

# The Australian Journal of **Emergency Management**



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department  
Emergency Management Australia

**EMA** *'safer sustainable communities'*

Vol 20 | No 4 | **NOVEMBER 2005**



## Developing effective emergency management partnerships

Definition and principles  
of volunteering

Enhancing links  
to benefit volunteers  
and communities

Valuing our volunteers

# historical snapshot



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At 11.50 am on 15 October 1970, a 367-ft (112 m) span of the West Gate Bridge, known as span 10–11, collapsed during construction. Approximately 2000 tonnes of steel and concrete came crashing down into the muddy banks of the Yarra River, taking workers and their machinery, tools and sheds with it.

Thirty-five workers lost their lives and many others were injured. Most victims were working on top of the bridge at the time of the collapse. Some men were fortunate enough to be on their morning break away from the site while others, seeing the collapse, were lucky to escape with their lives.

The scene was one of utter devastation. Emergency services responded quickly and together with nurses, first-aid staff, and other volunteers, worked all day and into the night to search for survivors and account for the dead.

The following morning, amid nationwide grief, the then Premier Sir Henry Bolte, announced a Royal Commission to investigate the cause of the collapse. Its report, tabled in parliament in 1971, left no party associated with the collapse blameless and stated that:

'Error begat error ... and the events which led to the disaster moved with the inevitability of a Greek Tragedy.'

Adapted from:

Public Record Office Victoria <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/exhibs/westgate>

Report of Royal Commission into the failure of West Gate Bridge, VPRS 2591/P0, unit 14.

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# FOREWORD

## Valuing our Volunteers

by Major-General Brian (Hori) Howard AO MC ESM (Retd), Chair of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum

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The Council of Australian Government (COAG) Report *Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements* noted that it is in the interests of all levels of government to provide recognition, protection, incentives and funding for volunteers and volunteer organisations as volunteer effort underpins Australia's emergency management effort. Similarly, the recent COAG Bushfire Inquiry Report concluded that Governments at every level must do all they can to recognise, foster and encourage emergency volunteering. The contribution of employers of volunteers must also be considered as crucial for volunteers to provide their services in response to an emergency and to participate in training.

The COAG findings reinforce the conclusions reached at the inaugural *Emergency Management Volunteers Summit* conducted by Emergency Management Australia (EMA) in 2001. The Summit identified four key priority areas for reform which were legal protection; funding; recognition; and training. These issues have become increasingly important in the retention of volunteers in light of the significant pressures facing emergency services resulting from increasing competition for volunteers' time, issues brought about through rural decline, and changing demographics in rural and regional areas. The main tangible outcome of the first Summit was the formation of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF), which had its first meeting in April 2002. The creation of the AEMVF was a real step towards the formation of a volunteer emergency management sector.

The 2005 *Emergency Management Volunteers Summit* held in April has given the AEMVF clear guidance on what we should concentrate on over the next couple of years. The 2005 *Summit Report* provides an outline of the Summit's proceedings that include issues of concern to the volunteers. Through its recommendations, it identifies actions required to ensure that volunteerism within the sector thrives. The Executive Summary of the Report appears later in this edition (page 30).

The Forum's top priority for 2005 is to establish a professional website. The new website is due to launch in December 2005 and will contain useful information

for emergency management volunteers, especially in the areas of training, legal protection, funding and recognition. There will also be links to the Forum's member websites as well as best practice literature and research.

Currently the AEMVF is involved in a research project funded by EMA. This survey is designed to establish the costs to volunteers – financial and in kind – which result from their volunteering activities. The results will be used by the AEMVF to advocate for greater financial support for volunteers involved in emergency services. The AEMVF will apply for grants from the recently established National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund, to sponsor further research projects on volunteer related topics in the future. We ask all organisations from within the sector to support these research projects.

I wish to congratulate EMA for allocating much of this edition of the AJEM to aspects of volunteerism, and for their ongoing support for the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum.



Quentin Turner, Volunteer Fire Brigades, Vic; Ron Carrick, SES Weipa, QLD; Hori Howard, Chair of the AEMVF; Sally Hasler, St John Ambulance; Doug Philpott, Anglicare; and Patricia Gillett, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association at the 2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit.

# The definition and principles of volunteering: What's all the fuss about?

Annette Maher presents Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering

## Abstract

There is a wide range of unpaid activity that takes place in Australia, including volunteering, student placements, caring, unpaid work in the home and unpaid work trials. All of these may have some common elements but it is only volunteering that encompasses the definition of *benefit to the community and self; activity that takes place through not-for-profit organisations; is without payment; is by choice and without coercion and occurs in volunteer designated positions*. This article discusses the definition and principles of volunteering as articulated through consultation with government, business, the not-for-profit sector and volunteers.

## Introduction

You may think that volunteering activity is so much a part of community life that there is little need for time and energy to be spent on talking about a common definition. It may surprise you to know that there are a variety of understandings. In fact, if you enter the words 'volunteer definition' into Google, 8,250,000 references appear. And the on-line encyclopaedia Wikipedia lists one of the definitions of volunteers as those who '... may even donate their bodies to science after ... death!'

As social beings, people like to be involved with their families, friends and communities. As well we all undertake an enormous number of activities that are unpaid ranging from household duties, to practical support of neighbours and even fighting fires and saving lives. Some of these activities may be part of volunteer roles but others are definitely not. For instance, when I wash our evening dishes or mind my neighbour's children for an hour or so, I do not undertake those activities as a volunteer. I do it because I want to eat from clean dishes at our next meal and because my neighbour and I have a reciprocal arrangement where we care for each other's children as acts of neighbourliness. So what do we mean when we talk about volunteering?

In 1996 Volunteering Australia undertook a national consultation to consider the definition and principles of volunteering, as understood and practised in Australia. Two main forms of volunteering were identified – formal and informal. One of the main differences between the two is that formal volunteering is carried out through a not-for-profit organisation or project, while informal volunteering is a more fluid activity that occurs without the protection of incorporation and the standards of organisational practice. Both forms are popular and valuable to our society. In this article I will concentrate on formal volunteering.

Through this national consultation with government, business, unions,

not-for-profit organisations and volunteers, eleven principles were articulated:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer;
- Volunteer work is unpaid;
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs;
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers and do not constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

It is these principles which inform the definition of volunteering.

Formal volunteering is an activity that takes place through not-for-profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;

- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- for no financial payment; and
- in designated volunteer positions only.

### Features of the definition

When we look more closely at the definition some of the elements are relatively straight forward, such as the one concerning benefit. This is clear and something we would all agree with – the community benefits by having meals delivered, trees planted, bushfires fought and lives saved. And people benefit in many ways, such as making new friends, learning new skills and being part of their community. Similarly, people intuitively understand the point on 'no financial payment' – if you want a paid job you go out and get paid work. But when you volunteer there is a clear understanding that the work does not result in a wage. While there are reimbursements made to volunteers for the costs they incur as a result of their volunteer activities, these payments are not a substitute for a wage. Other elements are more complex and can be elaborated.

### Why designated volunteer positions?

Ensuring that volunteers have position descriptions which are written specifically for them ensures that both paid and volunteer staff are aware of the differences between their respective roles, if not in actual tasks then in recognising the different qualities that volunteers bring to a role and the values and beliefs underpinning volunteer involving organisations. A position that is defined as volunteer marks a number of things:

1. that there is clarity between the two roles;
2. that the organisation acknowledges those differences; and
3. that both roles add value to the organisation and its mission.

### Why not-for-profit organisations?

The main difference between a not-for-profit organisation and a for-profit business is the distribution of profit. In not-for-profit organisations any financial surplus is reinvested back into the organisation while for-profit businesses distribute profit to owners or shareholders. Individuals may undertake unpaid work in for-profit businesses, and those businesses may even term this unpaid work as volunteering, but these 'volunteers' may feel differently about their involvement when there is understanding that their efforts profit the owners or shareholders of that business.

### Why free choice and without coercion?

Volunteering is a lifestyle choice of millions of Australians. People choose to volunteer because it has meaningful purpose to them. The concept of choice is built into the word *voluntas* which means free will, so it would be a contradiction in terms to try to coerce people to volunteer. Coercion negates the essence of the activity. Free choice occurs when people make a gift of their time. There are a number of reasons for volunteering, including:

- to help others and their community;
- for the personal satisfaction;
- to do something worthwhile;
- for social contact and to make new friends;
- to use skills and experience;
- as an expression of religious beliefs;
- to be active;
- to learn new skills; and
- to gain experience beneficial to securing paid employment (ABS, 2001).

The Australian Government's inclusion of volunteering within labour market policies and employment-related programs led to concerns within the volunteering sector, given the potential for

unemployed people to be penalised for non-participation. Unemployed people regularly take part in volunteering, for a wide range of reasons, but if they feel that they are *made* to volunteer they may perceive the activity as a chore to be completed as quickly as possible, and at worst something one has to do against one's free will. This would be fundamentally contrary to the definition and principles of volunteering.

### Strength of numbers

The first national survey on volunteering was in Australia in 1995 (ABS, 1996). The percentage of adults volunteering was found to be 24 per cent. This figure has steadily risen since then, to 32 per cent in 2000 and 34 per cent in 2002 (ABS, 2001, 2002). The Australian Bureau of Statistics plans to hold another national survey in 2006 and indications are that a further increase will be found.

The very latest research on volunteering on behalf of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership (2005) has found that 41 per cent of Australian adults volunteered in not-for-profit organisations for a total of 836 million hours, with each person giving an annual average of 132 hours.

In 2006 the Australian Bureau of Statistics will include a question on volunteering in the census. For the first time people in every household in Australia will be asked to provide information about their unpaid and volunteering roles. The depth and amount of research on volunteering is increasing in an attempt to understand its impact and true value to our society.

### Conclusion

The principles and definition ensure that volunteers can work compatibly alongside paid workers in community organisations. The growth of volunteering poses no threat to employment growth



or maintaining employment. To understand the social and economic growth of this country we must further explore the relationship between paid and volunteer work. Overall, volunteering has provided a diverse range of Australians with a sense of engagement with society and the satisfaction of making a meaningful contribution. With the development of the definition and principles of volunteering we are able to differentiate those aspects that are peculiar to volunteering and thus acknowledge and honour the effort and value of that activity – so, yes, it is worth making a fuss about the definition and principles of volunteering.

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## Author

Annette Maher is the Information and Research Officer at Volunteering Australia. Volunteering Australia is the national peak body working to advance volunteering in Australia. Its role is to represent the diverse views and needs of the volunteer sector while promoting the activity of volunteering as one of enduring social, economic and cultural value.



A volunteer fire fighter assists primary school children during a visit to their school. (This picture is part of the Value our Volunteers Photographic Competition, more photos on page 39). Photo courtesy Ashley Hosking.

# They should be heroes

*Dianne Coon reflects on the real meaning of emergency service heroes*

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## Hero

It's the four-letter word I hate most. Like those other, less socially acceptable four-letter words, it tends to be used when people are anxious, upset or excited, when their command of vocabulary is reduced. But like those other words, it tends to confuse, divide and alienate. Let's think about the label 'hero' in the emergency management context.

We are all familiar with the scenario: A big, fire or flood threatens a rural community. The volunteer emergency services (which have actually been working quietly on the problem for several hours or days) swing into more visible public action, and the media quickly follows, snapping up images of orange-suited SES crew doing daring rescues, or of fireies smeared with a scenic coating of soot and sweat. Then that word will be trotted out: *'Hero rescues pensioner's dog'*; *'the hero of the floods calls for more funding'*; *'Mayor reckons the fire fighters are the heroes of her town'*. For a day or two, the public face of the emergency response will get a bit of media attention and politicians – attracted by the pheromone of publicity – will follow, eager to be photographed with the local volunteers. The *H* word, predictably, will get a flogging.

This is the standard way we in Australian society recognise, acknowledge and reward people – either paid or volunteer – who provide emergency services to their communities. We overlook the quiet, day to day work they do under the radar, and wait until 'the big one' happens. Then we go over the top with media attention, politicians' visits, financial donations, awards

and certificates, even unsolicited payments, and we happily label them heroes. This sort of behaviour, in my view, works against good disaster prevention and emergency management. It devalues and debases the ongoing work of volunteers, and potentially destroys motivation and volunteer retention.

I believe the real heroes are the people who willingly and quietly do the ordinary, unnoticed work. These people are volunteering for recovery agencies still working in the community three months after the disaster, dealing with frustrated clients and doing tedious, detailed paperwork in order to get the families decent services. They are the fire fighters who uncomplainingly turn out week after week to the minor rubbish tip fire, then dutifully dry hoses and sort out gear for hours afterward at the station. They are the volunteer ambos who cheerfully turn up at the old lady's house – no lights and sirens – to take her on the winding mountain road to hospital to get her medications checked. They are the nerds – derided by the 'real men' in the unit – who carefully read all of the management memos, fill out the statistics and wash the vehicles. They are the people who give up afternoons watching the footy or overtime at work in order to attend training – the same training session they attended last year, and the year before. They are the people who go to the meetings and read the plans and staff the phones and run the sausage sizzles to raise funds. They keep their groups and their communities going.

They keep their groups going because, by reading and submitting the boring paperwork they ensure that management knows what

and how much work the unit is doing, and what its requirements are. By reading the memos they are aware that the radio channel has changed or that there is a new face in a key position, thereby avoiding embarrassment or perhaps dangerous misunderstandings. By doing the small, 'unimportant' jobs they keep their skills up, give the vehicle a run, renew their teamwork with their colleagues, check that the pagers are working, and much more. By cleaning stations and raising funds they demonstrate that the unit – and its individual volunteers – matters, both to the volunteers and their community. By doing all of these small, tedious, unnoticed tasks they ensure that their groups are ready for 'the big one' when it arrives.

In a bigger way, this 'ordinary' volunteer work keeps communities going because it is an expression of community at its best. The ambulance cases I am most proud of are not those where we saved lives (I've done a couple of those), or risked our safety to get to and extract patients (I've done at least one of those). It's when we have taken the elderly widow to hospital, chatting all the way about recipes; or helped a distressed tourist pack up her hotel room because her husband was being air lifted to hospital; or allowed a family to come to terms with the fact that their Dad might not survive this latest hospitalisation; or sat at a kitchen table for an hour, pretending to take a medical history but actually allowing a daughter to pour out her anxieties about whether she was caring appropriately for her mother. In none of these cases did I save a life, but I may have saved some psyches.



One of my greatest privileges was being able to take one of the town's stalwarts, who had devoted most of his adult life to civic work, to hospital. When he was in need his community, in the form of my colleagues and I, returned the favour. The firies who put out the blaze at the tip, or the SES crews who assist with road closures for sporting events, or the St John officers who staff the local festival are showing that they also do the small things that keep their communities functioning. The volunteers with the recovery agencies are demonstrating to disaster victims, in the most clear and tangible way, that, long after the media have moved on to their next drama and the politicians are seeking votes elsewhere, their community has not forgotten them, and will keep working to help them restore their lives.

In short, all this ordinary work gives our communities something at least as important as safety; it gives them dignity.

Which is where my dislike of the *H* word comes in. By labelling as 'heroic' actions fuelled by adrenaline, excitement or fear (all

the stuff that happens when 'the big one' hits) we are devaluing the true heroism of the work which prepares for this, and which signifies to our most vulnerable citizens that they are important and cared about.

All volunteer emergency services report a spike in recruitment immediately after a large or very public event, but both research and long-term experience shows that people who join in this fashion rarely last more than a few months. Once they discover that there is not a lot of abseiling down cliffs or pulling live people from burning buildings, let alone regular attention from the media, they lose interest. Meanwhile, the real heroes have had their skills maintenance programs upset by the need to train recruits, and the equilibrium and teamwork of the unit has been disturbed by the influx of new people. However, they are still faithfully putting out the tip fires and submitting the tedious reports.

I would like our community, our politicians, and our media to consider a new definition: *Heroes are the people who do the ordinary work, which enables the extraordinary to be done.*

Let's make sure we notice and acknowledge the people who are frequently at the station cleaning, sorting, preparing, training; who are in the back room staffing the radios while others are on the front line operating the cutting equipment; who are preparing food and driving long distances in searing heat to deliver it; who are sitting gently reassuring distressed people while their colleagues yell 'CLEAR!' with defibrillator paddles in their hands; who are still visiting families three months after they lost their homes. It is these people who are our greatest expressions of community.

They should be heroes.

### Author

Dianne Coon works in the tourist industry in Strahan where she lives, on Tasmania's rugged West Coast. She is a Volunteer Ambulance Officer, and represents ambulance volunteers on the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum.



Unsung heroes – Volunteers make sandwiches for emergency services personnel during recent bushfires.

# Developing an effective emergency management partnership: Surf Life Saving Australia and ambulance services

*De Nardi, Wilks and Agnew present current policies and procedures and the development of effective partnerships between Surf Life Saving Australia and ambulance services*

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## Abstract

Surf Lifesavers are an important link in the Australian emergency management and patient care system. In addition to more than 11,000 rescues performed nationally each year, the organisation provides in excess of 35,000 first aid and emergency care treatments. Recognising that collaboration with ambulance services is a critical element in the chain of emergency care, Surf Life Saving Australia is actively developing improved partnerships with ambulance services and their paramedics. This paper describes policies and procedures currently in place, provides a snapshot of beach incidents involving lifesavers and paramedics, and reports on a survey of ambulance officers in Queensland exploring their views and experiences working with lifesavers. Results provide a template for other water safety groups to work more effectively with government emergency services.

## Introduction

The importance of government and community partnerships in risk management and emergency response has been highlighted by Emergency Management Australia over a number of years. Indeed, the definition of an Emergency as “an event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and co-ordinated response” (Emergency Management Australia, 2004, ix) draws attention to the importance of genuine partnerships and an integrated approach across sometimes very diverse groups. This paper describes the development of an effective emergency management partnership between Surf Life Saving Australia and ambulance services to ensure the timely and appropriate care of patients.

## Beach safety and Surf Life Saving Australia

According to the Australian Water Safety Council (2004) there are more than 7 000 accessible ocean beaches in Australia and an estimated 60 million annual beach visitations. While it is encouraging to note that drowning deaths in Australia from all causes have dropped from 300 per year in 1998 to 250 per year in 2003 (only 11 per cent of drowning deaths between 1999 and 2002 occurred at the beach), the challenge remains for water safety authorities to further reduce this toll. The Council notes that “a major factor in the nation’s overall low rate of drowning must also be attributed to the contribution of Surf Life Saving Australia’s (SLSA) volunteer lifesavers” (p.9). During the 2003/2004 season SLSA patrolled over 300 beaches from a base of 303 Surf Life Saving clubs and 110,384 members. SLSA services rescue more than 11,000 people each year (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2004).

Surf Life Saving Australia has recently adopted a national initiative titled *Frontline First*, aimed at focusing the organisation’s collective energies and resources to support Frontline service delivery – the lifesavers – through building capacity and capability (Wilks, Dawes & Williamson, 2005). Government liaison and support is a key element in this initiative, and forms part of the overall strategy to develop Surf Life Saving as a core community service (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2004).

All SLSA volunteer lifesavers who actively patrol the nation’s beaches must hold, as a minimum, a Surf Life Saving Bronze Medallion (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2003), which is one of a number of SLSA awards that meet the Public Safety Industry’s Units of Competency and Qualifications (Public Safety Industry Training Advisory Body, 2003). The public safety industry is comprised of the police, fire brigade, State and Territory emergency services, emergency management sectors and SLSA. Table 1 outlines the units of competency required for the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue) and their mapping to the Bronze Medallion, highlighting the emphasis placed on the provision of emergency care.

**Table 1. SLSA Bronze Medallion and Units of Competency in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)**

Unit of Competency	SLSA Manual Module
Follow defined occupational health and safety policies and procedures (PUA OHS 001B)	Unit 1 – Safety and wellbeing
Apply surf survival and self survival skills (PUA SAR 012A)	Unit 2 – Surf awareness skills
Provide emergency care (PUA EME 001A)	Unit 3 – Anatomy and physiology Unit 4 – Basic first aid Unit 5 – First aid Unit 6 – Basic resuscitation Unit 7 – Resuscitation (CPR)
Communicate in the workplace (PUA COM 001B)	Unit 8 – Communication
Operate communications systems and equipment (PUA OPE 002A)	Unit 9 – Radio communications
Participate in an aquatic rescue operation (PUA SAR 009A)	Unit 10 – Rescue techniques Unit 11 – Carries and support
Work in a team (PUA TEA 001A)	Unit 12 – Patrols
Work effectively in a public safety organisation (PUA TEA 004B)	On-the-job training

In addition to the first aid and resuscitation training that form part of the Bronze Medallion (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2005a), patrol members can extend their emergency care knowledge and skills with qualifications in the use of defibrillation and Advanced Emergency Care (Silver Medallion). During the 2003/2004 season SLSA had 24 968 active patrol members at the Bronze Medallion level. An ‘active’ member is a Bronze Medallion holder who fulfils an annual proficiency test and patrol obligations. In addition, a total of 1 385 members are currently qualified and proficient in the use of defibrillation and 1087 in Advanced Emergency Care (Silver Medallion). These skills are regularly tested, with both training exercises at club level, actual rescues and other emergency care actions. Table 2 presents the SLSA figures for lifesaving actions during the 2003/2004 season.

**Table 2. SLSA lifesaving actions during the 2003–2004 season\***

Lives Saved (Rescues)	11 316
Resuscitations	130
First Aid Treatments	10 262
Stings	25 026
Suspected Spinal Injuries	111
Preventative Actions	410 327

\* Includes both lifesavers and lifeguards.

Compared to previous years, the number of rescues in Table 2 is slightly down (from 11 424 in 2002–2003 season) while the number of preventative actions is higher (up from 334 172 in 2003–2003). Preventive actions are defined as ‘interceptions to prevent rescues or problems occurring’ (Fenner, Leahy, Buhk & Dawes, 1999) so it logically follows that more proactive preventive actions should reduce the need for actual rescues over time.

Since Table 2 combines the actions of both groups, the distinction between SLSA lifesavers and SLSA lifeguards should also be clarified. A *lifesaver* is a Bronze Medallion holder who patrols in a voluntary capacity on weekends and public holidays through the summer months (generally from September to April) each year. A member of the SLSA Australian Lifeguard Service is also a Bronze Medallion holder but service as a *lifeguard* represents their main occupation and income, and covers weekdays during summer as well as weekends during winter months, depending on the location’s need. SLSA is the largest provider of professional lifeguards in Australia. It supplies lifeguard services to local governments, national parks, resorts and other aquatic facilities around the country. Currently there are more than 500 fully trained lifeguards operating on over 200 beaches across 65 local government authorities and parks (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2005b). The prerequisites for working as a SLSA lifeguard (and the relevant Public Safety unit competencies) are:

- a current SLSA Bronze Medallion (*Certificate II in Public Safety – Aquatic Rescue*);
- a current Silver Medallion (Patrol Captain) or relevant beach management competencies;
- a current nationally recognised *Senior First Aid Certificate* (PUA EME 001A Provide Emergency Care; PUA EME 002B Manage Injuries at an Emergency Incident);



- a current SLSA *Advanced Resuscitation Certificate* (PUA 003B Administer Oxygen in an Emergency Situation); and
- completion of an 800 metre swim in 14 minutes or less in a swimming pool of not less than 25 metres in length.

### Partnerships with emergency services

While SLSA lifesavers and lifeguards receive exemplary emergency management training, the organisation acknowledges the importance of collaborative work with other agencies. In particular, the ambulance service is recognised as a vital link between the first aid provided by lifesavers/lifeguards and hospitalisation of an injured patient (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2003). Training standards therefore require that an ambulance is summoned as early as possible to any cases where:

- (1) a person has lost consciousness, even for a brief period, and/or
- (2) a patient has received resuscitation.

The handover from surf lifesaver/lifeguard to ambulance officer is particularly important. The SLSA *First Aid and Emergency Care Manual* notes that “if an ambulance has been called, first aiders should stay with the patient, reassure them and continue to monitor them until the patient can be handed over to paramedics. First aiders should introduce themselves and the patient to the paramedic and detail:

- the events leading up to the incident;
- what happened to the patient;
- the patient’s vital signs and times assessed;
- any injuries the patient has sustained; and
- all treatment provided by the first aider.

All patients treated by a first aider should be referred to appropriate medical care for continuing or follow up treatment. This includes referral to a health care professional” (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2005a, 24).

Various Surf Life Saving State and Territory jurisdictions have specific policies and procedures in place to facilitate their interaction with ambulance services. For example, in Queensland there is a joint policy between Surf Life Saving Queensland and the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). The policy provides for a co-operative approach to response and handover of patients (Surf Life Saving Queensland, 2004). In particular, it emphasises that in all cases involving a collapsed victim, the lifesaver or lifeguard must immediately contact the QAS and seek assistance. In terms of roles and responsibilities, the policy directs that on the arrival of QAS, the lifesaver and/or lifeguard are to fully brief the officers on the circumstances of the incident and the patient’s presentation. SLSQ personnel should then provide assistance to the ambulance officers and follow their directions appropriately. Finally, unless a

doctor is present, the policy directs that the ambulance officers assume responsibility for patient care. Where cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is in progress, ambulance officers will determine if further medical aid is required and arrange patient transport.

In South Australia, Surf Life Saving has in place a memorandum of agreement with St John Ambulance Australia (SA) that commits Surf Life Saving SA resources to the ambulance service in times of major incident or disaster. The memorandum, signed in 1995, refers to the provision of first aid trained surf personnel, as well as equipment (St John Ambulance Australia SA and Surf Life Saving South Australia, 1995).

Surf Life Saving State and Territory bodies have adopted related SLSA medical policies, in particular, policies on first aid management of aquatic neck injuries, defibrillation, marine envenomation, pain management, and the use of oxygen equipment. SLSA also has a specific policy on off-duty ambulance officers on SLSA rescue craft (SLSA, 2001). This policy provides that should a person who is employed as an ambulance officer or paramedic wish to perform volunteer ambulance duties on SLSA craft (primarily offshore and jet rescue boats, and rescue helicopters), that person is required to have written approval from one of the following:

- the Medical Director of the State Ambulance Service;
- the State Superintendent of the State Ambulance Service; or
- one of SLSA’s National Medical Officers.

The person may then undertake the *Specialist Crew Certificate* accreditation applicable to the craft, may carry and use equipment and drugs according to their Ambulance Service protocols, and may perform advanced life support and emergency care skills according to their training. If the person does not receive permission from one of the above officers, they are not permitted to crew SLSA craft unless they become a member of a Surf Life Saving club, complete the Bronze Medallion and other appropriate SLSA qualifications. Even so, without permission from one of the relevant officers, the person may not carry additional equipment or drugs that are used in the line of performing their ambulance protocols. The policy (May 2001) was written in consultation with medical directors from all State Ambulance Services and the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals to ensure that the duty of care and liability of SLSA and the individuals concerned are protected. All SLSA policies mentioned above are available online at [www.slsa.asn.au](http://www.slsa.asn.au).

## Community first aid and rescue resources

The SLSA policy on defibrillation recognises that early access to defibrillation is one of the most important factors to assist in the successful resuscitation of heart attack victims. Defibrillation of the heart by first aid personnel has become possible with the introduction of the semi-automatic external defibrillator (SAED) and, as at 30 June 2004, SLSA owned 114 defibrillation units.

According to a joint policy statement issued by Queensland Health and the Department of Emergency Services (2003) the introduction of defibrillation in the pre-hospital setting for the treatment of the sudden out-of-hospital cardiac arrest has led to improved patient survival. Recent advances in defibrillation technology, specifically lightweight and compact units, means defibrillation is more widely available in the community. The main objective of the policy is to encourage expanded availability of defibrillation in Queensland communities through cost-effective, safe and sustainable programs that lead to improved patient outcomes. These include:

- promotion of community knowledge, skill and application of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
- an integrated emergency medical system (EMS) approach; and
- Rapid First Responder and paramedic response.



Defibrillator training is an important emergency care skill.

As Table 3 shows, Surf Life Saving Queensland actively contributes to expanding the availability of defibrillation. Twenty of the State's 41 defibrillation units are located on the Gold Coast, supported by an active training program in their proper use by Surf Life Saving club members and lifeguards.

**Table 3. Gold Coast defibrillator locations and qualified operators**

Clubs	Defibrillator Units	Operators
Burleigh Heads	1	19
North Burleigh	1	25
Miami	1	10
Nobby's Beach	1	11
Mermaid	1	24
Kurrawa	1	58
Broadbeach	1	29
Northcliffe	1	24
Surfers Paradise	1	32
Southport	1	44
Coochiemudlo	1	9
Point Lookout	1	53
Rainbow Bay	0	1
Tweed Heads & Coolangatta	0	5
Coolangatta	1	18
Kirra	1	30
North Kirra	0	13
Bilinga	0	1
Tugun	1	5
Currumbin	1	15
Palm Beach	1	20
Pacific	1	17
Tallebudgera	1	21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>484</b>

### Other Gold Coast defibrillator resources

Jet Boat Rescue Service	1 Defibrillator in each of the 2 Jet Boats
Westpac Rescue Helicopter	1 Defibrillator onboard Helicopter
Gold Coast Lifesaving Services Coordinator	Defibrillator in land vehicle

## Operational support services

Table 3 notes that additional defibrillator units are held in jet boats, helicopters and co-ordinators' land vehicles. The availability of operational support services in the delivery of first aid and emergency care is a critical aspect of the SLSA *Frontline First* strategy. For example, all mobile patrols in Queensland carry oxygen resuscitation equipment, and rescues are carried out using a wide variety of equipment (Table 4).

**Table 4. SLSA lifesaving and lifeguard rescues by mechanism 2003/3004**

	Number	Percentage #
Board	2928	26
No gear	2273	20
IRB*	2220	20
Tube	2189	13
PWC/RWV**	719	6
JRB/ORB***	373	3
Helicopter	49	<1
Ski	28	<1
Boogie board	6	<1
Surf boat	3	<1
Other	528	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11316</b>	

\* Inflatable Rescue Boat

\*\*Personal Water Craft and Rescue Water Vehicle

\*\*\*Jet Rescue Boat and Off-Shore Rescue Boat

# Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

## Tasking and communication channels

The tasking of SLSA personnel and equipment varies across jurisdictions but essentially is available to local communities in times of need through requests from emergency service agencies. For example, the Queensland Aeromedical and Air Rescue Network (2001) provides detailed tasking guidelines for helicopters. The State's health department, police and ambulance services can all call upon government and community helicopters to provide aeromedical, surveillance, and search and rescue responses.

There are two types of aeromedical operations. The first is Inter Hospital Transfer (IHT) and the second is

Aeromedical Primary Response (APR – either Category A where the aircraft forms the initial ambulance response or Category B where the aircraft forms secondary or backup response to health professionals already on the scene).

The Government's larger Bell helicopters and key community rescue organisations in Queensland are approved by the Minister for Emergency Services under the *Ambulance Services Act (Qld) 1991* to provide patient transport. The smaller Westpac 'Lifesaver' Rescue Helicopter, currently a Squirrel located on the Gold Coast, is not used for patient transfer but is often tasked by Australian Search and Rescue (AUSSAR), police and the Queensland Ambulance Service for search and rescue work (especially white water and surf environment rescue), surveillance, and providing transport for medical teams (O'Hara, De Groot & Wilks, 2002).

In New South Wales, SLSA's four Westpac 'Lifesaver' helicopters are authorised under Section 23 of the *Ambulance Services Act (NSW) 1990* to conduct full ambulance services (IHT and ARP) in addition to search and rescue. During 2003/2004 there were 368 primary response missions flown (Category A), 510 secondary response missions (Category B), and 61 search and rescue missions.

## Beach incidents involving SLSA and ambulance services

In order to provide a snapshot of the emergency care situations involving both lifesavers and ambulance officers, a small review of beach incidents was undertaken. Information was retrieved from the *Data Incident Log Report*, SLSA's national incident database record. Details of 97 incidents in Queensland and 84 incidents in New South Wales were selected and examined. The criterion for selection was the presence and intervention of lifesavers/lifeguards as the first point of contact, followed by attendance of an ambulance officer. Other parties, such as police and/or a helicopter were present in some major incidents, some involving between two and 12 people (Paget, 2004).

For the 97 Queensland incidents there was an even balance between male (52 per cent) and female (48 per cent) patients, with most incidents involving Queensland residents (79 per cent). The nature of injury varied considerably. The main categories were recorded as open wound/laceration (14), respiratory/near drowning (13), stings (11), fractures (10), suspected spinal injury (10) and cardiac (9). Loss of consciousness was recorded in five cases. The main categories of treatment recorded were oxygen therapy (42), RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation – 19), clean and dress wound/injury (11) and apply spinal collar (6).

Table 5 presents 18 randomly selected incidents from among those evaluated, in order to demonstrate the diversity of injuries recorded. In many cases lifesavers



are required to treat more than one serious injury, on one or more injured people, before paramedics arrive.

**Table 5. SLSA incident log report examples**

Nature of injury	Initial treatment
Hypothermia/Loss of Consciousness/Respiratory problem	Oxygen therapy
Concussion – Drug and Alcohol Related	Oxygen therapy
Heat Stroke/Loss of Consciousness/Fracture/ Open Wound	Oxygen therapy
Suspected Spinal	Spinal collar
Inflammation/Swelling/ Concussion	RICE
Open Wound/Laceration/ Contusion/Loss of Consciousness	EAR
Abrasion/Graze/ Dislocation/Fracture/ Suspected Spinal	Spinal collar
Heat Stroke/Heat Exhaustion/Cardiac Problem	Oxygen therapy
Suspected Spinal/Strain/ Concussion/Fracture	Oxygen therapy
Near Drowning – Respiratory problem	EAR
Nausea – Caught in Rip	Oxygen therapy
Near Drowning – Respiratory Problem	Oxygen therapy
Haemorrhage – Eye	Cleaning
Open Wound/Laceration/ Cut	Dressed (including bandage)
Open Wound/Laceration/ Fracture	Strapping/Taping
Loss of Consciousness	Recovery position
Fracture	Sling/Splint
Bruise/Contusion/ Suspected Spinal	Oxygen therapy, Spinal Collar

The 84 New South Wales incidents involved more males (63 per cent) than females (30 per cent) and there were six records of group incidents where genders were not recorded. Most incidents involved New South Wales residents (67 per cent). The main categories of injury recorded were suspected spinal injury (19), lacerations (9), suspected fractures (6), respiratory/near drowning (6), cardiac (7) and stings (5). Loss of consciousness was recorded in 15 cases. The main treatments provided

were oxygen therapy (24), spinal collar (13), RICE (10), dress/clean wound (5), and EAR (Expired Air Resuscitation – 4).

The incidents presented in these two State snapshots reflect the types of beach injuries reported in other Australian reports (Grenfell & Ross, 1992; Staines, Morgan and Ozanne-Smith, 2005; Wilks et al., 1995) ranging from cuts and abrasions, through to life threatening cardiac arrests and near drowning events. The variety of events also highlights the challenges faced by surf lifesavers in providing skilled and appropriate emergency care until paramedics arrive at the beach to take charge of the patient.

In the majority of cases extracted from the database the patient was transported to hospital, mainly by road ambulance, but in some instances by helicopter depending on the urgency of the case, the location of the incident and the distance of helicopter, ambulance and hospital. In minor first aid cases, the vast majority of which have been purposely excluded from this data collection, lifesavers and lifeguards were assisted by ambulance officers on location, without the need for hospitalisation.

### Paramedics' views on beach incidents and working with lifesavers

A small survey of 50 ambulance officers working on the Queensland Gold Coast was undertaken to provide additional insight into the working relationship between lifesavers and paramedics. Due to the varied shifts of the paramedics across six stations, face-to-face interviews were not possible. A target sample of 50 was set and officers received a questionnaire in the mail with a self-addressed return envelope. The survey was supported by the Medical Director and senior staff of the QAS resulting in a 100 per cent response rate. Full details of the pilot study and instrument development are available from the authors.

The majority of respondents were experienced paramedics, with an average (mean) of 11.5 years working in the field (ranging from less than one year to 28 years). Most, 88 per cent, had attended at least one beach incident, while 22 per cent had attended more than 30 incidents. Eight respondents were both paramedics and surf lifesaving members. Table 6 presents some key insights into the way paramedics view Surf Life Saving Queensland.

**Table 6. Paramedics' views of Surf Life Saving Queensland**

	Mean Rating	SD
<b>Value of SLSQ operating within the community</b> (1 = not necessary, 5 = essential)	4.96	0.66
<b>Ratings of SLSQ as a:</b> (1 = poor; 5 = excellent)		
Volunteer rescue organisation	4.26	0.73
Training provider for rescue and beach safety	4.16	0.72
Developer of beach safety skills for young people	4.10	0.66
Developer of beach safety knowledge for tourists/visitors	3.74	0.87
<b>Working relationship between SLSQ and ambulance service</b> (1 = poor; 5 = excellent)	3.97	0.81

First, there is almost universal agreement that Surf Life Saving Queensland is an essential service organisation within the community. Respondents gave high ratings for Surf Life Saving Queensland as a volunteer rescue organisation, a training provider and a developer of beach safety skills for young people. Ratings were slightly lower for providing beach safety knowledge to tourists/visitors. Overall, the paramedics sampled rated the working relationship between Surf Life Saving Queensland and ambulance services as 'good'. A majority of all respondents, 78 per cent, further clarified this position by suggesting that there was scope for better collaboration between Surf Life Saving Queensland and the emergency services generally. Table 7 presents the views on how Surf Life Saving Queensland might improve its services.

Highest among the suggestions for improving services was the importance of increasing beach safety awareness among tourists, followed by awareness and education in the general community. Overall, the importance of resources, training and having more beaches under guard was recognised. Less important for these respondents were more patrol hours (either voluntary or paid) and additional events, carnivals and other family outings. It should be noted that the Gold Coast area has already extended patrol hours (dawn to dusk) during summer and peak holiday periods. Therefore the number of patrol hours is perhaps not as critical as the number of beaches under guard from the perspective of service delivery (Wilks et al., 2005a).

Finally, Table 8 presents the views of paramedics on the beach management activities that would make their job easier. The highest priority reported was for detailed particulars on each incident to be

communicated to paramedics in real time during transit. In written comments some paramedics emphasised that information on the exact location of an incident on the beach was essential, along with information on access and whether a four-wheel-drive vehicle might be required. Similarly, the need for a fast call out was highlighted along with general assistance at the incident scene. Less important was the physical cleanliness of the patient on handover.

**Table 7. Initiatives to improve services**

Ratings of Initiatives for SLSQ to improve services	Mean Rating	SD
(1 = not important; 5 = very important)		
Increase awareness among tourists	4.63	0.86
Increase awareness/education in community	4.40	0.67
Increase resources available	4.32	0.65
Improve and develop training for members	4.30	0.71
Offer wider coverage in terms of locations/beaches	4.18	0.82
Development of new partnerships	4.16	0.76
Increase promotion and marketing	4.12	0.71
Offer wider coverage in terms of patrol hours (voluntary)	3.98	0.89
Institute more events, carnivals and other family outings	3.65	0.95
Offer wider coverage in terms of patrol hours (paid)	3.22	1.14



*Marine stings require co-ordination between lifesavers and paramedics.*

**Table 8. Beach management activities to make paramedic roles easier**

Things Surf Lifesavers might do (1 = not important; 5 = very important)	Mean Rating	SD
Detailed incident particulars communicated on ambulance transit/arrival	4.57	0.88
Fast call out	4.53	0.86
Assistance after exchange, eg., Crowd controller	4.30	1.01
Collection and distribution of equipment after usage	4.20	0.74
Constant communication in transit	4.06	1.02
Assistance with transport	3.80	0.94
Patient clean (no sand) on exchange	3.10	1.35

## Discussion

The mass drowning at Warrnambool, Victoria on 2 January 2005 highlighted the importance of emergency services working in partnership with surf lifesavers (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2005c). Five members of one family lost their lives in tragic circumstances, though surf lifesavers working with police, ambulance and State Emergency Services personnel managed to save three children. The incorporation of Life Saving Victoria into the Department of Police and Emergency Services has clearly improved communication and links with other agencies in that State. While the partnership model with ambulance services varies in other Australian jurisdictions, a common need is for co-ordination of services.

The Queensland and New South Wales snapshots of beach incidents show that lifesavers are presented with a range of complex first aid and emergency care situations. Their training is of a high standard but they are only one link in the chain of emergency care. Paramedics surveyed on the Gold Coast emphasised the essential value of surf lifesaving to the community, rating Surf Life Saving Queensland highly as a rescue and training provider. However, ratings for the organisation on developing beach safety knowledge for tourists/visitors were somewhat lower. Increasing awareness among tourists was top of the paramedic list for initiatives to improve services. It is now well established that tourists are a particular at-risk group for water-related activities (Australian Water Safety Council, 2000; Wilks and Coory, 2000; Wilks et al., 2005b), so increasing their awareness of beach safety is sound advice from paramedics actually involved in beach incident responses.

Second on the list of initiatives to improve services was increasing awareness and education in the community. Also high in importance were increasing resources, training members and wider coverage in terms of locations/beaches. These are current priority areas for SLSA under the national *Frontline First* initiative, which focuses on extending lifesaving services and providing a core community resource (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2004). The purchase of defibrillator units for clubs and the training of qualified operators is one example of surf lifesavers operating as an outreach community safety resource.

Finally, paramedics surveyed in Queensland believed there was considerable scope for greater collaboration between surf lifesavers and ambulance services, and in written comments especially highlighted joint training programs. For example, one respondent with 28 years professional experience recommended "greater liaison between SLSQ and QAS; for example training and ideas on how they both run".

## Summary

This report described policies and processes currently in place between Surf Life Saving Australia and ambulance services. The investigation revealed a number of opportunities for further engagement across the State and Territory jurisdictions. In particular, the development of formal relationships by way of memorandums of understanding, joint training programs and collaboration with respect to policy and procedures. Experienced paramedics working on Australia's leading beach destination recommended very practical ways in which surf lifesavers might assist in emergency care, such as detailed incident communication and continued assistance at the incident site. Tourists were identified as a target group requiring special attention. At the same time, general community awareness, member training and having more beaches under guard were rated as important initiatives. Overall, paramedics saw surf lifesaving as a vital organisation operating in the community and having a sound working relationship with emergency services.

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# Australian Rural Fire Services' Recognition and Service Awards for Volunteers

*Jim McLennan and Mary Bertoldi examine the use of service awards for volunteerism recognition*

## Abstract

All Australian rural fire services have recognition and service award schemes for their volunteers. However, there are considerable differences among the eight agencies in the number of recognition opportunities available, the variety of awards available, and the minimum length of service required to qualify for an award. It is suggested that fire services review their recognition and award systems to maximise the effectiveness of these schemes in contributing to volunteer commitment and retention.

## Introduction

Australia has a large area, sparse population, and great distances between population centres. It is heavily dependent on volunteer fire fighters to protect vulnerable communities against the threats posed by bushfires (Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2004; Nairn, 2003).

Based on fire services' Annual Reports, there were approximately 220 000 fire service volunteers in Australia's eight volunteer fire services (excluding retained fire fighters, who are remunerated for being on duty) as at June 2004 (McLennan, 2005). Over the past decade, some concerns have been expressed that social and demographic changes, and structural changes in the Australian economy, may threaten the future of volunteer-based emergency services in this country (Adler, 2004; CFA, 2001; Nairn, 2003; Rheinholdt, 1999/2000; Turner, 2004a).

Most volunteer fire services report difficulties in maintaining adequate numbers of volunteers in some regions – especially small rural communities and new housing estates in what were previously rural communities. CFA (2001) reported an annual rate of decline in volunteer membership of about 4.5 per cent over the period 1990–2001. The South Australian Country Fire Service reported that each year, for the previous five years, about 400 more volunteers resigned than joined

(Palmer, 2003). This represents a loss of about 14 per cent of the volunteer membership over the period.

One way to maintain adequate volunteer numbers is to maximise retention of volunteers. Woodward and Kallman (2001) surveyed former Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers about why they had left. McLennan (2004) re-analysed their data and concluded that about one-third of those surveyed had most probably left the organisation because they moved away from the area, while about two-thirds of resignations resulted from some factors other than relocation. Woodward and Kallman's survey data suggest that about one-third of volunteer fire fighter resignations may be unavoidable, leaving about two-thirds amenable to some form of organisational initiatives aimed at maintaining motivation to remain with the agency. At the time of writing, Woodward and Kallman's study was the only published report concerning the reasons why volunteer fire fighters left their organisation<sup>1</sup>.

## Increasing volunteer retention

There is general agreement among human resources professionals and managers of volunteers that organisational attrition rates can often be reduced by practices that increase members' morale and thus commitment to remaining with their organisation (Bush, Schaenman, & Thiel, 1998; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2004; Jones & May, 1992; Robbins, Cacioppe, Millett, & Waters-Marsh, 2001). Lillenthal (2000, p. 71) offered the following observation in relation to (paid) employee turnover in the United States. "Current research confirms that it is generally not pay, benefits, or dissatisfaction with the job that prompts good employees to leave. In fact, according to the Corporate Leadership Council ([www.clcinteractive.com](http://www.clcinteractive.com)), the vast majority (67 per cent) of employees who intend to leave their organisation are satisfied with their jobs. Rather, employees most often leave because they feel they are not valued."

The importance of volunteers feeling *valued* by their host organisation emerged as a major theme of the first *Emergency Management Volunteer Summit* for

<sup>1</sup> Several agencies are currently conducting surveys of former volunteers about their reasons for leaving the organisation.



NSW RFS volunteers and career staff at a recognition parade in Sydney.

emergency services volunteer leaders and managers held in Canberra in October 2001. The Summit was part of Australia's 2001 *Year of the Volunteer* and resulted in a Summit report titled *Value Your Volunteers or Lose Them* (Emergency Management Australia, 2002). The consensus of the Summit was that practical valuing of emergency services volunteers involved three organisational practices. These are:

- providing opportunities for volunteers to express their opinions and views;
- providing meaningful opportunities for volunteers' personal and professional development; and
- appropriately recognising volunteer contribution to the organisation and the community.

The need for emergency services agencies to value their volunteers was also the focus of the follow-up *2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit* (Koperberg, 2005).

Recognition of emergency services volunteers' contributions was one of four key issues addressed during the Summit (the other three were funding, legal protection, and training). Most volunteer fire fighters do incur some losses as a consequence of their volunteering activities which include direct financial expenses, loss of income, loss of time with family, and loss of opportunities for recreation (Conboy, 2004; CFA, 2001; Hourigan, 2003; Nairn, 2003). However, there is general (though probably not unanimous) agreement among fire service volunteer associations that giving direct cash payments to volunteers for the services they provide to their communities would be counterproductive. It would run counter to the commonsense notion

of volunteerism – service to the community, freely given (Gledhill, 2001; Turner, 2004a, 2004b).

It is perhaps noteworthy that a report by the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (Hevesi, 2001) found no evidence that Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) contributed to volunteer fire fighter recruitment or retention. LOSAP schemes provide municipally funded pension-like benefits based on an individual's length of volunteer fire fighting service.

The importance of valuing emergency services volunteers by publicly recognising their contributions has been noted by many commentators (e.g., Bush et al. 1998; Gledhill, 2001; Stringer, 2001; Turner, 2004a). We noted that some of these discussions fail to distinguish between recognition in the form of financial rewards, and other forms of recognition not involving financial benefit. In the interests of clarity we recommend distinguishing between agency *incentive* schemes, which involve some form of financial recompense for volunteers, and agency *recognition* schemes, which involve some form of public acknowledgement of the contribution of volunteers in ways other than providing financial benefits.

In the remainder of this paper we examine the recognition and service award schemes currently available to volunteers in Australia's volunteer fire services. Our aim in doing so is to encourage fire service organisations, and their volunteer associations, to review their recognition schemes so that these are as effective as possible in contributing to the retention of volunteers.

**Table 1. Rural Fire Service Awards for Volunteers**

ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY	Chief Officer's Commendation for Exemplary Service Service Awards (5–10 years) Diligent Service Awards
N.S.W RURAL FIRE SERVICE	Long Service Badges (15, 25, 35, 50 years) Commissioner's – Medal for Valour Medal for Bravery Commendation for Service Certificate of Commendation
N.T. POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES	Fire Service Award Administrators Volunteer of the Year Award (under 25 years of age) Five year certificate Ten year certificate
QLD FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE	Rural Fire Service Certificate of Long Service (10 years of service)
S.A. COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE	Service Awards – Chevron (2 years) Red Star (10 years) Gold Star (20 years) Red & Gold Star (30 years) 2 Gold Stars (40 years)  Long Service Awards – Bronze (15 years) Silver (25 years) Gold (35, 45, 50 years)  Service Medals – Medal for 7 years diligent service (career staff and volunteers) Service Bars at 10, 15, 20, 25+ years Life Membership (after 20 years) Honorary Membership (after 20 years) Outstanding Service by a Volunteer in the Region Outstanding Service by a Cadet in the Region Chief Officer Commendation Chief Officer Certificate of Appreciation
TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE	TFS Long Service Badges (10, 15, 25, 30 years) Brigade Life Membership Badge TFS Volunteer Award by TVFFAF
VICTORIA COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY	Long Service Badge (Urban Brigades for 12 years of service) Long Service Clasp (Urban Brigades for 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 years of service) Long Service Lapel Badge (Rural Brigades for 12, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 years of service) TH Grigg Memorial Achievement Award Valour Medal Outstanding Service Honorary Life Member Retiring Certificate Letter of Commendation Certificate of Appreciation Horrocks Shield
W.A. FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY	FESA Firefighter of the Year Awards: VFRS, BFS, youth encouragement for a volunteer firefighter aged 16–25 years FESA Outstanding Service Medallion; FESA Commendation VFRS Service Medals (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 years service); FS Commendation BFS Medallions (5–10 years service); FS Commendation FESA Units Service Medals (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 years service)

Note: The information in Table 1 was provided and checked by the agencies concerned.



## Volunteer recognition and service awards: rural fire services compared

All Australian rural fire services provide public recognition and award opportunities for their volunteers. However, an initial examination suggested that there were considerable differences across the eight agencies in both the nature and number of recognition and service award opportunities for volunteers. Early in 2004, as part of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre Volunteerism Project, agencies were surveyed concerning their current recognition and services awards schemes for volunteers. The information which was provided is summarised in Table 1. The table does not show Commonwealth or State/Territory awards which are available for volunteers generally, nor does it show unit/brigade recognition awards, nor scholarships and study award opportunities.

Table 1 indicates that rural fire services' recognition and service award schemes differ in three respects. First, the *number* of award opportunities available varies. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service provides only a single award – a Rural Fire Service Certificate of Long Service (10 years). By way of contrast, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (WA) Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service awards Service Medals at five year intervals commencing after five years of service for its Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service and FESA Unit volunteers. Second, the *variety* of award opportunities available varies. All agencies recognise long service, some recognise valour and/or bravery, and a few recognise service activities other than operational firefighting. Third, the *minimum length of service* required for a years-of-service award varies. The SA Country Fire Service provides an award after two years, the NSW Rural Fire Service requires their volunteers to serve for 15 years to qualify for an award.

## Discussion

Several rural fire service staff involved with volunteer support and administration provided detailed comments on aspects of the different services' recognition and award schemes. Several commented that the few awards which were not based on length of service were mostly oriented towards bravery or valour. There were few, if any, opportunities for recognising meritorious service in non-operational (or support) roles. A focus on valour, several claimed, sent the wrong message in relation to contemporary emphases on safety and risk-minimisation and failed to reflect the many and varied roles volunteers undertake in the community in addition to fire suppression activity. These activities include community education, fire prevention, and supporting juniors and cadets. Some commented, critically, that fire services generally failed to provide recognition opportunities for their juniors and cadets, notwithstanding the importance of junior and cadet units for ongoing recruitment into senior volunteer roles.

Several volunteer support staff observed that many volunteers served for between five and eight years before resigning. It would be desirable to formally recognise periods of service of two and five years to increase the likelihood of volunteers remaining with the agency and, should they leave, increase their willingness to rejoin in the future if their personal circumstances allowed.

## Conclusion

Of course, individual fire services and their volunteer associations have their own unique histories, and their particular award and recognition traditions are derived from those histories. However, it would seem to be prudent for rural fire services and volunteer associations to review their volunteer recognition and service award schemes to ensure they are appropriate for rural fire service volunteering in the context of today's changing



South Australian CFS volunteers in action.

economic, demographic, and social circumstances, and the changing roles of volunteers with emerging emphases on fire prevention, community education, and youth development roles<sup>2</sup>.

*The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Bushfire CRC Board.*

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Queensland F&RS Rural volunteers conduct an informal after-action review.

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<sup>2</sup> Several agencies have foreshadowed reviews of their recognition schemes.

# Australian Red Cross – making a difference

*Rod McKinnon* *ESM*, Chair Australian Red Cross National Disaster Services Advisory Committee  
*looks at the roles of the Australian Red Cross*

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On the evening of Saturday 1 October 2005, terrorist bombs killed 23 people and injured many more on the Indonesian resort island of Bali. Shortly after, the Northern Territory Division of the Australian Red Cross was placed on standby to provide assistance to victims being evacuated to Darwin. From 4am on Sunday morning, a small team of disaster services volunteers were at Darwin Airport and Royal Darwin Hospital registering and providing comfort to victims.

## Introduction

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest volunteer-based organisation in the world. It responds to emergencies around the globe with 181 National Societies and almost 100 million volunteers. It was a key response organisation in recent major events including September 11, the Madrid and London bombings, the Bam earthquake, the Asian quake and tsunamis, *Hurricane Katrina* and, more recently, earthquakes across Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

The Australian Red Cross (ARC) is a key player in the Australian emergency management environment. Through its disaster and emergency services program, the ARC is well prepared to assist Australian citizens affected by all types of disasters and emergencies.

## History

On 24 June 1859, Henry Dunant, a Swiss banker travelling on business in northern Italy, came across the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino, a horrifying and

bloody conflict between 300,000 soldiers from Imperial Austria and the Franco-Sardinian Alliance. He was appalled by the sight of the sick and wounded and set about helping them, regardless of their nationality. He called upon the local population to join with him with the rally cry, 'Tutti fratelli' meaning, 'all men are brothers'. And so, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was founded. The ARC was formed as a branch of the British Red Cross on 13 August 1914, nine days after the outbreak of World War I.

Over time, the organisation's initial focus on helping the victims of conflict has broadened considerably. Today, the movement comprises people who take action to prevent and address the suffering of the most vulnerable in the community regardless of the cause.

There are four other notable attributes which distinguish the Red Cross from other humanitarian organisations.

1. It is a truly international organisation that includes national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies from 181 of the 193 sovereign states in the world.
2. All components are bound by seven fundamental principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.
3. Components of the Red Cross all have defined roles that have been set out in international law and in separate resolutions of governments at international fora.
4. While independent of their own government, National Societies are established under national law and are recognised as an auxiliary to government in times of war and natural disaster.

## The Australian Red Cross

The ARC is an active and well respected player in the broader international Red Cross and Red Cross Movement, providing financial, human resource and other support to international programs. It is also a key contributor to domestic welfare matters. The ARC's vision is "to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity". Further, it seeks to be Australia's most effective community-based, humanitarian movement known for its compassion, action, and the impact of its work with vulnerable people. The ARC is well positioned



The Red Cross emblem, comprising a red cross on a white background, is perhaps the most recognisable symbol of any humanitarian organisation world wide.



to achieve this with 1 000 branches, 35 000 members and 27 000 volunteers in communities across Australia.

The ARC meets its aims and objectives through the delivery of a number of national programs co-ordinated through the National Office and delivered by a Division in each State and Territory. These programs are administered under separate arrangements and include:

- First Aid, Health and Safety;
- International Humanitarian Law;
- International Operations;
- Tracing, Refugees and Asylum Seekers;
- Youth and Education Services;
- Disaster and Emergency Services; and
- ARC Blood Service.

In addition ARC Divisions deliver a range of local community services.

The focus of this article is the ARC Disaster and Emergency Services which have historically involved registration and inquiry, emergency catering, first aid, and assistance to families following single incidents such as house fires. A number of changes are pending as the organisation is reviewing how it might better serve communities when disasters and emergencies threaten.

**Table 1. Delivery of disaster and emergency services in 2005**

Event	Support Provided
Fires – Eyre Peninsula South Australia January 2005	On 11 January, fire threatened to cause major disruption on the Eyre Peninsula. The State Inquiry Centre was quickly opened to activate the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS) and volunteers were called to provide reception and registration duties at the Evacuation Centre at the Port Lincoln High School. Two Recovery Centres were established in the area and ARC volunteers staffed these centres for nine hours a day for 35 days. 992 people affected by the fires were registered. The total volunteer and staff commitment was 1467 hours – a significant effort for a rural community.
Fires – Wilsons Promontory Victoria April 2005	On 1 April, a fire reignited on Wilsons Promontory. The weather conditions were hot with strong northerly winds. A number of campers were evacuated by car, air rescue or by sea. ARC catering teams, registration teams and Red Cross Communications (RECOM) were activated and were sent to various locations in the area. The event lasted several hours and necessitated activation of the State Inquiry Centre (SIC). Staff and volunteers were sent to the Tidal River area and staff activated the SIC. Over a period of several hours, 600 registrations were taken and transmitted to the SIC via fax or RECOM. Catering teams provided 320 meals to the emergency services and refreshments for those members of the public who were not immediately evacuated. As evacuees were able to use mobile phones to contact relatives, the SIC only received a small number of inquiries.
Flooding – Lismore area, New South Wales June 2005	Severe flooding resulting from very heavy rain on 30 June which fell over the north and east of NSW for more than 24 hours necessitated the evacuation of a number of homes in the Lismore and Tweed River areas. The NSW Department of Community Services sought assistance from ARC with the provision of personal support and registration at evacuation centres in Lismore and Kingscliff and subsequent outreach via door knock in the affected areas. 156 people were registered during the evacuation. 22 volunteers contributed over 150 hours to the operation.
Flooding – Gold Coast, Queensland June 2005	Unseasonal rain on the Gold Coast on 30 June caused flooding and landslips in various locations. More than 30 ARC Volunteers and Staff responded to a call from the Gold Coast City Council under the <i>Disaster Management Plan</i> to provide personal support and registration in a community centre in Southport and an evacuation centre in Burleigh Heads. 74 people were registered during the evacuation. ARC was subsequently asked by the Queensland Department of Communities to continue to provide assistance to residents for a further two weeks during the recovery phase. This entailed the provision of tea/coffee and lunch while they were clearing the debris and cleaning up the site.
Bombing Bali – Indonesia October 2005	Following the Bali bombings on 1 October, the NT Division was placed on alert early in the morning. A small ARC team met the first Qantas flight around 4am the next morning in case there was a need for personal support. Also in the early hours of the morning, 22 injured people were flown to Darwin in RAAF aircraft and a civilian charter plane. An ARC NRIS team registered the details of these victims at Royal Darwin Hospital with the information being provided to the respective authorities. The process ran smoothly and there was close interaction between agencies. Some personal support activities were also undertaken. At the national level, ARC participated as a member of the Australian Government Recovery Interdepartmental Committee providing ongoing liaison with Australian Government agencies about the needs of affected Australians. At the international level, ARC was in close liaison with the International Federation of Red Cross and the Indonesian Red Cross to determine any support needs.



## ARC Disaster and Emergency Services

Under *The Australian Constitution*, State and Territory governments are responsible for the protection of life and property within their jurisdictions. ARC Divisions maintain close links with their respective emergency management authorities and have clearly defined roles in State and Territory emergency management plans. Roles vary between ARC Divisions with the registration of disaster victims and responding to subsequent telephone inquiries using the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS) being the common task conducted in all jurisdictions.

Some examples of the work undertaken by ARC Divisions in the States and Territories in delivering disaster services in Australia in 2005 are summarised in Table 1. While these tasks may not seem significant in comparison with other recent international disasters, they are typical of the type and scale of event faced every year. Notwithstanding, the response effort represents a significant contribution by ARC volunteers.

ARC also provided a significant national recovery response following the 2002 Bali bombings, working in partnership with all Australian governments to ensure people affected were provided with comprehensive assistance programs.

At the national level, the Australian Government, through Emergency Management Australia (EMA), assists in the development of disaster management arrangements across States and Territories and co-ordinates assistance to States and Territories, when requested, following a disaster or emergency.

ARC Disaster Services mirror these arrangements. National Office has responsibility for national functions such as the development of policy and procedures, resource allocation and delivery, liaison with Australian

Government agencies including EMA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Family and Community Services and Centrelink. It also represents the ARC on key national bodies such as the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum, the Emergency Services Information Assurance Advisory Group and other committees formed to manage the domestic recovery aspects of events such as the Bali bombings.

To ensure a coherent approach to the delivery of disaster services nationally, the ARC has established two committees. These are the Disaster and Emergency Services Managers Forum (DESMF) and the National Disaster Services Advisory Committee (NDSAC). The DESMF is chaired by the General Manager Domestic Operations and comprises disaster managers from each Division. Its role is to provide inter-divisional liaison, co-ordination and co-operation at the operational level of disaster and emergency services. The NDSAC is chaired by a vice-president from the ARC Council and comprises senior representatives from National Office and Divisions and independent emergency management advisers. Its role is to provide advice to the ARC Board on disaster and emergency services and to examine and recommend new directions in disaster and emergency services. The DESMF informs the NDSAC on operational aspects related to the delivery of disaster and emergency services.

## Moving forward

During 2005, the NDSAC reviewed the traditional disaster and emergency services provided by the ARC and developed a framework of actions needed in order for the ARC to maintain its prominence as a recognised leader in the provision of disaster and emergency services. This was a timely review as the NDSAC recommendations have now been incorporated in the new ARC Strategic plan, *Strategy 2010*.

Some of the key disaster and emergency services strategies are outlined below.

## Registration and inquiry

With the increasing proliferation of mobile phone technology, there has been some suggestion that the future of the registration and inquiry services are limited as most people affected by disasters have a ready means at hand to inform family and friends of their location and status. However, recent experience from disasters such as *Hurricane Katrina* has shown that mobile and fixed communications are not always readily available following disasters due to damage to infrastructure or network congestion. Further, there still remains a need for disaster victims to be registered by government agencies for the purposes of subsequent medical or welfare needs. This is a role readily undertaken by ARC volunteers to free up government officials to undertake more pressing tasks. The ARC considers that the importance of the registration of disaster victims is unlikely to diminish in the near future and it will continue to afford a high priority this service.

The National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS) database is currently being migrated from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing to the ARC Information Technology Network. This will provide a permanent home for the NRIS database. EMA will continue to manage the development of NRIS and State and



ARC volunteers entering data into the NRIS data base during a recent exercise.

Territory authorities will continue to determine when NRIS is activated.

To enhance ARC's NRIS roles, a component of funding recently obtained under the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund will be used to develop and implement NRIS training and to recruit a diverse mix of disaster and emergency services volunteers. These funds will also be used to purchase equipment to enhance the ARC's capacity to transmit registration data from remote locations to inquiry centres in capital cities when conventional means are unavailable.

### Interpersonal skills

Often following a disaster, ARC volunteers are the first people in contact with traumatised disaster victims. This puts considerable strain on volunteers who may have been deployed to do registrations and who may not be trained to deal with the special needs of disaster victims. To alleviate this situation, the development of interpersonal skills training – supporting people in a crisis – is to become a core program offered to NRIS operators. In some areas of Australia the ARC already undertakes a formal personal support role – provision of comfort, care and referral to the relevant government professional services – however there is some variation in the approach undertaken. As part of the recruitment and training program, a national interpersonal skills training curriculum will be developed and all NRIS operators will be equipped with the necessary skills to ensure they are able to provide comfort to disaster victims in a professional way and without risk to their own well being.

### Responding to new threats

Traditionally, the ARC has responded to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and fires where there was little likelihood of volunteers becoming victims.



*An ARC volunteer comforts a victim of the 2002 Canberra bushfires.*

However, the changing threat scenario involving bombings, the use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons and the potential for health related pandemics requires new thinking. In such cases, the needs of victims may differ from past events particularly if they have been exposed to some form of contamination or infection. There is also potential for volunteers to become victims themselves even though they will not normally be allowed in high risk areas. As well as working with Australian disaster management authorities in developing plans for meeting the needs of those exposed to such environments, the ARC will draw on the experiences of other National Societies such as the American, British, Spanish and Indonesian Red Cross which have all had to deal with bombings in recent times. Being part of an international movement affords the ARC a unique opportunity to contribute to the emergency management sector in Australia.

### Other opportunities

In the past, the ARC's role has been predominantly focused on the provision of assistance during the response and recovery phase of a disaster. While there is a

need to revisit the cost benefit of providing these services, there may be other areas in which the ARC can make an effective contribution. Opportunities for broadening the ARC disaster and emergency services role are to be scoped. This may lead to seeking greater involvement in areas such as disaster preparedness which have traditionally been the domain of other non-government or government agencies. There may be places, such as in regional or rural areas, where by virtue of its presence, the ARC is better placed to foster disaster preparedness related activities. ARC again can draw on the extensive international experience of the Movement to inform and enhance Australia's preparedness for disasters.

### Partnerships

Another option for delivering disaster and emergency services may be in partnership with others. Such arrangements have the potential for greater sharing of expertise and more effective use of resources. The ARC Victorian Division is paving the way in this area, providing support to St John Ambulance in the provision of emergency first aid at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

NDSAC is reviewing the expertise and resources the ARC could provide in any strategic partnership related to disaster and emergency services. On a broader front, the ARC is exploring strategic partnerships at the local, national, regional and global levels after working with a number of other partners in the response to the 2002 Bali bombings and the 2004 Asian quakes and tsunamis.

### **Disaster appeals**

ARC has demonstrated its capacity to deliver effective and efficient emergency appeals, including the 2002 Bali Appeal, 2002 Farmhand Appeal, and 2005 Asian Quake and Tsunamis Appeal. When called on for assistance, the ARC also supports emergency appeals in State and Territory jurisdictions.

This experience places the organisation in an excellent position to manage future disaster appeals of any size. Whenever necessary, the ARC will offer this expertise, and that of its counterparts around the world, to the emergency services sector in Australia.

### **National recovery arrangements**

The ARC's national capacity is far greater than the sum of its parts. This was evident when, following the Bali bombings in 2002, the organisation provided extensive recovery support through the ARC Bali Appeal and established a network of caseworkers across Australia. This was a first for the ARC and at a scale and type of emergency not previously seen in Australia.

This experience, supported by that of other National Societies which have responded to similar events around the world, places the Australian Red Cross in a sound position to play a significant role in recovery arrangements for any future national emergencies.

ARC has been openly contributing this knowledge and experience in assisting Australian governments in their response to other recent international events such as the Asian quake and tsunamis and, more recently, the 2005 Bali bombings. ARC continues to seek opportunities to use its expertise to assist government agencies in their role of assisting Australians to recover from disasters.

### **Conclusion**

The Red Cross is a major player in dealing with disasters and emergencies throughout the world. Within Australia, the Australian Red Cross works closely with the civil authorities in delivering a range of disaster and emergency services to citizens affected by disasters. The majority of these services are delivered by a dedicated band of volunteers located in communities throughout the nation.

While the ARC has been delivering these services for many years, it cannot afford to rest on its laurels. There is a need to review the cost effectiveness of the current services and to explore opportunities for an enhanced and more diverse role. Only in this way can the Australian Red Cross continue to make a difference.

### **Author**

Rod McKinnon is an Australian Red Cross volunteer. He was the Director of Planning and Operations at Emergency Management Australia from 1996 to 2003. Following retirement, he was invited to join the Australian Red Cross' National Disaster Services Advisory Committee as a disaster management adviser. In November 2004, he was elected to the Australian Red Cross Society Council as a Vice President and appointed Chairman of the Committee.

# Notions of customer service

*Peter Floyd explores ways to integrate emergency service interactions to deliver superior 'customer service'*

## Abstract

Do emergency services need to communicate better with each other and improve their communication strategies to keep the customer satisfied? Can better use be made of the local resources of the emergency services by agencies breaking out of their organisational silos?

This article explores the notion that knowing our partners in emergency management and understanding their respective roles and capabilities will increase the ability to provide better customer service. Some agencies must stop 'guarding their roles' and shift their focus more to the needs of the community and integration with other services during down time as well as in times of crisis.

## Introduction

Customer service is often misunderstood as a term and does not only apply to organisations which exchange money for goods but also to those that just provide a service, such as emergency services.

In simple terms one pays for goods and/or services and hopefully the good and/or the service provided was to a satisfactory standard. As the bean counters have moved in we have seen privatisation happen *on mass* over the last few years and the need for all government agencies to be more accountable with the public dollar and the service they provide. This has sometimes meant a restructuring

process which usually meant, but not always, a loss of jobs. The motive behind this process was cost effectiveness, capability enhancement, competitiveness in the market place and better business continuity.

All emergency services, including the predominately volunteer ones such as the various Australian, State and Territory emergency services, have also had to embrace the notion of customer service. There is nothing wrong with trying to bring a focus on what and how well we go about doing our legislated roles and in turn how we allocate and spend the hard fought dollar from State Government. The various volunteer State and Territory emergency services are mainly funded from State budgets and are at times quite often assisted by local government in one way or another. In general, the emergency services do not receive payment for services rendered in terms of responding to emergencies. Many volunteer agencies also fundraise at a local level to supplement government funding.

Therefore, the services that the various emergency agencies provide are seen as *free* by the community regardless whether the response is to a roof blown off a house, a motor vehicle accident or a flood rescue. These services provided are also available to 'customers' 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Thus, the term *customer service* can be applied to any organisation, which basically offers *service* as well as or instead of goods as part of their function.

What emergency services actually 'sell' is public safety and this is ably assisted by the various public safety programs that the respective

services implement nationally. To achieve this, all emergency service staff require training to acquire the skills needed to do the job. All emergency services, both paid and volunteer, have vigorously embraced competency-based training for several years and can receive nationally recognised and transferable qualifications.

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) employs full-time business managers (Division Controllers for example), public relations experts, human resource professionals and others at State level. Professionalism is still an essential part of any volunteer service with such a high profile and some skills are only available on a paid basis. However these emergency services do not need to be paid to be professional in attitude or how they apply their skills. The NSW SES is proud of its versatility to perform an enormous range of tasks around public safety.

The NSW SES is limited by its statutory core roles of flood rescue and storm damage response. In some areas it also has a legislated role to provide road crash rescue service. Every year at various locations throughout NSW, the SES provides logistical support in terms of welfare to the Rural Fire Service during bush fire emergencies and assists the police with land or urban searches for missing persons.

Exposure to the multitude of varied incidents requires staff to be multi-skilled and expand their knowledge base which helps make the organisation information rich. What is new and different today becomes



common knowledge tomorrow. If versatility alone was benchmarked staff would score highly every time.

However, public opinion and the praise of other emergency services counts considerably, when praise is received, self esteem as volunteers and as an emergency service, increases exponentially.

It has been suggested a performance-based criterion can impersonalise emergency service staff. In recent years many organisations such as hospitals, local government and emergency services—both paid and volunteer—have adopted the notion of customer service and have attempted ways to measure it. Thus *key performance indicators* appear to be part of most customer service charters. However, when the hierarchies write their mission statements and customer service charters, who are they actually being written for? In a practical context those on the ground see the greater public as part of their community and *not* customers. The validity of these documents is based on the function these documents serve, rather than submitting them as a formality to senior management.

Mission statements have worth because they formalise the organisation's purpose and what the community can expect in terms of service delivery. Emergency services need to know how well they are progressing based on how the public measure their performance. For example, does the public measure performance based on the emergency services mission statements having relevance to fire fighters at a major structural fire; a rescue helicopter at the scene of an overturned boat; or an SES rescue team extracting an injured person from a motor vehicle accident? It is suggested this evaluation does not take place at the time, but only when the emergency service has achieved an outcome. Furthermore, good outcomes—achievable ones

(and therefore measurable) are what the emergency services are there for.

There needs to be a degree of simplification. Mission statements contain a series of outcomes which emergency services would like (or need and want) to achieve, and questions that require an answer. Thus emergency services must determine how they can do the job they are trained for within the constraints of the resources available. Alternatively, do emergency services need more resources, such as communication strategies, to assist them? In addition, better communication between services could mean better use of local resources. Often local resources are under estimated, mainly because of a lack of communication between services. If there is a need to measure performance then emergency services need do something with the information we gather. The information gathering process should, in theory, add value to the respective organisations if its usefulness can be justified.

What is really happening is the correlation of the dollar value to community benefit. Can we possibly increase performance or customer satisfaction and is it in fact necessary? The answer is yes on both counts.

One use of key performance indicators is the means of measuring actual response times against ideal response times. This is commonly done for the fire and ambulance services. Response times are critical when lives are at risk and it is the first thing to be criticised by the public—our customers. In reality, what is happening is a benchmarking against criteria which is suggesting (or insisting) on a need to do a particular task in a designated timeframe: for example, to be considered as providing good customer service.

To improve customer service the SES, like other business organisations, needs to understand

its customers' wants and needs. It must also be prepared to make the definition between these wants and needs in a time of crisis as it risks over servicing some clients with the affect of delaying response times to others also in need.

Experience shows that the public can become agitated when it appears the organisation has not satisfied customers' wants. It is important that we define roles clearly enough and that we are there to satisfy community needs. The SES is an emergency service made up of, predominately, volunteers who have left work or home at a moment's notice to help their community. They often go the extra mile to help people and frequently have a problem saying no to tasks outside normal roles. This can lead to community perception that we are jacks of all trades and can fix anything. Sometimes we have to say no because we are not there as trades people but as emergency service workers with a particular skill set to carry out particular tasks under State legislation. In a time of a major disaster, and in preparation for it, we must ensure that partnerships with other relevant services are strong. Emergency services must understand everyone's respective roles and abilities as this directly affects the scope of our performance and the standards of our customer service. Emergency management has been recognised as a business for some time but it can only operate successfully in partnerships with all community groups.

## Who are our partners?

To understand the notion of emergency management in NSW it is important to acknowledge the vast array of organisations that have a role to play in any given event. This can be divided into two main areas, *response* (or the combat agencies) and *recovery* (the welfare agencies). The first group includes the various fire and rescue services, police, ambulance, and SES while the second group includes the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Department

of Family and Community Services and their equivalents in the various States and Territories. It must be understood that at various times the combat agencies also have a role in the recovery process but usually after their initial responsibilities for the event have finished or are at least near completion. The recovery process and the role of the various agencies in this most important facet of emergency management are often underestimated by the combat agencies. Too much focus placed on the response aspect often undermines the need to involve the recovery agencies at an early stage, preferably in the disaster planning process at the local level. The process needs to focus on communication and not guarding local knowledge but rather sharing it.

Acknowledgement is due for the parts played by other government agencies, local councils, utility companies and many other community groups who have something to offer at the time of major disasters. Emergency managers are well aware that there is no defined time when response stops and recovery begins. Managers must look at disasters on a circular rather than linear timeline. The recovery process is going to start almost immediately, therefore managers need to appreciate the concerns of the local recovery manager and ensure there are open lines of communication with all concerned. At this stage customer service is still of high importance, documents such as mission statements become less important. Emergency managers act on instinct at this stage.

Because of this response, agencies will be working alongside welfare and recovery groups in the very early stages of large disasters possibly while backup is still arriving. Of course the biggest partner is the local community itself therefore emergency managers must not underestimate the notion of 'self help', or the work done by resilient and self-sustaining communities to give assistance to themselves prior to the arrival of the emergency



*Emergency services must understand everyone's respective roles and abilities as this directly affects performance and levels of customer service. (Photo courtesy Nikki Joyce, Western Advocate)*

services. The need to return to some sort of normality as soon as possible is very strong in a community and the more a community can do to help itself the more they will feel they have ownership and control of their destiny.

Contrary to popular belief there is generally not much panic at major incidents so those in need will be quickly calmed and quite often by complete strangers. A multi-agency response will occur when a major disaster impacts on a community. This raises issues such as who should be doing what, when do they do it and how should it be done.

### **What is your job?**

The emergency services in general know their specific roles but this often leads them to operate within their "organisational silos". However, agencies must come out of their silos during "down time" as quite often interagency interaction happens only at the scene of an incident or disaster.

In reality, the format of emergency plans of course allows for, but cannot always specify, the multitude of variations that will occur during an emergency. In other words, emergency planning gives us guidelines but, they are fluid by necessity in case emergency managers are subjected to the what-if scenario. They determine, in general terms, who does what and when.

Planning is also about communication between emergency services. This communication can override the fact that only a basic plan may currently exist, and that emergency services may have to, at times, improvise. This acknowledges the reality and the ability of a particular emergency service to have the potential to perform other tasks outside its normal role.

However, there are many variables when emergency services attempt to define and deliver customer service from a generic view point, Emergency services can state in general terms, we do what we do to serve the community and respond to their call for assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Meeting a mission statement is one thing, but quite often, they include a paragraph regarding relationships with other services. Most volunteers do not need to know what the mission statement is. Their primary concern is completing the tasks they are trained to do. This is not a criticism, but rather a fact. Emergency managers need to ensure everyone in the chain of command understands what they are there for; hence everyone can focus on the broader goals.

If we don't have the resources to do a job internally then we need to know who else can assist, such as other

emergency services. Many emergency service volunteers are keen to cross train for example, to add variety to their regular training activities. The cost of not doing the above is wasted resources and in the event of a major incident requiring responses to multiple locations such as a major storm event then, maybe the better solution is a different solution.

Perhaps, NSW should follow the direction of fellow State and Territories, by combining all the emergency services under one umbrella, rationalising resources and implementing cross training across those services. If necessary smaller rescue services could be absorbed into larger ones to present a more corporate face of rescue to the wider community. This would also maximise the budget, increase the flow of information and eliminate the information blocks between services thus sharing knowledge. This rationalisation could potentially make it easier for community education

professionals to get their message across. Currently the community obtains information about a range of disasters that can befall them and perhaps a uniform approach would help. Hence, instead of the 'fridge magnet approach', a combined communication strategy may be more prudent. Taking a more holistic approach will allow emergency services to educate more comprehensively, across several areas at the same time, over a period of time.

### Conclusion

There is much work to be done to get communication flowing between services and maintain and grow strong links. Individual emergency services can not be everything to everybody. Volunteers, in particular, are keen to help their communities but should be free, as individuals and a service, to admit limitations and plan to fill any gaps with other available resources.

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### Author

Peter Floyd is a full time Region Controller with New South Wales State Emergency Service. He has spent the last 12 years involved in various agencies in both volunteer and paid positions which have a legislated role to play in NSW emergency management arrangements.

He has completed emergency management training at all levels including Recovery Management and the Professional Development Program for Emergency Management Officers at Emergency Management Australia Institute Mt Macedon, Victoria. He is also a member of NSW SES Critical Incident Support Team and holds post graduate qualifications in Management Communication.

# Enhancing links to further benefit volunteers and their communities

*Len Foster looks at some of the challenges facing volunteers and the Australian emergency management sector in today's ever-changing and volatile environment*



*Len Foster presented this topic at the 2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit in Canberra.*

## Introduction

Maintaining and developing two-way linkages with communities and establishing strategic, national perspectives are two crucial factors that will help meet the challenges facing the Emergency Management Volunteer Sector in Australia.

Ten years ago, emergency services volunteer organisations were inward-looking and tactical, rather than future-driven and strategic. The drivers for change identified at the Emergency Management Volunteers Summit in 2001 were tactical in nature and many of the issues are still relevant today. These drivers are:

- community expectations – such as the expectations placed on fire fighters.
- legal matters – such as coronial inquires and occupational health and safety fire-ground and work place safety.
- media scrutiny.
- emergency service events – such as destruction.

- trends to community empowerment – such as recognising that the community is an essential partner.
- changing workforce roles – such as understanding that volunteers offer the same competencies as paid personnel.
- economies of scale – the need to recognise the advantages of emergency service agencies creating strategic partnerships and becoming larger.

For organisations to become strategic there needs to be a national mind set change involving two issues – linkages and scale.

## Linkages

To translate social capital, volunteers and volunteer organisations must be directly linked to their communities. Volunteers have the knowledge, skills and are the glue that can enable this link – in other words, volunteers need to become social agents of change.

There are several factors that facilitate linkages. Volunteers are people who have a local identity – they are often well known and trusted on the local scene. They provide and add value. With support, they get recognition and that, in turn, results in increased recruitment and retention.

Volunteers work with the community where linkages are created. Relevancy doesn't just happen. It must be worked for and learnt. To be successful, there must be a relationship with the community and a developed understanding. Emergency Service organisations need to develop

marketing, promotional and lobbying programs to build and maintain that relationship.

## Scale

Organisations ignore issues and fight the concept of scale at their peril. The aggregation of the volunteer movement with business strategies creates capacity to make and implement important decisions. Scaling attracts end resources providing linkages to politics, agents and sponsoring bodies. Some major benefits of scaling are:

- better infrastructure;
- integrated service delivery;
- increased effectiveness in adding value;
- increased voice of legitimacy;
- increased communication effectiveness; and
- Shared legal risks.

Creating a corporate body requires an enormous amount of work and significant obligation. If accepted, those organisations have a significant role to support with funds and infrastructure. It also leads to joint decision-making processes and a participatory approach with volunteers. There are a lot of drivers and it is up to us to identify and manage them – it is critical that we value volunteers within our community.

## Author

Mr Len Foster AO, is currently CEO of AFAC, a peak body representing fire, emergency services and land management agencies in the Australasian region.



# Hurricane Katrina

by Mike Tarrant, Principal Education Officer, EMA

The disaster triggered by *Hurricane Katrina* raises many questions. How could the most technologically advanced and richest country on earth allow a highly vulnerable population to be left in a well documented high risk area? How could there be such a massive systemic failure across three levels of government? What may be the implications for disaster management practice? In fact it is the characteristics, rarity and complexity which make disasters so prone to myths and behaviours based on inappropriate assumptions.

If people have to make judgements based on very limited direct experience then this is where research can provide assistance in enhancing practice. If disaster management as a field is to add value to society then there must be strenuous efforts to integrate research findings and emergency management practice.

The *Times Picayune*, a New Orleans newspaper, ran a special edition in June 2002 called "Washing Away" from which the following quotes were extracted. They generate a whole series of questions to be addressed by researchers.

*Left Behind: Evacuation is the most certain route to safety, but it may be a nightmare and 100,000 without transportation will be left behind.*

*The Federal Emergency Management Agency is preparing a plan for the unprecedented response that would be needed if the New Orleans bowl flooded.*

*In 2002 Michael Lowder FEMA Chief of Policy and Planning asserted "In concert with state and local officials FEMA is studying evacuation procedures, post disaster rescues strategies temporary housing and*

*technical issues such as how to pump out water trapped inside levees."*

*"Catastrophic disasters are best defined in that they totally outstrip local and state resources, which is why the federal government needs to play a role"*

*Joe Allbaugh FEMA Director stated.*

*"There are a half dozen or so contingencies around the nation that cause me great concern, and one of them is here" (New Orleans).*

To people outside New Orleans the level of violence was surprising, however when taken in context it is hardly surprising. But was this reflected in planning assumptions? A few indicators that may help put the disaster into perspective include:

- In 2004 university researchers conducted an experiment in which the police fired 700 blank rounds in a New Orleans neighbourhood in a single afternoon. No one called to report the gunfire.
- New Orleans has a homicide rate 10 times that of the American average and 42 per cent of serious crimes were deemed by prosecutors as not suitable for court so no action was taken.
- About 27 per cent of the population of 484,000 are living under the poverty line. In 65 per cent of families living in poverty, there is no husband present. 35 per cent did not have cars.

The actual level of violence is being contexted and only time will tell what really happened.

What about the mitigation activities in this well-documented high risk area? Settlers built the original city on a curve of high land that the Mississippi River had deposited, hence the nickname Crescent City.

By the mid 19th century, developers began clearing and draining swamps behind the crescent, even dumping landfill into Lake Pontchartrain to extend the city. Most of the city is below sea level, sinking at a rapid rate. Some sites have subsided as much as two feet in 60 years. This legacy is apparent in a study conducted by a team of geotechnical experts into levee failures. One of the levee failures was caused by deep, soft peat rich soil that extended below the sheet piling that makes up the core of the levee. This soft wet material slid sideways and the levee failed under pressure.

Levees can be useful in dealing with some aspects of flooding, the crucial disaster management issue is to manage the risks of the levees failing or being overtopped.

There are a very wide range of research projects to address issues generated by *Katrina* and there is much anticipation as to the outcomes.

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# Australia's emergency response to the Bali bombings



Crews unload equipment for transfer to Bali at Darwin RAAF Base, October 2005.

On 1 October 2005, a number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) exploded at restaurants in Jimbaran Bay and Kuta in Bali. As a result, a large number of tourists and Indonesian nationals were killed or seriously injured. EMA co-ordinated consequence management arrangements under the *Overseas Mass Casualty Plan* and the *Australian Overseas Assistance Plan*

The *Overseas Mass Casualty Plan* is a national plan developed by EMA following the Bali bombings of 2002, which was endorsed by COAG on 3 June 2005. The plan was written specifically for incidents such as the Bali disaster, where a number of Australians were injured overseas and required quick repatriation.

Arrangements in response to this incident, included:

- deployment of New South Wales and Western Australian medical personnel to provide medical support on board Qantas flights

returning to Australia with people who may have been affected by the Bali bombings;

- deployment of an Australian Emergency Response Team, including an EMA officer, to Bali to assist with the consequence management response;
- sending an EMA liaison officer to Darwin to co-ordinate arrangements within Australia of injured people brought back from Bali;
- redistribution of seriously ill patients from Royal Darwin Hospital to John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle;
- deployment of a portable image intensifier from QLD Health to assist Indonesian medical authorities in Bali in the identification and removal of blast shrapnel from victims; and
- co-ordination of the return to Australia of deceased persons.

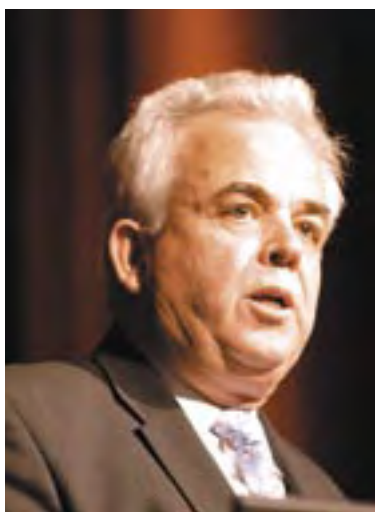
Daily meetings of the Australian Emergency Management Committee,

the Australian Health Disaster Management Policy Committee, and the National Disaster Recovery Network ensured appropriate actions were co-ordinated and delivered by all relevant Australian Government agencies.

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock thanked agencies involved in Australia's emergency response in the immediate aftermath of the Bali bombings. Mr Ruddock said agencies had responded quickly, decisively and effectively to the tragedy in Bali, demonstrating the high level of co-operation and co-ordination across jurisdictions.

# 2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit Summary

## Opening address by Mr David Templeman, Director General of Emergency Management Australia



Mr David Templeman

Immediately before the opening address, the delegates observed one minute's silence out of respect for the Australian military personnel who lost their lives during the humanitarian operations in Indonesia following the Indian Ocean tsunami.

David Templeman began by giving an account of the types and scale of emergencies which threaten Australia and the region. He acknowledged the contribution made by volunteers to the emergency management sector, and called on all governments to recognise the vital role played by volunteers.

He reminded delegates that EMA and the Department of Family and Community Services co-sponsored the first ever National

Emergency Management Volunteers Summit. As part of the United Nations sponsored *International Year of the Volunteer*, he recalled that the main themes of the first Summit were recognition, legal protection, training and funding. This led to the emergence of new initiatives as part of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) review of natural disasters, which was commissioned in June 2001. In December 2003, COAG gave in principle support to the recommendations of the COAG Review report.

Since the COAG Review, the emergency management sector has seen a greater emphasis on security issues and the impact this has had on Australian society. He spoke of the recent tragedy of the Indian Ocean tsunami, which he said reminded us that "we cannot lose our focus on the possibility, indeed probability, of a significant catastrophe occurring in Australia".

He thanked the organisations represented at the Summit for assisting in the logistics and co-ordination of the Australian assistance to Indonesia following the tsunami. In particular, he applauded the way they came together as one, demonstrating the strong emergency management capability in Australia, which is strongly supported by so many volunteers.

Finally, he introduced the Hon Philip Ruddock, the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

## Address by the Hon Philip Ruddock, MP, Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia



The Hon Philip Ruddock and Keith Pakenham, Country Fire Authority, Vic.

The Hon Philip Ruddock opened his address by stating how fortunate Australia is to have more than 500,000 volunteers in the emergency management sector, with exceptional skills and outstanding abilities. He described Australia as a land of extremes. With the risk of bush fires, floods and cyclones ever present, and used the recent example of *Cyclone Ingrid*, which put hundreds of communities on alert. He added that the risk of terrorist attack has added a new and urgent dimension to emergency management planning.

He paid tribute to the scale and scope of the work done by emergency management sector volunteers, often at great personal risk, and stated that governments can never hope to replicate the work done by volunteers, as

emergencies are best managed at the grass roots level. He said, "Australians are in the best position to work for the good of their communities and to overcome the problems they face".

This philosophy underpins the Australian Government's new program, *Working Together to Manage Emergencies*, which recognises the need to develop self reliance at both the community and local government levels to enhance community safety. He said, "The Government recognises the expertise you provide in this area. Accordingly the Government has allocated \$16 million for a National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund". He advised that the fund will provide grants aimed at boosting recruiting, retention and training for volunteer organisations in the first responder role.

The Attorney-General stated that EMA had consulted with many of the volunteer emergency services and other volunteer organisations from the emergency management sector in order to ensure the new program achieves practical outcomes for both volunteers and local communities.

He added that the Australian Government is also establishing a Local Grants scheme to assist in the development and implementation of community risk management plans, consistent with a National Strategic Plan.

He concluded by saying "I know you don't volunteer for money, personal reward or grand recognition. You volunteer because

you care, because you want to make a difference and because you want to contribute to our great country. On behalf of the Australian Government I want to assure you that your efforts, your dedication, professionalism and sheer hard work are well and truly recognised and appreciated".

The Attorney-General then introduced and welcomed His Excellency Mr John Landy, AC, MBE, Governor of Victoria and Administrator of the Commonwealth of Australia.

### **Official opening of the 2005 Volunteers Summit by His Excellency John Landy, AC, MBE, Governor of Victoria and Administrator of the Commonwealth of Australia**



*His Excellency John Landy AC, MBE*

His Excellency conveyed best wishes for the Summit from the Governor General, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffrey, and declared

that he was honoured to be among so many dedicated Australians who make such extraordinary contributions to the nation. He continued, "The tragic event off Nias Island serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerability and uncertainty of life for all men and women who serve in potentially dangerous circumstances".

He paid tribute to the deeply embedded sense of service which is evident in the Australian community, attributing it to the harsh Australian environment, and to the continent's vast distances and isolated communities, which necessitate the use of commonsense and self-reliance.

He said that he would be surprised if many other nations match the level of voluntary service achieved in Australia, with some 4.3 million people giving around 3.5 hours each week to a wide range of organisations. "It is estimated that 500,000 of these Australians come from your own ranks". He added that volunteers have proven time and time again how invaluable their contributions are to our nation, and Australian communities recognise the importance of volunteers during times of crisis, particularly during floods, fires and cyclones.

He concluded by stating that he sees the volunteer's role as one of "active citizenship". He applauded the work done by volunteers, and expressed his encouragement and thanks for their commitment. "Whatever your role in emergency management, I trust you will find great value in this Summit".



## Keynote address by Maj. General Hori Howard AO, MC, ESM (Retd)



Maj General Hori Howard

### Where volunteers have been and where we are going

Major General Hori Howard, Chair of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF), delivered the keynote address of the 2005 *Emergency Management Volunteers Summit*. He traced the development of volunteer organisations involved in managing emergencies, from 2001 to the present day and outlined what the future may hold.

Maj. General Howard said that until 2001, emergency management was not on the national agenda except during actual emergencies. Not surprisingly, he explained, emergency management volunteer organisations were also not on any main agendas. He said that now emergency management was firmly on the national agenda, a proper profile of the volunteer end of emergency management was possible.

He said, "Until the first Volunteer Summit in 2001, there was no real sense of togetherness amongst volunteer organisations dealing with emergencies. They worked well together during emergencies, but did not regard themselves as a sector.

The situation changed in 2001 because of two events – the first ever *Emergency Management Volunteer Summit* and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Review into Natural Disasters that recognised the vital role played by the emergency management volunteer organisations.

During the inaugural Summit, the themes of training, legal protection, funding and recognition were examined in depth and attendees formulated many recommendations. The main tangible outcome of the first Summit was the formation of the AEMVF, which had its first meeting in April 2002. The creation of the AEMVF was a real step towards the formation of a volunteer emergency management sector.

The COAG Review into Natural Disasters was also significant to the future of the sector, as there was a wide-ranging recommendation included in the report, which called on all levels of government to provide increased assistance to volunteer emergency management organisations. Fortunately, the Volunteer Summit was held before the COAG Review as it provided the basis for the recommendations regarding the volunteer sector in the COAG Review report.

The AEMVF has made steady progress, concentrating on sharing ideas and achieving peak body status for the sector. With support from Emergency Management Australia, it is now conducting a major survey into the costs of being a volunteer.

A report on the volunteer recommendations from the COAG Review report was tabled at the first meeting of the Ministers responsible for emergency management held in March 2005 chaired by the Attorney-General. The report maintained that despite considerable progress on the main issues raised at the Volunteer Summit and in the report of the COAG Review since

2001 – there was still much to be done. The Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC) is now responsible for developing proposals to provide tangible support to organisations in the sector and to report back to the next meeting of the Ministers later in the year.

In explaining the purpose of the 2005 Summit, Maj. General Howard said the AEMVF was seeking advice on the vision for the sector's future agenda and said the Summit would continue to pursue the first Summit's four main themes of training, legal protection, funding and recognition.

In addition, he explained, the AEMVF will continue to co-ordinate the survey on the cost of being a volunteer, seek greater recognition for the Forum as the peak body of the sector – particularly from the Department of Family and Community Services, attempt to rationalise any future offers of hardship payments by the Australian Government, and continue to share good ideas.

In concluding his keynote address, Maj. General Howard said "the emergency management sector is the backbone of Australia's emergency management system. As a collective it is effective and efficient. Governments and the community however must acknowledge the sector's stresses and strains".

His final remarks left the room contemplating, "Above everything else, volunteers still believe they are largely taken for granted – a situation that must be turned around. Australians must recognise that it is demanding to be a volunteer. If they don't look after them and recognise them more effectively, they will lose them", he said.

## Dr Fiona Wood AM, FRACS, Australian of the Year 2005



Dr Fiona Wood

### Drive the change from the front

*“There is only one certainty – change is part of life.”*

Following the Bali bombings in October 2002, Dr Fiona Wood, Head of Royal Perth Hospital's Burns Unit and Director of Western Australia Burns Service led a courageous and committed team in the fight to save 28 patients with between two and 92 per cent body burns, deadly infections and delayed shock.

Her strong leadership and vision to plan for a large-scale disaster five years before the Bali tragedy brought world-wide praise and recognition to the Royal Perth Hospital Burns Unit and highlighted the ground-breaking research into burns treatment in Western Australia. She emphasised the need for collaboration, planning and exercising and for first responders to be well trained because what they do initially can minimise the long-term effects on victims.

Dr Wood opened her address by challenging the audience with questions “What changes need to be made? Why change? What's wrong with what we do now? Who's driving the change?”

On reflection of her experiences, she said, “We should take the challenge: not to be driven but to be driving the change from the front”.

Giving an example of a school visit where a student asked her to explain her positive attitude, Dr Wood gave a demonstration of the “Living pulsating spirit of positiveness” she has experienced in Australia. “Imagine that a meteor is going to hit. In one room they are saying “everyone's going to die”, in another room, the emergency management people are saying excitedly, “we're getting ready for the biggest fireworks display ever”.

“The drivers for change should be societal and it starts with you and in universities and schools. Children are vital in the whole scheme of things and we should facilitate positivism around them.

“I implore you to lift the ante and get people over the line so that we become a society based on the fabric and integrity of every one of us. It's a challenge, but it's do-able.”

## Mr Len Foster AO



Mr Len Foster

### The future of volunteerism in Australia deeply etched in strategic community linkages

In his address to the Summit as presenter of Theme Two, *Enhancing links to further benefit volunteers and their communities*, Mr. Len Foster AO, Chief Executive Officer of the Australasian Fire Authorities

Council (AFAC), maintained that developing two-way linkages with communities and establishing strategic, national perspectives are two crucial factors that will help meet the challenges facing the emergency management volunteer sector in Australia.

He confirmed the mindset change from the tactical issues of the previous Summit, into the strategic issues that the sector needs to address to ensure success today and into the future.

“In the past, emergency service organisations have been insular and reactionary in nature, leading to widespread waste. There was no national approach to the emergency management environment and no mechanisms for communication between agencies,” he said.

He outlined the significant changes in community expectations over the last ten years that have driven change within the emergency management environment including: an increase in litigiousness and the changing way people view volunteers; increasing public sector and media scrutiny of emergency management; a trend to community empowerment; and increasing community acceptance of volunteers as an essential part of emergency services activity.

“Today we must recognise that the community is the most important strategic partner that we have, but a partnership requires an empowerment where the community is actually working with us. An informed and prepared community will reduce the efforts required in our response activity and improve our ability to recover after events,” he said.

He indicated that emergency service organisations cannot do the job on their own any more. He said the environment is changing but if the relevancy and value-adding is not there, how do emergency service organisations remain relevant?

## Tax Commissioner launches new publications for non-profit sector



Mr Michael Carmody

The Commissioner of Taxation, Michael Carmody launched two new publications for the non-profit sector at the 2005 *Emergency Management Volunteers Summit*. These are:

- *Volunteers and tax* which explains the tax treatment of common payments made to volunteers. It provides guidance on the GST, fringe benefits tax and pay-as-you-go withholding obligations that may arise on transactions involving volunteers.
- *Non-profit organisations and fundraising* which explains the various concessions that exist under the income tax, GST and fringe benefits laws to assist non-profit organisations with their fundraising activities.

The guide also outlines the State, Territory and local government requirements in relation to fundraising.

These two publications are part of the range of advisory, educational and electronic products and services the Tax Office has prepared for non-profit organisations. Non-profit organisations can choose the information that best suits their needs by referring to the *Take a closer look* flyer for non-profit organisations.

## Summary of recommendations from the Summit

### AEMVF Strategy

- The AEMVF should continue to pursue the themes of recognition, training, legal protection and funding, with a particular focus on recognition.
- The AEMVF should continue to work through EMA on the initiatives contained in Recommendation 58 of the Council of Australian Government Review into Natural Disasters Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements report.
- The AEMVF should seek formal recognition as the appropriate national peak body for the volunteer emergency management sector.
- The AEMVF should become more visible, providing more information on what it is doing, on best practice, and research.
- The AEMVF should continue to advocate for appropriate representation for the sector in the new training advisory arrangements.

### Recognition – Government

- Volunteer organisations should strengthen their links with their State and Territory governments, to ensure that their worth is well recognised and they receive appropriate support.

- Volunteer organisations should develop strong links with local government as a means of providing access to a wide range of support and to enhance their credibility.

### Recognition – Community

- Volunteer organisations should engage the local media, providing regular information on matters of community interest, particularly during operations.
- Volunteers should become involved in local community safety programs, engaging service clubs, churches, and other community based groups, and conduct demonstrations and school visits.

### Recruiting and Retention

- Volunteer organisations should develop innovative strategies to attract younger volunteers and to retain older volunteers.
- Organisations should consider restructuring and reorganising in order to compensate for the smaller pool of volunteers in some areas, and apply flexibility in respect of volunteers' availability for operations.
- Organisations should develop new strategies to minimise the amount of time volunteers are required to devote to non-operational tasks, including increasing the use of permanent staff.

### Training

- Volunteer organisations should develop robust and flexible training regimes to ensure that high quality training is readily available to all their volunteers, particularly those in rural areas.

### Legal protection

- Governments and organisations must ensure that their volunteers and the organisations themselves are well protected against litigation, and in the event of accident, illness or death.

### Management of volunteer organisations

- Organisations should ensure that they pay more attention to providing good leadership and effective management for their volunteers, paying particular attention to recognition.
- Organisations should develop strategic partnerships with other volunteer organisations at the most senior levels and at lower levels, co-operate, work together, share resources, and conduct joint training and exercises.



# Value our Volunteers Photographic Competition

Based on the adage that a “picture is worth a thousand words”, EMA hosted a national “Volunteers in Action” photographic competition as part of the 2005 *Emergency Management Volunteers Summit*. The competition, which catered for photographs taken between July 2003 and January 2005, aimed

to attract a range of photographs depicting volunteers in the course of their emergency activities, in all types of situations.

Of the almost 200 entries received, winners were chosen from two streams – professional photographers and non-professional

photographers who are volunteers belonging to an emergency agency. The selection provided shows the diversity of volunteering activities and its direct contribution to daily lives. Winners and High Commended entrants received vouchers for photographic equipment.



Photographer: Collette Harold

A volunteer comforts a frightened child at an accident scene.



Photographer: Geoff Potter

Grateful thanks to a Coast Guard officer after rescue from a burning yacht off Double Island Point, QLD.



Crews responded to a deliberately lit fire early one summer morning.



Photographer: Ashley Hosking



Photographer: Kevin Withnall

Wollongong City SES in training.



Photographer: Keith Pakenham

A volunteer fire fighter and a Fire Officer working together.



Photographer: Alton C Bond

Emergency Management Training in First Aid, patient care, stretcher handling and moving patient to suitable pick up point for evacuation.



Photographer: Keith Pakenham

CFA fire fighters from Dandenong work to release a trapped man from machinery.



Photographer: Ashley Hosking

Volunteer crews and instructors practice control of large gas fires.



Volunteers from the Shoalhaven Marine Rescue Association joined with the Royal Australian Navy in a recovery exercise in the waters off Crookhaven Heads.



Photographer: Fred Tyler

Top: Crews respond to a single vehicle roll over.  
Bottom: An SES volunteer, with a CFS fire fighter as a patient, practice vertical rescue techniques.



Photographer: Ashley Hosking



Photographer: Pip McGowan



Photographer: Keith Pakenham

CFA fire fighters, both volunteer and career, work with teams of Paramedics from the Metropolitan Ambulance Service to release a trapped female.



Below: Two Upper Ferntree Gully members try sand bagging to stop water entering a work site after flash flooding.



Photographer: Michael Drobbe



Photographer: Keith Withnall



Photographer: Philip Mosgrave



Photographer: Ashley Hosking

Top left: SES volunteers take time away from families to train and perform their duties with care, precision and compassion. Top right: Surf lifesavers practice rescue and resuscitation. Above: Volunteer fire fighters, along with Police and Ambulance officers, undertake joint simulated car crash training exercise.



Photographer: Will Russell

Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade volunteers take a break following a six-hour shift fighting the Hills Five, WA.

# The many faces of volunteerism



Ready for inspection at Government House Victoria parade.

## Thirteen years of volunteering – so far. Reflections on her years of volunteering by Sally Hasler

Volunteering has been a big part of my life and I have been involved with numerous organisations working with young people. Volunteering with St John Ambulance Australia has provided me with diverse training and countless personal and professional opportunities. I currently Chair the Australian Youth Council (AYC), a representative body for young members of St John. The AYC embraces youth participation and consultation, and encourages young people to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect them.

I have been involved with St John since becoming a Junior, aged 10. My parents encouraged me, along with my brother and sister, to join St John to learn first aid skills and contribute to our local community.

I progressed through Youth Leadership Training and received promotions to Corporal and Cadet Leader. As a Cadet Leader I taught on the Victorian Youth Leadership Course, a training and development weekend for potential young leaders in St John. In 2001, I received the Peter Falkland Award in Victoria, for Cadet of the Year, and acted as Aide to the Victorian Commissioner.

As a member of the St John Maroondah Combined Division I acted as second in charge of the cadet section before I moved to Knox Combined Division as Divisional Cadet Officer. My biggest leadership challenges in St John Ambulance relate to my positions as Chair of the Victorian Youth Council (VYC) and the AYC. In June 2002, I was appointed Chair of the VYC; at that stage the council suffered from a low level of recognition and was yet to earn the respect of young people and adults alike. The experience and skills I gained in this position held me in good stead when I began as Chair of the AYC in June 2004.

From 2003–2005, during my university studies, I worked as a trainer for St John Victoria, where I had valuable experiences in facilitating training and education programs. In 2005, I took leave from Operations Branch and joined the St John ACT Community Care program *Project Survival*. As a volunteer in this program I share my knowledge of Basic Life Support and Resuscitation to marginalised young people. In addition, I currently sit as a Director on the board of the St John Ambulance Foundation.

My most memorable volunteering honour was being awarded the Gold Duke of Edinburgh award by His Royal Highness, Prince Edward in 2003. The Youth Development program St John offers encourages young people to learn new skills to assist in their personal development, while contributing through service to their community.



Sally Hasler receiving the Duke of Edinburgh Award from Prince Edward.

My experience in St John has given me an incredible skill set, more diverse than just first aid training, that I apply beyond my involvement with St John. The opportunities provided as a young leader in St John are countless, and increasingly valuable as you begin to transfer these into your educational and professional career.





Attendees at the 2004 Youth Forum.

As Chair of the AYC I use my skills and experience to successfully motivate and encourage a group of young people to foster and facilitate youth participation in their home states and territories. I represented St John on Australian Forum of Youth Organisations (AFOYO), and organised a youth panel discussing Youth Development at a recent St John conference in Melbourne. I also represented St John on a panel at the 2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit in Canberra.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that investment in the St John Youth movement translates to the long-term sustainability of the organisation. Young people in St John, and other organisations for that matter, have an enormous capacity to become the current and future leaders of the organisation, and help drive and deliver a change agenda. Young people have an unsurpassed level of enthusiasm that, when cleverly directed and resourced, can produce strong results. It is clear that St John has committed itself to driving this agenda, and is continuing to support the Youth movement.

The sustainability of St John Ambulance is dependent on the extent to which it remains relevant to the community that it serves. I believe volunteer relevance must be accompanied by modern policies

and vibrant programs that engage members of the community.

For a Youth Development program, this means offering exciting and stimulating activities and opportunities relevant for young people in Australia. These sorts of programs may not traditionally fit within the scope of an organisation, and thus these organisations must continue to challenge themselves to engage a diverse group of young people at all levels.

It is these organisations that will reap the long and exciting rewards associated with a flourishing youth movement.

## Weipa State Emergency Service

*compiled by Ron Carrick,  
Local Controller Weipa State  
Emergency Services*

Weipa is a coastal community some 750 km north – west of Cairns, situated on the West Coast of Cape York Peninsular. It has a population of approximately 3,400 and forms part of the Western Cape York Peninsula – an area rich in geographical beauty and cultural heritage. The region boasts some of the last untouched wilderness in Australia with stunning beaches and out-of-the way waterholes and camping destinations.

In 1987, three visitors came to the community to visit a friend

preparing for a wedding. As part of their trip, they planned a camping and fishing trip to Mapoon. When crossing the bay in their dingy on the way back to their camp, the seas became quite rough and the boat was swamped and they all ended up in the water. One of the party made it to shore and then back to Weipa to raise the alarm. When he and others returned another person had made it to shore but it had taken over a day to return.

Local community members used their own boats and with the help of the local Police, (all one of him), started to search for the missing person. The search lasted for many days to no avail. This incident was the catalyst in the formation of the SES in Weipa.

As with all groups, the Weipa SES is made up of volunteers from all walks of life. The majority of



North Queensland

the membership is relatively new but have proved their worth on a number of occasions. An example of the commitment of the volunteers is that three SES members travel a 1,320km round trip to Mt Carbine and back to attend weekend training.

Special thanks to Comalco Management, for supporting local volunteers and the community. Weipa SES enjoys great support from the entire community, business and private, in many ways including fund raising.

### **A different type of search and rescue**

The Weipa SES group was approached by an officer of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to assist in logging the damage to marine life between Pennefather River and Dyfkin Point on the West Coast of Cape York Peninsular.

The search along the beaches was primarily for turtles injured or killed by 'ghost nets', which are drift nets and other commercial nets either lost or abandoned by their owners and left to wash wherever the tides and currents take them. Unfortunately these nets catch and kill many marine animals in their way.

Two SES members used the Weipa SES 4x4 two-seater Quad bike to assist the DPI officer. They travelled approx 42kms from Pennefather River to Dyfkin Point and returned, logging and taking photos of what they discovered along the way. They found over 20 dead turtles, (some quite rare) and they took samples of the remains for further analysis. They also counted 389 nets washed up on the beach.

### **International Rescue?**

Weipa SES received a call from local Police to assist a foreign tourist bogged somewhere in the region.

The tourist, travelling the Cape on his own, had become bogged. The traveller apparently did not speak English, was deaf and was unable to provide his actual location.

Although he had a mobile-come satellite phone and a GPS, it seemed he had no map, or if he did have one, he couldn't position himself on the map well enough to pass on his physical position.

With the information he had, he rang his sister in Switzerland and she somehow found the number for Weipa Town Office (the local Council) and passed on a vague description of his situation and the co-ordinates. The Town Office gave this information to the Police who contacted Weipa SES.

Three SES members used the co-ordinates to position the traveller on the map and headed off. With the help of good mapping skills they arrived at the scene and encountered a rather rude and unhelpful man. After quite a bit of effort and a lot of drama, including burning out the winch and being harassed about taking photos, the team finally extracted the vehicle from the bog.

In the end, the team was rewarded with \$20 and the view of the vehicle heading even further north. No lessons learnt here for some.



*SES crews help out in all kinds of situations.*

### **Lockhart air disaster**

Weipa SES was called on a Saturday afternoon to provide air observers when the ill-fated flight from Bamaga (at the tip of Cape York Peninsular) to Lockhart River (on the east coast, directly east of Weipa) was first reported missing. Fortunately the aircraft was located soon after activation and before the team left Weipa.

During the recovery phase it became apparent that the Lockhart community was struggling to support the influx of police and investigators and the SES team was called on to provide support by transporting food supplies from Weipa to Lockhart.

The initial trip on Sunday evening was a 5.5 hour trip. The local Woolworth's supermarket was asked to open on the Sunday to make the first trip possible. They returned Monday with a request for a larger delivery.

On arriving back at Lockhart on Tuesday, the second team was greeted with the news that three local pig hunters were reported missing. The Police on the scene requested that the SES team remain on site to assist in a possible land search for the missing hunters. While waiting for instructions the team kept busy assisting Police and investigators with tasks associated with the air crash and recovery. They received high praise by the onsite Inspector of Police and managed to profile on the evening news.

### **One Man, Many Thanks**

*by Sharon Sherman, State Emergency Service Tasmania*

John Duncombe is a self effacing person who has spent the last 40 plus years volunteering in one capacity or another. He is reluctant to broadcast his actions but quietly gets on with helping out where he sees a need. The State Emergency Service would like to thank John for over 40 years of service.



John Duncombe continues to be an active member of SES Tasmania.

### A busy John signs on

In 1964, John Duncombe was 20 years old and already a volunteer with the Wynyard Fire Brigade when he attended an information night for the Civil Defence Organisation. Maurice Parkin, the Wynyard Airport Fire Officer, had encouraged John to attend the information session. During the session Maurice was invited to become the Wynyard Unit Manager, which attracted a dozen people to its first meeting, including John. At least half of these people were already volunteers with the Fire Brigade, so the newly formed Wynyard unit met every Thursday evening and the Fire Brigade volunteers met every Tuesday evening.

Training was on a weekly basis and John became skilled in general rescue techniques as well as in the use of dosimeters to check for radioactivity (a symptom of the Cold War). Although very busy, and still a volunteer with the Fire Brigade, John accepted the opportunity to train at the Directorate of Civil Defence at Mt Macedon (Victoria). At that time training was operations based, however John saw the potential for Civil Defence to place more focus on the community. In 1976 John's realisation turned into reality as the Emergency Services Act came

into being and the State Emergency Service (SES) was created.

Over the following years John relocated several times, but always remained a volunteer member in the SES. John has been a member of the Wynyard and Penquin units and is currently Unit Manager for the Burnie unit. In 1984 John applied for the position of SES Local Coordinator with the Burnie Council, a position he still holds today.

*"Age is no barrier to learning"*

When the State Emergency Service introduced competency based training, it led to a loss of 50per cent of the Burnie SES Unit volunteer members. However, John not only embraced the competency based training, at the age of 57, he undertook a TAFE Certificate IV in Occupational Health and Safety as well as a computer course. According to John, age is no barrier to learning; it's just a matter of giving it a go and besides, he was feeling a bit bored at the time!

*"If you buy the paint, I'll paint the church"*

It came to John's attention that the local Uniting Church was celebrating its 150th anniversary. The inside of church was badly in need of painting and the church community was unsure how to achieve this. John said, "If you buy the paint, I'll paint the church". Though John was not a member of this church he, and one elderly helper, painted walls and ceilings which were 40 feet high; such was his sense of community spirit.

John is also responsible for the creation of a youth group for less-privileged children in the community, taking them on bushwalking and fishing trips they would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. While in Penguin, John was the Charter President of Apex for six years.

Another instance of helping those in need is the time he heard that a SES volunteer had become ill with cancer and could no longer work on his vegetable producing farm. To help the ill man's wife maintain an income, John looked after the farm for two years, until the man's death. During this period John would get up before dawn, spend two hours on the tractor, then drive 44km to work. At the end of the day he would return to the farm and work until dark (around 9pm in summer).

At the same time, John was still the Local Coordinator and Unit Manager of the Burnie Emergency Services Unit and Manager of the Search and Rescue team. He was asked to stand aside as he was unable to give it his full attention. John only told his unit what he was doing but kept it quiet from the Regional staff. Basically, John gave up his personal pursuits for that two year period.

### A very busy man indeed

John frequently receives calls from the Salvation Army or CWA when an elderly person in the community needs help with overgrown trees or blocked gutters. He just gets out the chainsaw and ladders and gets on with the job. John describes himself as impatient and one who likes to set goals. He enjoys boating, fishing and bushwalking and is generally very active. Recently he finished a 10 year project to building a house at Arthur's Lake in the highlands of Tasmania.

*"Thank you John"*

Recently John received the Emergency Services Medal for his services to the community as a SES volunteer. He would like to remain with the SES for at least another five years. No doubt he will continue to be a very active member. Well done and thank you John for many years of outstanding contribution, not just to the SES but also to the communities and organisations in which you have been involved on the north west coast of Tasmania.



# NOTES FROM THE FIELD

*Australian Forward Assessment Team: Trip to Washington DC, USA  
by Principal Education Officer Donovan Croucamp*

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The recent impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States has had the whole world observing with interest. This disaster has been recognised as the worst natural disaster to impact on the USA in recent history since a hurricane wiped out Galveston in the 1900s killing thousands. The losses have been quite devastating to the affected states and the economic impact is being felt across the globe. During the initial stages of the unfolding disaster Australia offered its assistance to the USA with a financial donation. This was followed by the dispatch of a small team of emergency management practitioners to assess what the needs were and how Australia could help most effectively. I was fortunate to be part of this team and here follows a short personal reflection on this experience.

A day before receiving my deployment instructions I had met with Linda Hansen, the head of the EMA Library, and we discussed collecting and collating as much information about this event as possible. The lessons learnt from this disaster would be very valuable to us as it would be a well documented case study of the evacuation of a large first world urban area. Little did I know at this point that I would be winging to Washington DC a few days later and immersing myself in the American media and government communications to assess the situation a little closer.

David Templeman, the Director General of EMA, tasked Margery Webster to lead a team including myself and John Richardson, State Recovery Manager, Department of Human Services, Victoria, to

conduct an in-country assessment of the situation and report back to Canberra. We were to be the conduit for matching any potential Australian Government response to established needs and requests for assistance.

On arrival we were collected by an Australian Federal Police Officer based in the Australian Embassy who gave us some background to the diplomatic mission and explained the basic layout of Washington, the capital of the United States of America. The next day we met with Gary Quinlan, the Deputy Head of Mission and Jane Hardy, the Congressional Liaison Counsellor and our purpose was discussed.

The political overlay on top of our emergency management mission became immediately apparent and for the rest of the two weeks we were very conscious of this as we prepared capability statements and articulated our offer of assistance to the US Government. Meeting

with FEMA was difficult as they were extremely busy and their headquarters was in 'lock down'. Our primary link to the US Government was through the US Department of State. We met with the Australian Desk Officer, Bill McCulla, who explained that all foreign offers were being channelled through a task force in the State Department and processing these offers in relation to their needs was going to take time. We formally presented our offer of assistance and after being thanked we were asked to be patient and also to prepare a written statement of capability for consideration. We then hit the computer keyboards again and between the three of us moulded a concise but practical capability statement. We spent the next day gathering information and consolidating our submission into three key areas. These areas were determined by examining other offers of assistance, discussions with the US Australian Desk Officer, lists of committed resources and



*Margery Webster, John Richardson (and children) and Donovan Croucamp.*





*Embassy of Australia in Washington DC*

information posted on the FEMA, UN and other websites.

The three key areas involved Disaster Victim Identification, Disaster Logistics Coordination and Disaster Recovery Centre management. Our offer was tabled at the White House during a Task Force meeting chaired by Condoleeza Rice, the US Secretary of State. We continued to gather local information, peruse websites and talk to contacts in the UN and the State of Louisiana. We also prepared daily Situation Reports which were sent to the NEMCC, based in Canberra.

After an interesting week, a lot of information management and diplomacy, our offer was respectfully declined. At this point we were well aware of the US capability as their enormous

logistics machine had gathered momentum. The sheer volume of available resources and the ability of the US Military was impressive. The involvement of the military was critical to this response, as was the case during the Indian Ocean Tsunami, and this is a subject area I am keen to research further in the Australian context.

With our mission complete and no further need for our presence we closed the various diplomatic and official loops and prepared to return. The Australian Embassy valued our assistance and if anything, we left them with a stronger understanding of emergency management and EMA in particular. Our efforts certainly supported their mission during this time and we said our goodbyes in good spirits with a positive cable to Canberra giving closure to our deployment.

It was frustrating that no Australian resources were deployed into the field to make a tangible contribution to relief and recovery efforts but what we could offer was really quite small and easily surpassed by the enormous surge capacity of the world's largest economy.

It was a valuable experience, although quite different to my Indonesian trip earlier in the year. We worked well as a team and our skills in disaster logistics, coordination and recovery were complimentary. Our thoughts and prayers should be with our counterparts in FEMA and other key agencies who are managing this event in a very politically unforgiving climate with the media scrutinising every move they make. We can certainly learn a lot from their experience and integrate those lessons into our own preparedness. At the time of writing this Hurricane Rita is bearing down on the Florida coast and the world is watching in anticipation. Let us not forget those people who were displaced, lost property and lost loved ones in this disaster.

# AJEM BOOK REVIEW

by Principal Education Officer Donovan Croucamp

Dilley Maxx, Chen, Robert S., Deichmann, Uwe, Lerner-Lam, Arthur L., Arnold, Margaret (2005)

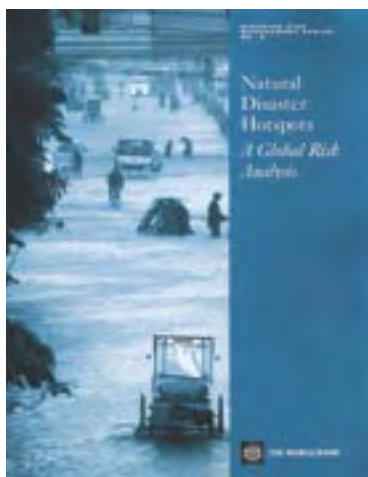
**Natural Disaster Hotspots : A Global Risk Analysis, The World Bank, Hazard Management Unit (HMU).**

ISBN: 0-8213-5930-4

For those fascinated by disaster statistics and risk management this book is an interesting read. It presents the collation and analysis of selected natural hazard data from around the globe and uses it to identify and categorise 'Hotspots'. These are areas where the risk of mortality and economic loss from multiple hazards is the highest.

This is 'publication five' in the Disaster Risk Management series and was published after the tsunami disaster but did not include an analysis of tsunami events as there was insufficient data at the time of research. Having said that, it does effectively cover the six biggest geophysical and hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, cyclones and drought.

The aim of the project was to provide information and methods to inform priorities for reducing disaster risk and making decisions on development investment. This publication is a thorough attempt to achieve that aim and stimulate detailed analysis at the local level. This will enhance the understanding of risk and the need to integrate risk management into development planning decisions.



## Methodology

In order to capture, collate, analyse and present data from around the globe the project team decided to grid the globe into a series of cells to allow data managing at the sub-national level. In these grid cells they are able to display data in a series of global maps and tables for a variety of uses. The team admits that a global analysis is affected by the availability and quality of data because a number of hazards only had 15 – 25 years of scientific event recording and relatively crude spatial information for locating these events.

Data on historical losses is in some cases limited, especially pertaining to economic losses. However, on a global scale the accumulated data, which may not be adequate for understanding absolute levels of specific risk at a local level, were adequate for identifying areas that are at high risk from single and multiple hazards. Consequences have been expressed in terms of mortality and economic loss relative to GDP. Areas of very low population density and non-agricultural in value were masked and the rest of the gridded cells classified into ten classes (deciles)

of roughly equal numbers of cells. The cells falling into the highest three deciles for either mortality or economic losses are considered disaster risk hotspots.

## Key findings

The maps and tables generated as outputs of the research made fascinating viewing and certainly highlighted the vulnerable areas. A range of legends and headings were used to this effect. Other key findings include:

- Approximately 20 per cent of the Earth's land surface is exposed to at least one of the natural hazards evaluated;
- 160 countries have more than one quarter of their population in areas of high mortality risk from one or more hazards;
- 96 countries have more than 10 per cent of their population in areas of high mortality risk from two or more hazards;
- In 35 countries, more than 1 in 20 residents lives at relatively high mortality risk from 3 or more hazards;
- Three quarters of the world's population are subject to a relatively high risk of mortality from one or more hazards;
- Seven per cent of the world's population lives in areas at high mortality risk from three or more hazards;
- More than 80 per cent of global GDP is located in areas of relatively high economic risk subject to one or more hazards;
- More than 50 per cent of global GDP is located in areas of relatively high economic risk subject to two or more hazards;
- Taiwan may be the place on Earth most vulnerable to natural hazards, with 73 per cent of its

land and population exposed to three or more hazards;

- More than 90 per cent of the populations of Bangladesh, Nepal, the Dominican Republic, Burundi, Haiti, Taiwan, Malawi, El Salvador, and Honduras live in areas at high relative risk of death from two or more hazards; and
- Poorer countries in the developing world are more likely to have difficulty absorbing repeated disaster-related losses and costs associated with disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

### Layout and content

The executive summary was very useful in providing an overall and concise picture of the project approach, key findings and the way forward. It is a good reference document and it is not necessary to read it from cover to cover to be useful.

The content covers the project objectives and approach, hazard exposure analysis, multi-hazard risk assessments, case studies and concluding observations about the implications for decision-making and disaster risk management. The tabulation and geospatial rendering of this data highlights the hazards by category, country and type of loss. The culmination of all this data produces a series of world maps depicting the global distribution of disaster risk hotspots by single hazard and for all hazards combined. These maps are presented in three main categories: mortality, total economic loss and economic loss as a proportion of GDP density.

The limitations of this study include a low level of local participation based on incomplete data. Therefore the results here should not provide the sole basis for designing risk management activities. The approach does, however, provide a scientific basis for understanding where risks are highest and why, as well as a methodological framework for regional and local-scale analysis.

### Conclusion

#### **The costs of disaster risks —**

If we consider that disasters are very expensive in human and economic terms we realise that effective disaster management is not just a humanitarian imperative but certainly an economic issue as well. Response, relief and recovery activities have high associated costs over and above the initial direct financial losses. Therefore sustainable development and investment in mitigation strategies are essential components to strategic planning.

#### **Implications for decision-making —**

The hotspots analysis gives focus to development planning and disaster preparedness in areas that are at high risk to human and economic losses. This type of research provides a scientific basis for prioritising risk reduction efforts and highlights areas where risk management is most needed. The analysis may be used to develop assistance strategies, encourage risk management by project planners and the strengthening of infrastructure and community resilience in hotspot areas.

#### **Improved information for Disaster Risk Management —**

The Hotspots project is a risk management tool which can be useful in risk identification and analysis and can be applied on different scales using the same methodology. It is also a useful approach to weave disaster risk management into development efforts and further refining of this methodology would be of great value. Lastly, it was highlighted that longer-term trends in hazard frequency coupled with human development and settlement patterns need to be further explored, and global climate change impacts are an example.

Overall, this publication is a worthwhile reference book for researchers, emergency management practitioners, risk management facilitators and students. While it has an international context it is still relevant as Australia is not isolated from international disasters and has strong interests in countries within the region. It also covers many disaster management concepts which are relevant all over the globe. The recent Indian Ocean tsunami proved that our future emergency management practice is not limited to our shores and the international context is very important.

Available at [http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item\\_id=4302005](http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=4302005)

# EMA Research & Innovation Program

The EMA Research and Innovation Program aims to facilitate the capture and transfer of innovative practice and disaster research outcomes across the sector.

For more information please contact Sue Collins 02 6256 4614 or Mike Tarrant 03 5421 5219, or email [projects@ema.gov.au](mailto:projects@ema.gov.au)

## Projects funded for the EMA Research and Innovation Projects Program 2005/06

### Development of a model for Civilian Disaster Medical Assistance Teams

#### Summary

Unlike other countries, Australia does not have a significant history of deploying civilian medical teams into disaster areas. In both the Aitape (Papua New Guinea) tsunami in 1998 and the Bali bombing in 2002, the Australian Defence Force had the primary responsibility for deploying medical teams into the disaster area. Most States and Territories have also based their internal disaster relief medical teams around major hospitals, a practice which had been questioned following the 1997 Thredbo disaster. Because this particular disaster produced only a single live casualty, a review of medical team performance under multiple casualty incident or disaster conditions was not possible.

As a result of the most recent tsunami disaster in South East Asia, Australia sent civilian medical teams into the affected areas at short notice. The first four teams deployed needed to be medically equipped and able to live in the field, which was a major challenge for the current health logistics systems. The preparation and screening of personnel sent was also done rapidly, making it difficult to ensure the most appropriate people had deployed. This was further complicated by the changing roles of the teams, in one case from surgical to public health, in the 24 hours prior to leaving.

The United States developed Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) as part of the National Disaster Medical System in 1981. While the US focus is more internal, the concept could be applied to civilian medical teams in Australia to provide a disaster medical response either intrastate, interstate or internationally.

### Cultural Diversity: To establish guidelines on understanding the cultures, strengths and needs of non-Christian faith communities

#### Summary

Faith communities are highly diverse in their theologies, values and organisations and, as a consequence, can bring a variety of contributions to other social networks that already exist within a community. Sadly, this contribution is often ignored or vigorously opposed. Engagement with faith communities makes demands on official leaders and members of other non-religious networks, requiring an understanding of religious literacy, tolerance and close encounters for which they are either ill equipped or bound by perceived stereotypes.

Engaging faith communities in community building and how to achieve that involvement is a neglected area of study. The commitments, interests, organisation, places of worship and the social networks that originate from these groups, which in turn relate to peoples religious beliefs and identities, have an important contribution to any community building initiatives.

This research seeks to understand and enhance the contributions that can be made by faith communities such as Muslims, Buddhists and others that may emerge from this research to the programs of disaster response, community recovery and community building.



## The development of clinical practice guidelines for Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### Summary

The Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) has been appointed by NH&MRC to develop best practice clinical guidelines for assisting adults following disaster and trauma. Specifically, the guidelines will outline evidence-based, best practice treatment of individuals who have developed, or are at risk of developing, distressing reactions generally consistent with diagnostic criteria for ASD and PTSD. The working group established by ACPMH for this project comprises top clinicians and researchers from around Australia in the field of posttraumatic mental health.

The working group will oversee a systematic review of research and clinical literature in the area of posttraumatic stress and related conditions. The review will identify levels of clinical and research evidence for common interventions. On the basis of this evidence, the working party will generate recommendations which will form the basis of the guidelines.

A sophisticated consultation process is required to ensure that the clinical guidelines are of practical utility and are widely accepted. In this project, the working group will seek regular input at each stage of the process from a multidisciplinary panel (MDP) comprising representatives of consumers, researchers, clinicians, service providers and purchasers, and other key stakeholder organisations.

Key deliverables for the project will be a summary of the evidence for the range of interventions following trauma and a set of clinical practice guidelines, endorsed by multidisciplinary practitioners across a variety of care settings and approved by NH&MRC. The document will form a national standard against which proposed interventions can be assessed.

## What is recovery and what helps people recover? An investigation into medium and long-term community recovery after the 2003 Canberra bushfire disaster

### Summary

A multidisciplinary research team across ACT Government and universities has been established to investigate the process of individual and community recovery after a disaster. The team brings together expertise from government, mental health, social work and communication to fully explore the recovery process. The project has four interlocking strands:

1. Whole-of-government, in partnership with community, approaches to recovery. The Bushfire Recovery Task Force and the ACT Recovery Centre provide a model for government/community response to natural disasters. The key research questions explore what the affected community accessed in terms of services provided: what worked, what the gaps were, and where people and communities are now in their recovery.
2. Communication and information provision to the community as part of the recovery process. The communication strategies of government and community groups will be explored in depth and analysed to develop models for effective communication approaches for communities in recovery.
3. The long-term mental health outcomes in individuals exposed to the bushfires. Using the expertise of the Department of Psychiatry, ACT Health, the research team will administer standardised instruments to look at morbidities such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and alcohol abuse.
4. Community and individual resilience. The impact of government and community recovery programs on community and individual sustainability will be evaluated and community development strategies identified which may become models for other recovery programs.

# EM Update

Emergency Management Australia provides national leadership in the development of measures to reduce risk to communities and manage the consequences of disasters. EM Update provides current information on activities and issues in the emergency management environment across EMA and State and Territory jurisdictions.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER & CABINET, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

#### Eyre Peninsula bushfire recovery

The Lower Eyre Peninsula bushfire in January 2005 devastated a regional community and had major economic, environmental, social and physical impact. Nine people died and more than 1200 people were directly affected. This was a fire that burnt high value farming enterprises interspersed with remnant vegetation.

The fire-affected area was eight hours drive from the State's capital and covered remote rural communities, some of which were completely obliterated. The town of Wanilla was burnt to the ground and many landholders and residents lost everything – homes, sheds, stock, crops, equipment and their livelihoods. Seventy-nine homes were destroyed and more than 200 properties damaged. Major infrastructure was damaged, disrupting power, water and communications to hundreds of residents. Flora and fauna – some unique to the area – were destroyed and may never return.

The summer fire was followed by the driest autumn on record, leaving many crops unsown or with insufficient rain to prosper. Thousands of stock were agisted away from the area and many could not be returned as there was insufficient feed.

The recovery from such a disaster presented unique difficulties given the geographical location, the range of needs and the nature of the affected community.

Within hours of the declaration of an 'identified major incident' the SA government marshalled resources to assist the devastated communities and coordinate the recovery operation led out of Port Lincoln.

Within 24 hours:

- a Duty Minister with "full Cabinet authority" was despatched to the devastated area;
- the Bushfire Recovery Centre was established as a "one stop" shop;

- the Hotline, set up through Centrelink, was ready to receive calls;
- the State Recovery Committee was convened;
- personal hardship and distress grants were provided;
- the Premier announced funding support for the relief operation; and
- contact was made with the ACT and a representative travelled to Port Lincoln to share Canberra's lessons from their 2003 fires.

The Duty Minister's role proved an important part of a swift government response. This ensured that the range of new recovery grants were appropriately targeted and local issues dealt with adequate priority.

With the devastation has come the opportunity to start again in a new way. The destruction of properties has given the opportunity to completely reinvigorate businesses and ensure sustainability and viability. The recovery program includes Federal and State government support for reinstatement of farm enterprises. Rather than repairing their land and crops, this recovery effort involves recreating whole new ways of doing business. The manner in which crops and stock were handled has been reassessed and newer and better practices are being considered and adopted.

The number of volunteers who offered their time and efforts was such that the assistance of Army personnel was sought to manage the camp sites set up to accommodate the volunteers. The volunteer effort continues with people travelling from around the country and even from New Zealand to assist. A campsite continues to be managed locally and volunteers are welcome to come and help out.

### **Eyre Peninsula bushfire recovery**

(continued)

In many ways, the Lower Eyre Peninsula bushfire recovery effort provides a template for future recovery operations. As the first such operation instituted under the newly proclaimed *Emergency Management Act 2004*, it highlighted the broad scope of recovery as a core function in emergency management.

*For further information contact Ross Pagram  
Phone: 08 8204 9376;  
email: pagram.ross@saugov.sa.gov.au*

### **SAFECOM & Act**

On 1 October 2005, a new *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*, was proclaimed. This new legislation consolidates the existing Acts of the SA Metropolitan Fire Service, Country Fire Service and State Emergency Service into one Act with supporting regulations.

The purpose of the Act is to establish the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM), an organisation that provides governance and strategic accountability of the emergency services sector to a single Board, subject to the control of the Minister for Emergency Services.

*For further information contact David Cant  
Phone: 08 8463 4071;  
email: cant.david@safecom.sa.gov.au*

### **Doppler Radar**

On 28 October 2005, the Bureau of Meteorology commissioned a new state-of-the-art "Doppler" radar to the north of Adelaide. It is the first of six to be installed in Australia as part of a \$62 million commitment by the Federal Government over five years.

Information from the radar will benefit the wide range of services provided by the Bureau of Meteorology, including severe weather, hydrological, marine and aviation.

This means:

- severe weather systems will be more accurately depicted;
- better estimates of rainfall across catchments in the Mount Lofty Ranges will be obtained;
- improved flood forecasts will result;
- wind flows over Adelaide and adjoining areas can be monitored; and
- short-term prediction of potentially damaging winds and rapid wind changes which could impact on bushfires in summers will be enhanced.

*For further information contact Andrew Watson  
Phone: 08 8366 2643; email: a.watson@bom.gov.au*



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY

### **Urban Search and Rescue Capability Development Project**

The Urban Search and Rescue Capability Development Project is a joint effort between the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments to develop national USAR policy and operational arrangements. It provides equipment, and training of rescue personnel, operational managers and government decision-makers. This project aims to build the national USAR capability.

The project team has consulted extensively with USAR authorities in each State and Territory to identify equipment needs for each jurisdiction. The procurement methodology is being finalised and will comply with Australian Government procurement guidelines. Delivery of equipment will commence before Christmas 2005. The equipment procurement element of this project is scheduled for completion over the next 18 months.

NSW Fire Brigades and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service have already delivered USAR Category 2 training courses to multi-discipline teams throughout Australia.

The EMA project team provides regular reports to the National Counter Terrorism Committee, the Australian Emergency Management Committee and the National USAR Working Group.

*For further information contact James Gustus  
Phone: 02 6256 4618; email: james.gustus@ema.gov.au.*

### **Emergency Services Infrastructure Assurance Advisory Group**

On 5 October 2005, the Emergency Services Infrastructure Assurance Advisory Group (ES IAAG) held discussion exercise Cold Comfort. The discussion exercise examined the consequences of a pandemic influenza on the emergency services including:

- planning, response and recovery;
- impact on numbers of staff that may be incapacitated and how they would cope under such circumstances;
- delivery of service both quantitatively and qualitatively, and,
- critical tasks that must be performed during a major event for essential services to be delivered to the community and industry.

The discussion exercise was facilitated by EMA Principal Education Officer Colin Fiford. Dr Moira McKinnon from the Communicable Diseases Branch of the Department of Health and Ageing gave a detailed presentation from a health viewpoint.

This exercise built on work commenced in September 2004 in which ES IAAG members were tasked with identifying, from their agencies perspective, the services on which they depend. Agreement was reached on communications, energy, transport and health.

Cold Comfort provided an opportunity for the energy and communications sectors to provide some context for the ES IAAG to consider continued service provision in an influenza pandemic.

*For further information contact Taru Farrelley  
Phone: 02 6256 4619; email: taru.farrelley@ema.gov.au*

### **COAG's National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management**

Following agreement from State and Territory governments, on 24 January 2005 the Prime Minister released the report of, and COAG response to, the COAG *National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management*.

The report can be downloaded from [www.coagbushfireenquiry.gov.au/](http://www.coagbushfireenquiry.gov.au/).

The report highlights opportunities to improve co-operation and management of fire fighting resources. The report stresses the need for better understanding of risk, a greater focus on mitigation and better co-operation across jurisdictions. COAG agreed that the Augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council will have a lead role in co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation/consideration of the report's 29 recommendations and 46 findings.

The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) is responsible for co-ordinating and reporting on the implementation of the recommendations of the Report. EMA is responsible for reporting on implementation of several of the recommendations to DOTARS and is working with relevant Australian Government Departments and all States and Territories to this end.

*For further information contact Claire Sullivan  
Phone: 02 6256 4674; email: claire.sullivan@ema.gov.au*

### **COAG Report on Natural Disasters in Australia – Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements**

The COAG report examined the ways in which Australia's national capacity to mitigate natural disasters and to manage their effects could be improved. It made a number of recommendations which broadly aligned with 12 reform commitments for action. Eight working groups, incorporating all levels of government, were formed to progress

the implementation of the recommendations and commitments. EMA provides a secretariat and reporting service to these working groups.

At the August AEMC meeting, it was agreed that the AEMC Strategic Works plan would incorporate an implementation plan for the work resulting out of the review. It was agreed that there would be broader

reporting based on the 12 reform commitments rather than focusing on the individual recommendations. The AEMC reports to the Augmented Australasian Police Minister's Council on the implementation of the recommendations and commitments.

*For further information contact Kim Fitzgerald  
Phone: 02 6256 4687; email: kim.fitzgerald@ema.gov.au*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### **Working Together to Manage Emergencies**

Applications for funding under the Working Together to Manage Emergencies Initiatives scheme in financial year 2005/06 closed on 29 July 2005. State Selection Committees met in each jurisdiction over the period 30 August – 12 September to prioritise applications for funding under both the Local Grants Scheme and the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund.

The priority lists from individual jurisdictions for both programs are currently being compiled into a composite list for consideration by the Australian Government Attorney-General.

Applications for funding in 2006/07 will be invited in mid December 2005, with a closing date of 3 March 2006. Eligible emergency management response agencies and local governments are encouraged to apply. Guidelines and application forms will be available on the EMA website at [www.ema.gov.au/communitydevelopment](http://www.ema.gov.au/communitydevelopment).

### **2005 Australian Safer Communities Awards**

The Safer Communities Awards recognise best practice and innovation that help to build safer communities. They cover both organisations and individuals working in risk assessment, research, education and training, information and knowledge management, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Awards are given in categories covering pre-disaster and post-disaster.

On August 19, entries closed for the 2005 Safer Communities Awards. A total of 63 entries were received by the States and Territories. A national judging panel was convened comprising Greg Scroope of Brisbane City Council; Jenny Davies of Anglicare; Steve Frost of NSW State Disaster Recovery Centre; and Dr Fiona Wood, 2005 Australian of the Year. The panel was chaired by EMA's Assistant Secretary for Community Development, Trevor Clement. The panel judged State and Territory winners and awarded national winners in the respective streams and

categories during September. The national winners were recognised and presented with their awards by the Attorney-General at a ceremony at Parliament House on 1 December.

*For further information contact Kim Fitzgerald  
Phone: 02 6256 4687; email: kim.fitzgerald@ema.gov.au*

### **New Program – Business Continuity Management**

The course in Business Continuity is with the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) for national accreditation approval. This will be a four-day course run over five days and will include topics such as Commencement, Risk and Vulnerability, Business Impact Analysis, Response Strategies, Communications, and Maintenance and Testing.

Courses have been scheduled for 2006. Check the EMA website for further details.

*For further information contact Luke Dam  
Phone: 03 5421 5268; email: luke.dam@ema.gov.au*

### **Strategic directions for Education Training & Research**

In 2001 a training needs analysis was undertaken by EMA. The Education & Training Group is now embarking on a project to inform its education, training and research directions and priorities for the period 2006–2008. The project involves national consultation with key stakeholders using a range of methods including workshops in all States and Territories.

*For further information contact Margery Webster  
Phone: 03 5421 5283; email: margery.webster@ema.gov.au*

### **Emergency management and the school curriculum**

EMA is the lead agency for recommendation 3.1 from the Council of Australian Governments', National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management.

The Inquiry recommends that the Australian, State and Territory governments jointly develop and implement national and regionally relevant education programs about bushfire, to be delivered to all Australian children as a basic life skill. These programs should emphasise individual and household preparedness and survival as well as the role of fire in the Australian landscape.

To this end, EMA has proposed a national audit to identify strategies to integrate all hazards and emergency preparedness education into the school curriculum. This process will be completed by the end of the 2006 financial year and will lead to the identification of gaps within the curriculum and resources materials. It will lead to a clear understanding of the hazards and emergency preparedness needs in the Australian education system. This is an important step to prevent the duplication of resources and provides direction for EMA's and other emergency sector organisations' efforts in this area.

*For further information contact Melanie Ashby  
Phone: 03 5421 5269; email: melanie.ashby@ema.gov.au*

### **Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management**

There are two cohorts of students involved in EMA's *Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management*. This course provides professional development at a post graduate level and requires students to carry out in depth research and writing on current and pressing issues within the emergency management field.

The second cohort of students, who will graduate in mid-2006, are currently engaged in research projects to solve problems related to their emergency management work. The projects include:

- assessing community awareness of flood risk in a major city;
- understanding volunteers' reasons for leaving an emergency management agency;
- evaluating the ability of staff to carry out their emergency management responsibilities in a large government organisation;
- investigating the effects of an influenza pandemic on particular communities;
- evaluating the effectiveness of a new computer system in assisting response to emergencies; and
- researching the best approaches to emergency management training in a health organisation.

These projects and the many others being undertaken, directly assist students in their emergency management

roles and help develop crucial research and analytical skills. In this way, EMA's Graduate Certificate program serves to better equip students to deal with an increasingly complex risk landscape.

*For further information contact Mike Tarrant  
Phone: 03 5421 5219; email: michael.tarrant@ema.gov.au*

### **EMA Library**

The library pages of the EMA website have received a facelift. The new format provides an easy and efficient means for clients to access all library services. To access the library website, visit [www.ema.gov.au/library](http://www.ema.gov.au/library).

*For further information contact the library  
Phone: 03 5421 5246; email: ema.library@ema.gov.au*

### **Australian Emergency Manual Series**

A number of AEMs are currently under review in conjunction with a panel of subject matter experts from State and Territory organisations. The review of *Storm Damage Operations and General Rescue* will be completed by June 2006. The reviewed AEMs will join the rest of the series currently published on the EMA website.

*Evacuation Planning* has also been reviewed and has a new look. This publication is available on the EMA website.

*For further information contact Kate Keane  
Phone: 02 6256 4671; email: kate.keane@ema.gov.au*

### **This is EMA**

This publication has been reviewed and updated and is available for distribution. It is also accessible via the EMA website.

*For further information contact Kate Keane  
Phone: 02 6256 4671; email: kate.keane@ema.gov.au*



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LIAISON

### **Augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council**

EMA provides the Secretariat for The Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC) and the Augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council (A/APMC). The A/APMC is the Ministerial Council responsible for emergency management.

The AEMC met in Canberra on 4 August 2005 and 15 October 2005 in Brisbane.

*For further information contact Peter Arnold  
Phone: 02 6256 4602, email: peter.arnold@ema.gov.au*

### **Bushfire Awareness and Preparedness Campaign**

Since the Prime Minister's announcement of the Bushfire Awareness and Preparedness Day initiative, EMA has consulted extensively with State, Territory and Australian Government agencies as well as peak bodies such as the Australasian Fire Authorities Council and the Bushfire CRC.

These consultations concluded that it would be more appropriate to further enhance community bushfire awareness and preparedness through a national TV advertising campaign rather than implement a single national day of bushfire awareness and preparedness. A *National Bushfire Awareness and Preparedness* campaign which directs the community to locally relevant awareness and preparedness messages was launched by the Attorney-General on 15 October 2005. The media used for the campaign included TV advertising

and Indigenous radio advertisements. The campaign provides local bushfire services telephone numbers and websites at the end of the advertisements. This strategy also takes into consideration the varying jurisdictional bushfire seasons through its implementation timetable.

*For further information contact Li Peng Monroe  
Phone: 02 6256 4610, email: lipeng.monroe@ema.gov.au*

### **Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council**

The Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) formed a working group to examine the issue of tsunamis. Council membership comprises of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Science and Training, a number of Ministers with SET interests, and other non-Ministerial members.

The working group comprises 12 people with expertise in tsunamis and disaster preparedness, management and recovery. David Templeman, Director General Emergency Management Australia is a member of the working group.

The Working Group will examine the science of tsunami, in the context of the risk, potential impact and preparedness and prepare a report for consideration by PMSEIC. The group will make a presentation to the council on 2 December at Parliament House in Canberra.

*For further information contact Peter Arnold  
Phone: 02 6256 4602, email: peter.arnold@ema.gov.au*

## PLANNING & COORDINATION

### **Exercise Mercury 05**

During October, EMA participated in the multi-jurisdictional exercise (MJEX) *Mercury '05*, the largest counter-terrorism exercise ever conducted in Australia. This tested the consequence management co-ordination processes from a whole-of-government perspective. During the exercise the NEMCC liaised closely with States and Territories, deployed two EMA liaison officers to ACT Emergency Services, and received requests for assistance from ACT. EMA representatives also participated in a number of jurisdictional discussion exercises (DISCEXs) from September through to early November.

*For further information contact Tracy Hicks  
Ph 02 6256 4680; email: tracy.hicks@ema.gov.au*

### **NEMCC awareness training**

NEMCC awareness training for EMA staff was carried out in October as part of the Learning and Development strategy. This training will eventually be integrated into the EMA induction process. The training increased awareness about the NEMCC operation and EMA's responsibilities, and included some practical "hands-on" work with simulated sitreps, hand-overs and resource coordination.

*For further information contact Stacy Warner  
Ph 02 6256 4622; email: stacy.warner@ema.gov.au*

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# Cost of being a Volunteer survey

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The Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum is currently undertaking research into the costs to the individual volunteer of being involved in emergency management volunteering. EMA funding has been made available to develop a national survey to examine the negative direct cash costs and in-kind contributions that volunteers make over a 12 month period as a result of their volunteering commitment.

The Research and Planning Unit of Anglicare Sydney has carried out the first stage of this two-stage

project and have designed and piloted a questionnaire on one of the Forum agencies – the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol. The pilot results were very promising and it is intended that in the 2006 Stage 2 of the project, a national survey of emergency services volunteers will be implemented.

Underpinning the project is the knowledge that this research is the first of its kind anywhere in the world. There has been considerable national and international research on valuing volunteer contributions, the costs to the agencies and

retention factors but there has never yet been a comprehensive national survey that gauges the costs to the volunteers themselves. It is expected that the results of this survey will enable intelligent and informed advocacy to Government on the cost of volunteering to members.

**It is expected that the survey questionnaires will be distributed in February and it will be vital to the accuracy of the results to achieve a high participation rate. Remember this survey is designed to help us to help you, so if you receive one please complete it.**

# CONFERENCE DIARY

Conference details are sourced from the EMA website.  
For more information about these and future conferences, visit [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

## 2005

### 4–7 December

Location	Orlando, Florida
Title	2005 Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) Annual Meeting.
Details	There are three supporting goals for this year's annual meeting, which are to take advantage of the meeting location in Florida to touch on "local" topics that have broad implications or analogies; to continue the internationalization of the SRA; and to encourage a more interdisciplinary orientation in the technical program. The 25th anniversary of the SRA also presents an opportunity to examine the changing role of risk analysis in societal and private decision-making.
Enquiries	tel: (703) 790-1745 e-mail: <a href="mailto:sra@burkinc.com">sra@burkinc.com</a> web: <a href="http://www.sra.org/events_2005_meeting.php">http://www.sra.org/events_2005_meeting.php</a>

### 7–9 December

Location	Bhopal, India
Title	42nd Annual Convention and Meeting on <i>Earth System Processes Related to Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Volcanic Eruptions</i> .
Details	In addition to earth system processes, other topics include solid earth geophysics; atmosphere, space, and planetary sciences; marine geosciences; environmental geophysics; and more.
Enquiries	P.R. Ready, Indian Geophysical Union, NGR Campus, Pupal Road, Hyderabad 500 007, India. tel: 040-23434662 e-mail: <a href="mailto:igu123@rediffmail.com">igu123@rediffmail.com</a> web <a href="http://www.igu.in/schedule.htm">http://www.igu.in/schedule.htm</a>

## 2006

### 23–27 January

Location	Quito, Ecuador
Title	Cities on Volcanoes 4
Details	This meeting provides a forum where volcanologists, urban planners, civil defenders, community authorities, and business and health specialists can meet to discuss ways to mitigate the effects of volcanic eruptions and minimise their impact upon humanity through better science, technology, communication, and education. Symposia include new computational techniques for mitigating volcanic hazards, volcano studies and monitoring, risk management, emergency management, and human health impacts of volcanism. Workshops, field trips, and other scientific activities will also be offered.
Enquiries	e-mail: <a href="mailto:citiesonvolcanoes4@igepn.edu.ec">citiesonvolcanoes4@igepn.edu.ec</a> web: <a href="http://www.citiesonvolcanoes4.com/">http://www.citiesonvolcanoes4.com/</a>

### 22–23 February

Location	Hong Kong
Title	GOVSEC ASIA, Asia Law Enforcement & Asia Ready Conference & Exposition – Uniting the Best Minds in Government Security, Law Enforcement and Emergency Management.
Details	GOVSEC Asia, Asia Law Enforcement & Asia Ready is the event of choice for government security leaders, law enforcers and first responders around the Asian region – offering up-to-the-minute insight, strategy, tactics, best practices and technologies for each of the three key components that constitute national security. The first presentation in Hong Kong brings together recognised experts and industry professionals to explore what's new, collaborate, share knowledge and experiences and vision.
Enquiries	e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@infoexws.com">info@infoexws.com</a> web: <a href="http://www.govsecasia.com">http://www.govsecasia.com</a>

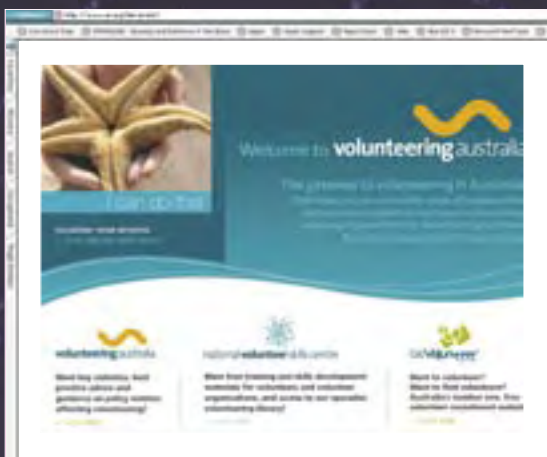
# interesting websites



## Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum

<http://www.emergencyvolunteersforum.org>

The Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum provides volunteers, their managers and organisations with the opportunity to raise issues of concern to a national representative body. The website provides the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues to the forum, and includes links to volunteer organisations across Australia, a photo gallery, and download section which includes the AEMVF Charter.



## Volunteering Australia

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. Its role is to represent the diverse views and needs of the volunteer sector while promoting the activity of volunteering as one of enduring social, cultural and economic value. The website includes a volunteer recruitment section, volunteer skills centre, conferences and events, information sheets, and a number of reports available for download including Snapshot 2004: Volunteering Report Card outlining the trends in volunteering in Australia and internationally.



## Australian VolunteerSearch

<http://www.volunteersearch.gov.au/>

The Australian VolunteerSearch site is managed and maintained by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The website has been established to facilitate the contacts between volunteers and volunteer organisations. The VolunteerSearch site allows organisations to advertise volunteer opportunities and for volunteers to post a profile outlining their details, skills and experience and the type and duration of volunteering they wish to undertake. Potential volunteers can automatically generate a list of volunteer opportunities in their area, and volunteer organisations can use the site to search for suitable volunteers.



# EMA Research and Innovation Program



**Australian Government**

**Attorney-General's Department**  
Emergency Management Australia

**EMA's role in research and innovation is:**  
**"to provide national leadership in generating knowledge and inspiring innovation in emergency management practice".**

To achieve EMA's vision of 'safer sustainable communities' it is critical that existing knowledge and practice in the emergency management sector are enhanced. Research and innovation play a vital role in this, especially in relation to a changing environment and in providing the evidence base for good practice.

The EMA Research and Innovation Program aims to facilitate the capture and transfer of innovative practice and disaster research outcomes across the sector. The program is seeking applications from organisations wishing to participate in the program for 2006–2007 in the following priority areas.

## Priority areas

- ▶ Building individual and community resilience
- ▶ Risk perception, including warnings and community action
- ▶ Innovations in disaster mitigation
- ▶ Methods for assessing disaster impacts, including long term, social and economic effects

### Process and level of funding

Applications should be submitted by 3 February 2006.

Proposals will be accepted at two different levels:

- ▶ Scoping: a small grant to test an idea or concept for future project funding (up to approximately \$10 000)
- ▶ Major projects (up to \$100 000)

### Information and contact details

Details of the program and application are available on the EMA website: [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)

For further information contact:

Sue Collins (02) 6256 4614

Mike Tarrant (03) 5421 5219

or [projects@ema.gov.au](mailto:projects@ema.gov.au)