

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY

## RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services



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## FLOODS, FIRES DOMINATE 2012/13 SUMMER

Kapunda: Catching a killer

Churchill Fellow's US and Canadian study

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FRONT COVER  
Grampians, Victoria, February 2013.  
Photo by Lexia Irving



## Bob Maul, LFAIES

### *General Secretary/Registrar*

The AIES National Council is pleased to announce the following emergency services, and related, professionals were elevated to Life Members, Fellows or joined the AIES between December 2012 and March 2013.

| Name                  | Organisation                  | State  |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Jeff Barnard          | Red Cross                     | NSW    |
| Aaron Beach           | SES                           | VIC    |
| Michelle Bowker       | SES                           | QLD    |
| Deborah Brown         | Latrobe City Council          | VIC    |
| Peter Dawes           | Royal National Lifeboat Org.  | UK/QLD |
| Alan Eade             | SJA                           | VIC    |
| Trevor Gitsham        | SES                           | SA     |
| Stephen Hancock       | SES                           | SA     |
| Tristan Hardwick      | SES                           | QLD    |
| Tam Hoang             | SES                           | NSW    |
| Ben Holder            | SJA                           | QLD    |
| Brian Lee             | Marine Rescue/Defence         | SA     |
| Jenny Luke            | St John Ambulance             | VIC    |
| Warren Phillip-Clarke | Emergency Mgt/Fire Safe Group | WA     |
| Reginald Rendall      | SES                           | NSW    |
| Jonathan Saunders     | SES                           | VIC    |
| Peter Stacey          | AMSA                          | ACT    |
| Thomas Sugget         | SES                           | QLD    |
| Owen Sutton           | Rural Fire Service            | NSW    |
| Philip Tan            | SJA                           | SA     |
| Leigh Witchard        | SES/CFS                       | SA     |

AMSA - Australian Maritime Safety Authority, CFS - Country Fire Service, RFS - Rural Fire Service,  
SES - State Emergency Service, SJA - St John Ambulance



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## EDITOR'S REPORT

### Kristi High

**I**t was a hot one, with record-breaking temperatures, and with it came true the 2012/13 summer predictions for higher than average fire potential for many parts of Australia. From coast to coast, bushfires destroyed land and property, and claimed the lives of three firefighters. While many emergency services organisations and individuals were pushed to the limits fighting fires, Queensland was again hit by devastating floods. Thank you to all who contributed stories in this issue during such an

intense time. In particular, thanks to CFA firefighter Lexia Irving and the Queensland Red Cross.

I would also like to thank SAPOL for our special feature story, *Kapunda: Catching a killer*. I remember being shocked and devastated by the murder of Chantelle Rowe and her parents Andrew and Rose at the hands of an 18-year-old man back in 2010. The murderer, Jason Downie, is now behind bars but the community of Kapunda, on the fringe of South Australia's Barossa Valley, is likely to be rocked forever. In this unique

feature, written by SAPOL Media Director Shelaye Boothe, the story of the police involved in one of SAPOL's largest homicide investigations is told in a rare and candid manner. Thank you for sharing this unique insight into the operation with our members, and also to Matthew Rodda at SAPOL for assisting us in pulling it all together.

I also hope you enjoy Churchill Fellowship recipient Ian Mannix's report from US and Canada and thank Ian for permitting us to publish his excellent report. ●



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

**Alan Marshall, LFAIES**

*National President*

## EMERGENCIES – PROTECTION OF LIFE

The protection of life must be the main priority when agencies are responding to an emergency: this principle cannot be overstated. Where the consequences of an emergency have the potential to impact communities, informing these communities must be the priority of responding agencies. It is the Incident Controller's role to consider the current and potential impacts and the consequences of the emergency on the responders. The flow of information from the Incident Controller to the relevant response support agencies, relief and recovery agencies as well as the Emergency Response Coordinator is paramount. It is the recognition that the controller, at the onset of an emergency, understands that individuals, their livelihood and communities may be affected. We have recently experienced the principle of rapid delivery and the increase of information to the communities through the use of web-based systems attached to emergency services. The community, now hungry for the latest information, is focused towards the data on emergencies affecting them and their lives. This has stretched to the limit those methods available through electronic mediums. We have come a long way regarding how the information is provided to emergency responders. The emergency responders have a responsibility to preserve life and to look after the community's welfare. Education and being involved creates improvements in the understanding, and in the delivery. We cannot stand still nor rely on any one method of communication to protect lives. We must work to ensure agencies can deliver what they agree to provide and understand that some disasters cannot be controlled and that humans need to get out of the way of danger. At all times, when planning to preserve life, consider what's happening.

Take action on your plan earlier rather than later and resolve to be part of a resilient community. Mitigate the issues through an 'All Hazards' community-shared approach, to make the protection of life inclusive.

## COMMUNICATION AS AN ISSUE

Recent newspaper reports indicate that communication may still be an issue. The acceptance of a problem or an emergency affecting your neighbourhood is a shared responsibility; we are all part of improving communication through feedback and discussion. Media management at any emergency, including access and safety for media representatives, is the responsibility of the control agency. The whole question of communications, both now and in the future, must depend on and be geared towards designated command, control and coordinated systems. To develop communications solely on the bases of advances in techniques and capabilities would be unlikely to produce optimum communications effectiveness. However, community feedback in an emergency has, and will continue, to save lives.

The demand for information and the ability to communicate it is often overwhelming. Information overload these days comes largely through social media and it refers to Internet-based applications that enable people to communicate and share resources and information. Technologies are being developed to support automated social media analysis to collect, detect, assess, simplify and report situation information in near real-time from sources such as Twitter and Facebook. The plan is to continue to capture evidence prior to the incident and add the real time of the incident activity with first hand reports and finally to include the community response to an emergency warning.



The aim is to work with, and incorporate, the issues and to involve the public. This is already recognised as the best defence against any emergency. The information pattern must have consistency – is it relevant, clear and targeted? The incident controller's team, through its media element, has the responsibility to provide regular up-to-date reports that are informative and accurate. A pattern must be established for set times of delivery of information sharing – where are we coming from, what are the major issues, what are we doing about it, and what are the long term issues confronting the community and incident control? We must include the community's feedback and share with the community aspects that relate to the emergency.

Communication itself is not an issue; it remains a method of exchange.

## JOURNAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Keeping to the theme of our journal, each year the General Council awards the contribution of a published article in the *National Emergency Response*. I encourage you all to continue the delivery of your excellent articles to your magazine.

On behalf of the General Council of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services, stay safe, healthy and continue the networking. ●

# POLICE COMMISSIONER SPEAKS OUT ABOUT CRIME IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SA Police Commissioner Gary Burns provides an interesting insight into crime in South Australia and the perception of crime in (the) state.



**Gary Burns**

I am going to make a bold statement: the community fear and perception of crime is out of step with the reality of crime.

It's bold because it is not my intention to offend or diminish the hurt and anguish of those people impacted by crime. Those innocent people traumatised by crime have my sympathy. One victim of crime is one too many.

It's bold because it's made in the shadow of recent suburban shootings and I recognise that crimes like these do create concern and distress in the community.

But please – read on.

The fact remains that victim reported crime in (South Australia) has significantly declined in the past decade - dropping by about 40 per cent.

In the last year alone, 2011-12, there was a 5.6 per cent reduction. This means there were tens of thousands

fewer victims of crime last year than there was 10 years ago.

Supporting these figures is a report released (in February), looking at Australia's 30 biggest cities. It found Adelaide the country's safest, with the lowest levels of crime per head of population.

But despite these very real falls in crime rates, there's every indication that the public does not accept that crime is actually decreasing. Surveys, some conducted by (*the Adelaide Advertiser*), show that there is a high level of public concern about crime.

So how did we reach a point where crime rates are trending down and perceptions are heading the other way?

After 40 years policing (South Australia) I've come to the conclusion that much of it can be attributed to the speed in which information now spreads throughout our communities – through mobile technology and via mainstream and social media.

Twenty or even 10 years ago, many of us were learning how to use our first mobile phone. Internet coverage was patchy and generally our daily diet of news was through this paper or a single, nightly news bulletin.

The result: a limited knowledge of local crime.

In the new media landscape journalists are tweeting on the way to a crime scene with what information they may have gleaned. Often this early information is inaccurate. The first sniff of a crime and the online version of (*the Adelaide Advertiser*), Adelaide Now has a headline up with a breaking news flash before we've even tied off the crime scene tape. It's what the public now expect from their news outlets.

Media coverage, as well as being immediate, is also reported differently – dare I say more sensationalistically.

I'm constantly perplexed when I see media talking up crimes, fuelling a 'streets of fear' culture, while worrying trends seem to leap out from everywhere. Yet, when police make an arrest for these crimes, those details rate well down the news bulletin and, in many instances, don't make a mention at all.

The result is an information gap – the public is left with a view that crime is rampant, while arrests are few.

It's also important to know that many serious and violent offences are not random. I do concede that at times innocent people are caught up in these terrible crimes. But with more than four decades in the job I can assure you the vast majority are directly linked to organised crime, bikies, drugs or domestic disputes. But as these people are still victims of crime, police are often legally or operationally hamstrung at revealing background and motive. So we are left with simply saying the offence was 'not random'.

It frustrates me when I see victims of home invasions re-enacting the drama for news cameras, but then refuse to provide police valuable information to help the investigation.

It is understandable that crime issues capture the public's interest and in turn drive news ratings – it is interesting but sensational and unfortunately fuels a public psyche that crime is out of control.

But on the flipside, mainstream media can aid police investigations. They reach large numbers quickly and can amplify the police message for the public to come forward with information.

SA Police (SAPOL) also plays a large part in disseminating information on crime. And therefore, takes some





responsibility in promoting a view that there's more crime in the community.

Two years ago SAPOL's only avenue to inform the public about crime was through mainstream media. Today through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as well as our dedicated online news site we reach more than 250,000 people each week.

But there's no doubt these sites have been incredibly successful in helping solve crimes, progress our engagement with the community and raise public confidence in police.

The community also generates its own rapid flow of crime information. Instead of relying on the town grapevine, you're now taking to Facebook in droves to post your 300+ friends a message or tweet your followers or text your entire mobile phone contact list the news.

It's this combination of a changing media landscape, a more open and engaged police force and the explosion of social media that has helped fuel unrealistic fears of crime.

*It's (the) combination of a changing media landscape, a more open and engaged police force and the explosion of social media that has helped fuel unrealistic fears of crime.*

To help redress this issue, and close the gap between the reality and perception of crime, SAPOL (has begun) publishing monthly state and local service area (LSA) crime statistics. At the end of each month we'll publish the data for the preceding month.

Helpful information to explain the crime data will be published at the same time, along with specific comments from each LSA manager which provide rationale for any fluctuations in the statistics.

I'm hoping that by providing this context we can put crime in perspective and reduce the fear of crime, which in itself is a crucial factor in how people feel in their home, their community and their state.

While some cynics might hide behind the oft quoted suggestion that 'There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics', it's important to note these statistics are in compliance with nationally accepted and approved counting rules. These same rules will apply to the figures released next month, and the month after that, and the month after that.

I'm hopeful this new initiative will create a more informed community. I encourage you all to look at the data each month – across the state and for the LSAs that impact you.

In the meantime, (SAPOL) remains committed to driving down crime across the state – and to keep (the community) informed at every opportunity. ●



# **NOTICE OF 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

All Members of the Institute are cordially invited to attend the

## **2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

to be held at the :

Meridian Hotel

Melbourne Street, North Adelaide

on Wednesday 17 July 2013

commencing at 7 PM

the Order of Business shall be:

Welcome

Apologies

Confirmation of Minutes of 2012 Meeting and Matters Arising

President's Report

General Secretary/Registrar's Report

Adoption of Financial Statements

Notices of Motion

General Business

By order of the Board of Directors

**Robert A Maul**

General Secretary/ Registrar/Company Secretary, AIES



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# KAPUNDA: CATCHING A KILLER

This is an account of a crime so heinous that it tore apart a family, shattered a small community and shook South Australia to its core. SAPOL's Media Director, Shelaye Boothey, provides a rare insight into one of the largest homicide investigations in SAPOl history – all of which was carried out under the glare of intense media scrutiny.

**Shelaye Boothey**

*South Australia Police Director Media and Public Engagement Section*

*Photo courtesy of the Adelaide Advertiser.*





(l-r): Murdered teenager Chantelle Rowe with convicted killer Jason Downie. © SAPOL

## SERENITY SHATTERED

Harriet Street is a short, narrow, unsealed road – contemporary houses on one side, heritage cottages on the other. It is like many others in Kapunda – a small town on the fringe of the Barossa Valley (South Australia).

Kapunda was best known for its history of Cornish settlers who came to mine the copper-rich region in the mid-1800s.

In the early hours of Monday 8 November 2010 that all changed.

A neighbour recalls just after 1am hearing three pleas for help and then a thump, like someone falling, followed by more screams and then silence. Inside 5 Harriet Street three people were dead – murdered in the most shocking of circumstances. They were Andrew and Rose Rowe, along with their 16-year-old daughter Chantelle.

When Andrew didn't arrive for an appointment the next day, the alarm was raised.

Kapunda-based officer Senior Constable Justin Doherty was first to the house.

"I got to the front door and I looked through the side window, there was blood everywhere. The door was unlocked. I walked through the house to see if anyone was alive. But it was obvious no-one could have survived this. I was in shock. I just froze. It was horrendous," Senior Constable Doherty said.

Then for the next nine days the residents of Kapunda collectively held their breath until detectives from Major Crime arrested 18-year-old Jason Alexander Downie. Downie had moved from

Scotland with his family six years prior. He was a loner and Chantelle Rowe had taken pity on him and befriended him. No-one could have ever predicted that her kindness would culminate in this tragedy.

## NO ORDINARY CRIME SCENE

When the three bodies were discovered, Superintendent Grant Moyle was in his office in Wakefield Street. Appointed head of Major Crime less than a month before, he had been busy reviewing all outstanding homicides.

Just before midday Senior Sergeant Steve Kinsman (now retired) walked in – and in a second everything changed.

"He told me about an incident at Kapunda where there were three bodies in a house. We were unsure what had exactly happened, but murder-suicide certainly wasn't ruled out," Superintendent Moyle said.

Senior detectives from Major Crime converged on Kapunda only to be told there was no chance of them accessing the house for some time, for this was no ordinary, run-of-the-mill crime scene.

A clear comprehension of what they were dealing with came via video footage from inside the home.

"My first thought was the unimaginable fear the family must have gone through. And then I thought: we have to solve this; it just had to be solved. It's difficult to put into words, but it was clear we had a very complex and extensive crime scene to deal with. But at that stage we were starting from

scratch as far as any motive or significant leads," Superintendent Moyle said.

A few hours later Superintendent Moyle and his team were able to get a limited view of the crime scene via the open front and laundry doors and windows.

"It was nothing like anything I'd ever seen before. It certainly brought home the fact that video cannot do a crime scene justice," he said.

"My personal view was that it was most likely we were looking for a murderer. But because you can't shift bodies, you can't look underneath them, to make a call without some sort of solid verification was very difficult. Basically, I thought I had a triple murder but with no idea who had committed it."

Sergeant John Keane, who has notched up 22 years at Major Crime, is considered a veteran of homicides.

"It was the worst I had seen. Horrific would be the word to describe it. It was an obvious frenzied attack; there was so much blood in that place," Sergeant Keane said.

The complexity of the scene meant there was still no formal confirmation of triple murder by early evening – but the entire state, let alone the town, knew three people were dead and everyone wanted answers.

It was time to talk to the throng of media who had made their way to the town, eagerly awaiting just the smallest piece of information – but in a case such as this, where do you start?

"It wasn't until just before midnight on the first day that the pathologist and crime scene investigators confirmed it was a triple murder. But when you have a whole community in fear, we needed to say something well before then," Superintendent Moyle said.

Three hours after Major Crime arrived on the scene the first press conference was held. Superintendent Moyle's holding statement confirmed three people were dead and a 'complex' crime scene needed to be assessed before more details could be released.

## A COMMUNITY IN FEAR

Helping to settle the fear within the small community was Officer in Charge of Barossa Local Service Area (LSA), Chief Inspector Alex Zimmermann.

"The fear was palpable," he said.

"There was no life after nightfall and a reluctance for anyone to answer a knock



at the door. It was difficult because we could not give the community answers. To help with reassurance we sent crime prevention staff to talk to people in the main street and extra patrols were immediately sent into the area, including a dedicated night shift patrol which would be highly visible and provide some comfort to the community," he said.

Major Crime detectives were hopeful that comfort would come in the form of an early breakthrough on the first night.

"We got our first exposure to how Facebook can impact on an investigation," Superintendent Moyle said.

#### **Transcript of second press conference held at 7.15pm on 8 November 2010 – Superintendent Grant Moyle.**

"We are at the very early stages of this investigation and examination and processing of this crime scene is going to take some time. However, it is our responsibility to ask the public to be vigilant with their safety... this is a small community, and I would ask that anyone who saw anything to let police know immediately. No matter how trivial they think it is, it could be the vital piece of information we are looking for."

#### **Reporter question: Are you looking for a murderer?**

"It is just too early in this investigation and I wouldn't like to speculate... there will be a high police presence and safety of the community is of concern to us. I do appreciate that the public are concerned."

"We became aware of a person who'd posted a comment that suggested he'd done something terrible and didn't know how he could live with himself. He lived nearby and we'd been able to establish a connection to the Rowe family. We thought no way, it can't be this easy."

But hopes of a speedy resolution and the opportunity to put a town at ease were quickly dashed.

"We established the person was talking about a domestic issue. It was deflating, but we had to quickly refocus," he said.

A Police Operations Vehicle had been brought into Harriet Street to support those dedicated to the investigation, but within a day it was obvious that a bigger space was needed. The extended team of detectives, intelligence and crime scene analysts along with uniformed patrols moved to a vacant room at the Kapunda Courthouse.

#### **DETECTING THE MURDERER**

Day two and Major Crime detectives had a whiteboard crammed with priorities. It was overwhelming: continue door knocks, re-visit neighbours, coordinate searches, gather background on the family and talk with a lengthy list of friends. Essentially the entire town was on the shortlist.

As Superintendent Moyle puts it, "we were looking at anything we could focus the investigation on".

Gut instinct from detectives, backed up with sound advice from the crime scene investigators helped define a starting point for the investigation: it was 16-year-old Chantelle.

"We felt the way her body was positioned and the apparent state

of semi-undress that more care was taken with this body than the others. So our priority was chasing up all the family members and the friends of Chantelle," Superintendent Moyle said.

Investigators soon discovered that Chantelle had held a party at the Harriet Street home on Saturday night. It was decided those who attended would be spoken to first.

Uniformed police officers were tasked to speak with, and take statements from, friends of Chantelle. In one of those conversations the name Jason Downie came up, along with many others.

Downie was followed up and gave a statement claiming he knew Chantelle from school, but stated he had not been invited to Saturday's party. The statement – which later formed part of Downie's demise – did not raise any alarm, nor would it at that stage of the investigation. It was filed to review, along with dozens of others.

Day three. While the bodies had been removed, Major Crime detectives still had no access to the house.

Brevet Sergeant Peter (Jock) McKenzie, a crime scene Investigator with the Forensic Response Section, clarifies why.

"On my way up to Kapunda I thought 'this is going to be a murder-suicide'. When I got inside the house I thought 'this is murder'. It was the bloodiest scene I had ever encountered in my 20 years. Blood was in every room, on every wall. The patterns of the wounds, the spray on the walls – you could tell those people were fighting for their life as someone was stabbing them," Brevet Sergeant McKenzie said.

Chantelle was stabbed at least 33 times. Her father, Andrew, was found near the kitchen bench – he had 29 wounds, while his wife, Rose, was found just metres away. It is believed she was attacked twice and was stabbed at least 50 times.

"The scene was so complex; I just knew I was going to be there for days. The priority was to protect the integrity of the scene. I had to clear a path to each body, examine them, 'tape lift' the bodies to preserve any transference from the offender to the victims. Only then could I release the bodies to the Coroner for further examination," Brevet Sergeant McKenzie said.

Brevet Sergeant McKenzie started with a team of four but determined it would be easier in the house if it was just him and a second officer. Brevet Sergeant



Natasha Douglas stayed with him throughout. It was her first murder scene.

"She did a great job. All the team did. It was overwhelming at first for all of us. Everything looked the same and you wonder where to start, but once the bodies were removed you started to look at stains or patterns that seem out of the ordinary," he said.



*Evidence. © SAPOL*

Over the next five days Brevet Sergeants McKenzie and Douglas individualised every blood splatter – measuring, photographing, taking samples and tagging. The methodical work of these crime scene investigators helped build a scenario of what occurred and how.

"We just started at the front door and worked backwards. I had to cut up the lino in the front hallway and take it back to the office. That way I could move along the hall to start examining the walls.

"There were more than a thousand blood stain patterns. I made the separate, significant patterns my priority – there were 250 of them," Brevet Sergeant McKenzie said.

Since detectives couldn't enter the house for days after the murders, a big part of Brevet Sergeant McKenzie's role was feeding information back to Major Crime, briefing them every 30 minutes or so on the latest discovery so they could assess and prioritise the information and their resources.

So thorough was the work conducted by the crime scene investigators that the sequence of events put forward by Brevet Sergeant McKenzie was largely agreed to by Justice John Sulan who sentenced Downie.

"The coordination between crime scene, forensics and Major Crime was the best I've ever come across," Brevet Sergeant McKenzie said.

Major Crime's Operations Inspector, Denise Gray, who led the coordination of resources and information for this investigation, applauded Brevet Sergeant McKenzie's role.

"In 26 years of policing I have never seen such a comprehensive scene

examination as that of Brevet Sergeant McKenzie's," Inspector Gray said.

Together the pair also praised Forensic Science South Australia (FSSA) who they said 'set aside everything' to get evidence analysed with the urgency this case demanded.

While Brevet Sergeant McKenzie and his team methodically processed the scene, Major Crime worked on leads.

Calls to Crime Stoppers flooded in, especially after one public appeal asking if anyone knew of someone with unexplained cuts to their hands. Leads were triaged and followed – all necessary but time consuming.

"I was conscious that I couldn't have the team running off in too many directions and then lose focus on the investigation. When information came in we had to prioritise and then follow up, hoping we didn't miss the crucial piece," Superintendent Moyle said.

At the time it was just one of hundreds of prints all over the house. So what singled this print out? It was found in a blood-type substance.

One hundred hours of non-stop work; door knocks, interviews, phone calls, statement-taking, searches and following leads and forensics – and finally a wafer-thin glimmer appeared out of nowhere. It re-energised and re-focused the entire team.

"It was exciting, as it gave us something to focus on and build from," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt said.

Day five and the print came back 'unknown'. But that was not unexpected. It meant it wasn't from the Rowe family, or anyone who'd already been identified as having a legitimate reason for being in the house. There was no time for despondency – it was a starting point.

*Evidence. © SAPOL*



Then on day four the first piece of a very complex puzzle fell into place – this is the precise time that Downie's elaborate story began to unravel. Major Crime Investigations Supervisor, Detective Brevet Sergeant Anthony van der Stelt, explains.

"The forensic investigators were spraying the doors with a chemical called Amido Black. It reacts with proteins to bring out the prints. Chantelle's bedroom door was being sprayed. Nothing showed up on the section being targeted but some of the spray ran down the door and brought up a previously non-visible print. The finger print was on the very edge of the door, just above the door handle," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt said.

On the same day, Major Crime detectives were allowed inside the house for the first time. Even the most hardened of SAPOL's detectives found it difficult to grasp the horror of what confronted them.

"Crime scenes like this show you how frail the human body is and is a manifestation of how cruel human beings can be against another," Superintendent Moyle said.

Another day (six), a new breakthrough – as horrifying and appalling as this one was. Semen was found on Chantelle's body. She had been raped by the man who murdered her. The information also reinforced to detectives that it was Chantelle who was the focus of this crime.

"Normally it would take up to a week to get samples analysed, but FSSA worked around-the-clock to get us the information overnight. Throughout this case they worked exceptionally hard and produced some great results. They are the behind-the-scenes people that we could not do without," Superintendent Moyle said.

FSSA advised the semen was not recorded on any database.

"When I read Downie's statement I thought it was odd. Downie said about four times, without prompting, that he did not have a girlfriend.

"He also said he knew Chantelle had a party on the Saturday night but she hadn't invited him. He went on to provide an alibi, saying he went to McDonald's, even though he wasn't asked for one," Sergeant Keane said.

He later changed this to falling off a motorbike. They were deep cuts, not scratches and not consistent with falling off a bike. We asked if he'd been inside the Rowe home, he said no, but admitted to being outside it," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt said.

### WEB OF LIES UNRAVEL

One week and one day on from the murders, forensics confirmed that the print on Chantelle's bedroom door was Downie's.

Earlier Downie had told police he hadn't been inside the Rowe's home! But was it enough for detectives to move? Not for Superintendent Moyle, he wanted, and needed, more.

"If, at the end of the day, we locked someone up and the print was all we had, the clock is ticking. Downie could say he was there months ago. Don't get me wrong, the print was nice, but it was of limited value on its own," he said.

But when the DNA came back as a match to Downie late the next day, Superintendent Moyle admits his 'pulse rate went up'.

"There was some punching of the air – it was a relief. Then you have to play devil's advocate. You have to take the time to examine everything before you and question: if I were defence for Downie, I'd be looking for an explanation like 'yeah I said I didn't have intercourse with Chantelle, but in actual fact I had, but didn't want anyone to know'. That's not unusual.

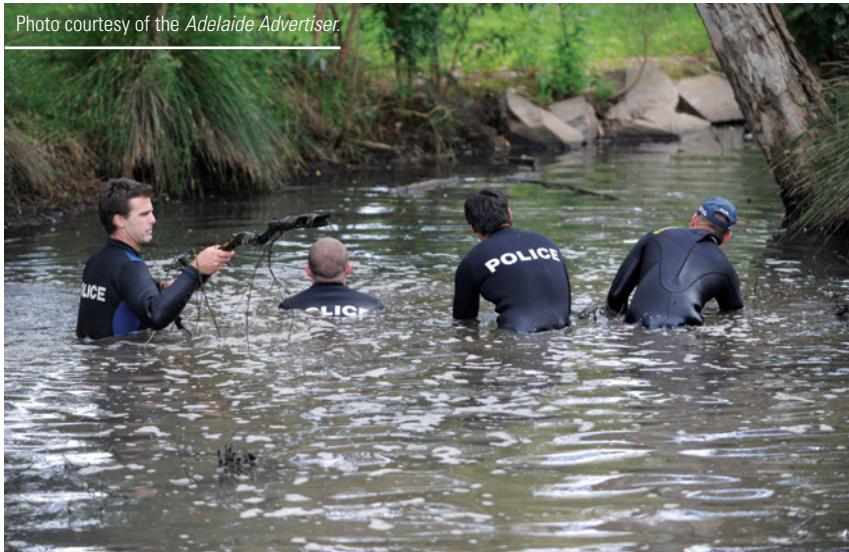
"But we looked at everything objectively and at the end of the day we were happy with our answers. We could have waited for more DNA indicators to come back, but I was worried about the dangers. What if something else happened overnight? How would we answer to the public on why we didn't move on what we had?" Superintendent Moyle said.

Within 48 hours, Sergeant Keane's initial hunch had turned into a set of facts that would eventually see Downie plead guilty to triple murder. Deliberations then started on the best way to arrest a man who was suspected of murdering three people.

There has been a lot of speculation around why Major Crime detectives decided on a course of action that saw Downie's boss bring him to the police station.

Superintendent Moyle explains that it was not intended, but was something that couldn't have been foreseen in the planning process.

Photo courtesy of the *Adelaide Advertiser*.



### THE DEFINING MOMENT

A finger print – unknown.

Semen on Chantelle's body – unknown.

Major Crime detectives were in a unique situation. They knew the forensic makeup of the killer, but frustratingly there was no name to attach to it.

The physical evidence was staring back at detectives, daring them to find the final piece to complete the puzzle. It was time to stop and take stock. Did the answer to who murdered the Rowes lie somewhere in the piles of information already gathered? A decision was made to review the initial statements taken from Chantelle's friends.

Downie's statement was just one of dozens taken early in the investigation. At that time, there was no reason for his testimony to stand out. In fact, at this time Major Crime detectives were not specifically aware of Downie – there was no reason to be.

After reading Downie's statement Sergeant Keane, Major Crime's most experienced detective, had a hunch. His hunch was to be the defining moment in a case which had already become one of the state's most notorious murder investigations – and it was less than a week old.

It was odd: the details stood out, but was it significant? Sergeant Keane shared his thoughts with fellow detectives and a plan was hatched.

It was Inspector Gray's call to Downie's boss that yielded yet more valuable information.

"I asked if Downie had been at work the day of the murders. He said yes, but he'd been late. When he arrived Downie told his boss he'd fallen off a motorbike, cutting his hands, and said he might not be able to do much work.

"After that call we felt we had something concrete to follow. We were planning to DNA swab and print all Chantelle's male friends who had attended the party on the Saturday night. Downie was added to that list," Inspector Gray said.

While the DNA requests were voluntary, no-one who was asked refused. This included Downie. Sergeant Keane took the DNA while Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt took Downie's prints.

"He was a bit timid and a bit shy, but that was his personality. He was cooperative and invited us into his house. When I printed him I saw that he had cuts on his hand. When we asked how he got them, he said he fell off his bike on the Friday night.



"There is always a risk assessment that needs to be done. You ask: how do we effect the arrest – will it be a high-risk situation and how do we not expose people to more danger than can be avoided?"

Options we considered were going to his workplace and arresting him, but there were a lot of other people working there. How do you control the scene? Does he have access to weapons, or potential weapons? If you go and knock on his door there may be other people in the house and if he panics we could end up with a siege. We considered a vehicle stop on his way to or from work, but that was problematic again – if he panics you could end up with a pursuit with members of the public being exposed to danger," Superintendent Moyle said.

And so detectives went with the option of asking Downie to come in and sign his statement. It was simple; clean. Downie was aware that others had been asked to do the same, so it was not out of the ordinary.

And so Detective Kinsman rang Downie's work and asked his supervisor to give him a message: on his way home, could Downie please drop in to the Kapunda Police Station and sign his statement? Unbeknown to police, on this day Downie had not taken his car to work, but had asked for a lift from his boss.

"When we asked his boss to pass on the message, he said 'no worries: I brought him into work, I can bring him into the police station on my way home'."

"I was not comfortable with this, but to change the plan could have spooked Downie, so we let it run its course," Superintendent Moyle explained.

Brevet Sergeants Anthony van der Stelt, Peter Martin and Shaun Osborn made the arrest.

"We just stood inside the station waiting for Downie to arrive, looking out the windows. We'd closed the station earlier and unlocked the door when he arrived. I just went up to him, introduced myself and shook his hand. I took him out the back of the station and arrested him."

"He didn't really react at all to anything. He just calmly denied committing the offences," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt said.

Downie asked to call his mother. Detectives allowed her to sit in on the interview.

"She told him to tell the truth. We gave her a chance to speak to him in private;

Photo courtesy of the *Adelaide Advertiser*.



she just wanted to know the truth and he just kept saying no, he hadn't," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt explains.

Throughout the interview Downie's lies kept mounting.

"There were a number of things he said that were quite clearly incorrect. In particular, we explained to him we found his semen on Chantelle. He claimed he had consensual sex with her a number of months ago and that he'd used a condom. He said 'obviously the condom broke,'" he said.

The night Downie was arrested, a press conference was arranged to let the people of Kapunda know their ordeal was over and they could reclaim their town. More than 100 locals gathered at the police station.

"It was pretty overwhelming to see that amount of people there. The TV cameras became invisible, because all I could see was the sea of people. It was

extraordinary that people would come out for the press conference, rather than stay at home and see it from their lounge room. It was really emotional for everyone involved," Superintendent Moyle said.

Chief Inspector Zimmerman believes that when Downie was identified as the alleged killer, shockwaves swept through the community for a second time.

"There was total disbelief. It was one of their own. Someone most people knew. After the arrest it was a priority to make sure there was no vigilante action against Downie's family. I had my members walking into front bars to pass on the message, that Downie's family were not responsible for an individual's actions," Chief Inspector Zimmerman said.

While arrangements were being made to go public with the arrest, Downie was taken from Kapunda to Elizabeth Police Station Cells for a range of forensic procedures.

On the hour-long drive Downie said very little and showed even less emotion. It seemed unfathomable that someone accused of such a heinous crime could appear so impassive.

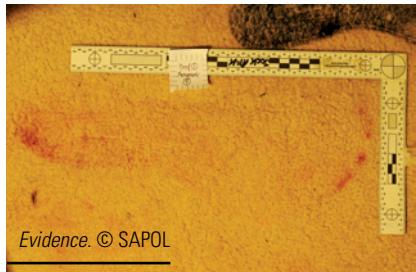
"He seems to have the ability to distance himself from reality. Whatever he says to himself is the reality, the rest is just fiction."

"He was able to go to work on the Monday morning. He not only went to work, he had people believe he was grief stricken. He carried on the charade throughout the week, he even went to the extent of laying a card and teddy bear at the back gate of the house," Detective Brevet Sergeant van der Stelt said.

### EVIL WITHIN

There's no doubt the crime, the scenario of events and the viciousness so evident in the crime scene has replayed a thousand times over in the minds of those who dealt with this brutality. All admit there is no easy way to erase it.

"His behaviour is what you expect from a psychopathic killer who had done it a number of times – but this was an 18-year-old lad with no criminal history.



*Evidence. © SAPOL*

"It is hard for us to go to bed and picture that scene, how is it for him to go to bed, and close his eyes at night knowing what he did?" Superintendent Moyle said. Sergeant Keane elaborated.

"I couldn't think of anything worse than closing your eyes and re-living what you had done. It's my view that Downie disabled all three of them and came back and finished the attack. In that process he stabbed Chantelle, she's crawled under the bed already bleeding, he's dragged her out and raped her then redressed her – for me, that's the worst

part of it. We don't really know if she was dead or dying when he raped her," Sergeant Keane said shaking his head.

Brevet Sergeant McKenzie added his thoughts.

"I am rarely surprised at what humans can do to each other. But I have four children and I couldn't help think how someone can kill a child like that, with such rage."

Chief Inspector Zimmermann said the scene was so staggering that his priority was the wellbeing of his local members.

"I had to protect my staff, they were clearly shaken. I was conscious of the need to limit their exposure to the carnage," he said.

### A COMPELLING CASE

After the arrest came the exhaustive process of filling in the remainder of a most complex puzzle. Much of that fell to forensics.

Brevet Sergeant McKenzie explains his biggest challenge of the investigation came when he was asked to select an initial 10 blood samples to be taken to FSSA to see if any DNA could be extracted.

After studying the hundreds of samples he'd taken, Brevet Sergeant McKenzie chose 10. Remarkably, four of those came back as positive matches to Downie, including blood stained finger marks found in front of the knife block in the kitchen.

Brevet Sergeant McKenzie is confident that if Downie had gone to trial, the forensic evidence from the crime scene was so compelling, that alone would have convicted Downie. And although Downie was never interviewed again after his arrest, detectives describe the final brief of evidence against him as 'overwhelming'.

It included blood from the Rowe family located on Downie's car console and Chantelle's USB stick and lanyard (seen in a photo around her neck the day before she was killed) in Downie's possession.

Almost as compelling as the bedroom door finger print and DNA, was the ability of Brevet Sergeant McKenzie and his team to match a pair of Downie's shoes to prints at the crime scene.

"Even though we didn't have Downie's shoes we had a Facebook photo of him wearing a pair that we thought may match those found at the crime scene. He couldn't account for where the shoes were. But we were eventually able to find out the make and brand, purchase a pair from Big W and analyse the tread pattern against those found at the scene – it was a perfect match," Brevet Sergeant McKenzie said.

*Evidence. © SAPOL*



Downie's shoe print was found in the bottom of the Rowe's bath, with no blood on it. That led crime scene investigators and detectives to safely assume that Downie had broken into the house through a bathroom window.

At some point during the attack Downie removed his shoes which were covered in blood, and walked around in his socks. He also attempted to clean up.

### NO REMORSE

The day Downie pleaded guilty, Superintendent Moyle walked from the Supreme Court with a heavy heart. Journalists were swarming around, seeking comment. Perhaps they were expecting him to signal a relief at the plea?

Instead the Superintendent's anger surfaced. He told reporters: "Downie's guilty pleas should not be seen as any sign of remorse on his part, for three murders which I think were of a truly savage nature."

Superintendent Moyle said he felt compelled to make those comments.

"He pleaded guilty but he never confessed. There's a big difference between a confession and a guilty plea and I would not want anyone to think he was in some way remorseful for what wasn't," he said.

Police were aware that after the guilty plea Downie was still telling his family that he didn't commit the murders.

It's for that reason the DPP requested that the Court make Downie formally plea a second time. There was no way anyone would accept Downie getting off on a technicality.

And so in March (2012) Downie stood in the Supreme Court and confirmed he was responsible for taking the lives of Andrew, Rose and Chantelle Rowe – all because he was obsessed with Chantelle, but could not possess her.

Following his second plea Downie surprised everyone by offering directions, through his lawyer, to where police could find the shoes he wore on the night of the murder.



"He gave us some directions and the local police went and recovered the shoes. Then there was a further offer to take us and show us where the knives he used and clothing he wore were. We never recovered the knives but we did eventually recover the clothing, hidden under a tree on a back track outside of Kapunda. We know he took Chantelle's phone and Rose's purse, but he denies this. I don't think he wants to give them up," Superintendent Moyle said.

Inspector Gray agrees Downie is holding back.

"While we found his clothes, we never found the knife. I don't believe he was ever going to show us where that was, that would be the ultimate confession. At the time I remember thinking how cold and dispassionate he is.

"No remorse, no sorrow and no explanation, just pure evil."

## A LONG ROAD BACK

... after being sentenced to life with 35 years non-parole, Major Crime detectives can take time to reflect.

"I think the team, all my team, did an extraordinary job and put in long, long hours. But also we were supported by a lot of other people. There were 80 or more police officers that played a part somewhere," Superintendent Moyle said.

*Media conference. © SAPOL*



would give him some relief," he said.

Another key contributor to the investigation was Victim Contact Officer, Constable Cristina Poppy. It was her role to act as the conduit between investigators and Christopher.

This involved keeping him apprised of developments and explaining how investigations, evidence and court processes worked. Her work also extended to keeping all family members and close friends informed, which wasn't easy.

"Andrew and Rose shared 10 siblings between them. Then there are all the

issues, deliver news to them, steer them towards the right services like the Homicide Victim Support Group.

"Now I feel like an adoptive mother. I am still in contact with all the family, and sometimes we don't even talk about the murders, we just talk about anything," she said.

Constable Poppy expects that contact to go on for years to come, as the future is uncertain for those who are left with so many questions that will go unanswered.

But what is certain is that Jason Alexander Downie will spend the next 35 years in prison.

Major Crime detectives are guarded on their views of the length of Downie's sentence. But the family left grieving are not so retrained.

Christopher Rowe's Facebook post provides an insight into their grief:

"Nothing changes. It doesn't matter if he gets one or 100 years, my family isn't coming back. You have destroyed my life and everybody's life around me who cared for and loved my family."

"Whatever you get will never be enough."

In sentencing, Justice Sulan said that had Downie not pleaded guilty, his minimum term would have been 42 years.

Justice Sulan described the attack upon each of the Rowes as frenzied and added, 'the coldblooded, merciless attack' upon Chantelle was 'a chilling act'.

But right to the end, Downie showed no emotion. ●

cousins and Chantelle's closest friends. The extended circle was enormous. But they all feel, they all hurt – so you can't isolate one, or a handful, you had to ensure everyone was informed. At times it would take almost a whole day to ensure everyone was aware of a single message.

"The family is just so strong, so gracious and always so grateful. Christopher is amazing," Constable Poppy said.

But she concedes that Downie's sentencing devastated the family all over again.

"There is still so much anger, so much disbelief. I can't even begin to understand how someone who loses their whole family can start to repair," she said. Constable Poppy says that she struggled to find a starting point with the family because the crime was so overwhelming.

"We just built a dialogue. I didn't have all the right words, but I could explain

This article first appeared in *Blueprint*, Issue 2, 2012 and has been republished with permission from SAPOL.



# RED CROSS LEADS FLOOD RECOVERY

*Queensland is in recovery again after ex-tropical cyclone Oswald claimed the lives of six people and destroyed thousands of homes.*

Ex-tropical cyclone Oswald claimed six lives and caused destruction along the Queensland coast in January with damaging winds, heavy rain, flooding, tidal surges and tornados.

A number of emergency services have been instrumental in the recovery effort, including the State Emergency Service, Emergency Management Queensland, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Volunteering Queensland, BlazeAid, Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program, while the Red Cross led the establishment of the Queensland Flood Appeal 2013.

Throughout February and March, Red Cross has mobilised recovery support for the communities affected by the devastating floods. Red Cross trained staff and volunteers are providing personal support, knocking on doors in flood affected areas including Bundaberg, Caboolture, Brisbane, Warwick, Chinchilla and Tara to provide support and resources.

In Ipswich, the Red Cross team met 62-year-old great-grandmother Lynette Davies who shared her story.

## Antony Balmain

*Australian Red Cross Communications Account Manager, International Emergencies and Stronger Communities*

Lynette Davies stands in a shaded corner of the busy flood recovery centre, rocking her two-year-old great-grandchild to sleep. Dozens of people wait to be assisted. The hot midday sun bears down on the roof of the Ipswich Showground building, one hundred kilometres from Brisbane in south east Queensland.

"When the storm came, it wasn't so much the rain, but the devastation that the rain brought and how quickly

it came down," Lynette recalls.

According to Lynette, aged 62 years, thousands of Queenslanders are facing difficulties accessing the basics.

"The floods have affected everybody, every day. There's no bread, there's no fresh milk, no petrol," she said.

The bridge connecting the city of Ipswich to One Mile, the small town where Lynette lives, was destroyed by the floods.

"That's very scary. If the babies get sick or if you can't get to a doctor, you've got

no bus service whatsoever, you're just stuck there," Lynette said.

Seven years ago, Lynette relocated her family to Ipswich, seeking a better life from a tough part of Sydney.

"My third youngest son had finished high school. He wanted to be a chef. There was more opportunity up here than in Sydney. We moved up here and he's the head chef at Ipswich RSL Club and we haven't looked back," she says.



Smiling lovingly at her family, Lyn says, "I've got four children and I brought up four grandchildren, and now I'm bringing up three great-grandchildren ... never a dull moment in my house!"

Recent years have not been easy. On top of recovering from cancer, Lyn says the recent disaster has brought memories back of her house being devastated by the huge floods that swamped much of Queensland in early 2011.

She described the stench of mud and everything rotting in her former home.

"The water came in through the back door, through the kitchen, in to the lounge room. You end up with concrete floors because all your carpet's gone. And you get that smell in the concrete forever," she said.

"There's nothing more frightening than sitting there, watching the water rise, you don't sleep."

Despite losing a lot of her possessions two years ago, Lyn reflects that it was the little precious things that meant the most.

"I had a teapot. My son bought it for me when he was 10. And I've carried it around with me everywhere and when I went through the boxes, the teapot was broken. I cried for days," she said.

Lyn says due to her experiences with the last big floods, this time she made sure she was prepared, which helped her whole family deal better with the disaster.



*When floodwaters hit Lynette Davies' suburb of One Mile, the 62-year-old great grandmother headed straight for the Ipswich recovery centre. After the Queensland floods devastated her home in 2011, Lynette and her family had a bag packed in case of another emergency. Lynette said she has been grateful for Red Cross support over recent years. Photo: Australian Red Cross/Dilini Perera*

"I had my bags packed. I had children's clothes ready to go. You've got to definitely have a plan. Things that are sentimental, well they've got to have a special place. If you're in control and you have a plan, then the rest of your family will be in control too," she said.

Fortunately, this year her house was mostly spared from the flood waters.

"Underneath is flooded but that will dry out. I'm really, really lucky, I'm really grateful for that," she said.

When floods devastated her home two years ago, Lynette reflected gratefully that she was assisted by Red Cross by saying, "After the disaster, they came knocking on my door making sure we were alright."

This time, Lyn says the support has been especially great for her family adding, "You can come down here and look around and there's Red Cross saying 'are you alright? Do you need anything? Do you need to talk? Do you need a drink of water?' How good is that? You can't ask for anything more than that."

Thousands of people need support across the state, Lyn says. "As soon as I get paid, I'll be donating to Red Cross. If everyone even just gives one dollar, that makes an awful lot of difference to people."

"If you've been in a disaster and you've lost your home, your food, your power and Red Cross is there, everyone should help." ●



*(l-r): Lucille Gott receives support from Lindy, a Red Cross volunteer at an evacuation centre in Bundaberg, after damaging floods in southern Queensland forced thousands out of their homes. Photo: Australian Red Cross/Dilini Perera*

Every cent raised by the Queensland Floods Appeal 2013 will go to help affected individuals, families and communities. To make a donation visit [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)

Red Cross is also appealing for donations for fire affected states including Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Northern Territory.

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# HOUSEWIFE'S TAKE ON GRAMPIANS FIRE



**Lexia Irving**

*CFA volunteer, Edenhope Brigade District 17*

**T**his is the story of my bleeding on my first Strike Team. And hopefully not my last!

Our area was in the Cherrypool sector, Red Rock Road area. Staging was held at the lovely Mooralla Golf Course. Thankfully we did not have to be bussed to the Dunkeld staging area as it is such a long bus trip, although on the Thursday evening our staging area was at the Glenisla homestead.

Lexia Irving, a CFA volunteer with the Edenhope brigade in District 17, shares her account of being a first-time member of a CFA Strike Team in the Grampians Fires (Victoria) in February 2013.

I did feel for the owners' agapanthus that lined the driveway – I think a few may have been lost to the constant traffic of the bus and numerous tankers, but I am sure they are gracious about it.

Knowing I was off to this area beforehand, and the Red Rock Road area is on the top corner of the CFA map book, I photocopied the four pages that it seemed to cover and taped together as one map – if there is anything I hate, it is a fire in the corner of a map page, very inconsiderate.

So my trusty little map accompanied me through my adventures.

We were the last CFA strike team to be needed at the Grampians fire in February 2013, as it is blacked out to the containment lines now. The guys did some back-burning Sunday night and blacked out, so all is well up in our sector, anyway.

We did three nights on Red Rock Road, so I know every pothole, every dangerous tree, every corner, and so on. And, I certainly know from a vivid, painful and shocking experience, that on Andersons Road,

west of the quickfill, there are two massive, almost meteorite type craters full of that weird, smothering dust stuff that seems to line every road and track in that neck of the woods, although I am sure any track that had about a thousand tyre tracks traversing it every day is sure to turn into a right mess.

It was a great experience and I will go to another one. You sure get tired, and 6am takes a while to come, but anyway, you meet some lovely people from all over the Wimmera. The ones who went from our area those two days were Peter Irving (my brother-in-law,) who was the Strike Team leader – a CFA strike team comprises five tankers plus the Forward Control Vehicle, a CFA ute with radios galore in it – Andrew Rainsford from Apsley, Kym Sambell and his son-in-law Travis Langford from Benayeo, Shane Cryer and Dean Brook from Edenhope. The others were from all over the place in the Wimmera, so my geography of the Wimmera has now expanded in leaps and bounds.

The CFA has provided an incredible





*Stephan Allan and his daughter Natasha Mustafa of Toolondo Brigade.*

amount of assistance to the fire fight, alongside the Victorian Department of Sustainable Environment and Parks Victoria crews. CFA crews patrolled our sector right through the night. There were strike teams from everywhere. I saw some from down near Lorne (a coastal town about 140km south-east of Melbourne) roll in and some from Mornington Peninsula area – good blokes and girls. At the start there could have been more than that, with crews just coming in from everywhere. It would have been mayhem.

A lot of logistics go into it, but it is still mayhem. It's so hard to get everything up and going under dire circumstances and tough conditions. Food to the crews is always hit and miss, with firefighters getting late meals and on the go.

It was an impressive sight to see a couple of CFA strike teams roll across a paddock to the fire, all in a line. These marvellous tankers work 24/7, with crew changes every 12 hours, and they work all that time in the dust and smoke. They go to the garage after they have finished one of these campaigns and get all fixed up, but they are tough bits of gear, built well.

I was on the Tarranyuk tanker on the Thursday night, (AKA Telangatuk, if you are having a 'seniors' moment on the radio) and firstly we went through French's

paddocks from the Henty Highway, where a formation of about 10 tankers held a paddock from ember attack when the fire came out of the Grampians National Park on Red Rock Road onto the farmland. So we raced around stopping those.

When this was successfully done, we were deployed to other tasks. Two of us unlucky tankers, Dimboola being the other one, got the Grader Duty, which is as boring as all hell – three graders widening the tracks/roads up there into the Victoria Valley Airstrip from the Henty Highway and also widening the Red Rock Track. A working grader goes 7 kilometres per hour, so consequently, we were trundling at 7 kilometres per hour for the rest of the night.

Our mission was to protect the graders in case they came under attack, but there was no direct threat. You sure got time to look at the flaming hills, and if you were a botanist, you could study the plant varieties as they were not yet burnt, but however, in the end, after many, many long hours, daylight came upon us over the smoking, burning hills, and our shift ended.

So we came home Friday morning, slept, and then went back Saturday and Sunday night. After ascertaining that I was not available for Grader Duty, I was to be a 'penciller'. Such a dreary title I think, with no oomph to it. I think it should be retitled as 'scribe', however, a penciller I was to be – my fate was determined.

Our job Saturday and Sunday was to basically help the DSE and Parks Victoria to "...aggressively control any spot fires..." so this our tankers did with exuberance. The guys and girls spent the day pulling out long hoses and walking in diligently treating every log and stump with great attention and foam. If a fire rekindled from their efforts, I would be most surprised. Fires embering out of the top of trees were of great concern, so

much time was spent on these characters.

I must say, the DSE Sector Commanders put in a mighty big effort – they would have been tired, stressed, weary and brain fatigued from a week of constant action, but they went to great pains to fill us in at our briefings to let us know what the history and situation was. I think they really do appreciate the CFA's job that we do. We have a fairly big volunteer bank to draw from and we are a very responsible bunch, to be sure.

We were put up in a motel after working Saturday night to sleep and shower, ready for Sunday night, because they won't let you drive an hour home after working a 12-hour shift plus travelling to the staging area where crew changes take place. It had been a big day, and we all worked out that everyone only slept for four hours during the day. No one slept more – an odd observation.

Dozers build rough tracks through scrub. You can't get enough dozers in these situations even though there could be ten working. Man, they are a mighty sight to behold – those dozer drivers are brave. Even though they have safety all around them, it's still dangerous. I would be a nervy dozer driver. But thank goodness they do it. You would never get a fire out without the containment lines they build.

I must go and have a look in the daylight one day, after those potholes calm down a bit, and the fires of course. It always felt weird when you got back onto the bitumen after 12 hours on the tracks, as though it was some sort of modern super highway built in heaven.

So, all in all, I feel stuffed and I wasn't even working the hoses like the guys, but a good feeling and an interesting time for a housewife! ●

*Lexia Irving's article first appeared on [www.cfa.vic.gov](http://www.cfa.vic.gov) and is published with kind permission from the CFA.*



# COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO MEMBERS



**Mick Bourke**

*CFA Chief Executive Officer*

**C**FA has a proud history of providing high quality mental health services to its members and their families.

It is fitting that we pause to recognise our Peer Support Program at this time, having this past couple of weeks (January–February 2013) commemorated the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Black Saturday, and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ash Wednesday fires.

Not all members would be aware that the program began as a grass roots movement amongst firefighters involved in Ash Wednesday, who recognised that firefighters needed emotional and psychological support to deal with the potentially traumatic elements of their roles.

The foresight shown by these members at a time when little was known about the emotional and psychological impact of trauma should

not be underestimated. While research has advanced in relation to treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and other mental illnesses associated with trauma, one thing has remained constant, and that is the critical importance and efficacy of peer support programs.

For more than 25 years now we have been operating our Peer Support Program and we have more than 150 volunteer and career peers within the network who have completed a 12-month training program. Peers travel to wherever they are needed around the state and offer a skilled listening ear to help members and their families respond to traumatic and distressing events, as well as the cumulative difficulties that life sometimes throws our way. In all cases, the peer's goal is to help the individual to reconnect





with their own coping skills. Where more support is required, the peer acts as a skilled navigator and networker and will support their client to access other services.

But peers also offer other personalised services such as driving members to hospital appointments and visiting them in Melbourne hospitals. Many of our members will be familiar with the valuable support work that peers perform at staging areas during major incidents.

Peers also accompany members to court when they are required to give evidence in legal proceedings on behalf of CFA. Members and their families are also able to access chaplaincy services within a pastoral care model in which all chaplains have counselling training.

Psychologists can also be accessed through our Member Assistance Program (MAP) with both the psychologists and chaplains provided through external contractors to guarantee their independence.

All services are confidential, free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services are available through a range of channels including face-to-face meetings, online or over the phone, as determined by the client.

It's important that all members are clear that CFA's mental health support for members has not decreased regardless of recent budget-saving measures. Our Organisational Wellbeing department oversees the provision of these services, working closely with our Claims and Injury Management team to ensure that members are provided with support and treatment to meet their needs. We also have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which provides guidance on the activation of support services in an operational context.

The CFA Board has recently approved our Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) Strategy, which clarifies that

health and safety are both physical and psychological issues. The Australian Centre for Post Traumatic Mental Health, Australia's peak independent trauma research body, has reviewed CFA's HS&E Strategy against its trauma research and validated our strategic priorities.

We continuously strive to improve both our services and our members' knowledge and understanding of mental health issues. As such, our services include a significant education and awareness component.

*In all cases, the peer's goal is to help the individual to reconnect with their own coping skills.*

An example is new career firefighters receiving training on stress and potential trauma. Our education recognises the need to promote personal accountability for accessing support in times of difficulty and crisis regardless of the cause.

We also seek advice and input from other agencies both within the emergency services and outside – such as *BeyondBlue* – to support and ensure improvement.

We recently completed a member satisfaction survey on our welfare services and the results showed high levels of member satisfaction with the services.

The media has recently reported on the Newcastle Centre of Full Employment and Equity study into mental health support for firefighters. This study was carried out without the involvement of CFA (which) recognises that firefighting can be risky and stressful and the health and welfare of emergency management employees and volunteers is an absolute priority. ●



# WARNING CENTRES, EMERGENCY WARNINGS AND EVACUATIONS, PART I

Ian Mannix

Churchill Fellow 2012

Bushfire country, Manton, Sierra Mountains, California.  
Photo: Ian Mannix.

In 2012, Churchill Fellowship recipient Ian Mannix travelled overseas 'to study US and Canadian emergency warnings, warning centres, warning broadcasts, and evacuation procedures for natural disasters'. The South Australian Division of the AIES was fortunate to hear about Mr Mannix's visit to the US and Canada at a General Meeting Dinner held in December. Mr Mannix's presentation at this event was based on his report to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia. *National Emergency Response* Journal has been granted permission to publish Mr Mannix's report – Warning centres, emergency warnings and evacuations in the US and Canada – over the coming issues.



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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## PROGRAM

### September

- 24 California Emergency Management Agency California Warnings Centre
- 25-26 Manton, California Emergency Management Agency Tahoma County (Reading, California) KQMS Talk Radio (Reading, California)
- 28 National Weather Service (Kansas City) Joplin

### October

- 1 National Weather Service (Washington)
- 2 Federal Emergency Management Agency FEMA
- 3 National Forest Service
- 9 American Broadcasting Corporation (New York)
- 12 Emergency Management Agency (British Columbia)
- 15 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (British Columbia)
- 18 Pierce County, Washington State National Weather Service, Seattle
- 19 Washington SECC
- 20 Washington EMA

**A**ustralians are increasingly expecting a warning from an emergency agency when they are responding to a natural or man-made disaster. Warnings give context to the threat and advise what action experts want people to take, and importantly they are disseminated at a time that is useful to the listener. They therefore differ from "information". Effective warnings can come via a radio broadcaster, normally ABC Local Radio, or mobile phone, or social media, TV, road signs, phones, or megaphone, but nearly always they are ignored until verified by a second or third trusted source.

Although the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has been issuing weather warnings for decades, the expectation from the community that they will receive all warnings, is a recent phenomenon, brought about by the

commitment of ABC Local Radio to issue bushfire warnings in Victoria in 1997, a decision which was rolled out nationwide in 2006.

The US and Canada have a range of risks which have resulted in them creating, 60 years ago, an all-nation all-hazard warning system. It's recently been modernised.

The Churchill Fellowship was aimed at examining how American and Canadian emergency agencies provide information and warnings to communities under threat from fires, floods, tornadoes and tsunamis. A variety of technical warning systems have been put in place to deal with these contingencies, many of which have not been considered in Australia.

In addition, it appears from reading media and literature, their communities are highly motivated to evacuate, a process only now being considered in Australia.

Discussing warnings with the national, state and county emergency agencies, as well as the National Weather service, and commercial broadcasters, and then comparing their plans with actual on-the-ground events such as fires, tornados and floods, will give a very real indication of the value of warning services in the US and Canada.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States and Canada have national disaster warning services, which have been in place since the 1950s. The platforms in the US are now used widely by emergency agencies at state and county level. The Canadian system isn't as robust, but is being improved. Australia does not need to replicate the North American warnings systems, as we don't face the same range of threats.

The US warning platform includes the Emergency Broadcast System; the telephone based Wireless Emergency Alert system; and National Weather Service Radio. Each relies on a partnership with commercial radio and TV broadcasters or telecommunications providers. The content is created by

emergency or weather professionals at national, state and regional level, through local, weather warning offices, or state and county warning centres and emergency operation centres.

The US system is supported with legislation, community obligation, and co-operation and forms the basis of what could be an effective whole-of-community warning process. The Canadian system is being rebuilt to include modern telecommunications as the principal platform for communicating to the community.

The opportunities for Australia identified by this visit are contained within the various chapters in this report (published over four editions of *National Emergency Response Journal*: Autumn, Winter, Spring 2013 and Summer 2013/14). They are numerous but principally lie in the following areas:

- Federal agencies setting standards and monitoring implementation
- A better understanding of community obligation by the private sector
- Partnerships between the private sector, emergency agencies and the broadcast media
- Use of smart phones to issue warnings
- Evacuation procedures
- Community awareness programs

The shortcomings of the system are those inherent problems of any warnings – they rely on accurate personal risk assessment to motivate change in human behaviour; the networks and content need to be integrated but often aren't, and the community planning and practice is essential but often ignored.

The US and Canadian systems could be improved with an approach similar to that taken by The Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Australian emergency agencies which graduate warnings as the threat increases, and directs information at the most personal and local level. This doesn't occur in North America. There is no universally accepted Standard Emergency Warning Signal in the US, although it would create opportunities to cut through the noise of North American media.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Australia does not have a national warning system. It has a diverse range of warning procedures and guidelines on multiple, separate platforms, with no accountability and little legislation guiding disseminators. At best the warning system can be described as ad hoc, voluntary, and based on good will.

Of course Australia does not have the history of North America which built a national warning system around threats posed by the cold war and nuclear power, and modified it in response to the massive growth of population near natural disaster risk areas (which include significant earthquake risk on the west coast).

Australia does not have the range of risks, which confront North America, nor the population density, so there has been no momentum here for a national warning system.

Indeed it can be argued that Australia doesn't need a national platform for the dissemination of warnings, although a catastrophic level tsunami on the populated sections of the east coast, which would require an immediate, cross border response, might change people's thinking.

However there is much to be gained from having a national framework or authority for warnings, which is evident in the North American experience.

A national approach to warnings would improve cross-border co-operation; set standards and directions; co-ordinate review and research, and enable urgent changes to mechanisms should short-comings become obvious through catastrophic level disasters.

Under Australian practice State-based agencies are responsible for emergency response. Piece-meal warning systems have grown up around agencies, rather than populations, with each being designed to meet a specific hazard response.

The Bureau of Meteorology warns of storms, floods and cyclones; bushfire agencies have a variety of systems loosely based around the National Bushfire Warnings framework.

These agencies can issue warnings but do not control the dissemination of the warnings, therefore often responsibility for issuing warnings lies with the disseminator, which does not have any obligation to do so.

A recent development, using the telecommunication network to support agency needs for issuing warnings, known as the Emergency Alert System, has grown without legislation that requires integration, and has been enacted in different ways in all states. It is not integrated with other warnings platforms and arguably, from the North American experience, is expensive and cumbersome.

The evidence from the US shows that this ad hoc approach to issuing warnings has resulted in great loss of opportunity and potential, reduces the number of people who can effectively be warned by an emergency agency or the BoM, and it does not lead to momentum for world's best practice or further innovation or development.

The Australian process has specifically precluded development of partnerships, which are so powerful in the US.

In addition with one important exception, warning platforms are expensive. The exception is the warnings platform of The ABC.

The American system is expensive and is not universal. It is based on technology, not researched best-warning practice, which starts with "personal" and "local." The systems created by the BoM and the ABC, of graduated warnings, better prepares the public for response to disasters, than the one-off information bulletins do in the US.

The following key points emerged as areas for further evaluation from my visit to the US and Canada.

### PART I:

#### FEDERAL AGENCIES SET STANDARDS AND MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION

In North America, responsibility for the national warning system sits with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or the Department of Community Safety in Canada.

This provides over-arching legislation, and brings together all federal departments, particularly the departments responsible for the broadcast media, the internet and telecommunications. It specifically encourages partnerships.

The approach is to make all technology open-source and to encourage as many users as possible.

This results in innovation at the private and broadcast media sector.

It has resulted in the US encouraging smart-phone media companies to build the Wireless Emergency Alert system, so, as of June 2012, all smart phones are pushing warnings to users.

Australia does not have a similar body charged with developing the warning system, therefore opportunities are being lost.

It does have a series of loose alliances called 'trusted information sharing networks', which form the basis of technical advice to the federal government, but they meet irregularly and do not appear to be given responsibility for development and strategy.

#### COMMUNITY OBLIGATION

The over-arching interest from federal agencies in the work of broadcast media starts with the concept that the airwaves are a public good, and therefore those who are given the opportunity to use them, even while being licensed, should use them for community good. In North America this attitude which has resulted in nearly all radio and TV companies becoming closely involved in issuing warnings.

This attitude is not always prevalent in Australia, despite the fact that the commercial radio licence agreements contain provision for radio and TV stations to issue warnings if requested.

A partnership based on mutual benefit would likely encourage the commercial media to join the ABC in developing improved systems for issuing warnings to the whole community.

#### PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, EMERGENCY AGENCIES AND THE BROADCAST MEDIA

Emergency agencies in the US base their relationships on three-way partnerships between the private sector, the government sector and the community.

'The private sector owns 90 per cent of all the community assets' is a phrase regularly repeated by US and Canadian emergency agencies. This results in regular partnership meetings between the three sectors, and the experience has resulted in a sophisticated understanding of how to share resources across county borders.



As an example state and county warnings centres have email alert systems which include as many government and media recipients as private sector contacts. This engages the three sectors at the outset of a disaster, and it creates a culture of shared obligation which is hard to recognise in the Australian context.

The obligation is taken up by the private sector, including the media, which chairs county, state and federal co-ordination bodies, directs innovation of emergency alert and shares responsibility for issuing warnings and responding to disasters.

## USE OF SMART PHONES TO ISSUE WARNINGS

In June 2012 the US began operating the Wireless Alert System, in which warnings are pushed out to owners of smart phones. This is being done for free, an extraordinary development compared to the Australian experience where telecoms providers are charging the federal government \$30-60 million to roll out the same system.

Emergency agencies are buying off-the-shelf products to distribute warnings to their communities. They are using the 'one-to-many' cell phone broadcast system, which is less cumbersome and speedier than the one-to-one system based on phone numbers, presently used in Australia.

As Australians have embraced the use of smart phones at a rate even greater than the US, it seems it can't be long before this system would be widely available, should a federal government agency mandate it.

## EVACUATION

The long experience with evacuations, and the expectation that evacuations will involve tens or hundreds of thousands of people, has resulted in a sophisticated system in the US.

Local planning authorities have developed evacuation routes; and signposted them which results in emergencies being constantly top of mind. The procedure is for graduated evacuation warnings, with residents being told: 'get ready to evacuate', and 'evacuate in a short period of time', followed by 'evacuate immediately'.

This compares to the experience in Australia, which has been 'evacuate now,

or it's too late'. This ignores researched evidence that people don't respond to warnings until they have been validated. It does not allow for the frail and vulnerable to receive warnings earlier than others in the community and it puts great pressure on the disseminators of warnings (radio, TV or the phone system) to work urgently to get warning messages out.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROGRAMS



*Emergency Management Agency, Victorian British Columbia Sonia Woolford with her ShakeOut shirt.*

Community engagement activities in the US are similar to those in Australia, and are seen as essential to an effective warning system.

However Australians have been reluctant to engage whole-of-community exercises in which there is great disruption to people as they undertake these exercises.

The 'Great Earthquake ShakeOut' community engagement activity is an example which shows that all-of-community engagement is not only possible, but important.

Thirteen US states participate in the ShakeOut activity twice a year. British Columbia in Canada participated for the first time in 2012, as did Italy and New Zealand.

The scale of the event is impressive – train systems will be delayed 5-15 minutes during the day as carriages are brought to an emergency stop and passengers involved in a mock evacuation. Offices grind to a halt and millions of students drop under their desks and hold on for three minutes.

In Pierce County in Washington State an additional community evacuation is practiced to educate the community about the threat from lahars (Volcanic mudflows), and each year roads are closed, schools evacuated and sirens sounded.

## THE US WARNING SYSTEM

Threats of nuclear war, nuclear meltdown, and catastrophic level natural disasters have resulted in the US creating an integrated warning service that is effective, reliable, flexible, and comprehensive.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) includes several major components: the Emergency Alert System (EAS) (not to be confused with the phone-based local warning system operating in Australia under the same name) which leverages the reach of radio and television broadcasting; the Commercial Mobile Alerting System (CMAS) which communicates to cellular phones, and an interface to the US's National Weather Service's All Hazards Weather Radio network.

In 1951 the US legislated to create a public early warning system in response to the threat of a nuclear armed attack from the Soviet Union. It was assumed the US President would need to be able to address the population immediately. The first system was set up under the electro-magnetic radiation bill because AM and FM transmitters were used for targeting of warheads, so it came under this legislative sphere. It was first called CONTROL of ELectrromagnetic RADiation, (CONELRAD) in 1951. In 1963 it was refined and called the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS)

EBS was established as a contingency platform to be used only if normal broadcast communication failure.

It was updated again in 1997 to take advantage of new communications mechanisms and renamed the Emergency Alert System, and after Hurricane Katrina, legislation was modified yet again, to allow local authorities to use the platform to deal with local disasters and emergencies, including AMBER alerts (child kidnapping) and all local hazards.

In 2012 it was modified yet again to allow telecoms to connect, and the mobile phone system is now an important disseminator.



The nature of US society, the culture driven by private ownership, and the technology available to the US, has driven the developments.

Initially the system was simple and elegant – radio and TV transmitters would be connected to a control room operated by The Federal Emergency Management Agency (or its then equivalent) and the US President would be able to speak to the public within 10 minutes.

It was robust and virtually fail safe. The signal was provided to multiple and numerous 'primary' radio and TV broadcasters in any or all regions. They would then be responsible for re-broadcasting instantly and at least two other broadcasters in their region, connected to the primary transmitter, would be expected to retransmit. Those broadcasters then re-broadcast as well, until nearly all radio and TV stations were connected. They called it a 'daisy chain', which describes it nicely. There are 20,000 transmitters attached to the system.

It was tested nationwide for the first time in November 2011 and while something like 20 per cent of the broadcasts at the hyper-local level failed, the test was deemed a success because technical strengthens and weaknesses were identified and can now be addressed.

Broadcasters were required to install the reception equipment at their own cost and as part of the broadcast license agreement, but stand by generators for the primary stations were funded by a government program. While this was initially pushed as a public service function for broadcasters, in reality competitive forces have ensured that all the major broadcasters and telecoms providers take the EAS seriously.

The National Weather Service Radio, which transmits weather warnings, was connected to EAS in 2006. In this way National Weather alerts are monitored, and frequently rebroadcast, on all radio and TV stations.

The guiding principles have since been extended to the internet and mobile platforms. In this way the system has become what's now known as IPAWS.

One of the major principles of IPAWS is that it is an open network. All emergency agencies, as well as the National Weather Service, are able to use its operating standards and protocols to issue warnings.

Approximately 400 commercial mobile service providers have licensed for content, and 100 are already broadcasting warnings messages to those who choose to buy handsets which are emergency warning connected. Embedded data enables all outlets to be automated.

Disseminators receive data in the same way at the same time for redistribution.

This has become vital to the system's flexibility.



*Meeting Antwane Johnson, FEMA, October 2012.*

The system has never been used for a Presidential address. Director of IPAWS Antwane Johnson says it doesn't mean there has never been widespread threat to warrant that.

"It's a contingency system and was only ever to be used if other telecommunications systems failed," Mr Johnson told me. "The telecommunications and broadcast industry has never failed, so was not used in the missile crisis, or the 9/11 Al Qaeda attacks."

Mr Johnson works for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is a division of the Department of Homeland Security. "Our goal is to improve the nation's capability to ensure under all conditions the President can talk to the public, but when the President isn't using the system, local officials can use the capabilities to send alerts to their local citizens to enhance public safety. We develop, maintain and operate the system."

Manny Centeno, a program manager for IPAWS, says the standard is to be able to broadcast to the entire nation in 10 minutes, and participants or disseminators are required to be able to rebroadcast almost instantly when a new alert is received. The system is automated: "We can do much better than 10 minutes if not better. It's virtually instant."

"Although the legislation provides that we make the system available for Presidential messages, almost all of the use is currently at the local and state level, and through NOAA weather warnings."

"The only mandatory requirement is that the system be in place for a Presidential address. All other content is voluntary, but there is tremendous private sector involvement, being driven by their license requirement to serve the public interest – that's the primary reason the US allocated spectrum to broadcasters."

"Some broadcasters were initially worried about liability, for carrying warning messages, and for failure to carry them, and for hoaxes."

"Senders of alert messages are validated in the IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks, or IPAWS-OPEN system, through a series of cyber security protocols before rebroadcast but there are no other filters."

## BROADCAST COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE US

The media and broadcasters in the US are highly valued partners in disseminating information and warnings about all hazards.

There are three elements on which the partnerships are based which serve the US well – legislation, obligation and co-operation.

## LEGISLATION

The US set up CONtrol of ELectronegative RADiation, (CONELRAD) in 1951, and the Emergency Broadcast System, or EBS in 1963 to deal with the threat posed by the Cold War. Legislation was passed which compelled radio stations to participate in the program at their own cost, and to ensure they could carry all Presidential level warnings and addresses.

"It is a condition of their license agreement now that TV and radio broadcast companies serve the public interest," says Manny Centeno, Program Manager of the Integrated Public Alert and Warnings system with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "They are using public airwaves, the public owns them."

Jim Bremer, the program director at KQMS Newstalk Radio backs up the observation, "We're licensed to serve the public."





EP at KQMS Reading Jim Bremer.

The Commercial Mobile Alert System is one of several systems within IPAWS. The Commercial Mobile Service Providers' decision to broadcast alerts and warnings is voluntary. "We have 400 telecommunications providers in the US, and within a few months of the process being set up, we already have over 100 providers who've opted in," said Manny Centeno."

The cost to send these alerts: 'Nothing at all, they do it voluntarily.'

Phone companies will receive alerts via the IPAWS Open Platform for Emergency Networks, or IPAWS-OPEN, and then broadcast them to the public in areas which have been geo-targeted by emergency alerting authorities.

To ensure the process is smooth, the Federal Communications Commission and FEMA set standards and protocols, and developed a common operating system for emergency agencies, and they provide training. The FCC requires a monthly test of the system.

In addition, the National Weather Service was provided with funding to set up its own radio network – the National Weather Radio. With more than 1,100 transmitters, it's a robust and comprehensive system, which has come to be relied upon by a sizeable proportion of the US community.

## OBLIGATION

Legislation alone cannot compel organisations to ensure that all aspects of their content meet the requirements of Federal Government or the needs of their communities. Only the 'Presidential Address' is obligatory, all other warning content is carried voluntarily. But the competitive nature of the private sector has ensured that all participants feel obliged to participate. The telecommunications companies created demand for phone handsets that are warning compatible.

The radio and TV stations know that in an emergency their competitors will be broadcasting warnings, and they can't afford to ignore the possible impact on their audience reach.

TV stations play the most important role, with weather presenters being the go-to people when an emergency begins. TV watching seems to be universal. Homes, clubs, bars, restaurants, schools, public gathering places like airports all seem to have TV networks switched on 24/7.

Jim Bremer from KQMS estimates that his company spends \$20,000 on the hardware to receive EAS content, and there are numerous stations in his comparatively small company.

## CO-OPERATION

"Tremendous private sector involvement is the key to the success of CMAS and EAS," said FEMA's Deputy Director of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Wade Witmer.

There is no doubt that emergency managers are grateful for the support they are receiving from broadcasters.

But to ensure the process is integrated, there has to be high level and frequent co-operation. FEMA and the Federal Communication Commission have a monthly meeting with national broadcasters and telecommunications companies, to ensure the systems remain technically robust and to create a standard for sharing of information between emergency agencies and the disseminators.

"You have to engage the broadcasters. A lot of them don't trust each other," says Manny Centeno, in a phrase that will resonate with broadcasters and emergency agencies everywhere. "But some broadcasters do call themselves first responders, which show they are fully engaged."

In addition to the nationwide meetings, each state has a meeting of state broadcasters and their emergency management agencies each month.

The National Weather Service also reflects the expectation that there will be leadership and co-operation. Warnings' broadcasters meet their local and regional broadcasters frequently to extend understanding. Additionally, the NWS set up NWSchat, to talk directly to broadcasters to ensure their message is well understood and useful.

Howard Price, the emergency manager at the American Broadcasting Corporation, which runs radio and TV stations and networks across the US, sums up the three elements: "It's about public interest, convenience and necessity." The public interest is obvious but why convenience? "Because FEMA, NWS and FCC created the platforms which we plug into to receive all the warnings and content." Necessity? "That's just competition to retain listenership and audience."



Meeting the IPAWS team at FEMA.

The partnership model was started by the private sector. "Richard Rudman, the Director of Engineering at CBS started the Partnership for Public Warning," said Mr Price. "We also started the Media Security and Advisory Council after 9/11. During Hurricane Katrina, Entercom, which owns one of their local stations, never went off air. They set the gold standard for emergency broadcasting.

"EAS is a good system, but it has to be defended, and the local stations have to practice using it. The total cost for ABC to implement the mandatory system on its own network runs to five figures, and no one here has ever suggested the Government should pay."

Nevertheless the companies retain editorial control. "We put warnings on every TV and radio station. It's good for the warnings to be on during kids' watching time as their parents are often watching with them. But the ABC never puts an unverified warning to air. No talk station in their right mind will do that."

To be continued in *National Emergency Response Journal* Winter 2013 edition. ●

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Mannix is the Manager Emergency Broadcasting and Community Development on ABC Local Radio, Collingwood, South Australia. View his blog at [www.forewarned.info](http://www.forewarned.info)



# IN BRIEF

## IYV CLASPS

Don't forget all emergency service organisations who have issued the International Year of the Volunteer medal can still order the 10-year anniversary clasp from the AIES.

In recognition of the anniversary of the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer full and miniature sized clasps, plus rosettes, are available.

The AIES approved the issuing of 10 year clasps and rosettes to members who have continued to contribute to the running of the Institute at the end of last year.

Bulk order of 10 sets or more are being taken by AIES Registrar Robert Maul for \$18 per set. Please email [registrar@aines.net.au](mailto:registrar@aines.net.au)



## OZ DAY HONOURS

The AIES congratulates two of its finest members for their Australia Day awards.

Peter James McMurtrie AO, KStJ, FPA, AFCHSM, FAIES received an Officer of the Order of Australia award, while Anthony Scott Oxford ASM, OStJ, MAIES received the Australia Day Honour of the Ambulance Service Medal.

Mr McMurtrie is currently a Queensland Division member of the AIES, having joined in Victoria in 1983. He is the current Commissioner of St John QLD and recently retired from the Ambulance Service QLD as Deputy Commissioner.

Mr Oxford is an AIES member from Victoria and a former member of the SA division. He was an ambulance paramedic in the Northern Territory when he joined the institute in 1988. Mr Oxford is currently a paramedic in Portland, Victoria, and attended the recent Heywood and Dartmoor bushfires.

The AIES also extends its congratulations to Office of the Emergency Service Commissioner Victoria Bruce Esplin who received an Order of Australia medal.

## UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

A new management body headed by a commissioner will oversee Victorian emergencies – from floods and bushfires to disease outbreaks.

In a shake-up of the state's disaster response, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) will take charge of major incidents in a bid to minimise confusion that occurred during past disasters like Black Saturday.

The new management body is the centrepiece of the government's emergency management white paper released in December, detailing 25 changes to the way Victoria deals with large-scale disasters.

Peter Ryan, Emergency Services Minister at the time of the announcement, said it the most significant reform of Victoria's emergency management arrangements since the 1986 overhaul after the 1983 Ash Wednesday blaze.

"These reforms will move the sector towards a genuine all-hazards, all-agencies approach and improve emergency management, with a strong emphasis on risk mitigation," he said.



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Following the success of the inaugural EARTH: FIRE & RAIN conference held in 2012, not-for-profit organisations the Australian Institute of Emergency Services, Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Organisation Inc, and the Association for Sustainability in Business Inc is once again hosting a program of keynote addresses, sessions and workshops that will examine issues surrounding natural and man-made hazards.

Conference streams will include:

- Animals in disasters
- Business continuity
- Community engagement
- Crisis management
- Economy and environment
- Volunteer involvement
- Human and social issues
- Policy and governance
- Relief and recovery
- Risk management
- Social media and the Internet



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Name of Organisation

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|------|----|----------------------|---------------------|
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|      |    |                      |                     |
|      |    |                      |                     |

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I declare the above particulars to be true and hereby agree to be bound by the Constitution, By-Laws and Code of Ethics of the Institution).

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Date:

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Completed Application forms with fees should be forwarded to the Division Registrar in the State where you normally reside. Further information may also be obtained by contacting your Division Registrar or General Registrar of the Institute at the following addresses:

#### **NATIONAL COUNCIL**

The General Registrar  
Australian Institute of Emergency Services (General Council)  
Post Office Box 710, Spit Road, Spit Junction, NSW 2088  
Ph: (02) 9968 1226  
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#### **TASMANIA**

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#### **VICTORIA**

The Registrar – VIC Division of Australian Institute of Emergency Services. C/O 44 Webb St, Warrandyte, VIC 3113  
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- Corporate members receive a bronze plaque free of charge and can advertise on the AIES website, as well as provide articles for inclusion in the Institute's journal.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### Costs

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Nomination Fee:                             | \$20.00  |
| Annual Subscription:                        | \$50.00  |
| Fellows:                                    | \$60.00  |
| Corporate Subscription:                     | \$250.00 |
| Note: Institute Fees may be tax deductible. |          |

##### Classes

There are four classes of membership:

- Members • Fellows • Life Fellows • Corporate

There are five categories of affiliation with the Institute that may be offered to persons who do not meet the requirements for membership:

- Associate • Student Member • Retired Member
- Honorary Member • Honorary Fellow

##### Eligibility

Applications for membership will be considered from persons who are at least eighteen years of age and who:

- Are members of a permanent emergency service or associated service, or
  - Are volunteer members of emergency or associated services.
- Admission as a member may be granted if in the opinion of the General Council the applicant meets all other conditions of membership and passes such examinations and/or other tests as may be required by General Council.

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Our members come from

- Ambulance Service • Community Services • Emergency Equipment Industry • Emergency Management Organisations
- Fire Services • Health, Medical and Nursing Services • Mines Rescue • Police Service • Safety Officers • SES • Transport Services
- Volunteer Marine Rescue • Volunteer Rescue Associations



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# DUNALLEY, TASMANIA, 4 FEBRUARY 2013



A burnt-out ute rests alongside the remains of a house destroyed by a catastrophic bushfire on the Tasman Peninsula on 4 January 2013. The bushfire destroyed 20,000 hectares of land including more than 100 houses, a primary school, fire station, and police station. Thousands of people were forced to flee the fire, many sheltering on nearby beaches.

Dunalley was one of a number of Tasmanian communities affected by numerous fires across the state in early January, believed to be sparked by an extreme heat wave.

Temperatures reached a record high of 41.8°C on 4 January, causing several

large bushfires to burn out of control.

On 5 January, up to 40 fires were reported to be burning across Tasmania.

Other affected communities included Bicheno, Boomer Bay, Connell's Marsh, Copping, Eaglehawk Neck, Forcett, Murdanna, Primrose Sands, Sommers Bay, Susans Bay, and Taranna.

The AIES wishes to acknowledge the work of all emergency services organisations and individuals that played a significant role in controlling the devastating fires. We also send our condolences to DSE firefighter and CFA volunteer Peter Cramer, 61 years, who lost his life fighting the state's devastating fires. ●

**Photo:** John Kirk



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- Individuals with community investments and interests
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