

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY



## RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australasian Institute of Emergency Services

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# NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE



Official Journal of the Australasian Institute of Emergency Services

May 2019 • National Emergency Response

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#### FRONT COVER

Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) Remote Access Team Drummond Williamson watches the progress of a fire burning towards the Huon Track.  
Photo by Warren Frey,  
courtesy of Tasmania Fire Service.



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# NEW MEMBERS

The Australasian Institute of Emergency Services is pleased to announce the following emergency services people joined the AIES between January and April 2019.

NAME	ORGANISATION	DIVISION
Lorraine Cross	Ambulance Victoria	VIC
Benjamin Loiacono	Ambulance New South Wales	NSW
John-Paul Agostino	Rural Fire Service	ACT
Sue Ford	Anglicare Disaster Recovery	ACT
Sam Speirs	Country Fire Authority	VIC
Sarah O'Connor	Fire & Emergency Services	QLD



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Articles, photographs and short stories are sought for the *National Emergency Response Journal*. Please submit items for the next edition to [editor@aies.net.au](mailto:editor@aies.net.au) by 31 May 2019. There is an annual award for the best article submitted by an AIES member.

## Living with PTSD? We Can Help

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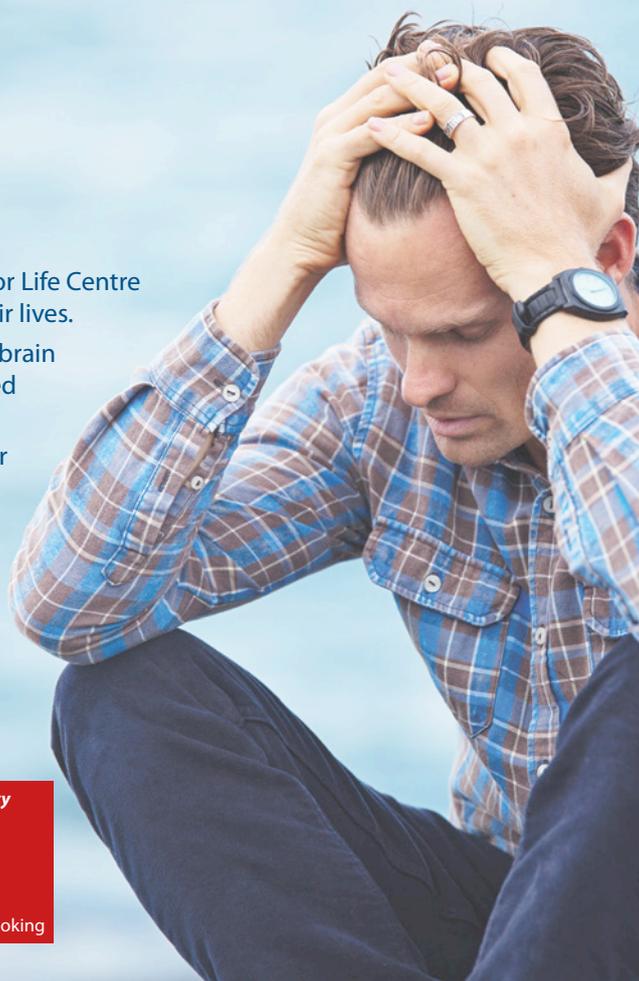
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# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Steve **Jenkins**, FAIES

*National President*

**W**elcome to 2019 – another year, another summer behind us, and another repeat of previous years for the emergency management community – extreme heatwaves, cyclones, flooding and fires. When I wrote this report in March, more than 2000 firefighters were battling fires in Victoria. These fires resulted in property losses but more importantly, no loss of life. Not that long ago, Queensland was burning one week, and drowning the next. Numerous fires have also been fought across New South Wales and in Tasmania. As always, volunteers provide a significant majority of the response to these events. The value of their contribution to the safety of our communities cannot be overstated and we thank them all for their service.

Over recent months, there have been some new appointments within AIES, both nationally and within the divisional management committees. Jim Pullin (NSW) has been appointed as the Company Secretary to succeed Robert 'Bob' Maul (NSW). I welcome Jim to this role and thank Bob for his service and long-standing support of AIES, especially as he came out of retirement to take on the role for a second time in 2017. Bob continues his involvement with AIES as President of the NSW Division. Many thanks Bob for your ongoing dedication to the organisation.

Changes in divisional management committees include: Brett Henderson, NSW Vice-President with David Parsons and Moyra McGee appointed Committee Members; Doug Caulfield VIC Vice-president, and Roger Halliday

SA President with Rebecca Hunt as Director representing SA on the national Board. I welcome these appointments, along with all others on divisional management committees, especially as Rebecca's appointment increases the representation of women on the Board.

The Director for Membership, Wayne Coutts (QLD), has been busy responding to events in north Queensland. In recent months, he has also attended to developing artwork and obtaining quotations to produce an AIES Challenge Coin. The Board has approved the coin design and procurement. These coins will be provided to individuals who contribute to AIES events as tokens of appreciation. These were released at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April.

Also on the subject of merchandise, Ron Jones (TAS) has had sample coasters made from Huon Pine with the AIES emblem laser embossed. The Board has approved for Ron to obtain a supply of these, which it is hoped he will have in time for the Adelaide AGM. Details on how to obtain these coasters will be provided in due course.

Notifications have been disseminated to advise all members that the AIES annual general meeting being held on Saturday 13 April 2019.

My appreciation goes to members of the SA divisional management committee and Jenny Crump for organising the AGM held on 13 April and related bookings.

Members are reminded about the Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference to be held on 12-13 June (see back page) and the Search and



*"The value of their contribution to the safety of our communities cannot be overstated and we thank them all for their service."*

Rescue Conference on 14 June 2019 (visit [sar.anzdm.com.au](http://sar.anzdm.com.au) for more). Both conferences will be held at the RACV Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast.

Also, AIES members are entitled to nominate for the Volunteer Leadership Programs (VLP) conducted on behalf of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum at various locations throughout 2019. Details of dates, locations and nomination forms are available at [www.aidr.org.au/programs/volunteer-leadership-program/](http://www.aidr.org.au/programs/volunteer-leadership-program/)

If you wish to attend a VLP and need assistance with travel costs, the Board will consider supporting members' requests on a case-by-case basis.

Stay safe, and thank you all for your contributions to the emergency management community. ●

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and just married.

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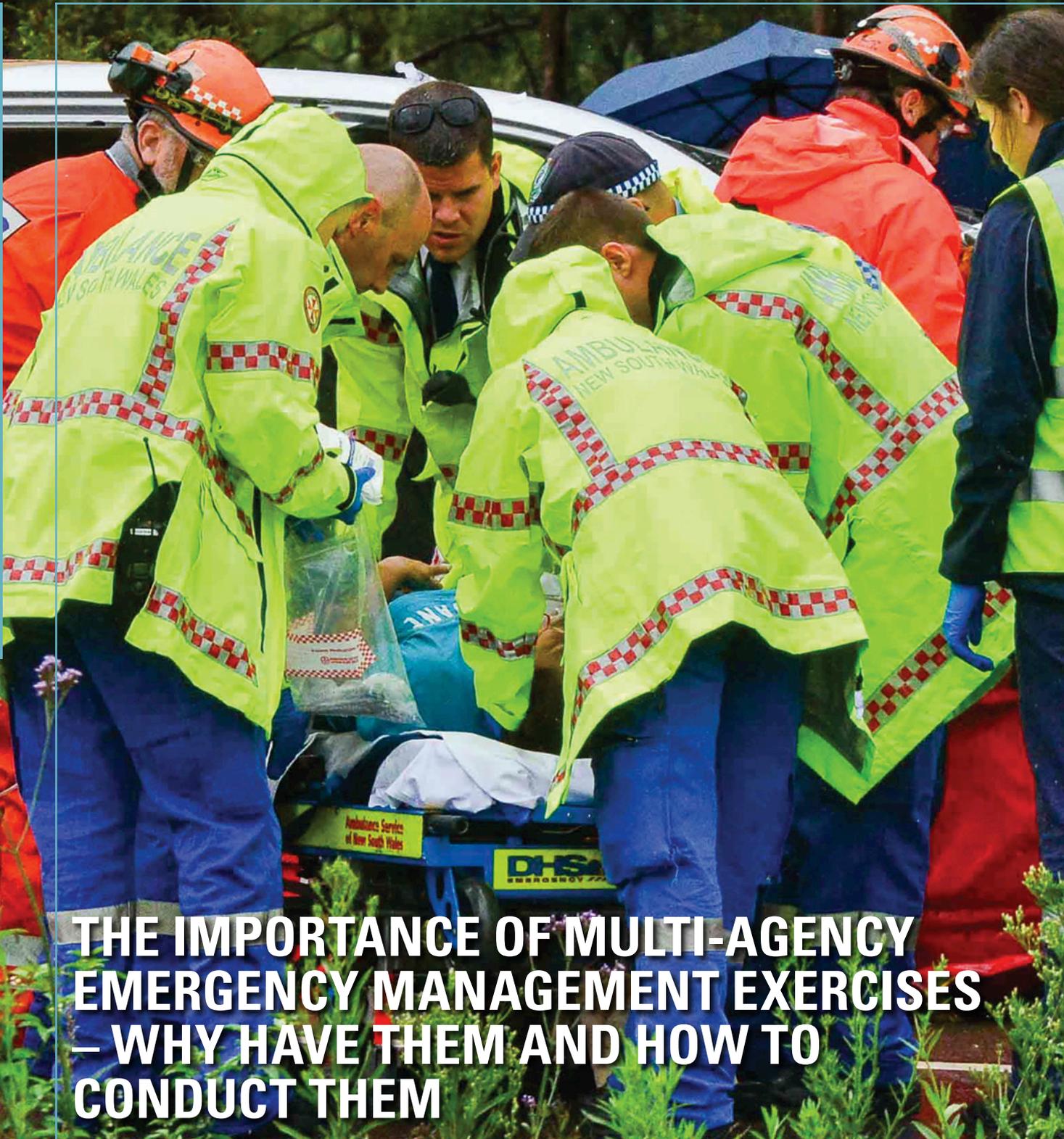
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## THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTI-AGENCY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXERCISES – WHY HAVE THEM AND HOW TO CONDUCT THEM

President of the NSW AIES Division Robert (Bob) Maul continues his well-researched article about the importance of multi-agency management exercises and how to plan them. Part I is available in the Spring 2017 edition of *National Emergency Response*, and Part II is published in the Summer 2017/18 edition of *NER*. Both publications are available on the AIES website, [www.aies.net.au](http://www.aies.net.au).

Robert **Maul** LFAIES

*NSW President National*





## PART III

### ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

The inclusion of the (recommended text from Part I and Part II of this article) in the exercise instructions may seem to be a very laborious task. Many are, therefore, not anxious to conduct this type of activity, nor be willing to afford the time to write the instructions for a multi-agency emergency management exercise. However, if an activity such as this is to be meaningful, instructional and be professionally run by those responsible for responding to an actual emergency management incident or disaster, it is essential that all these considerations be included in the text of the exercise instructions. To do otherwise may not achieve the aim or the objectives set for the exercise, and thereby result in a gross waste of time, effort, and funds for all those involved in conducting the exercise, as well as the participating and emergency services agencies.

After the Exercise Working Party and the Sub group have completed the Instructions, there are further Annexures to the Instructions to be drafted. Some mention (was) made of these Annexures in Part 1 and Part II but it is useful to re-iterate what content they should contain.

The first Annexure is the Exercise Narrative and it should encompass:

1. Description of the exercise
2. The incident details- information about the incident, its location, damage and injuries sustained deaths if any etc
3. Information relating to the EOC or subordinate EOC's if applicable and response required by agencies
4. Notification of the incident/disaster to agencies.

The next Annexure to be drafted is the Instructions to Directing Staff and should contain:

1. Exercise Direction
  - Direction and Control of the Exercise – the composition of the Directing staff such as the Exercise Director, Exercise Co-ordinator, Chief Umpire, other Umpires, Staging Group (Cas-Sim Team)
  - The roles of the Directing Staff – ensuring exercise staging is planned,

implemented and completed on time, safety measures are observed, an evaluation and record of actions of participants are made, and actions taken to keep the exercise moving

#### 2. Umpire Organisational Structure/ Preparation of Casualties

- Composition of Umpires – Chief Umpire, Umpires and Staging Party and roles and detailed responsibilities of each of these appointees during exercise.
- Staging Party (Cas-Sim Co-ordinator and team) – co-ordination of moulage and subsequent 'clean-up' of casualties, placing of casualties and recording attendance and return of casualties
- 'Make -up' of casualties, identification of injuries by means of labelling, number of casualties and role play by casualties
- Type of injuries to be simulated including patella, rib, wrist and femur fractures, bruising, shock, abrasions, lacerations, crush, head and leg injuries and bleeding
- Safety aspects and umpire instructions to be obeyed at all times
- Umpire communications – provision of separate mobile radios and details of Umpire network (diagram).

The last attachment to be drafted is the Schedule of Events/Timetable, which should only be issued to the Directing Staff, umpires and observers. This is a chronological sequence of events, scheduled to take place in date/time, as an aide-memoire to foregoing staff and observers.

### CONDUCTING THE MULTI-AGENCY EXERCISE

Once the Exercise Working Party has completed writing the exercise instructions and related instructional documents referred to above, it is necessary to have all the documentation agreed upon by the Emergency Management Committee. If the Emergency Management Committee agrees, action can then proceed to conduct the exercise on the date and time decided.

On the day of the exercise is held it is extremely important that:

*continued on page 8*

*continued from page 7*

- A last minute briefing is held with all Directing Staff and Umpires to make sure there are no final problems.
- Both the Directing Staff/Umpires and responding agencies communications systems are physically tested and operating properly.
- All Directing Staff/Umpires and support personnel are in place before the starting time and that the Exercise Director is advised that all is ready.

### **DURING THE EXERCISE THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED:**

- Control of the exercise must be managed by the Exercise Controller, in accordance with the Schedule of Events, so if problems arise, they can be rectified and alternative arrangements made. In the event of the latter, the Exercise Director can call a halt to the exercise to change its direction, or speed it up or slow it down to ensure the objectives as set out in the Exercise Instructions can be met.
- Directing Staff/Umpires must assist the Exercise Director to make certain that everything is proceeding smoothly at each location, and that appropriate inputs occur at the designated times as shown in the Schedule of Events.
- Umpires must observe, record and evaluate the actions of those being exercised and the circumstances in which each action occurs.
- The Exercise Director terminates the exercise at the pre-arranged time on the Schedule of Events, or on receipt of a signal.

At the end of the exercise, the supporting staff (Casualty-Sim Team) need to ensure that the simulated casualties are recovered, accounted for, cleaned up and dispersed, and stores and materials retrieved.

### **DEBRIEFING PROCESS AND VALIDATION**

The last stage of the exercise cycle is the debriefing and validation stage. There are normally two debriefing sub stages, the first being the initial debrief held immediately after the exercise involving all personnel who participated in the activity. The second is the final

debrief which takes place a week or so after the exercise attended by the Exercise Working Party, Exercise Director and Team, Exercise Umpires and Agency and Service organisations represented on the Emergency Management Committee. The initial debrief is conducted by the Exercise Director on site, while the final debrief is chaired by either the President or Chairman of the relevant Emergency Management Committee.

The initial debrief is a short verbal presentation by all personnel providing an analysis and evaluation of the exercise specifically as to whether the aim and objectives were achieved, and what deficiencies in response, rescue and recovery activities were identified. Additionally, any dangerous practises observed need to be identified. This type of exercise should be no longer than of one-hour duration, and shorter if possible.

The final debrief will be of a more protracted nature because apart from verbal presentations, written dissertations are required to be presented to the Emergency Management Committee by attendees covering such issues as:

- Faults observed and recommendations how these can be avoided either in future exercise or actual emergencies
- Whether the resources applied during the exercise were appropriate and sufficient to deal with the scenario chosen
- Whether more up-to-date or advanced technological or equipment needs to be obtained such as adequacy of rescue vehicles/operatives and radio devices.

Apart from the foregoing, the attendees also need to provide feedback on other aspects of the exercise, including:

- Were the objectives of the exercise fully or only partially achieved?
- Were the objectives the right objectives?
- Did participants attain performance standards?
- Does the emergency management plan, procedures contained therein and training programs require amending?
- Was there insufficient time devoted in planning and preparing for the exercise?

- The reasons for inadequate performance on the part of the participants?
- Were the exercise objectives chosen unrealistic or unattainable?

Some really important points that need to be carried in the conduct of the debrief/s by those that chair these meetings are:

- The meeting **MUST** be controlled by an experienced chairperson
- The meeting must not turn into a 'back slapping' exercise nor a 'witch hunt'
- Constructive comments should be sought from those attending the debrief, and good points identified and mentioned. It is not wise to be over critical of mistakes made in the performance of those tested. Any criticism should be constructive but certainly not destructive. If the outcome of the exercise is to ensure that the Emergency Management Plan is an effective document, that the procedures contained therein and the response arrangements in that plan are appropriate, and that training procedures are effective, it is necessary for failures to be identified, and recommendations made to address deficiencies observed during the exercise
- Minutes of the meeting have to be prepared, detailing what was discussed, recommendations made, and what actions need to be taken, and by whom, and issued to all attendees.

The last action to be taken is that the Exercise Director, or a designated officer (usually the Exercise Co-ordinator), is to prepare a comprehensive report covering all stages of the exercise and reflecting the findings and recommendations of the debriefs. This report should be sent to all those agencies present at the final debrief, and if appropriate, to the Chief Executive Officers of the agencies who participated in the exercise. This latter action is required to enable these Officers to implement the recommendations made in the report. All members of the Emergency Management Committee should be given a copy of the report particularly if deficiencies in the plan were identified during the conduct of the exercise, to enable the committee to make revisions.



## VALIDATION

If deficiencies in the contents of the Emergency Management Plan, procedures, training or equipment were identified at both the initial and final debriefs, and recommendations made to rectify these deficiencies, it is important that the Emergency Management Committee takes appropriate follow-up action to confirm that the recommendations suggested are, as far as practicable, implemented by the various organisations represented on the Emergency Management Committee. This process can be termed validation. Both the Committee, and each of the agencies represented on the Committee, have a dual responsibility to undertake a validation process.

Validation can be achieved by some, or all, of the below:

- Observation of the performance of participants on the job
- Post exercise questionnaires to participants and supervisors
- Interviews with participants and supervisors

- Further development of, or changes to, the Emergency Plan/Standing Operating procedures and training
- The conduct of a follow-up All Agencies Emergency Management Exercise.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

(In Part I of this article), I mentioned that if response and recovery procedures are to be professionally carried out, and co-ordination of effort is to be effectively handled during a disaster which requires a multi-agency response, it is essential that the disaster or emergency management plan prepared to deal with such a situation has to be tested by way of a full-scale exercise. Such an exercise needs to involve all response, recovery and supporting agencies, which have roles to perform as delineated in the plan. This is because an Emergency Management Plan is usually designed to deal with large man-made or natural disaster occurrences, which require a multi-agency coordinated response.

Accordingly, it is most desirable that the plan be tested by way of a series

of exercises on a regular basis using different types of disaster scenarios. This is particularly relevant because disasters can vary markedly in intensity, the hazards and risks they impose and the scale of damage encountered. Disasters can have very different outcomes on a community and the environment. The more the emergency management plan is tested, the more professional the response to a disaster will be by the emergency management agencies who have either statutory responsibilities or supporting roles under the plan.

I trust that the information I have provided will to some extent assist those responsible for the preparation of emergency management plans at various levels of control enable them to conduct more expertly run multi-agency emergency management exercises to test plans. The well-known cliché, 'Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents Poor Performance', is a fundamental criteria in planning, writing and conducting of large scale multi-agency disaster exercises. ●



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# RALLYING TO PUT OUT TASMANIA'S WORST BUSH FIRES

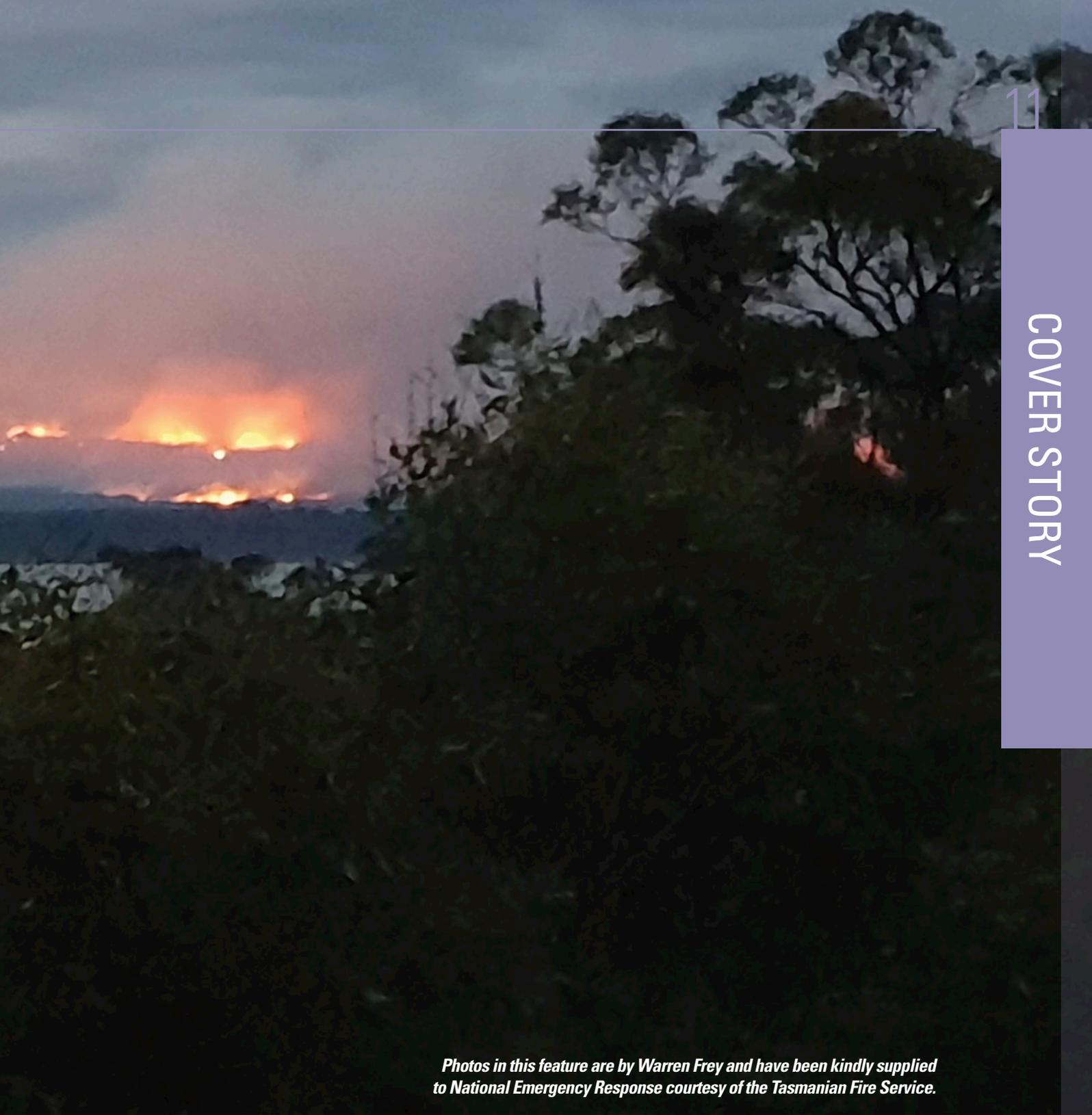
*Great lake of fire run from Liawenee to Reynolds Neck on 3 February 2019.*

---

Summer 2018/19 was Tasmania's hottest and driest on record, which led to the largest fire season for the Tasmania Fire Service, eclipsing all other significant years.

Ron **Jones** LFAIES

*President Tasmania AIES Division*



*Photos in this feature are by Warren Frey and have been kindly supplied to National Emergency Response courtesy of the Tasmanian Fire Service.*

**T**he fires started in late December with major a major incident at Gell River (lightning strike), Bruny Island (suspicious) and Central Plateau. These fires saw many crews spending Christmas away from their families.

As the fires spread, evacuations at Maydena from the Gell River fire and the Southern end of Bruny Island included many campers there on holidays.

At one stage air support was suspended because of drones in the

area. This became a major concern over the fire season - drones being flown over other fires around the state.

The use of drones over prohibited airspace in fire zone hinder air support, putting life and property in danger and in particular our firefighters. This is becoming a problem nationwide.

In mid-January, the state had 2,402 dry lightning strikes across Tasmania including around 60 new starts. With winds predicted to pick up it produced a very high fire danger across the state. Many of the fires were in remote areas

including the SW National Park that had little to no access.

Major fires burned in the Huon Valley where 300 residents were evacuated and many roads closed. Some residents chose not to evacuate, causing resources to be deployed for door knocking and providing assistance.

Evacuations also took place during the Central Plateau and West Coast fires with warnings to more communities around the state.

*continued on page 14*

# PROTECTING THE AIR WALK AND HUON PINE WALK, TAHUNE

*Luke Mellers Hobart Fire Brigade Remote Access Team pumps water out of the Huon River to fight a fire spreading into the Huon Pine Walk.*



*Volunteers Sam Edwards (left) and Jess Woolley from Channel Brigade worked with TFS RATs.*



Relief crew.



Huonville volunteer Tom Andrews watches flames run up a tree.



Damage done!





## GELL RIVER



*continued from page 11*

The Tasmania Fire Service called for support, and these were answered swiftly with resources coming from interstate and New Zealand.

NSW provided 681 personnel on a rotation basis, which included air support and logistics over three months. It was the most protracted interstate fire deployment in history.

On 4 February, seven houses were lost including four in the Huon Valley and three in the Central Plateau damaged to many more homes.

By 6 Feb, 755 personnel were deployed around the state including 159 from interstate and New Zealand.

The next day rain came, helping our firefighting effort and by 12 February, it was snowing.

But fire still raged. On 15 February, 18 fires were still going. Around 2.5 per cent of Tassie was burning, 1,793 kilometres of fire edge, and 486 personnel were deployed and 24 aircraft in use.

By late March, the majority of areas were well into the recovery stage with most fires out or being patrolled.

The main fires are in the South West Wilderness area with Remote Area Firefighters still being deployed in the Gell River area where fire hotspots continue to smoulder and burn in and under the ground in peat.

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters are still joined by personnel from Tasmania Fire Service and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, as well as interstate and international deployments from NSW, ACT, SA and New Zealand.

The cost of the Tasmanian fires is still being added up with damage and loss



Firefighting in difficult terrain at Gell Look Out.

*Tasmania thanks everyone involved in our worst fire season on record, from our firefighters from all over Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand to the supporting personnel behind the scenes.*

of houses, infrastructure, businesses and income, particularly in fire effected areas that rely on tourism in their peak summer period.

Tasmania thanks everyone involved in our worst fire season on record, from our firefighters from all over Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand to the supporting personnel behind the scenes.

We thank the families, loved ones and employers for enabling all the firefighters from Tasmania, interstate and overseas to spend time away from their home, family, friends and work to help Tasmania out. ●





Fireservices at GC airport.

## ONE AIRPORT, TWO STATES, THREE FIRE SERVICES – LETS GET COORDINATED

An emergency incident at an international airport in the age of the 24-hour media cycle rapidly becomes world news that is dissected by the media, leading 'experts' in the field and colleagues. The advent of mobile phones that shoot video and social media means that there are a lot of amateur journalists out there keen to broadcast what we are doing as emergency responders.

**Gary White**

*Inspector, Duty Commander Regional  
North 2, Fire & Rescue NSW*

**W**ithin hours of the 2016 terrorist attack at Ataturk airport in Istanbul, mobile phone footage of the airport terminal CCTV was beamed around the world. Gold Coast airport has approximately 6 million passenger movements per annum and is Australia's fifth busiest international airport. It is unique in Australia, as the runway straddles the New South Wales and Queensland border with the terminal buildings at this stage in Queensland. There are three fire and rescue agencies that border and service the airport:

- Airservices' Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) provides an ICAO Category 8 service at the airport,

- Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES)
- Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW)

Each agency has their own legislation, capability and culture that impacts and/or influences interoperability. This paper outlines the journey to interoperability by the three fire and rescue agencies that are responsible for Australia's fifth busiest international airport.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS INTEROPERABILITY?

Interoperability is not just technical solutions enabling radios from different agencies to talk to each other. A view supported by Johnson (2011 p.7) where

'interoperability is not simply if you can use your radio to talk to another agency'. Timmons (2007 p. 2) identifies that 'the radio is one tool of communication, but the overall process of communication deserves greater attention'. Put simply 'communicating requires that people are willing to share information with each other' (Donahue & Tuohy 2006 p.7). In order to collaborate in the multi-agency environment communication among agencies is essential (Curnin & Owen 2014 p. 264). The ability to communicate between the fire and rescue agencies is not just about what channel we're on but ensuring that we are communicating. This requires that agencies have the commitment to

coordinate with each other (Donahue & Tuohy 2006 p.7). To achieve situational awareness at a multi-agency incident information sharing and communication are required (Curnin & Owen 2013 p.115).

Nor is interoperability all legislation, emergency plans and memorandums of understanding/arrangement between agencies. There's also the cultural piece, the Report of the Victorian Fire Services Review (O'Byrne 2015 p. 16) identifies that 'for firefighters true interoperability would mean that they know and understand how one another operates, can trust in each other's capability, utilise each other's resources, and, if necessary, join one another's crew'.

Interoperability is 'about holistic engagement – almost what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine approach – and the courage of a true professional to make it happen' (Johnson 2011 p. 7). So interoperability is more about being able to work together and understand each other at an incident, than just being able to communicate on the same channel. Training and multi-agency exercises prior to any actual event assist in achieving this end state (Curnin & Owen 2013 p. 118).

Gold Coast airport is fortunate that it has an active Airport Emergency Committee that allows all the emergency service players to meet quarterly. These regular meetings have provided an excellent gateway into interoperability between the fire and rescue agencies. Which has led to a fantastic working relationship between the three fire and rescue agencies at inspector level. Interoperability also requires a commitment at the State and agency level to support what we as responders do on the ground.

### IS THERE COMMITMENT TO INTEROPERABILITY AT STATE OR CORPORATE (STRATEGIC) LEVEL?

Fortunately for the fire and rescue agencies that respond to Gold Coast airport there is a commitment to interoperability at State Government level though the 'Queensland-NSW Statement of Principles and Priorities for Cross-Border Collaboration 2016-19' signed by both the Queensland and NSW Premiers. Specifically, '2.6 Keeping communities safe – emergency

management' in the 2017-18 Annual Work List, reinforces the commitment of government for agencies to share information and coordinate during emergency situations.

At an agency level all three fire and rescue agencies have identified the importance of working together and interoperability in their respective strategic or corporate plans.

- QFES Strategic Plan 2016-2020 - identifies one of its strategic challenges as 'achieving seamless interoperability'.
- FRNSW Corporate Plan 2013 – 2017 p.12, identifies one of its strategies as 'encourage the interoperability of technologies and systems across emergency services sector to ensure interoperability in emergency and disaster response.
- ARFF 5 year plan 2011-2016 p.17 identifies as a strategy for implementation in 2016 'ensure Memorandums of Agreement are agreed between airport, metropolitan fire brigades and other emergency services to safeguard continuation of services in all events'.

### THE CHALLENGE OF INTEROPERABILITY

Most interoperability challenges start with a question that has a seemingly simple answer and a complex solution, for example, at an airport that has a state border running through it, does it matter where a plane crashes? Or a simpler question can we communicate on the fireground?

### DOES IT MATTER WHICH SIDE OF THE BORDER THE PLANE CRASHES?

Knowing who is in charge and each agency's roles and responsibilities at an incident is an important facet in achieving interoperability. The NPIA (2009 p. 20) confirm that "emergency services need to recognise and understand the separate roles and responsibilities that each has in response to events and incidents'. To avoid any unnecessary coordination hurdles 'arrangements with other agencies, such as memorandums of understandings, also need to be well established" (Curnin & Owen 2013 p. 118). To clarify who has responsibility for what, consider the following legal overview:



- Gold Coast airport is a 'Commonwealth place' under the Australian Constitution 52(i), Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970 (Cth) ss 3 and 4; Commonwealth Places (Applications of Laws) Regulation 2014 (Cth) reg 5.
- State laws continue to apply on Commonwealth places except where they are inconsistent with Commonwealth law or excluded by the regulations (Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970 (Cth) s 4). The State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (NSW) and the Fire Brigades Act 1989 (NSW) continue to apply on the NSW side of the border, and the Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld) and Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (Qld) apply on the Queensland side of the border, unless they are inconsistent with Commonwealth law.
- The relevant commonwealth law is the Air Services Regulations 1995 (Cth) (made under the Air Services Act 1995 (Cth)). One of the functions of Airservices Australia is to provide airport rescue and fire fighting services (Air Services Act 1995 (Cth) s 8 and Air Services Regulations 1995 (Cth) r 4.01).
- Airservices Australia may also make arrangements with any state or territory with respect to the use of state fire brigades as part of the airport response (Air Services Regulations 1995 (Cth) r 4.05). Depending on the local arrangements, the officer in charge of the response will be an

*continued on page 18*

continued from page 17

employee of ARFF or the officer in charge of the responding state brigade (Air Services Regulations 1995 (Cth) r 4.04).

- Under the NSW State Aviation Emergency Sub Plan, a sub plan of the NSW Emergency Management Plan, if the aviation incident is of the nature that it is in the capability and scope of local resources to manage then local plans and arrangements apply (paragraph 106 p.8).

To meet the requirements of the **Air Services Regulations 1995** (Cth) r 4.04 and the NSW State Aviation Emergency Sub Plan, a Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) has been negotiated between FRNSW and Airservices Australia for Gold Coast Airport. The MoA in Schedule B outlines Operational Responsibilities stating what each agency must do and Command and Control for different incident types.

Consistent with the provisions in the **Air Services Regulations 1995** (Cth), Gold Coast airport has an Airport Emergency Plan (AEP). The AEP (2.2.4 p. 24) provides that ARFF is the Combat Agency for fire control and rescue of crew and passengers. QFES and FRNSW assist ARFF in combating the fire and rescue of crew and passengers (AEP 2.2.7 p. 25). This is consistent with the State Aviation Emergency Sub Plan (paragraph 209, p 12).

Whether a plane crashes in NSW or Queensland shouldn't affect the response on airport during the operational hours of ARFF as each agency has their roles and responsibilities defined.

The challenge though is if there's a fire or other emergency at a terminal building on airport. Arrangements for control and co-ordination of the response to an aviation emergency are detailed in the NSW State Aviation Emergency Sub Plan (Paragraph 101, p 8). Although what an 'aviation emergency' is, is not isn't defined. A fire at an airport building is, prima facie, not an 'aviation emergency' though responding to a fire 'at an aerodrome, whether in an aircraft or elsewhere' is one of the response obligations of ARFF (Air Services Regulations 1995 (Cth) r 4.02(b)(i)).

The Gold Coast airport AEP (Cl. 4.9.2 p. 64) provides that:

- During operation hours, ARFF is the combat authority for any building fire; and
- Outside operational hours, QFES is the combat authority (as the airport buildings are in Queensland).

Project LIFT (Gold Coast Airport Pty Ltd 2016) will vary this status quo as the extension to the terminal building and aerobridges will now fall within NSW. Arrangements will need to be made with the Local Emergency Management Committee to incorporate the local arrangements into the Local Emergency Management Plan. Presumably, and consistent with the current AEP, ARFF will remain the combat authority during operational hours and FRNSW will be the combat authority outside operational hours. This will require a coordinated approach between FRNSW and QFES as the terminal building footprint overlaps both NSW and Queensland.

### CAN I COMMUNICATE BETWEEN FRNSW, ARFF AND QFES ON THE FIREGROUND?

Interoperable communications is a reoccurring theme during literature reviews of incidents involving multi agency response. In the active shooter incident at Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA) "LAPD and LAFD commanders arrived on scene, lacking communication interoperability with LAWAPD" (2014 p. 30) this led to a scenario where each agency was unaware of what the other agency was doing. The Wheeler review into airport security (Cth of Aust 2005 p. 40) found a similar situation, 'One glaring example is the failure to provide effective arrangements to enable AFP, AFPPS and State and Territory Police services to communicate with each other and with other airport security personnel, especially in time of emergency'.

The initial approach adopted to achieve interoperable communications was 'let's give each other our radios'.

- FRNSW already had QFES channels in the radios installed in their fire trucks so FRNSW could talk to QFES strategically.
- FRNSW also had handheld radios programmed to the QFES tactical/ task channels.
- Unfortunately neither FRNSW nor QFES could talk to ARFF as their radios were not within our bands.

- The interim solution was for FRNSW to equip ARFF with FRNSW handheld radios.
- FRNSW could now talk to ARFF and FRNSW could talk to QFES, but QFES couldn't talk to ARFF.

QFES then changed over to the GWN radio system. Fortunately, FRNSW stations that adjoin the Queensland border were allocated QFES GWN handheld radios.

- FRNSW could now talk to ARFF on a FRNSW radio
- FRNSW could again talk to QFES on the QFES radio
- QFES couldn't talk to ARFF and ARFF couldn't talk to QFES.

The National Coordinating Committee for Government Radiocommunications (NCCGR) is a national peak body that provides support to State, Territory and Commonwealth government jurisdictions to support their operational requirements with radio communications (<http://www.nccgr.govspace.gov.au>). Their goal is to achieve national interoperability where emergency services and public safety agencies communicate seamlessly using mobile radio in support of the COAG endorsed framework to improve government radiocommunications interoperability.

The transition to the 400MHz band by Government agencies has allowed for interoperability to occur. The NSW Telco Authority is responsible for negotiating with Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) on allocation of frequencies for NSW government agencies as part of the 400MHz reform project.

QFES as part of their roll out of the GWN included the agreed interoperability channels within their radios. When FRNSW recently updated their profile in their radios, they also included the agreed interoperability channels. This resulted in five channels being identified for tactical/ task communication. Utilising the interoperability channels means operating on a non-secure simplex channel for QFES. The result of agencies adopting the national standard for interoperability is:

- FRNSW can talk to both ARFF and QFES on the interoperability channel using a FRNSW radio
- ARFF can talk to QFES and FRNSW





using a FRNSW radio on the interoperability channel. All three fire and rescue agencies can talk to each other on a tactical/task level using the same radio.

The next stage in the radio interoperability journey has been the installation of an audio bridge to enable QFES radios to talk to ARFF radios and vice versa. This technical solution requires each agency to coordinate combined scenario training to ensure that those on the ground can communicate.

Each year, Gold Coast airport conducts a desktop exercise and a full field exercise. This provides the opportunity for the fire and rescue agencies to learn more about how each other operates and their roles and responsibilities during different scenarios. The NPJA (2009 p.14) identifies "joint training and interoperable communications provide emergency services' personnel with an improved understanding of the culture and capabilities of their counterparts in other emergency services". Outside of these once a year events there's also a need for fire and rescue agencies to regularly get together and get hands on with each other's capabilities. The need to regularly practice interoperability is shared by Timmons (2007 p. 3) who observes that first responders need to use interoperability solutions regularly so that it becomes a natural instinct when responding to an incident. All the expense and effort in achieving an interoperable radio capability is wasted if the first arriving crews from each agency can't remember how to dial up the correct channel on the radio.

### WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast provided a focus to continue the interoperability journey. The future in providing an overall framework of joint agency emergency response/management lays in further developing interoperability between the three fire and rescue services. Some of the areas to explore further are:

**The invisible border concept,** where the dotted line on the map has minimal effect on the deployment of FRNSW and QFES resources across the border. The Memorandum of Understanding and Mutual Aid Agreement between QFES and FRNSW agreed to in November 2016 has further enhanced the interoperability between the agencies. FRNSW's NSW operations in support of QFES during the 2018 Commonwealth Games provided a 'sandpit' environment to further test the 'invisible border' concept. Listing FRNSW resources in QFES CAD and listing QFES resources in FRNSW CAD will enable the nearest appropriate resources to be dispatched to an incident. This will require some reworking of the 2016 Mutual Aid Agreement between QFES and FRNSW to formalise the process.

**Having the three fire and rescue agency's CADs talk to each other via ICEMS.** This takes away the need for the agency's respective FireComms to phone each other and verbally pass on information. The Keilty Review (2013 p. 19) identified that Queensland Ambulance and QFES can automatically advise each other of incidents by intercomputer aided dispatch system messaging. Currently FRNSW, QFES and ARFF CADs can't

communicate with each other via ICEMS. A tentative step has now been taken in this direction with the QFES CAD now using ICEMS to communicate with the Queensland Ambulance Service CAD.

**The adoption of a Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Program (JESIP)** model by all 'blue light' agencies in Australia (Hamm 2015). The JESIP model was initially a two-year programme that started in the UK in 2012. The primary focus was about improving the way the Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance services work together when responding to major multi-agency incidents. The basic principles of JESIP are collocate, communicate, coordinate, jointly understand risk, shared situational awareness.

Since its inception JESIP has continued to provide practical guidance, training and awareness products for agencies to improve how they work together during multi-agency response.

Interoperability is more than just being able to talk to each other on the radio. As Johnson (2011 p. 7) puts it "about holistic engagement – almost what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine approach – and the courage of a true professional to make it happen". Further strengthening interoperability requires agencies and more importantly individuals within those agencies to be humble and recognise their shortcomings. Building on these shortcomings through training and multi-agency exercises will only further strengthen interoperability between the fire and rescue agencies that respond to incidents at Gold Coast airport. ●

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# PARAMEDICS!

are you ready to

# STOMP

for mental health?



Rain Histen and fire officer prepare to Stomp the MCG. Photo supplied by The Stadium Stomp organisers.

Have you ever sat in a stadium watching a game of AFL or cricket, musing over the number of stairs it takes to build a 40,000-100,000 seat venue?

The annual Stadium Stomp event gives you the chance to put your feet on each and every stair, and it is happening around the country again this year, starting in Sydney on 2 June and finishing at Brisbane's GABBA in late July.

The most stairs to tackle will come from arguably Australia's most iconic sporting venues, the MCG, with up to 7,600 stairs for the most daring emergency services personnel to stomp.

Paramedics are signing up alongside colleague, stair climber and mental health advocate Rain Histen from Ambulance Victoria as she leads a team at this year's Stadium Stomp Emergency Services challenge at The 'G' on 30 June.

Rain has teamed up with Emergency Services Foundation (ESF) as her charity partner, an organisation dedicated to providing a service to emergency services officers.

"The great thing about Stadium Stomp is we choose our own charity to fundraise for, and I am completely aligned with the work ESF does for emergency services," Rain said.

"The Stadium Stomp is much more than a race, it is a coming together of all emergency services stomping our iconic MCG to show the camaraderie that exists between us, and raise money for a foundation we back wholeheartedly."

The Emergency Services Foundation was established after Victoria's 1983 Ash Wednesday fires to provide relief to affected families.

CEO Siusan MacKenzie said ESF brings together people, organisations and expertise from across and beyond the sector to further knowledge, drive innovation and continuous improvement in the area of mental health and wellbeing.

"There is much evidence which points to the fact that this needs attention and is critical to overall capability of the sector," Ms MacKenzie said.

"The Emergency Services challenge component of this year's Stadium Stomp will include people working with the agencies Ambulance Victoria, MFB, CFA, SES and VicPol.

"It will be a team effort to raise funds to help the ESF help the sector address

the mental health challenges faced by its people."

Rain said mental health is not an issue individual emergency services agencies can tackle individually.

"We can't find solutions to mental health just by ourselves," she said,

"We need allies. When a paramedic or a police officer, a member of the SES or a firey is in the room talking about PTSD, we can all relate.

"This event will bring us together and connect us, building camaraderie and will be a solid reminder that we need each other and are there for each other as we face similar issues and problems.

"We are very proud to have the Emergency Services Foundation onboard and will look to raise money that will be funneled back into programs that aim to keep us well."

Paramedics from all over Australia are encouraged to join the Emergency Services challenge at this year's The Stadium Stomp at the MCG! Or, check out a Stadium Stomp in your capital city and get onboard. ●

## ABOUT THE COURSE

The Stadium Stomp is a challenge not a race, **not a timed event.** You can match a course to your level of fitness.

### FULL COURSE:

Number of stairs: 7,600 up and down

Expected time to complete: 45 minutes – 2 hours

### SHORT COURSE:

Number of stairs: 2,200 up and down

Expected time to complete: approx 25 minutes

## THE STADIUM STOMP 2019 EVENTS:

Sydney ES, Sydney, 2 June • Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 16 June  
MCG, Melbourne, 30 June • GABBA, Brisbane, 28 July

For more information about The Stadium Stomp Melbourne contact Rain Histen at [rainparamedic@gmail.com](mailto:rainparamedic@gmail.com)  
The Stadium Stomp visit [www.stadiumstomp.com](http://www.stadiumstomp.com)  
Emergency Services Foundation visit [esf.com.au](http://esf.com.au)



Bill Hoyles (left) with lifeguard in Goa.

## POSTCARD FROM GOA

Bill Hoyles, MAEIS

*NSW SES Canada Bay*

In February, I travelled to India, first visiting Mumbai before heading south by car to the former Portuguese colony of Goa.

It was around the same time that all hell broke loose in the far north of the country. The area known as Jammu and Kashmir in the north is disputed territory between India and Pakistan with frequent cross-border skirmishes and an active separatist movement in

Kashmir wanting either Pakistani control or independence.

A suicide bomber in Kashmir drove a car bomb into a convoy of Indian paramilitary police and other officials killing upwards of 40 and injuring multiple others.

A militant group with links to Pakistan claimed responsibility and thereafter India retaliated with an air strike on a terrorist camp in Pakistan during which

one or more of the Indian aircraft were destroyed and one Indian pilot captured. And as the world news reminded us – this all occurred in a period leading up to an election, in the world's largest democracy, when political leaders in power needed to be seen to be strong, and where both countries had a nuclear capability. Friends at home were concerned at the prospect of Nuclear War – but we were heading for the beaches



Quirky surf lifesaving towers are marked by red flags on the beach.



A cow feasts on fruit and vegetable scraps under a poster advertising Indian cookery classes, providing a lighter moment of Bill's trip to Goa.



Female Indian tourists paddle in small groups dressed in a Sari or Shalwar Kameez.

of Goa – a thousand miles from Kashmir and a million miles from care!

Goa has changed since my first visits 30 years ago. The influx of tourist Indians from Mumbai, cheap charter flights from the UK, and a mass influx of Russian tourists has impacted heavily on this predominantly Portuguese Catholic State.

Yet it still has its charm, and its beaches still provide some semblance

of serenity. I met local surf lifesavers on their dawn patrol – keeping a watchful eye on the many non-swimmers who braved the gentle surf. Lifesavers were introduced to Goa after a spate of drowning, and they have saved hundreds of lives over the years. Complementing the Goa surf lifesavers are the Goa Beach Safety Patrol – a group of men responsible for the safety and security of visitors

out of the water - either on the sands or frequenting one of the many beach shacks that serve food and grog along the shoreline.

Goa was largely untouched by the sabre rattling in the north, except for one day when we awoke to find the streets strangely quieter than normal. It seems a 'bund' had been called – a national day of strike action in solidarity with the hero soldiers who had died in Kashmir. ●

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To provide a professional body for the study of the roles and functions of Emergency Services and Emergency Management Organisations throughout Australasia, and the promotion and advancement of professional standards in these and associated services.

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- To facilitate full interchange of concepts and techniques amongst members.
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