NSW SES headquarters in Port Macquarie.



Evacuating community members in Ulmarra Region, NSW.



A landslide in Wongawallan. Photo by Robert Bloss.



The K9 squad practised tracking scents at Whyte Island.

K9 squad gets prepared

Twelve volunteer handlers and their dogs from the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) K9 squad conducted a major training session at Whyte Island in March to build their skills.

The squad deploys to disasters in Australia and overseas, including the earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan in 2011, tracking scents to find missing persons under rubble.

Commissioner Greg Leach said the K9 squad was valuable for QFES' disaster response capability.

"As it takes two to three years of training and assessment for handlers and dogs to become qualified, training as a team is vitally important," Mr Leach said.

"The working life of a dog is relatively short so we are always working to train new handlers and dogs to ensure future needs of the community can be met."

The right dogs for the job

Volunteer handler Natalie Fraser joined the team in 2018. Like many handlers, Natalie is a vet. She specialises in veterinary reproduction and also consults with the RAAF on their breeding program.

"Before I immigrated to Australia, I worked with one of the premier detection dog programs in the US, which started my fascination with detection dogs," Natalie said.

"I'd been looking at options for volunteering in Queensland and this just fit all the pieces of the puzzle.

"It's a huge responsibility to keep ourselves and the dogs mission ready, but it's very rewarding to know if the community needs us, we're ready to go at a moment's notice."

Natalie said the team's dogs came from varied backgrounds.

"The highest-ranking search dogs in Australia were both mixed breeds from a shelter," she said.

"Many of our dogs are 'repurposed' – for example, I have two Belgian Malinois I adopted from the RAAF because they were unsuitable as military working dogs, but they needed a job to be happy.

"Some of our dogs are purpose-bred for searching or hunting, but we have very few restrictions on the types of breeds or mixes.

"The most important things we look for are a genuine enjoyment of people, and a strong desire to do work for some sort of reward, like food or a toy."

Falkor and Bourke

Natalie's two dogs couldn't be more different.

"I adopted my first dog, Falkor, for competitive sports," Natalie said. "A fellow handler suggested I try him at USAR because he was a very suitable breed, and he loved it.

"He's been my partner for nearly three years, and I genuinely feel there's nothing I could ask of him where he wouldn't give 110%.

"Our relationship has grown stronger every year, and it's really exciting to see it come through in his work.

"He loves his job, and would search for people every day if he could. He's also very serious, so I make sure the job retains at least some elements of fun!

"My 'puppy', Bourke, is just shy of two years old, and I've been working with him for about a year now. We're still in the development phase of our relationship, and he is just a very goofy dog.

"His working style is the polar opposite to Falkor's – every day is just a joyful opportunity to go do some sort of work."

On the scent

Dogs use a special scent-detecting organ that can smell up to 100 000 times better than humans.

"Their ability to smell is akin to our eyesight," Natalie said. "They are continually aware of the scent of objects in the environment.

"As handlers, we simply teach them to tell us where the scent of a living person is strongest.

"We start by teaching the dogs to bark on cue for their reward. We transition this to barking at people, and then gradually increase the difficulty of finding that person, until the dog can detect them even if they can't physically get close to the person because they're trapped inside a structure."

Unlike bomb or narcotics dogs, USAR dogs work in dangerous terrain, off leash and sometimes out of sight of their handler.

"We spend a huge amount of time teaching them agility, obedience and directional control so we can move them into search areas from a distance," she said.

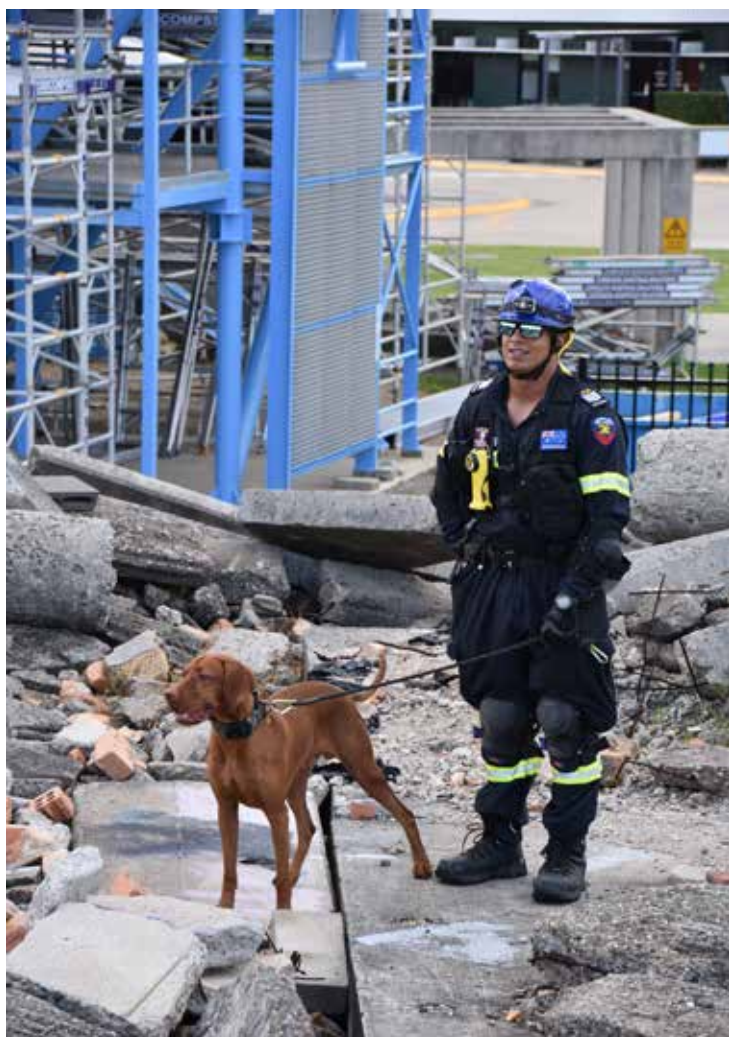
"We desensitise them to loud noises, such as generators and power tools, that they might encounter on the job site.

"We need them to be social, quiet and well-mannered while stationed at the base of operations during a briefing."

As for what the dogs get up to in their down time, Natalie said they had a better social life than she did.

"We do some cross training in different dog sports to allow them to exercise their brains for fun," she said.

"Falkor's favourite activity is herding sheep, and Bourke really enjoys agility. Both boys love hiking, biking and swimming at the beach, which helps keep up their general fitness and endurance."



Handlers and their dogs train for two to three years to qualify.



Volunteer K9 handler Natalie Fraser with her dog Bourke.



A hazard reduction burn at Lucinda. Photo by Candice Song.

Operation Cool Burn: Exciting changes in 2021

This year is a turning point in QFES' bushfire mitigation program, as we introduce significant changes to the way we assess risk and time our activities.

Since 2016, Operation Cool Burn (OCB) has reduced the potential impacts of bushfires by identifying high-risk areas and using targeted activities including hazard reduction burns near at-risk assets.

This approach is supported by external research such as that done by CSIRO, Australian National University and Griffith University.

This year QFES will use a new methodology to better support Area Fire Management Groups (AFMGs) to identify risks in a transparent and evidence-based way.

James Haig, Executive Manager of Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and Policy, said the methodology aligned with the Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework and was supported by new data sets of buildings and overall fuel hazard ratings.

"The methodology provides a framework to help AFMGs methodically consider the various factors that affect risk and capture that local knowledge systematically.

"Local knowledge is vital when it comes to bushfire mitigation and the new methodology helps give this knowledge greater context, making it even more useful," James said.

This change in itself is significant, but QFES will also transition our mitigation program from a five-month operational period to year-round.

On 31 August this year, when OCB traditionally ends, QFES will continue capturing and recording mitigation activities.

"This recognises two important truths: Queensland is a big state with widely varying conditions, and bushfire mitigation activities can be undertaken year-round," James said.

"These activities don't stop being effective just because they happen outside the OCB period.

"Our changing climate means we have more limited windows for burning, so we need the flexibility of a year-round program to keep our communities safe."

This means from 31 August this year QFES will record many more bushfire mitigation efforts completed by QFES and our partners.

"To support this, the State Bushfire Committee has formed a new working group of key partners so we can agree about what information we need to record and share this data more effectively," James said.

"This will paint a common picture of fuel loads, hazards and preparedness.

"QFES recently released some simple apps to help brigades and partners capture permit burn and community engagement information more easily."

It is envisaged that, in time, mitigation will transition to a rolling program where land managers apply strategies for their areas including how frequently they conduct burns and where they create fire breaks.

"Capturing more mitigation activities will help our understanding of fuel loads and preparations near communities, but it will also improve bushfire information in the broader landscape," James said.

"While research supports mitigation near our communities as the best bang for buck in terms of protecting assets, understanding distant hazards is also useful.

"This can help manage large remote fires and improve the chances of controlling them before they grow.

"These changes will require plenty of hard work and steady improvement, but 2021 is likely to be a watershed year for our bushfire mitigation programs.

"Thank you for all the hard work regions and state-based team members have already put in this year. I encourage everyone to get behind this exciting new direction."

To learn more about the science behind bushfire mitigation, check out The Burning Question documentary on the Gateway.



Top honour for virtual reality training

Robert Hawxwell won the 2020 Commissioner's Outstanding Award and Adaptive Award for his work using virtual reality (VR) headsets and 360° video to drop recruits into simulated emergencies where they can safely develop their skills.

Robert has always been fascinated by technology. Twenty years ago, he helped implement the station management system that introduced computers into fire and rescue stations.

He started working on VR technology six years ago in the Digital Learning Deployment Unit at Whyte Island, helping develop a fully immersive VR system.

"Recruits wear a VR headset and a heated vest that simulates flames approaching," Robert said.

"We also simulate the pressure of a firehose. They hold a hose in their hands and when they spray water in VR, the hose rewinds and pulls them back. We can simulate different spray patterns and pressure, with up to 80 kilograms of force.

"Recruits wear the lower half of a respirator and carry their computer in a backpack to simulate a breathing apparatus (BA)."

To recreate disaster situations, the team captures 360° video footage with six connected GoPros.

"We load the video into headsets and use software to synchronise them, so we can immerse 20 recruits in the same scenario at the same time," Robert said.

"There are unlimited possibilities, from chemical spills to a house with the roof blown off by a tornado.

"It's a great cost saving because we can hit one button and reset the whole environment.

"It's also much safer. For example, a real-life container burn can be overwhelming – hot, crowded and hard to hear.

"Simulating this experience allows the instructor to talk recruits through it and make sure they feel safe. We're the first in Australia to train recruits this way."

Robert and his team also simulated a road crash rescue by putting a camera on a dummy in the passenger seat of a crashed car.

"The recruits are entrapped in the passenger seat, with a pole against their door, as they watch ambulance officers and firefighters cut the driver out and extricate her," he said. "It puts them in the shoes of the people they'll be rescuing."

The team plans to distribute VR training for all three services throughout the regions, particularly since the disruptions of COVID-19.

"We're also developing virtual classrooms in Teams," Robert said. "People can join from anywhere and interact with each other, move around the environment and study virtual models.

"We're really leading the way with this technology. We're assisting other states, as well as the Queensland Police Service, to use similar techniques.

"VR simulations will never fully replace practical training, but they're a fantastic way to enhance it."

Commissioner's Awards for Excellence 2020

Commissioner's Outstanding Award and Adaptive Award: Robert Hawxwell

Capable Communities Award: Cheryl-Lee Fitzgerald, Murray Hayton, Nadine Oosen, Alan Hatcher, Chris Wegger, Kerry Bodsworth

Intelligence Award: Samantha Thompson, Jane Houston, Anna Hurley, Katrina Macdonald, Gery Muir, Tammy Woolf-Stefanutto, Renea Mahboop, Kathleen Tyler, Anita Ransome, Amanda Wanda, Deborah Packer, Phyllida Hayes, Joseph Davis

Interoperable Award: Woodgate Group, Elliott Heads Group, South Kolan Group, Childers Group, Bundaberg Group, Bargara Group, Innes Park Group, Moore Park Beach Group

Sustainable Award: Peter Mason, Robert Dines

QFES Employer Recognition Award: Steven Oates and William Barnett from Sawcom Industries and Luke Hildred and Joe Pennisi from Ergon Energy



The world-class VR technology simulates a variety of emergency situations.



Commissioner Leach presented the Commissioner's Outstanding Award 2020 to Robert Hawxwell.

Paving the way for driverless cars

Driverless cars may be on our roads sooner than we think. What does this mean for QFES and how can we prepare?

QFES is supporting a research project on driverless cars run by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

The research gives QFES and other agencies the chance to experience driverless vehicles and consider how this new technology will affect how we deliver services.

QFES' Futures and Research and Scientific branches were both involved in the project and the Digital Learning and Development unit contributed virtual reality equipment to capture data as well as participating in driving tests for the study.

Senior Program Manager Justin Wiki said the driving test aimed to measure driver behaviour as the vehicle switched from manual to autonomous driving.

"The ZOE2 is an electric Renault/Nissan prototype level 4 vehicle, which performed very well under a variety of conditions," Justin said.

"It was interesting that, even in wet conditions, ZOE2 drove unassisted without causing distress to the 'pilot' or passengers."

Professor Sebastien Glaser from QUT's Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety added, "When the car takes over it will feel like you want to take over, but if you let the car drive, it can do it by itself."

Justin said, "Driverless cars aren't far off, but it's still premature for QFES to be making big changes. Being involved in the research encourages conversations about how the technology might impact QFES."

"The technology is currently undergoing assurance testing to make sure it meets Australian standards and legislative requirements.



The driverless car used in research conducted by TMR and QUT with support from QFES.

"Every state has their own laws, so the technology needs to be adapted to comply with each state."

There are details to be ironed out, like how a driverless car travelling between states will switch between jurisdictional legislative directives when it crosses a border.

People might not expect to see cars driving around by themselves anytime soon, but Justin said they would be rolled out once the legislation had caught up.

"We're testing level 4 automation, which is low-level automation where the car just drives itself," he said.

"There are six levels of automation slowly rolling out in the next few years. When distributors start selling the new cars there will be a transition period of traditional and automated vehicles.

"One of the first things we will start to see is 'platooning', where trucks will be able to check in with the trucks in front of them for vehicle-to-vehicle communications (V2V)."

For governments struggling to make roads safer, improve air quality and reduce congestion, platooning is an attractive proposition.

"The transport industry can use this technology to make better use of road space, increase safety by reducing time to react and collectively increase their speed with the fuel efficiency of slipstreaming.

"Along with platooning, vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) is currently being tested by TMR. Vehicles fitted with the technology can be sent safety warnings from adapted infrastructure like traffic lights."

Justin said QFES is strategically positioned to ensure these technologies and research are provided to leadership to make evidence-based decisions and share with all QFES members.

Preparing ourselves for a future with this technology is largely unknown, but with the benefit of talented QFES people and collaborative knowledge sharing we can drive better strategic outcomes.

"Driverless vehicles will disrupt the way we think about accidents from a sociotechnical context and interoperational alignment, as technology contributes towards TMR's vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries on the state's roads," Justin said.

Contact the QFES Futures, Planning, Research and Innovation Unit at innovation@qfes.qld.gov.au if you have questions about driverless vehicles or if you want to explore innovation design thinking strategies for your area. You can also search 'Innovation tools' on the Gateway.



The Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group.

A unified marine rescue service

The Queensland Government recently announced a \$35 million investment to establish a single Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) service that will ensure the sustainability of marine rescue in Queensland.

Over the next four years, QFES will be working to establish a new single marine rescue service in Queensland that will provide Marine Search and Rescue capability in support of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ), with 3000 volunteers between them, will be invited to join a new service.

The transition to a single service will provide an enhanced service to the boating public and enable better support for volunteers, giving them greater legal protection and seek to reduce their fundraising burden over the coming years. As a part of this commitment, more than \$17 million has been allocated to replace the ageing vessel fleet.

The move is a result of the Blue Water Review and a working group, which recommended a single service was the most secure and sustainable option for the sector.

Marine rescues are on the rise, particularly with more Australians holidaying domestically. On average, the AVCGA and VMRAQ complete more than 4000 activations a year.

The Marine Rescue Implementation Working Group (MRIWG) met for the first time in

Brisbane on 2 March 2021 to start planning for the transition. The role of MRIWG is to provide advice regarding the volunteer marine rescue sector in Queensland and assist QFES with planning and delivering the future integrated service.

Representatives from a range of organisations attended, including QFES, AVCGA, VMRAQ, Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC).

Together, they considered the Blue Water Review working group's recommendations and a draft concept of operations.

QFES Commissioner Greg Leach said the combined knowledge of emergency service organisations meant Queensland was well positioned to move to this single entity.

"QFES has a long and successful history in managing and supporting volunteer-based organisations, such as State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service, and would be well placed to take responsibility for this new entity," Mr Leach said.

"I recognise the outstanding dedication of past and current marine rescue volunteers and their contribution to keeping the Queensland community safe. These

organisations have a proud history and QFES will continue to honour this legacy."

Matt Thompson, Director of Marine Rescue Implementation, said QFES had a close working relationship with the AVCGA and VMRAQ.

"QFES has facilitated service agreements with both organisations on behalf of the Queensland Government since the 1990s," Matt said. "In 2020, the service agreements totalled \$4.5 million.

"We also work closely with flotillas and squadrons at a local level as part of emergency response for events like marine fires, as well as disaster response and community engagement.

"The reform will bring marine rescue closer into the fold as an essential part of Queensland's search and rescue system in support of our jurisdictional SAR authority, the Queensland Police Service.

"The new structure will allow QFES and other emergency services to work more seamlessly with marine rescue volunteers and enhance the state's response capabilities."

Matt said the working group's next steps will be advising on the future structure of the new service and how QFES will continue to support it.



MULTI-AGENCY **AIIMS**



PLANNING FOR **COMPLEX INCIDENTS**



EXERCISE MANAGEMENT **FOR EMERGENCIES**



COMMANDING **UNDER PRESSURE**



INTER-AGENCY **LIAISON OFFICER**

BE READY FOR THE WORST, BE TRAINED BY THE BEST.

Whether you want to improve your crisis or emergency management and leadership skills, bushfire awareness or multi-agency communication skills, the National Centre for Emergency Management Studies (NCEMS) has a course that can get you and your staff emergency ready. NCEMS is a specialist department within TAFE NSW that is committed to providing nationally recognised qualifications to help you better function in an emergency - because while you can't always predict when an emergency will occur, you can predict your response.

EXPLORE. ENQUIRE. ENROL.
TAFENSW.EDU.AU/EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT
1300 045 737



TAFE NSW

**NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
STUDIES**

PSBA transition: Putting people first

The transition of staff members from the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) into QFES has confirmed that our approach to change is successful.

When the Queensland Government announced in September 2020 that PSBA's functions would be transferred back into QFES and the Queensland Police Service (QPS), QFES was ready to undertake the challenge.

The QFES Transition team got to work quickly and started by agreeing on a change management approach that had people at its centre.

Executive Manager Louise Snowdon said it was important to acknowledge the transition was about much more than just picking up a function from PSBA and putting it somewhere in QFES.

"From the start our focus has been on learning from each other and discussing how we can be more efficient in the way we deliver corporate services to support our frontline," Louise said.

"We have a lot of experience within both PSBA and QFES and we want to bring these together to help make the department operate more effectively."

Louise said honest, open and transparent communication across both groups and all corporate business areas was also a key to success.

"We had to recognise that several agencies were involved, and this meant different change and communication approaches had to be incorporated in our work."

Change Manager Mona Momtazian said sharing our change management plan with the PSBA Board was crucial to setting us up for success.

"We tried to make sure our change and communications approaches were aligned with those of QPS and PSBA," Mona said.

"But when that couldn't be achieved, we reached out to impacted staff and their current and new managers as soon as possible.

"We worked with managers to provide context around changes and what to expect once we had approvals for functions to be transitioned into QFES. This meant managers could keep their staff fully informed at every step."

Mona said one thing that had worked well were the impact assessments, which investigated how moving a function into QFES would impact existing work processes as well as understand how best to take on the new tasks.

"The staff involved appreciated the opportunity to share their views and have a say about how the incoming work should be done."

Senior HR Business Partner Virginia Middleton said that involving PSBA staff in impact assessments and business process mapping showed that QFES cared about impacts to staff and valued the expertise they had to offer.

"QFES has shown that a people-focused approach can be successful in transitions like these," Virginia said.

"It's not without its challenges of course. But the lengths QFES have gone to in welcoming PSBA staff makes it feel like we're officially part of the QFES family."

This was echoed by Finance Services Manager Andrew Alcock who said that even though there has been a lot of uncertainty for PSBA staff during the transition, they have been welcomed and supported through the process.

"The transition team has been incredible. They have taken an interest in our wellbeing and ensured we're being looked after as the details get worked out in the transition," Andrew said.

"It's a lengthy process and we've still got some way to go, but QFES' communication has been first-rate.

"There has been consultation and regular updates from day one. And the induction days were fantastic, they really made us feel welcome.

"It's also been great to hear from the Commissioner and Executive Leadership Team, who have taken time out of their busy schedules to meet with us and really champion our transition into QFES.

"QFES, at all levels, has been extraordinary throughout this process."



PSBA staff attending an induction day at Kedron.

Next generation is in good hands

The future of QFES is in good hands with Emergency Services Cadets learning the ropes and laying the foundation of respect, integrity, courage, loyalty and trust.

Thousands of young people across the state are getting a jump on a future career in emergency services thanks to QFES.

The Emergency Services Cadets (ESC) Program has been operating through QFES since 2014. The program is facilitated on behalf of QFES by PCYC Queensland, and supported by QFES staff who volunteer their time.

Skills for life

One of these ESC volunteers is Inspector Craig Lovell, North Coast Region Community Safety Manager.

Craig, who has been an adult leader at the Hervey Bay ESC unit since 2019, said the program was important to the young cadets, aged 12 to 17.

“The program gives young adults exposure to local emergency services and helps them find their purpose in the community,” Craig said.

“ESC also helps them develop skills for when they start looking for jobs after school, including volunteering in the community.”

Craig said the program gives hands-on experiences in emergency services, as well as teaching the young participants about reading maps, problem solving, Indigenous cultural awareness and personal development.

“The cadet program is important in developing future leaders,” he said.

“Some might go on to employment in the emergency services and others might not, but the skills they learn at ESC are transferable to all workplaces.”

Bringing communities together

The programs operate out of an emergency service facility (a fire and rescue station, Rural Fire Service brigade or State Emergency Service facility) under the leadership and guidance of volunteer adult leaders.

There are currently 21 ESC units in Queensland, with four units set to launch in 2021. Most of these are in smaller regional areas, including Biggenden, Charters Towers, Gin Gin, Childers, Torres Strait and Tara.

QFES Senior Program Officer, Volunteer Capability and Sustainability, Jade Keogh said the ESC program offers smaller communities an opportunity to be part of something different.

“The program brings young people from all walks of life together to learn a range of emergency service skills, develop their leadership potential and give back to their community,” Jade said.

“I think that’s why the cadets, particularly those who live in smaller or more regional locations, find the program so great – it gives them something to work towards and look forward to after school.”

Cadets making a difference

The impact of the program extends beyond possible career prospects. The cadets take pride in, and are passionate about, the role they play in their communities. This is true for one cadet in particular.



The Biggenden ESC unit.



Members of the Hervey Bay ESC unit participating in a controlled burn.

Hervey Bay ESC member B'Jae Jansen led the movement to get his unit back online last year after it was disbanded in 2019, because of how important it is to him and the other cadets.

"I have always had a passion for helping people and helping the community. There aren't any other opportunities in Hervey Bay like the cadet unit," the 17-year-old high school senior student said.

B'Jae has been a cadet since 2017 and said the number of young people in the unit had almost doubled from the end of last year – from six to between 10 and 13.

"This is an amazing program and it's great that there is an amazing crew that supports each unit," he said.

"I enjoy learning about the emergency services and how they help everyone in the community, and I'm sure other teenagers do, too."

A logical match

The cadets aren't the only ones who get something positive from the program.

Jade said the involvement of QFES volunteers brought the emergency services and the youth development sector together through PCYC Queensland.

"The PCYC know the science behind engaging young people and helping communities, and QFES has the technical knowledge and skills around prevention, preparedness, response and recovery," Jade said.

"QFES is respected all across Queensland, and we have a lot of experience in community education to help these communities be more resilient ahead of disasters. When we share this with the cadets, it benefits us, them and their community.

"QFES and PCYC Queensland working together through ESC is a logical match between two great organisations and we're seeing fantastic things happen through cadets."

As the ESC program's profile expands, more and more units are being established.

"The fabulous ESC team are in the process of finalising and launching new units, so it's absolutely growing," Jade said.

This partnership, and the skill and commitment from the volunteer leaders, is not lost on the young cadets.

B'Jae is very grateful for the Hervey Bay unit and knows the other cadets are, too.

"I would just like to thank everyone who supports the ESC in any way, shape or form, either volunteering, teaching or even being a cadet and learning," B'Jae said.

"You make a big difference."

If you'd like to get involved in your local PCYC Queensland ESC program – as an adult Leader or mentor or by supporting the ESC events – contact the team on 3909 9555 or emergencyservicescadets@pcyc.org.au



Hervey Bay ESC member B'Jae Jansen.



SOUTH WESTERN REGION

Four-day response to silo fire

Cecil Plains Fire and Rescue Station responded to a fire in a grain storage facility at the Norwin silo complex, west of Toowoomba, in February.

The incident was caused by a product called wet cake, a byproduct of the ethanol industry being stored for use as feed.

To reach the seat of the fire, emergency services personnel removed 2000 tonnes of grain over four days.

State Emergency Service members from Toowoomba and Cecil Plains provided lighting and the Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Police Service assisted the operation.

During the early stages, several Rural Fire Service brigades helped set up the control and supply of additional firefighting water.

The Research and Scientific Branch provided invaluable support by monitoring internal and external air quality and giving advice on the product.



Methods of Instruction training in the Darling Downs

Twelve Rural Fire Service volunteers from Toowoomba, Warwick and Stanthorpe attended a two-day Methods of Instruction course in Cambooya.

This was the first course facilitated for volunteer trainers and was run by Miriam Troy from the Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command with assistance from Darling Downs Area Rural Staff.

Methods of Instruction allows current and future trainers to develop their skills and knowledge to deliver training and collect evidence under the QFES Facilitator Model.

Many of the participants have started undertaking the assessment by delivering training at their own brigades and groups.

The team will look for more opportunities to run this training to work towards the goal of volunteers training volunteers.



Air Base Operators course

State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS) members, along with auxiliary firefighters, gathered at Roma Airport to undertake the Air Base Operators course.

The members studied theory before heading out to the airbase to become familiar with the tempo of airbase operations.

The training included aviation-based planning, logistics and safety around aircraft, including marshalling and how to safely reload aircraft.

SES volunteers performing these roles frees up firefighters from the RFS and Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to respond during fire events, and allows aircraft to deploy faster and across wider areas.

LifeFlight explained the operations of their AW139 rescue helicopter based at Roma. The relationship between LifeFlight and our members is extremely important in remote areas, where volunteers are often the first on scene at life-threatening incidents.

Stanthorpe mural

The Southern Downs Regional Council and the Stanthorpe Art Gallery secured a grant for \$20 000 from state funding to produce four murals under the Recovery, Resilience and Healing initiative after the September 2019 bushfires.

Art Gallery Director Mary Findlay approached QFES about using the wall of the Stanthorpe Fire and Rescue Station for a mural designed by artist Travis Vinson, whose father is a retired Station Officer from Brisbane.

Travis used spray cans to create his masterpiece and caught the attention of many passers-by who stopped to have a chat.

The mural contains many coats of paint, giving it a lifespan of 10 to 15 years. It features auxiliary firefighter Reece Lancaster-Kelly, Michael Bell from the State Emergency Service and Liz Thompson from the Rural Fire Service.





FAR NORTHERN REGION

Tropical Cyclone Niran response

Thank you to all the State Emergency Service volunteers who responded as strong winds from Tropical Cyclone Niran brought trees down and damaged houses, and to the volunteers who helped neighbouring groups clear through their jobs.

More than 100 jobs were completed as tens of thousands of people across Far Northern Region went without power and phone communication.

Niran was the third tropical cyclone for this severe weather season. The wind was funnelled by geographic formations, so some areas were affected by strong gusts up to 80 kilometres an hour.



Technical rescue training

Regional technical rescue firefighters were put through their paces during training in an array of disciplines.

Most of the training was conducted in purpose-built facilities at regional fire and rescue stations.

In Cairns, firefighters completed Confined Space Rescue training, while at Gordonvale they performed practicums in Trench Rescue Techniques.



West of Cairns at Tinaroo Dam, Fire and Rescue Service Swift Water Technicians practiced rescue and manoeuvring techniques during Motorised Swift Watercraft training.

At the Cairns airbase, firefighters undertook their helicopter winch re-qualification.





NORTHERN REGION



Guide Dogs Queensland workshop

In collaboration with Guide Dogs Queensland, QFES conducted a pilot workshop to support vision-impaired clients to better understand their disaster risks and be prepared for emergencies using the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) toolkit.

Nine members of Black River Rural Fire Brigade completed training on P-CEP before the workshop so they could 'buddy' up with Guide Dogs Queensland clients to help facilitate conversations.

The P-CEP toolkit is an outcome of the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) Project.

Firefighter Corinne Young said, "Initially it was quite daunting considering nearly all our communication involves sight, so we learnt to be more descriptive in our language and even to consider our gesturing while presenting information."

QFES members in turn learnt more about accessibility in relation to emergency preparedness literature and warnings information.

This included simple fixes, such as not using glossy paper to make it easier to access printed materials using smart phones. More complex challenges include making warnings and information more accessible through the various government platforms.

Jonathan Hall, Guide Dogs Queensland Client Engagement and Development Leader, was pleased with the workshop pilot, which was funded through a Queensland Bushfires Category C, Flexible Funding Grant. He is now planning to conduct more workshops around the state.

Jonathan said, "The workshop reinforced the importance for the emergency management sector to engage the disability community and include them in local conversations and disaster risk management activities. This can only help improve disaster response and reduce risk."



Local solutions for local problems

The Horseshoe Bay Rural Fire Brigade from Magnetic Island were recognised in the Commissioner's Awards for Excellence 2020, in the category of Capable Communities.

The brigade received a Highly Commended for their dedicated effort and integrated approach with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Magnetic Island Rangers and Magnetic Island Local Disaster Management Group.

They received the award for their outstanding work to improve local community awareness and understanding of fire management messaging.

They created working partnerships to strengthen the bond of community resilience and deliver effective community engagement.



CENTRAL REGION

Joint cattle trucks exercise

Emergency service agencies from the Longreach area came together in February to conduct a joint exercise at the Western Queensland Livestock Exchange (WQLX).

Participants familiarised themselves with cattle trucks to help them respond to incidents involving these vehicles.

Members of the Fire and Rescue Service, State Emergency Service, Queensland Police Service and Queensland Ambulance Service worked with WQLX staff to learn about how the trucks work. They practised manually operating the trailers and identified extraction points.

The exercise was timely in the leadup to Beef Australia 2021, which will be held in Rockhampton in May. QFES will take part in the whole-of-government site at this internationally renowned event.



Working together to build skills

Personnel from the State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue Service and Rural Fire Service converged at Nebo in February for a combined Road Crash Rescue training day.

The training provided an introduction for potential operators, gave current operators a refresher and enhanced interoperability by strengthening relationships between the services.

The training activities were followed by a fabulous BBQ lunch courtesy of Isaac Regional Council and a meet and greet with local families who had come to see the trucks.



New VCEs welcomed to the Gladstone area

Volunteer Community Educators (VCE) from the Rural Fire Service's Miriam Vale and Port Curtis groups came together on 20 February in Calliope, to discuss all things community engagement and plan educational activities in the leadup to the next bushfire season. Experienced educators welcomed 10 new VCEs to the group.

Area Director Craig Magick congratulated the coordinators.

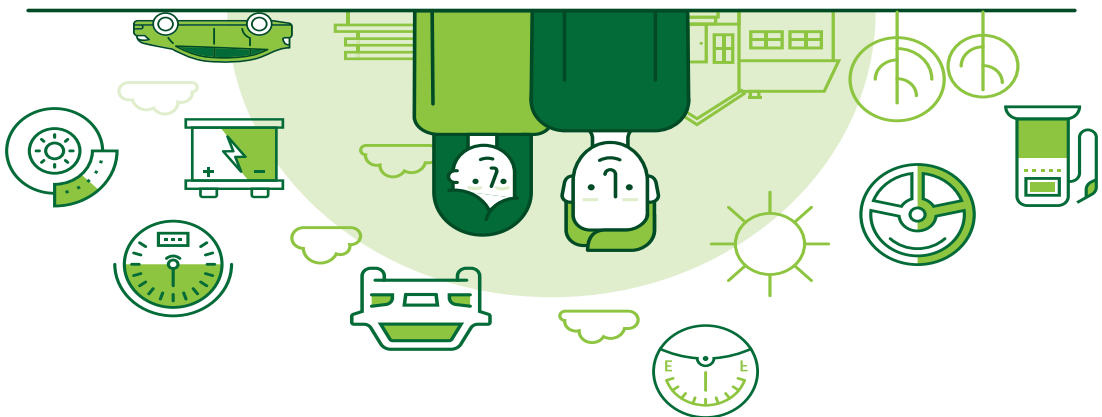
"A big thank you to Brigade Training and Support Officer Sarah Toth and VCE Coordinators Judy Ferrari and Tracy Kierys for coordinating such a successful day," Craig said.

Judy Ferrari echoed her group's appreciation for the workshop.

"Every single member was really impressed and encouraged by this workshop," Judy said.



Welcome to ZERO fees novated leasing.



1300 22 55 82

allianceleasing.com.au

*Zero entry fees,
zero exit fees, zero management fees.

APPROVED QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT SUPPLIER

Alliance Leasing Pty Ltd is an approved supplier under the Queensland Government panel arrangement Novated Leasing Services QGP0026-16. The arrangement commenced 7 November 2016 for a period of three (3) years with an extension option of up to two (2) years. From 7 November 2016, all Employees who wish to access a motor vehicle using a novated lease must use one of the approved Salary Packaging Novated Leasing Panel Suppliers to arrange, organise and manage the novated lease. The novated lease will continue to be administered through the Salary Packaging Administrator.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT DISCLAIMER

The implications of salary packaging a motor vehicle through a novated leasing arrangement, including tax savings will depend on your individual circumstances. The information in this publication has been prepared by Alliance Leasing for general information purposes only, without taking into consideration any individual circumstances. Before acting on any information or entering into a novated leasing arrangement, you should consider your objectives, financial situation and needs, and, take the appropriate legal, financial or other professional advice based upon your own particular circumstances. **The Queensland Government strongly recommends that you obtain independent financial advice prior to entering into, or changing the terms of, a salary packaging arrangement.**



NORTH COAST REGION



Gympie Fire and Rescue Station milestone

Last year the Gympie Fire and Rescue Station celebrated two historical dates: 80 years of continual service at the station, and the 120th birthday of the brigade.

In 1875, a loose affiliation of miners formed a volunteer fire brigade to support the mining community.

They served the community well, but a more permanent brigade was needed and on 20 November 1900, a town meeting was called to form the Gympie Fire Brigade. This was unanimously voted in and one week later an advertisement was placed in the Gympie Times for 20 volunteer auxiliary firefighters and one paid officer.

The Gympie station was officially opened on 24 August 1940 by the Minister for Home Affairs at the time.

The army confiscated the new station's corrugated iron roof, forcing the builder to use a bond wood roof that leaked all through the war years.

During the war, 135 civilians completed the Air Raid Wardens course and scanned the sky over Gympie, looking for Japanese bombers from atop the fire and rescue station until the end of 1942.

The celebrations of these milestones included a visual display on the station's main door, and a parade of the station's vehicles escorted by Queensland Police Service and Queensland Ambulance Service.

The Gympie community visited the station to see its display of memorabilia and the original pump from 1942. The station's honour board was also unveiled on the day.



Street party in Bli Bli for connected neighbourhoods

Sunshine Coast Regional Council held a community celebration at Lotus Court in Bli Bli in February.

The council had run a #covidkindness Neighbourhood Stories Competition asking residents what they do to connect as neighbours because knowing your neighbours is a key part of disaster preparedness and resilience.

Residents were asked to take a picture and share inspiring stories about their neighbourhood during COVID-19. The prize was a four-person emergency evacuation kit and a street party.

Lotus Court residents won the competition and held their street party with local Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Fire and Rescue Service members, along with the Regional Community Engagement Officer.

QFES members set up a display of appliances and preparedness resources, and chatted with residents about extreme weather preparedness and home fire safety. The council was extremely grateful for QFES' participation.

SES Regional Manager's retirement

Merrick Ilett has had an extensive career in the Queensland Government, joining in 2011 when he was appointed Executive Manager Regional Capability, North Coast Region for Emergency Management Queensland.

In 2013, Merrick was appointed as State Emergency Service (SES) Regional Manager for North Coast Region. Merrick has been an integral member of the North Coast Regional Leadership Team and proudly represented both SES and QFES in this role.

On his retirement day, Merrick was awarded an SES-outfitted scarecrow that staff had made for his farm.





BRISBANE REGION

Engaging Brisbane at the Home Show

In late February, Brisbane Region's Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) partnered with Brisbane City Council for the Brisbane Home Show.

With more than 20 000 attendees over three days, the event gave RFS and SES volunteers an opportunity to engage with the community about disaster and emergency preparedness.

RFS Bushfire Safety Officer Wayne Ford said, "This builds on the good work we've done in community engagement programs that engage and educate the community to help them better prepare for and manage disasters."

The event featured a rural town theme with props relevant to community messaging.

"Overall, it was a great outcome, demonstrating how working together with local government allows us to share important messages with the community," Wayne said.



Developing skills for the SES

Our State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers are always looking to upskill and develop their abilities to give back to the community.

Deception Bay SES coordinated a Storm and Water Damage Operations Course in February to build capability for the severe weather season, including sandbagging, tarping, water diversions and temporary repairs.

Brisbane Region SES conducted a Regional First Aid Trainer Workshop for 26 first aid trainers in February. The day consisted of a mixture of RTO compliance and updates, guest speakers from the Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) and Dementia Friendly Communities.

A moulage session (applying mock injuries) refreshed volunteers' first aid skills and knowledge for working with people with dementia.



Expanding RAAP to increase Indigenous engagement

QFES' Road Attitudes and Action Planning (RAAP) program has expanded significantly throughout Queensland and into more diverse areas and education settings.

RAAP is now delivered in most Indigenous communities as well as in youth detention centres and in conjunction with youth justice programs.

As an active RAAP presenter, Acting Station Officer Nick Gahan has taken a keen interest in supporting the program's expansion.

"Our demographics for RAAP have become so much more diverse than they have ever been," Nick said.

"We needed to be better and more capable of delivering the RAAP message in a way that's both effective and engaging for different communities."

Driven by Acting Station Officer Clinton Pilon, a meeting was organised between QFES, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Queensland Police Service Indigenous Liaison Officers, local elders and local Indigenous media groups to discuss how the RAAP program can better serve Queensland's First Nations' communities.

Through open and collaborative discussion, the group identified three key themes: use local crews to assist qualified presenters for local issues, recognise that listening is as important as presenting, and incorporate families within the community if possible.

Nick saw the meeting as a great step forward for the RAAP program and QFES in general.

"We are working hard to engage with all Queenslanders about road safety and seeking to understand the needs of our diverse communities," Nick said.

"Community education is only as strong as our understanding of the community."





SOUTH EASTERN REGION

Make-A-Wish Day in Gatton

QFES members from Gatton Fire and Rescue Station, Gatton Springdale Rural Fire Brigade and Gatton SES Unit joined other local emergency services in a joint Make-A-Wish Day for a sick young girl in Gatton.

Savannah had a huge day as a police officer, including a foot patrol in Gatton, arresting a baddie and inspecting the POLAIR helicopter.

Other highlights were the Police Pipes and Drums Band, the Mounted Police Unit and her favourite, the weapons detection dog Neptune.

Neptune was a constant companion during the day and even got to share some birthday cake.

All emergency services in Gatton combined to make a special day for Savannah.



Clean Up Australia Day in Ipswich

On Sunday 7 March, SES members from across Ipswich Unit put their gloves on for a different cause.

Crews participated in Clean Up Australia Day around different sites in Ipswich. In one area, they collected around 600 kilograms of waste, including 52 tyres that had been dumped around a koala habitat, a site that is also used for SES training.



PIO training

Twelve South Eastern Region members undertook Public Information Officer (PIO) training in February at Ripley Valley Rural Fire Station.

In an Incident Management Team, PIOs provide warnings and information to threatened communities, other stakeholders and the general public.

They liaise with news media and manage media liaison issues, as well as consulting and liaising with affected communities.

The boost in trained PIOs is a welcome capability enhancement for the region.



Level 1 Chainsaw Operations Course

Fifteen Rural Fire Service volunteers from across the South Coast Area completed the Level 1 Chainsaw Operations Course in March.

The course was delivered by SES trainers over two weekends, providing the skills and knowledge to safely and effectively operate chainsaws.

Rural firefighter shaves beard for good cause

Geoff Purton from Grantham Rural Fire Brigade shaved off his beard and hair on Saturday for a good cause, raising money for the families of fallen firefighters who lost their lives battling the December 2019 bushfires in NSW.



Cutting the red tape

The latest Workforce Experience Surveys revealed almost one in two QFES members think there is too much red tape in their work. In response, QFES has started cutting it back.

QFES conducts the surveys every year to get your feedback and make changes to improve the way we work.

Two questions about red tape received the least positive results in the survey: 46% of staff agreed ‘there is too much red tape in my work’ and 42% of both staff and volunteers agreed ‘approval processes at my workplace are excessive.’

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has listened to this feedback and is reviewing the issue.

Assistant Commissioner Kevin Walsh said QFES will implement measures to improve business processes.

“During COVID-19, QFES took an adaptive, flexible approach, and we must continue to

challenge traditional business practices,” Mr Walsh said.

“Cutting red tape opens up discussions about why we do things rather than just accepting we do it one way and that’s that.

“It allows us to identify areas of frustration, from minor things through to systemic issues.”

Mr Walsh said anyone in QFES can talk to their leaders about work practices or processes they think can be simplified.

“The leadership team gathers this information. We then ask the business owners to critically analyse and challenge the way the work is done.”

QFES is reviewing things like training delivery, correspondence, AIIMS, the Officer Development Program and governance processes.

“The goal is for people to see improvements over the coming months, but some changes will take longer than others,” Mr Walsh said.

“Some changes will be made through a governance committee, others through normal review and business decisions.”

This initiative is consistent with the QFES Strategic Plan 2020-24 and its guiding principle of Adaptability: “We are a learning organisation that proactively uses knowledge to continually challenge the way we work.”



Working for Queensland Survey

There is too much ‘red tape’ in my work (eg. regulatory or administrative processes).

19%

35%

46%

Approval processes at my work are excessive.

18%

40%

42%

Volunteering for Queensland Survey

Approval processes at my work are excessive.

14%

45%

42%

■ DISAGREE ■ NEUTRAL ■ AGREE



FleetWave gives a full picture of the maintenance costs of fire trucks.

A new toolbox for our fleet

QFES has rolled out a new digital system to keep track of the repair and service history of our entire fleet.

Fire and Rescue Service members can use FleetWave to record services on appliances, making it easier to manage repairs and gauge the condition of our fleet.

The system has three components: FleetWave for workshop supervisors, FormsApp for fire officers and The Hub for mechanics.

Assets Services Executive Director Paul Hyde said FleetWave went live in August 2020 via a staged approach, and FormsApp was trialled at select Brisbane stations.

“All workshops were live on FleetWave by February 2021, and training on FormsApp is now available as an eLearning package for all fire officers on Nexus,” Paul said.

“Feedback on FormsApp has been overwhelmingly positive. We are now focused on getting The Hub finalised, tested and deployed to all workshop staff.”

Bryce Bell is the subject matter expert for the project, drawing on his previous experience as a mechanic and workshop supervisor.

“My role is to ensure the new system aligns with our former practices, and develop new ways of working,” Bryce said.

“FleetWave makes reporting much easier. Fire officers can report a fault and follow it through to completion, including live updates.



Mechanics learning to use the new FleetWave system.

“The system also gives mechanics a clean line of sight for all the faults related to trucks that need repairing. That helps them fit repairs into the appliances’ existing maintenance schedules.

“Over time, FleetWave will give us a picture of how much it costs to maintain appliances and help us predict future build plans.

“We’ve had this information in the past, but it was all paper-based and hard to collate. Now it’s all in one place.”

He said FleetWave will help QFES identify how to improve costs.

“For example, we could use the data to consider what the fire trucks of the future could look like. Will they be eco vehicles with a diesel engine and battery-assisted power?”

“FleetWave will help us determine that. It builds a picture of the life of a truck.”

Bryce said the system had been well received by firefighters and mechanics alike.

“The system is in the final stages of rollout and we expect it to be fully operational by June,” he said.

“It’s a step forward for QFES, taking us up to industry standard.”

If you have any questions about FleetWave please email fleetfeedback@psba.qld.gov.au

Three Components

1. **FleetWave** – the complete system, used mainly by workshop supervisors to plan, allocate, manage and report on work completed.
2. **FormsApp** – used by Fire Officers via their appliance phones to send fault forms, start-of-shift checks and weekly maintenance data to workshops.
3. **The Hub** – used by mechanics via tablets to record all maintenance they complete.

#1 fund for weathering market ups and downs¹

Our members know beyond every cloud, there's always blue sky. So our members can focus on today, knowing their future is safe with us.

Visit [QSuper.com.au](https://www.QSuper.com.au) today



¹ Winner of SuperRatings' Smooth Ride 2020 award. The rating/award is issued by SuperRatings Pty Ltd ABN 95 100 192 283 AFSL 311880 (SuperRatings). Ratings are general advice only and have been prepared without taking account of your objectives, financial situation or needs. Consider your personal circumstances, read the product disclosure statement and seek independent financial advice before investing. The rating is not a recommendation to purchase, sell or hold any product. Past performance information is not indicative of future performance. Ratings are subject to change without notice and SuperRatings assumes no obligation to update. SuperRatings uses objective criteria and receives a fee for publishing awards. Visit [superratings.com.au](https://www.superratings.com.au) for ratings information. © 2020 SuperRatings. All rights reserved.

Product issued by the QSuper Board (ABN 32 125 059 006, AFSL 489650) as trustee for QSuper (ABN 60 905 115 063). Consider the PDS on our website to see whether QSuper is right for you. © QSuper Board



AFL team is kicking goals

For the first time, the annual Emergency Services Cup featured a women's match between QFES and the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

The annual event at Sherwood Football Club is a chance for staff from both agencies to get to know each other and engage in some friendly competition.

About 500 people turned up to watch the men's and women's games. Fire trucks were on display, along with a QFES career information hub where people could find out more about working for QFES.

The new QFES women's team is coached by veteran AFL player Natalie Sargent.

A former soccer player with the Matildas, Natalie switched to AFL in 2007 and went on to captain Queensland in the national championships.

She said it was great to be part of the new QFES team.

"We have players from Mackay, Townsville, Ipswich and Warwick, and we're hoping to attract more players from other regions," she said.

The team has 22 players, all full-time Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) firefighters as well as Permanent QFES staff, and leading

into the match the team trained every other Friday.

"Some of our team members are beginners and others have played in local clubs for many years," Natalie said.

The game was close, with many shots on goal for both teams, but QPS claimed victory in the end.

The men's team had an even closer match, with QFES winning by seven points in the final three minutes.

Natalie said women's teams are developing at lightning pace at both club and elite level.

"The talent coming through is phenomenal, and girls are playing at a lot younger age," she said.

"Local football has grown a lot since I joined. We had one women's division with maybe six clubs across Brisbane, but now the women's space has spread to the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and the Northern Rivers with QAFLW & QAFLW Development league, Div 1, Div 2 as well

as a growing junior pathway. Some of the bigger clubs have a junior team and two senior teams, if not more."

Natalie said their training sessions were light-hearted and fun.

"Everyone's eager and interested in learning," she said. "They're excited to be a part of something that involves the whole state.

"We all get along really well and we show the newer players the ropes.

"After training those who could hang around gave us the opportunity to get to know each other and swap stories."

Natalie said the team planned to hold another match in September and was looking for more QFES members to join.

If you're interested, you can contact Matt Dillon, the organiser of the Emergency Services Cup, at matt.dillon@qfes.qld.gov.au.



Photos by Gracie A Sport & Event.



Firefighters from Cherbourg Fire and Rescue Station joined community celebrations for the third birthday of Cherbourg Health Services.



QFES staff and State Emergency Service volunteers worked with the Cook Shire Local Disaster Management Group to coordinate the resupply of almost three tonnes of essential goods to Coen. The resupply was much needed because several remote properties were isolated by water after weeks of wet weather.



The 61 members of Pumicestone Rural Fire Brigade celebrated the opening of their new station at Elimbah in March. Photo by Brittany Lord.



Rural Fire Service volunteers participated in a Firefighter Advanced Skills assessment in Guanaba to improve their skills on the fireground and get a step closer to becoming senior firefighters.



QFES joined Queensland Police Service and Queensland Ambulance Service in a helicopter crash training exercise at Caboolture Airfield.



Jane Zsombok, Executive Manager of Emergency Management Training Command, won an IGEM Champion of Change Award in February.



North Coast Region staff participated in a Pink Stumps Day charity cricket match against the Coolum Cricket Club to raise more than \$5000 for the McGrath Foundation. Local firefighter Tara Hutcheson was recently diagnosed and is currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Photo by Kellie-Ann Keevers.



QFES members generously donated 410 lunchboxes to Zephyr Education to benefit children affected by domestic and family violence.



QFES participated in the Opening Ceremony of the 2021 Special Olympics South East Queensland State Games.



Fire and Rescue Service crews and State Emergency Service volunteers from South Eastern Region responded to a vertical rescue job on Mt Greville in February.

PSOs are the first step

Station Officer Jason Anderson from Hendra Command received this year's Peer Support Officer (PSO) of the Year Award for his extraordinary work supporting QFES members and the PSO team.

Jason became a PSO 11 years ago after seeing one of his colleagues go through personal issues and feeling out of his depth when he tried to help.

"They left work due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)," Jason said. "I wanted to try and reduce the chance of anyone else going through that."

"With initiatives like PSO Week and R U OK? Day, we help spread the word that PTSD is not a death sentence – it's curable."

Jason said his experience as a PSO had given him greater understanding, as a crew member, of mental health struggles in the community.

"At some jobs I've sat down with a grieving mother or wife to give them some support until a chaplain arrives," he said.

"At bushfires or cyclones, having a chat and a cup of tea with a community member when they've got absolutely nothing left – it's enough to put a smile on their face."

For Jason, it's a privilege to talk to one of his peers after they've built up the

confidence to make the call and share their story.

"I'm proud to be the conduit between the next level of support, such as a psychologist or counsellor, if it's needed," he said.

"PSOs are the first step to recovery. We help people get on top of potential issues early. People often think they're the only ones suffering, but we show them what they're feeling is normal."

Jason often supports his peers through critical incidents.

"After responses involving fatalities or significant trauma, I go out to the station with a Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) counsellor and sit with the crew to run a support session," he said.

"Talking with them face-to-face makes it more personal and builds trust. If they don't trust you, they won't talk to you."

"As a PSO, you have to be able to listen, so you can pick up when someone's not coping."

Jason said his workload increased dramatically during 2020.

"A lot of QFES members experienced hardships, as did many in the community," he said. "We attended a lot more suicides, and that was hard for firefighters."

"If you relate a situation like that to what may be happening to you personally at the time, it can have a big effect on you."

Jason also passes on what he's learnt by mentoring new PSO applicants.

"I try to instil the finer points of listening to your peers," he said. "I teach them that without trust, this program won't work. It can't be overstated how important confidentially is."

Jason said he received the award on behalf of the other FESSN PSOs.

"There are so many PSOs out there doing amazing work – I'm just a part of that," he said.

You can find a PSO in your region by visiting qfes.qld.gov.au/fessn/peersupport or access FESSN counselling by calling 1800 805 980.



Jason Anderson was awarded PSO of the Year at Kedron Park in March.



STOP DREAMING.
START DRIVING.



A novated lease is one of the most convenient and cost effective ways to get and run a car!

- + Thousands in upfront GST savings on new car purchases⁺
- + Great discounts and tax savings on running costs[^]
- + Your choice of make, model, colour and accessories

Check out some of our latest vehicle specials



BMW 3 Series
Luxury Line Sedan

Including FleetPlus packaged finance and running costs

From \$332/week from your take home pay*
Save \$18,300# in estimated tax savings over 5 years



Jeep Compass
Limited Wagon

Including FleetPlus packaged finance and running costs

From \$235/week from your take home pay*
Save \$15,956# in estimated tax savings over 5 years



Mitsubishi Eclipse
Cross ES Wagon

Including FleetPlus packaged finance and running costs

From \$172/week from your take home pay*
Save \$13,172# in estimated tax savings over 5 years



Hyundai Kona
Wagon

Including FleetPlus packaged finance and running costs

From \$152/week from your take home pay*
Save \$11,589# in estimated tax savings over 5 years

For more specials and great rates contact us:

Call 1300 353 381 or visit fleetplus.com.au/vehicle-specials

Important Information: Information is current as at time of publishing and is subject to change. *Vehicle pricing is based on the following assumptions: living in NSW, salary: \$80,000 gross p.a., travelling 12,000 kms p.a., lease term: 60 months, using the Employee Contribution Method for FBT purposes. Images shown may not be the exact car that the calculations have been based on. All figures quoted include budgets for finance, fuel, servicing, tyres, maintenance, Allianz comprehensive motor insurance, and re-registration over the period of the lease. Vehicle residual, as set by Australian Taxation Office, payable at the end of lease term. The exact residual amount will be specified in your vehicle quote. Vehicle pricing is correct at the time of distribution but may be subject to change based on availability. Weekly costs have been determined by comparing the post-tax position of including a car through a novated lease vehicle package with no leased vehicle. Vehicles must be ordered and delivered before 30 June 2021 via the FleetPlus preferred dealer network. ^A residual value amount of 28.25% of the vehicle purchase price plus GST is owed at the end of term. #Savings amount based on income tax and GST savings over the lease term. Savings figures are based on Eclixp Group negotiated buying power discount. Discount has been calculated with reference to the manufacturer's recommended retail price current as at 1 April 2021 in NSW. Discount will differ depending on the State or Territory you purchase the vehicle in. The novated lease offers are only an indicative approximation and availability on the selected new vehicles and models shown and may change at the time the lease quotation is completed and finalised. Your individual circumstances have not been taken into account and will affect the overall weekly cost amount and the benefits of a novated lease. This information is not intended as a substitute for any specific financial and tax advice which you should obtain. Credit Criteria, fees and charges, terms and conditions apply. These novated specials cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. *Savings based on 2020 - 2021 customers' average GST savings on new car purchases. Up to \$5,376.00 in GST (as per ATO guidelines, current at 12/01/20). ^ Total savings may vary depending on personal circumstances and whether a new, used or existing vehicle is leased.



NO SALES TALK, NO ONE ON ONE PRESSURE SELLING

DEAL WITH LICENSED, EXPERIENCED TAX ADVISERS WORKING IN YOUR BEST INTEREST



AT YOUR SERVICE

DIRECT ACCESS TO YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGER FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR LEASE



WE DO IT ALL

FROM START TO LEASE END, ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LEASE ARE COVERED



NO HIDDEN CATCHES

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET!



FAST SECURE CLAIM PROCESS

QUICK AND CONVENIENT



ON LINE, ANYTIME

MOBILE FRIENDLY WEBSITE



It's Your Choice!

100% Queensland Owned
Local, Experienced, Licensed

1300 76 1114

www.statewideqld.net.au



Novated Leasing Pty Ltd

ABN 48101218731

AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL SERVICES LICENCE: 439732

AUSTRALIAN CREDIT LICENCE: 387111

TAX PRACTITIONERS BOARD REGISTRATION: 24792339

Please contact us for a free no-obligation consultation and quote.



SERVICING EMPLOYEES FOR 19 YEARS

Statewide... the really smart choice!



APPROVED SUPPLIER

Statewide Novated Leasing Pty Ltd ("Statewide") is an approved supplier under the Queensland Government panel arrangement Novated Leasing Services QGP0026-16. From 7 November 2016, all Employees who wish to access a motor vehicle using a novated lease must use one of the approved Salary Packaging Novated Leasing Panel Suppliers to arrange, organise and manage the lease. The novated lease will continue to be administered through the Salary Packaging Administrator.

Queensland Government Disclaimer: The implications of salary packaging a motor vehicle through a novated leasing arrangement, including tax savings will depend on your individual circumstances. The information in this publication has been prepared by Statewide Novated Leasing for general information purposes only, without taking into consideration any individual circumstances. Before acting on any information or entering into a novated leasing arrangement, you should consider your objectives, financial situation and needs, and, take the appropriate legal, financial or other professional advice based upon your own particular circumstances. **The Queensland Government strongly recommends that you obtain independent financial advice prior to entering into, or changing the terms of, a salary packaging arrangement.**