

the

Volunteer

Issue 46 | December 2018

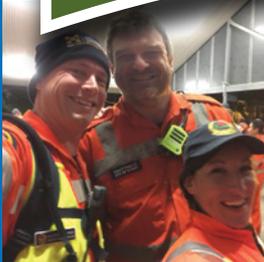
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AND

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*Thank you
for your service...
It was a pleasure to serve you*

Club Central was proud to serve meals to SES, RFS and other emergency services personnel during bushfires in the Menai area in April 2018. We appreciate the dedication and sacrifices the SES volunteers made to keep our homes and families safe this year, in the past and likely again in future.



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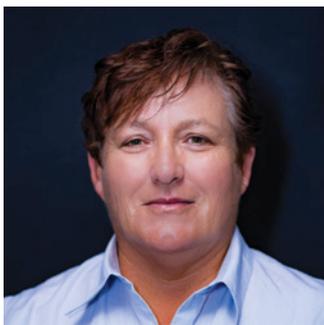
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KIM DAVIS ESM
PRESIDENT NSW SES
VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

Just like that, the year is over. And what a year it has been.

It is the anniversary of the 20th year of the Association, and we have seen more changes in the last 12 months than arguably, the entire history of the Association.

There has been a turnover in Board members, and for the first time, we have a majority female Board. We also have a female Chairperson and Managing Director.

There has been tens of thousands of dollars given away in grants this year, and this has included:

- » Specialised courses in roping
- » Nationally accredited training certificates
- » Covering university subject fees
- » Nationally accredited courses in mental health
- » Mental Health First Aid
- » Recovery equipment for 4WDs
- » Marquees for community events/ shade during operations
- » A USAR training cell
- » Sponsorship of multiple major training events
- » Conference registration fees
- » Unit anniversary events

We have also seen an unprecedented amount of welfare

support- through both the normal welfare process but also through the targeted Drought Support Program.

Fundraising has continued through the Direct Mail Campaigns for normal welfare processes, but we have trialled different methods- and with the help of SES Units and the State Operations Centre- for helping our members who have been doing it tough as a result of the drought.

There has been over \$8000 raised through the Drought Support Program, with our staff volunteering their time to manage the administration of the program to ensure all proceeds are going directly to the members.

To date, approximately 5000 kilometres have been travelled, over two tonne of feed, two pallets of dog food and care packages have been distributed and about 200 staff hours have been donated to the program.

A very special mention must go to Helen Newbold, one of our State Operations Centre legends, for her ongoing innovations around this program! The support shown to volunteers has been and continues to be amazing.

So while this year has not been without its challenges, we have

remained positive in the delivery of support and advocacy for our members and have been holding ourselves and those who represent us firm to the mantra of volunteers first. This means a shift away from face-to-face meetings and use instead of tele and video conference facilities; smaller, local professional development opportunities rather than a single, centralised conference; Association run training courses for multiple participants rather than single grant recipients.

We have also been focused strongly on the values and ethos of the Association- breaking away from being viewed as an 'old boys club' and challenging the 'we've always done it that way' standpoint. Innovation and efficiency, capability and capacity have become key; and holding firm to the reason we are here- for our members.

As we do draw to a close my first year as the President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have offered support and guidance. I hope each and every one of you have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year, and weather permitting- have an enjoyable break with family and friends.

It is the anniversary of the 20th year of the Association, and we have seen more changes in the last 12 months than arguably, the entire history of the Association.

NSW Volunteers Association Members Database

If you need to update your details please contact the office at office@nswsesva.org.au or call on **1300 073 782**.

“
The people of this state know that in times of trouble, they can rely on the men and women in orange to come to their aid.
 ”



TROY GRANT MP
MINISTER FOR
EMERGENCY SERVICES

It's hard to believe it's that time of year again with Christmas and New Year's Eve just around the corner. Every year it seems to be here just that little bit quicker. I know too well however, as all of you do too, that the festive season means something very different to those in emergency services. While most people will be spending this time winding down and reflecting on the year that was, dedicated volunteers like yourselves will often be spending this time away from your loved ones, offering a helping hand to those in need across our community.

While summer is most often synonymous with bush fires, it is also known as storm season. The people of this state know that in times of trouble, they can rely on the men and women in orange to come to their aid. Whether that's responding to major storms, flooding events, or a range of other emergency incidents – SES officers show up every single time and go above and beyond to support people in need.

And what's so remarkable is that all of you do this out of the goodness of your hearts. You do this because Australia is a nation based on volunteerism. A nation of mates helping mates, and doing the right thing when things go wrong. NSW communities rely on our emergency services, and our emergency services rely on our volunteers.

Over the course of the summer season I've no doubt you'll be called out hundreds if not thousands of times, as you already have been throughout the year. And what a year it has been, working together to strengthen the incredible services you provide. From the \$56.4 million NSW Government investment to bolster your fleet, to the completion of the \$53.5 million SES Operational Communication Equipment and Systems Project to reduce communication black spots, deliver 5,000 new radios, and fit 131 SES vehicles with automatic vehicle location devices to enable timelier

tasking in emergencies and improved volunteer safety. I've also had the pleasure of helping to deliver 20 new Avalanche Transceivers to the Alpine Capability Unit that I was fortunate enough to visit earlier this year, during their training regime.

Of course, I know, I'm merely scratching the surface. The biggest achievement of all is the work each of you do every day in the midst of a flood or storms, when the flood of calls for assistance is coming in thick and fast.

Needless to say, it's an amazing privilege to be your voice and advocate, and it's an honour to continually meet with volunteers from every corner of the state and hear first-hand of the work being done on the ground to prepare and respond to all manner of emergencies in our towns and suburbs. Once again, I thank you for your unwavering dedication to your communities, I wish you a safe festive season, and I look forward to working alongside you once more as we ring in 2019.

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

1800 626 800



MARK SMETHURST DSC, AM
COMMISSIONER

The end of 2018 is fast approaching, and the last quarter of the year has been particularly busy for the Service, with many vital improvements to our structure and processes implemented. In the last three months the NSW SES Organisational Transformation program has moved us towards new ways of working and improved collaboration across the Service. Following the five Zone workshops that brought members together to share insights about the organisational change and how to improve our business from top to bottom, a new contemporary, agile and adaptive structure responding to the need for change across the Agency was designed. Through a complex assignment and recruitment process to position the Agency for the future, meet NSW Government standards and better support our volunteers, the staff restructure is almost complete. October marked a major milestone in the history of our Service as we launched the new structure, which included introducing matrix-style reporting, Zone clusters, system changes and new policies and procedures. I acknowledge that major changes like this take time for all to learn and adjust to, and applaud the way members have been supporting each other through the transition. In fulfilling our mission and vision together, we continue to work towards providing more effective outcomes for volunteers and communities.

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 ”

Within the Operational Response Directorate significant planning with Region Controllers was conducted in preparation to move from the Region to Zone structure on the 4th October. Particular focus was on the development and application of Unit clusters under the Incident Management Operating Model (IMOM). Since October, Zone Commanders have focused on leadership within Zones during the transformation, and on moving capability plans from Regions to Zones. A revised capability framework is expected to be ready by the end of the year, and further leadership and capability plan development will remain the focus of Zone Commanders and their teams in the first half of 2019.

Operationally the Service has been moderately busy, with almost 4000 requests for assistance received from beginning of August until the end of October. The busiest areas were the Metro Zone and the Northern Zone with over 1000 RFAs each. Over 3000 jobs were storm related, while support jobs and miscellaneous flood-related jobs followed. October brought the most severe weather events in this quarter, with heavy rainstorms, thunderstorms and damaging winds hitting the state twice, first from 2-8 October and again on the weekend of the 20-21 October. Thank you to those who assisted the community during these and many other weather events, your professionalism and hard work is commendable, and makes a real difference to those affected.

While supporting the transition process, the Planning and Preparedness Directorate delivered in the last quarter several key projects such as the review and endorsement of the State Storm and State Tsunami Plan through the State Emergency Committee, and further development of State Capability Units. These Units are made up of existing and new volunteers who work in a traditional Unit structure, but deliver specialist State-wide capability when tasked through State Headquarters, e.g. Bush Search and Rescue (BSAR) or Aviation. Leading into 2019, the Directorate will continue working on the Safety Management Strategy to leverage the new NSW SES Structure for our members, the development of a modern and efficient hazard planning and risk reduction strategy that meets community needs and expectations, and the development of a Capability Planning Framework to streamline capability identification and implementation across the State.

The Training team have been focused on providing broader reach and flexibility in the delivery of training with professional development sessions conducted via webinars. This included a Rank and Insignia information session, which reached over 150 members, and a session for approximately 45 Unit Training Coordinators on maximising online, rather than paper-based, training administration. 85 volunteers are currently enrolled with TAFE Digital to

undertake a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In collaboration with Fire & Rescue NSW and the ICT Directorate, the Training Directorate launched the Mobile Assessment App, which is currently rolled out via a staged approach to Units across the State. A revised NSW SES Induction program is being implemented to support Volunteering Reimagined, providing the basics for a new unit member to commence participation in an operational team under supervision. 2019 will see the Training Directorate focus on delivering updated Incident Management training, streamlining of training pathways to focus on a skills-based approach, and continued support to Zones and Clusters to develop efficient and effective training plans, training delivery and enhanced trainer and assessor capability.

further four Cells-on-Wheels (CoW), building on the prototype which has been successfully tested in operations. Following on from the first stages of the Records and Information Management Project, 2019 will see a shift to more structured, streamlined and automated systems and processes that will enhance our management and dissemination of information across multiple platforms for both volunteers and staff. Other projects planned for early next year include collaboration with RFS on member availability and radio locational intelligence solutions, and enhancements to beacon.

The Organisational Performance and Engagement (OPE) Directorate has been actively supporting and coordinating the Organisational Transformation and the transition to the new structure, while

warnings and community liaison IMT functions, the building of partnerships and MOUs, the development measurement and evaluation of the Service's community engagement practices, development of strategic business analysis, and the intelligence and reporting capability.

The focus of the Finance, Asset and Business Services remains on simplifying the way we do business, and building consistency across the Zones. In the last months the team has been busy embedding new policy, building the team and communicating the changes with Units. We recognise the need for short, simple communications to help volunteers get things done at a Unit, particularly when it comes to purchasing. Quick Reference Guides for Volunteers are being developed and we are setting up more common-use vendors. Processes have been centralised, so that we are able to speed up the reimbursement process. Mobile vehicle servicing options are now widely available to save transit times, and can be arranged by contacting the fleet team, or directly through SG Fleet. Next year FABS will continue working on simplifying the way we undertake stocktakes, and streamlining business service practices.

Reflecting on what happened in our Service in the last 12 months, I can definitely say it has been a busy and rewarding year. I have been impressed with the passion and desire of all members to embrace the changes brought by the Organisational Transformation, and to help us move to a new, more efficient and agile structure. Thank you all for your time and enthusiasm in putting into practice our mission of saving lives and protecting communities. With many vital projects planned to increase our operational capability and competency in critical areas, I look forward to working with you all in 2019. I wish everyone a happy and safe holidays.

Best wishes to all,
Mark

October brought the most severe weather events in this quarter, with heavy rainstorms, thunderstorms and damaging winds hitting the state twice...

In order to ensure a smooth transition into the new organisational structure, the ICT Directorate has focused over the past three months on planning and implementing the mandatory structure change in systems and infrastructure. Work continues on the next steps to ensure systems reflect and support the new functional and directorate alignment. The desktop rollout continues across Zones and is ahead of schedule for completion early in the new year. Fixed network upgrades will be completed this year to deliver enhanced connectivity and performance at primary sites throughout Zones. Procurement has commenced on a

maintaining critical functions such as stakeholder engagement, media and communications and project and change support. The current focus areas for the new directorate are a review of community and youth engagement strategies, development of centralised processes for these functions, a review of the Service's media and social media strategy, development of improved policies, processes and training for social media, and ongoing support for business process improvements and projects across the Service. The key OPE projects planned for 2019 include the delivery and improvement of the NSW SES Public information,

Ballina Yetties



Our first pilot program ran at the Ballina unit during the second school term of 2016.

An AAR was conducted by SHQ after the pilot course, in which Yetties, Parents and members of the Ballina SES unit who were involved with the program were interviewed.

From the first pilot Ballina unit four members joined the unit.

A second program was conducted in term four 2017 with some modifications from the first.

From the second program 4 members joined as full time members of the NSW SES.

This year's program included team work, leadership, solving problems, boats, flood awareness, radio operations, first aid, and other SES activities. The group was visited at the unit by the police and the ambulance service. They visited the local fire station, and the airport fire station which was the highlight. They watched a plane land while they were in the observation tower, shown through the station and equipment.

During the graduation their parents, families, teachers, the Ballina Mayor, representative from the Local MP, local newspaper, representatives from SES unit, Region and State

and the emergency services that participated in the program were present.

During the graduation program the Yetties were challenged with a First Aid injury scenario that they had to carry out in front of the visitors.

The graduates were presented a certificate and an SES paddy kindly donated by the NSWSESVA.

We appreciate the ongoing support that the VA has given us during the past programs and we look forward to being able to work together in future programs.

Benefits to NSW SES

- » Attend course in the SES environment
- » Trainers are available in the evening
- » Parents bring Yetties to unit and pick up after each session
- » Parents and families are exposed to NSW SES and its roles
- » Yetties are exposed to NSW SES and other emergency services in their roles
- » Teachers are exposed to NSW SES and its roles
- » Most effective Community Education program that exposes the NSW SES combat roles and its involvement within the local community

» Exposure to the local community via the schools, neighbourhood talk and newspaper articles.

» 100% attendance

» A number wish to become unit members

» Spreads the SES organisation throughout the country as these young people travel to UNIs, work etc. with understanding, future involvement

From the first program 3 from the 11 have become unit members

From the second program 4 from the 12 have become unit members plus the sister of one of these has joined as unit members. One of these has become school captain.

From the 3rd program 1 has already applied to join the service with a number of others shown interest. There were 15 participants.

There is also a strong interest being shown from parents and teachers.

Ballina unit has written a TRK for the state. This is in the final draft form and should be available for all units in the New Year.

Ballina unit continues to receive updates on the success stories from past yetties who are making good from their experience in the yetties program.



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Christmas Mental Health

With festivities and good times, December is fabulous part of the year. But whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or just enjoy all the public holidays, it can also be a difficult. So it's always important to take some time to make sure we're looking after ourselves, and those around us.

Although they're hard to avoid at this time of year, remember that sugar and alcohol impact on our mood and our brain function. If our mood is low, alcohol will exacerbate this. Watch your intake, and support others that are trying to limit theirs.

It's ok to say no. Even though it may feel like it, you don't actually have to visit everyone. If you have to be at multiple places, set yourself time limits so you don't overextend yourself. Recovery and downtime is just as important as the social side of things.

Holidays can get lonely. Friends are away, our routines are disrupted,

we might need to work and don't live near family. Whatever the reason, it's quite normal to feel more isolated at this time of year. Plan ahead and think about friends who might be in the same situation. There are also many place you can spend some time helping others - whether it's packing Christmas hampers or visiting a nursing home, it can help keep us connected to what's important.

Sometimes the sense of loneliness can come from having lost a loved one. This is always hard, but it can help to think about traditions or memories you shared with that person that you can incorporate in to your celebrations. Making sure they aren't forgotten can make things that little bit easier.

Christmas – much like the rest of our lives – is increasingly influenced by social media. Try and cut down on your online time, and focus on where you are and who you are with. Be mindful, and don't waste your holidays

comparing your decorations and parties to other peoples.

Look around and look out for each other. Does someone you know not have plans? Do they live far from family? Does it seem like they've picked up every Duty Officer shift or extra work over Christmas? Does an elderly neighbor not get many visitors? Reach out, make sure they're ok and make an effort. An invitation for a coffee or dropping a card in a mailbox can make a world of difference.

Lastly: Remember that services are still running over the Christmas period if you do need to talk to someone, or get help for a loved one.

- » **Beyond Blue** 1300 224 636 Or online: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/online-forums>
- » **Lifeline** 131114
- » **Mental Health Access Line** Provides 24/7 assessment and referral for all NSW Mental Health services. 1800 011 511

Working at Heights

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

We have seen the number of falls from heights increase in the last few months. These have required medical attention and are considered to be significant injuries. Two of these instances were resultant of 'recce' jobs where the volunteers were working alone.

We have to be very mindful of complacency and/or rushed actions when we are attending any job, but especially when we are working from a height.

Falls from height are the major cause of death and injury when working on roofs.

Hazards to consider in managing fall risks include:

- » unprotected edges
- » fragile surfaces, skylights, holes or vents
- » working alone
- » weather conditions such as wind and rain (for example being blown

over the edge or slipping on a wet roof surface)

- » trip hazards (for example roof components and protrusions), and
- » overbalancing or losing grip on steep pitched or sloping roofs.

Be aware that while working on a roof or even a ladder, you can trip and fall on roofs, through roofs and openings or while accessing or exiting roof areas. Falls from even low heights can leave volunteers with permanent and debilitating injuries such as fractures, spinal cord injuries, concussion and brain damage. The risk of serious injury or death from a fall increases significantly as working heights increase.

ACTION NOW REQUIRED

1. Remind all operators to never work alone at heights
2. Do your Take 5 prior to any activity
3. Following your training when working at heights

4. Report all safety hazards, incidents and near hits to your supervisor and SafeHold by calling 1800 737 647 immediately.
5. If the hazard, incident or near hit is a serious or dangerous incident, it is mandatory to report it to SafeWork NSW immediately on 13 10 50. See the WHS Notifiable Incident Procedure for more information.

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Enquiries regarding this safety alert should be directed to:
Stanley (Stan) Williams
Safety Health and Wellbeing Officer
P: 02 63348518
M: 0428 866 806
E: stanley.williams@one.ses.nsw.gov.au

Authorised by

Gary Zuiderwyk
Manager Safety Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health First Aid

With 1 in 3 Australians experiencing a mental illness or mental distress in their lifetime, mental health is a topic that we are increasingly aware of – but do we know how to identify concerns, or what we can do to support someone?

For SES volunteers this is an important issue. Some of us, or our friends and family members, already have lived experience with mental illness. Additionally, we encounter diverse community members, sometimes in distress, as well as needing to support each other after attending a wide variety of, sometimes traumatic, events.

Thanks to support from the NSW SES Volunteer Association, we were able to explore these issues during a pilot of Mental Health First Aid for SES volunteers over the weekend of 6th and 7th October. Mental Health First Aid is a nationally recognised course, however running it specifically in the SES context meant being able to include scenarios specific to First Responders and discuss how our units can improve our response to mental health concerns.



The first 18 members came from Marrickville, Waverley-Woolhara and Randwick and attended the Marrickville Unit to complete the course. It is a big two days of training and these members should be acknowledged for their commitment to becoming our first Mental Health First Aiders! The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive that they had developed skills and knowledge relevant to both their personal lives as well as their volunteer role, and that they would strongly recommend it to other SES members.

We are really appreciative of the VA acknowledging the importance of mental health for SES volunteers, and



investing in our knowledge and skills to look after ourselves and support each other.

Due to the positive feedback, we are hopeful of being able to provide this training to more units across NSW, with further support from the Volunteer Association, as well as identifying community grants that might be appropriate. If your unit or cluster would be interested in having Mental Health First Aid provided, please let us know so that we can put you on the radar for future training possibilities. You can express your interest directly to Selina.thomas@member.ses.nsw.gov.au.

Buff for a Buddy

The State Operations Centre (SOC) staff at State Headquarters have organised a fundraising activity to support the NSW SES Volunteers Association Drought Support Program. By purchasing the specifically designed Buff/Bandana you will be supporting Members of NSW SES who are affected by the Drought. The fundraising activity is called **"Buff for a Buddy"** and 100% of proceeds will be donated to the Drought Support Program.

The Buffs provide protection from sun, wind, cold, dust and are functional & fun. You can order your Buff via the NSW SES Volunteers Association website shop <https://www.nswsesva.org.au/shop/> for **\$12.95 (including**

Benefits of the Multifunctional Bandana

Breathable Wicks Moisture Non-Irritational Retains Elasticity	100% Polyester Microfibre Multifunctional Seamless Construction One size fits most	Colourfast Fast Drying Non-Fray Durable
		
Thermal	Breathable	UV Protection
		
Moisture Control	Recycle	

postage) during November, with shipment to your nominated address in mid-December. Payment can be made by direct deposit or credit card.

The VA will pass on your details to the staff at the SOC who will dispatch your Buff via Australia post.

For further information contact the team at the SOC on 4251 6111 or via soc@ses.nsw.gov.au

Buffs will be sourced from "Custom Bandana's" with more information available here: www.custombandanas.com.au

International Commission for Alpine Rescue

Annual Conference, 16-20 October 2018, Chamonix, France



Richard Delaney after NSW SES was awarded full voting membership of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR).



Richard Delaney and Steve Cliffe at the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) annual conference in Chamonix, France.

The ICAR annual conference is the peak international event for technical rescuers. Most attendees are front-line responders and the opportunities for sharing knowledge, skills, and experience are unmatched by any other event. Over 500 people attended the 2018 conference in Chamonix.

NSW SES certainly has an Alpine capability and members are trained in the areas of snow survival, hypothermia, snow mobile transport, avalanche awareness, and helicopter use however the relevance of ICAR goes far beyond Alpine.

The ICAR Terrestrial Commission this year had excellent presentations on:

- » Implementation challenges of Incident Command Systems with remote search & rescue
- » Light-weight rope rescue systems
- » Hazards and rescue from Wind Turbines
- » Glacier cave mapping
- » Influence of fatigue on search dogs

- » Backcountry SOS systems
 - » Use of Satellite data & systems for search & rescue
 - » Performance criteria of rope rescue systems
 - » Use of helicopters in Mountain Rescue
 - » Preventing rock-climbing accidents
 - » Psychological health of rescuers
- Lessons that we have already learnt from past ICAR presentations include:
- » The benefit of twin tensioned/dual rope systems for vertical rescue.
 - » Management of suspension syndrome.

There should be no doubt about the relevance of ICAR to the NSW SES.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are not alone. There are rescuers all over the world responding to the same situations as us. Regardless of culture, language, or political situation, we can all learn from each other.

Terrestrial search and rescue is normally conducted away from vehicle

support. Teams must be appropriately clothed and equipped. It has been positive to see NSW SES equipping Alpine teams with appropriate equipment and the trials currently underway for the remote search teams however this must extend to all our non-vehicle-based response teams. It was interesting to discuss clothing with others and it seems one of the most common approaches is to supply a shirt and a shell/jacket. Members often have unique preferences for footwear and pants so this choice is left open. Organisations often negotiate 'pro-deal' arrangements with local manufacturers and these often reduce the cost of these other items by up to 50%. Many organisations also seem to provide sew-on/Velcro-on patches so that members can attach these to packs and other items.

There are a few significant developments in helicopter mountable mobile phone tracking systems (such as <http://www.centum-rt.com/en/lifeseeker/>). Lifeseeker seems to have



Richard Delaney presenting the NSW SES membership application to the ICAR Assembly of Delegates.

resolved the issues around privacy and access to spectrum to allow location of the phone of a lost person within a search area. Tools like this have the potential to find lost people far more quickly and reduce the risk to search teams.

Another ongoing topic is the quest for lighter weight roping systems for remote teams. Admittedly this is a key area of interest for me however interest in this area is surging as teams reduce in size and average age increases. There are many organisations who are using 8-9mm rope systems and lighter hardware rather than 11-13mm ropes with full body industrial harnesses. These developments are very relevant for our VR teams responding in canyons and other remote areas.

NEXT YEAR: ZAKOPANE, POLAND 8-13 OCTOBER 2019

Now that NSW SES is a voting member of ICAR, it is important that we maintain a presence and find ways to share this experience with more technicians. I plan to attend ICAR 2019 in Zakopane, Poland however it would be great to support other younger volunteers to boost their knowledge and enthusiasm. Ideally, we would have three representatives attend: one with the experience and background knowledge to vote on behalf of the NSW SES and two more for professional development. Priority should always be given to front-line technicians as these make up the majority of ICAR attendees.



Richard Delaney field testing the SES SAR trial shell jacket and pants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I must express my gratitude to the NSW SES VA for awarding myself and Steve Cliffe grants to attend this conference. These grants covered the conference fees and return air travel. I commend the NSW SES VA for seeing the value in these grants – supporting volunteers in their efforts to advance the NSW SES is vital for the organisation.

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Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit:

www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Bites and stings

In Australia there are many insects, spiders and snakes that bite and sting. This fact sheet provides information on the basic treatment of common bites and stings in Australia. For more information about how to manage bites and stings contact the **Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26**.

GENERAL FIRST AID

Most bites and stings are not life threatening, but may cause mild pain, redness and/or itching. For most bites and stings the following first aid treatment will help ease discomfort.

- » Wash the area with soap and water and keep it clean and dry.
- » Apply ice (wrapped in a thin cotton cloth) or cool running water to reduce the swelling and relieve the pain.
- » Seek advice from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26
- » **If your child is having difficulty breathing, is unconscious or fitting, call an ambulance on 000.**

More detailed first aid advice is given below for bites and stings from:

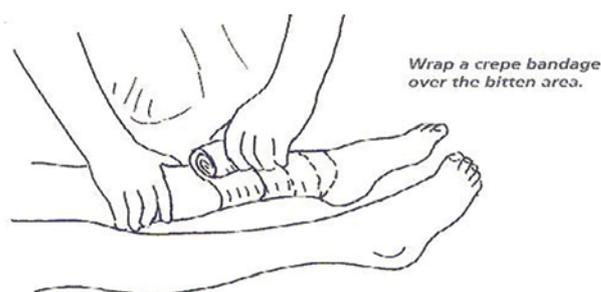
- » Snakes
- » Spiders
- » Ticks
- » Scorpions, Centipedes and Millipedes
- » Bees, Wasps & Ants
- » Blue-ringed Octopus
- » Bluebottles

SNAKES

There are many venomous snakes in Australia. Most bites do not result in death however all bites should be treated as potentially dangerous. Seek immediate medical assistance for all cases of suspected snake bites.

FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Apply a firm wide elasticised bandage around the bite (see picture below) and then apply a second bandage over the whole limb. Ensure that the bandage is not too tight and cutting off the circulation.
- » Use a splint to keep the whole limb still (that is, immobilise the affected limb).
- » Keep the person still and do not move them from their position.
- » Call an ambulance (000) to take the person to the nearest hospital.
- » Try to notice the colour and markings on the snake but DO NOT try to catch or handle it. DO NOT wash the bitten area as the venom on the skin may be used to identify the snake.
- » If the person bitten collapses, perform CPR immediately and call 000 for an ambulance.



SPIDERS

There are many different types of spiders in Australia. Spider bites can cause pain, swelling and/or itching at the bite site. The only venomous species of significance in Australia are the Red-back spider and the Funnel-web Spider (FWS). The FWS can be difficult to distinguish from other big black spiders.

Red-back Spider

The red-back spider is found throughout Australia. The female red-back spider has a red/orange stripe on its back while the male is very small, usually with no stripe. A red-back spider bite may result in pain, redness and sweating at the bite site.



FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Wash the area with soap and water and apply an antiseptic if available.
- » Apply ice or cool running water to relieve pain.
- » Seek advice from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 or your local doctor if pain continues. If severe pain occurs, the patient needs to be taken to the nearest hospital.

Funnel-web Spiders and big black spiders

Many Australian spiders that are large and black can resemble the highly venomous funnel-web spider (FWS). A bite from this spider can be very dangerous, and potentially life threatening. A FWS bite will usually cause severe pain, lots of sweating, nausea and vomiting, drooling, difficulty in breathing, confusion, as well as numbness, tingling and twitching of the mouth and tongue.



FIRST AID TREATMENT FOR ALL BIG BLACK SPIDER BITES:

- » Apply a very firm wide elasticised bandage around the bite and then apply a second bandage over the whole limb. Ensure that the bandage is not too tight and cutting off the circulation.
- » Use a splint to keep the whole limb still (that is, immobilise the affected limb) to slow the flow of venom around the body.
- » Keep the person still.
- » Call an ambulance (000) to take the person to the nearest hospital.

TICKS

Common bush ticks or scrub ticks are often found on people. Ticks bury themselves in the skin and scalp. Some Australian ticks release venom into the blood. Symptoms may include headache, blurred vision, weak limbs and unsteady walking. These symptoms may start a few days after a tick bite.



Some people may be allergic to tick bites. Ticks should be killed before removal to reduce the chance of a life threatening allergic reaction and the development of mammalian meat allergy. Trying to remove the tick before it has been killed may cause the tick to inject more toxin, leading to a serious anaphylactic reaction.

FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Do not pull on the body of the tick or try to remove it with tweezers, as this will inject more toxin.
- » To kill the tick safely, the Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) recommends either freezing adult ticks with an ether spray (eg: Wart off spray) or applying permethrin cream (Lyclear cream) to small ticks. Both products are available from the pharmacy. For people with a known tick allergy, this should be done in the hospital emergency department.
- » Wait 10 minutes after treatment for the tick to die, then carefully brush off.
- » Wash the area with soap and water and keep the area clean and dry.
- » Seek advice from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 if any symptoms occur.

SCORPIONS, CENTIPEDES AND MILLIPEDES

In Australia scorpions, centipedes and millipedes are not venomous. Pain, swelling and/or itching may occur. Millipedes can cause blistering and brown discolouration of the skin.



FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Apply ice or cool running water to relieve the pain.
- » Seek advice from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 or your local doctor if pain continues.

BEEES, WASPS & ANTS

A bee, wasp or ant sting can cause pain and/or swelling. Some people may have an allergic reaction to the sting, which may cause a rash, vomiting, collapse or difficulty in breathing. Seek medical attention straight away if an allergic reaction occurs.



FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Remove the sting by pulling it out or scraping it away; you may need tweezers, a credit card or something firm.
- » Wash the area with water and keep the area clean and dry.
- » Apply ice or cool running water to reduce the swelling and to relieve the pain (do not apply ice to the eye).
- » Seek medical attention straight away if any allergic reaction occurs.
- » If a person has been stung more than five times seek medical attention.

BLUE-RINGED OCTOPUS

The blue-ringed octopus bite is very venomous. A bite may be painless but can cause paralysis, and the person may stop breathing.



FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Apply a very firm bandage around the bite and then apply a second bandage over the whole limb. Make sure that the bandage is not too tight and cutting off the circulation.
- » Call 000 for an ambulance or take the patient to a hospital as quickly as possible.
- » If the person stops breathing, they will need cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

BLUEBOTTLES

Most stings are painful. Blue bottle stings leave a whip-like, red, wavy line on the skin from the tentacle. Allergic reactions are possible.



FIRST AID TREATMENT:

- » Clear away the tentacles.
- » Immerse or wash the sting area in hot water for 20 minutes, for pain relief. A hot shower up to 45°C may

be used. First check that the water temperature is not too hot and BEWARE of burns.

- » If hot water is not available or does not relieve pain, then apply ice or cool running water.
- » Avoid using vinegar, it is not useful and may increase pain.
- » Seek advice from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 or your local doctor if pain continues.

FIRST AID COURSES

It is very important to know what to do in an emergency. First aid can save lives and prevent serious injuries. For information about first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) courses in your local area contact:

- » Australian Red Cross Society Tel: (02) 9229 4111
- » St John Ambulance Tel: (02) 9212 1088.

CPR TRAINING FOR PARENTS

Learn how to perform CPR on a child through a FREE online program at cprtrainingforparents.org.au.

REMEMBER:

- » Keep a first aid kit at home and in the car.
- » Save the Poisons Information Centre phone number in your mobile phone 13 11 26.
- » More information at www.poisonsinfo.nsw.gov.au

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