

24seven

Official magazine of the Government of Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Issue 1, 2014





From the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner

In 2013, we continued to make headway in our journey towards a better co-ordinated and effective emergency services delivery model in WA. We set ourselves an enormous challenge from the outset which involved changing our way of doing things to create a more cohesive and focussed organisation.

We have made great advances in implementing Professional Development Pathways, an Integrated Planning and Reporting System (IPRS), an All Hazard Information Management System (AHIMS) and the State Control, Command, Coordination and Information System (C³IS) to name a few, but we need to recognise it will take time to embed these systems as a new way of doing business.

The benefits of the C³IS project are already being realised with the development of a single manual that consolidates existing documents, doctrine and procedures for the State, Metropolitan and Regional Operations Centres. WebEOC has also become the Department's Incident Management System.

These are important achievements that will collectively streamline access to DFES' corporate knowledge and standard operating procedures resulting in enhanced operations and improved service delivery.

Additionally, the establishment of the new Belmont Simulation Centre will support the introduction of pre-determined trained teams at the State, regional and incident level. Personnel who are currently rostered for mobilisation within these teams will regularly participate in response simulation exercises and assessment at the new Centre.

We have also made substantial progress in the review of WA's emergency services legislation and a Concept Paper leading to the development of a single legislative instrument that will better support fire and emergency services personnel and volunteers. The Concept Paper for the new *Emergency Services Act* will be released for public comment in the coming weeks.

The Paper will outline the legislative options available to the government to address current operational issues and challenges, as well as the alternatives to modernising the legislation to reflect current practice. A significant theme in the Concept Paper will be risk mitigation for all natural hazards, and there is a particular focus on bushfire fuel management and risk planning. I strongly encourage the fire and emergency services community, combat and support agencies, volunteers and DFES personnel to provide feedback on the Paper once it is released for comment.

Lastly, but not least, 2013 saw the launch of the State Government's media campaign on bushfire mitigation and pre-season preparation for bushfire. The need to share responsibility for WA's bushfire risk and prepare for the bushfire season is the cornerstone of the "Are You Ready?" campaign, which was launched on the first day of summer.

The campaign messages are especially relevant as this bushfire season is proving to be as challenging and demanding as expected, with significant operational efforts already seen this year particularly during the Stoneville-Parkerville and Banjup bushfires.

Acknowledging our collective achievements and reflecting on our progress to date is an important part of understanding and framing our priorities for the year ahead.

In 2014, there is more work to do in order to see continued success in our operational efforts as well as our corporate environment. We have more to achieve and this requires a concerted effort and commitment to maintaining our momentum throughout the year ahead.

Our business processes have a direct impact on our internal efficiencies as well as our operational efforts so it is essential that we get these right. Having sound and robust corporate systems in place will be a priority of key projects this year.

The need to deliver on operational priorities and maintain the high standards that we are becoming known for, whilst driving change, will continue to be a challenge in 2014 but we have already demonstrated this is possible through an impressive body of work implemented to date.

What we plan to achieve this year will be no mean feat given that seasonal hazards and incidents cause us to refocus our energies at different times of the year. However, the ability of all personnel to adapt to the challenges we face, operate strategically and work in collaboration with our stakeholders, will underpin our success in 2014.

I would like to thank you all for your ongoing commitment to achieving our strategic vision of being a leading emergency services organisation and look forward to working with the fire and emergency services community in the year ahead.

**WAYNE GREGSON APM
COMMISSIONER
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Magazine articles are welcome – please email 24seven Editor at DFES Media and Public Affairs: kristine.smith@dfes.wa.gov.au

Stories should be up to 500 words in length and submitted with accompanying images and captions wherever possible. Digital photographs are required at high resolution (300dpi) to ensure acceptable quality for printing.

For permission to use material in this publication, please contact the Editor on (08) 9395 9570.



Kalamunda VFRS Captain Tony Moiler and Fire and Rescue Station Officer Jack Vanderklau face the camera.

Firefighters debut on small screen

Career and volunteer firefighters who often prefer to stay out of the limelight recently found themselves front and centre of a new State Government campaign.

Leading the charge with Victoria Cross recipient Ben Roberts-Smith, they played a starring role in a series of television advertisements that were launched on the first day of summer.

The campaign asked one key question of Western Australians, "Are you ready?" this bushfire season.

It focuses on the message that bushfire preparedness is a responsibility shared by Government, emergency services, communities, neighbours and individuals.

Members of the community living in or near high risk bushfire areas are encouraged to be proactive and make necessary preparations for the season.

Each of the State's fire service agencies are represented, including the Fire and Rescue Service, Bush Fire Service, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Volunteer Fire Services.

The series of three television advertisements began airing on Sunday 1 December 2013 and will be broadcast for the duration of the season.

Bullsbrook Volunteer Fire Services volunteer Alice Becklake, who was involved in the filming of the advertisement, said the experience gave her an insight into multi-agency bushfire response.

"It was interesting to learn more about how the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) works, and the role that Western Power has in bushfire prevention.

"I also made great friends with some of the other volunteers involved in the shoot, so I was very glad to be a part of it," Alice said.

The television advertisement is being complemented by an extensive print and online campaign.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis said while Western Australia's career and volunteer firefighters were better equipped and protected than ever before, it was essential that people living in high bushfire risk areas also did their bit to prepare for a fire emergency.

"Being prepared means more than just clearing around your property," Mr Francis said.

"People need to ensure they have insurance, a proper survival plan, a generator and independent water supply to defend their homes.

"They also need to keep a close watch on fire danger ratings."

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson said that DFES was doing everything it could to help educate and safeguard the community.

"DFES is working closely with career and volunteer firefighters, DPaW, Local Governments, Western Power and other stakeholders to ensure arrangements are in place for another long and challenging season," Commissioner Gregson said.

"Preparing for bushfire is a responsibility all Western Australians share and now we need the community to play their part to ensure everyone's safety.

"We hope the community will heed our message and 'get ready' as part of this campaign."

For further information on the campaign visit www.areyouready.wa.gov.au or contact Media and Public Affairs on 9225 5955.

Contents

General News	3 – 15
Operational Incidents.....	16 – 23
Resources and Training	24 – 37
Awards and Recognition	38 – 45
Youth	46 – 48

Cover photo: Volunteer firefighters at the Parkerville bushfire photographed by Evan Collis.

Managing Editor: Michelle Neil
Editor: Kristine Smith

Regular Contributors: Todd Cardy, Dana Jackson, Elena Kane, Lauren Gardiner, Nic Hatherly, Bren McGurk and Ivana Oroz-Bootsma

Design: Jemma Williams

Family fun at open day

It was a dream outing for many children in the crowd of more than 1,150 visitors to the DFES Education and Heritage Centre Open Day.



Not surprisingly, some of the most popular activities included riding on shiny red vintage fire trucks and dressing up in mini firefighter uniforms.

Many youngsters also jumped at the chance to sit in a present day fire appliance and talk to a real firefighter.

Volunteers from the Bayswater State Emergency Service (SES) Bike Team were present to let interested visitors know about their special role and skills.

Another attraction that drew crowds was the SES Canine Section represented by area scent dogs Jemma and Karma, along with their handlers.

Centre Manager Su Ferreira said the day was a great success, largely due to the fantastic efforts of 30 volunteer helpers from across the DFES family, and the involvement of several members of the combat services.

“Bayswater SES volunteer Ash Smith co-ordinated the program and he was ably assisted by career and volunteer personnel from several of the operational services, the Centre volunteer team and Community Engagement staff,” Su said.

“The event was held during the Perth Heritage Days Festival and offered members of the public the opportunity to see a range of DFES equipment and operational set ups together in one place.

“Feedback told us that people appreciated being able to talk directly with some of the emergency personnel who use these items when helping to protect the community.”

Su said another important aspect of the day was the chance to visit the Centre’s All Hazards Education Gallery and get involved in interactive learning activities.

“It was also timely to promote bushfire awareness and highlight the associated publications developed by Community Engagement.

“Thanks go to all who gave their time to make it such a fantastic day.”

A cross selection of vehicles was on display including a decommissioned Scania medium pumper and other contemporary appliances from the Fire and Rescue Service, Bush Fire Service, SES and Volunteer Emergency Service which provided an incident control vehicle.

In addition the SES brought along a flood boat, and set up a Larkin frame and stretcher used for rescue operations.

The Salvation Army catering unit, which is regularly called in to provide refreshments for operational personnel during DFES incidents, was invited to provide a food and drink station which helped to raise funds for the charity.



SES volunteers outside Boulder Town Hall, one of the landmarks lit up in orange for WOW Day.

“SES Week and WOW Day are co-ordinated by DFES to publicly thank the SES for continuing to offer their time and put the needs of others before their own.”



Orange colour of the week

The contributions of more than 2,000 dedicated State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers were celebrated during SES Week with an abseil down the face of a city skyscraper and the lighting of prominent buildings in orange.

SES volunteers, DFES personnel and media representatives took part in the abseil at enex100 in Perth’s CBD to showcase the service’s vertical rescue techniques.

Occupational Therapy student Elle Murray, who was on practicum with the DFES Injury Management branch at the time, said she had never imagined having the opportunity to abseil off a city building.

“During SES Week I was privileged to experience firsthand the amazing work that the SES does for our community,” Elle said.

“As a university student I am used to having my feet firmly planted on the ground in the safety of a lecture theatre.

“Standing on the edge of a St Georges Terrace office building in strong wind is not something I would usually do.

“I had no idea that my placement at DFES would take me out of my comfort zone, 25 metres above the ground, with only a rope and harness keeping me from dropping to the pavement below.

“However, thanks to the skilled SES men and women instructing and cheering me on, I was able to take that step.

“Realising that these brave volunteers do this on a regular basis also helped me get over my initial nerves.

“It was an exhilarating experience and with District Officer Will Blackshaw by my side, I knew I was in safe hands. I enjoyed the thrill of the descent and actually wanted to do it all over again.”

The highlight of the week was Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day). It provided a great opportunity for people to visibly show their support and appreciation for the valuable role of the SES by wearing an orange coloured item.

It was also a day when SES personnel were encouraged to turn up to work in uniform and show their ‘true’ colours.

Commissioner Wayne Gregson said SES volunteers, who were always highly visible when responding to emergency incidents in their orange personal protective clothing, had a real passion for helping people.

“SES volunteers are part of the DFES family and commit many hours to training, risking their personal safety to come to the aid of people in emergencies,” Commissioner Gregson said.

“In the past year they have responded to more than 1,580 calls for help across the State and donated more than 21,000 hours to assist local communities.

“SES Week and WOW Day are co-ordinated by DFES to publicly thank the SES for continuing to offer their time and put the needs of others before their own.”



Homeowners leading by example



Bob and Maureen Sumpton have enjoyed living in their hills retreat in Bickley for more than ten years, surrounded by tall trees, native vegetation and national park.

They are very much aware of the risk of bushfire and the vital importance of being prepared, so their property was a suitable venue to launch WA's Bushfire Action Week.

Bob said he has been a Street Co-ordinator for the Bickley Bushfire Ready Group for two years.

"Since the Roleystone-Kelmscott bushfires many Hills residents have become more aware of the potential risk and the wisdom of properly preparing their homes," Bob said.

"We previously spent time in the South West and it has always been the culture of our family to talk about bushfires.

"Living on a bush block with a mixture of Jarrah, Marri and Banksia trees, we ensure the fuel load is reduced by safely burning off and clearing a wide area around our house.

"We have also installed a residual water tank with a capacity of around 80,000 litres that can be accessed for firefighting purposes in an emergency.

"Neighbours in our street and others nearby are on a telephone tree so that if a bushfire gets going, everyone can be quickly notified."

Bushfire Action Week was co-ordinated by DFES with people across the State invited to organise or take part in a range of activities.

Capability Deputy Commissioner Steve Fewster said the annual initiative provided householders with the perfect opportunity to find out what they could do to protect their families and properties from bushfire.

"A variety of activities were held during the week highlighting the need for people to take action to lessen the risk and impact of bushfire, including information forums, interactive displays, workshops, street meets and busy bees," Steve said.

"The key message promoted was bushfires can start suddenly, unexpectedly and move fast, so people living anywhere near bush need to be aware and prepare before the season starts.

"Rather than waiting to be told what to do by emergency services, householders were advised to inform and empower themselves prior to start of the bushfire season.

"A well prepared property has a much better chance of surviving a fire."

Thanksgiving service

focuses on safe operational season

The traditional peal of church bells heralded a ceremonial service that drew around 80 fire and emergency services personnel to historic St George's Cathedral in Perth.

Again the brilliance and magic of the cathedral was evident as the second annual Service of Thanksgiving was held during Sunday Choral Evensong.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis read the first lesson from the scriptures, followed by DFES Chaplain Ron Wingate who led the congregation through prayers.

"The purpose of the service was to give thanks and pray for the welfare of all emergency services personnel across the DFES family," Ron said.

"It was very timely, as these dedicated people will be dealing with yet another

bushfire, cyclone and summer boating season, and we wish them all safe passage."

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson later commented on how pleasing it was to see representatives from across the services supporting the occasion and spending time together at this special event.

SAVE THE DATE:
2014 Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Sunday 26 October.



DFES Chaplain Ron Wingate speaks from the pulpit.



Service personnel at St Georges Cathedral with Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM (far left) and Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis MLA (sixth from left).

Lifting the lid on bushfire preparation



A profile of absentee landowners will help gauge their understanding of bushfire risk and attitudes to preparing for this hazard.

It is the first part of a three stage research project and targeted the views of people who own a second home across ten Local Government areas in Western Australia.

A robust evaluation was conducted with respondents who own property secondary to their main residence in the Local Government areas of Augusta, Margaret River, Busselton, Denmark, Jerramungup, Dandaragan, Greater Geraldton, Waroona, Bunbury, Capel and Albany.

Acting Manager Community Engagement Jennifer Pidgeon said the research was the first of its kind in Australia and attracted a healthy 21 percent response rate.

“Of 4,000 questionnaires distributed, more than 850 were completed,” Jennifer said.

“People were asked about the connection they had to the community in the area of their second home, as well as their understanding of what emergency services existed in the locality.

“The homeowners were also quizzed about their view of bushfire risk in the area, the likely emergency services response, and barriers and drivers to preparing for a bushfire.”

In addition two workshops for absentee landowners were held at Bold Park in Floreat where attendees gained knowledge and skills about local bushfire risk as well as preparing their property and visitors for a bushfire incident.

They involved operational personnel, Bushfire Ready Program facilitators and external agencies such as the Botanical Gardens and Parks Authority and WA Local Government Association. A third workshop for the Lower South West Region also took place recently.

Engagement with regional real estate agents and tourism authorities is also planned to discuss their responsibility, and that of their clients, to managing local bushfire risk. This includes ensuring that visitors have instructions available that provide guidance in the event of a bushfire.

More than 12,000 people have second homes in regional South West communities and this type of property ownership dominates some regional towns.

In the Augusta-Margaret River Shire for example, it is estimated that upwards of 50 percent of homes are owned by people who do not reside permanently in them, and in Bremer Bay that figure goes up to around 80 percent.

Jennifer said this level of absentee ownership represents a significant challenge to the preparation and response of communities that face bushfire risk.

“Volunteer and career personnel, as well as Local Government staff, have raised major concerns that vacant second homes may not be prepared for a bushfire,” Jennifer said.

“They also believe that when people reside in these homes for short periods of time, the occupants are often not prepared or do not know how to act in a bushfire.”

Snapshot of research findings:

- 62 percent of absentee landowner properties are unoccupied for more than five months a year.
- 45 percent of owners do not occupy their property at all.
- Absentee landowners in target areas are likely to be:
 - older and have a higher total weekly income than the general population
 - long term owners of properties they have purchased
- Attitudes to bushfire risk among absentee landowners were generally positive.
- 80 percent of owners accept responsibility for preparing their own property.
- The majority of absentee landowners surveyed did not feel that a bushfire at their secondary property was likely and were therefore not personally engaged with the risk.
- Most absentee landowners undertake at least one bushfire risk action.
- Nearly two in five carry out between one and three actions.
- One in five absentee landowners said they take no action.

The research findings can be found on the Community Engagement intranet page or by contacting Acting Manager Community Engagement Jennifer Pidgeon on 9395 9880 or email jennifer.pidgeon@dfes.wa.gov.au



Broome puts in ‘oarsome’ dragon boat performance

A determined fire and emergency services team of 22 Broome volunteers recently raced their hearts out in the town’s annual dragon boat regatta.

The Broome Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) and Bush Fire Service combined to compete against 19 other local teams.

The colourful spectacle took place at Broome’s idyllic Town Beach, with the first task for the morning being to dot the eyes of the dragons to ‘wake them up’ and bring good luck to the participants.

Broome VFRS Secretary Kellie Bullen, captain of the ‘Fire Breathing Rubber Duckies’, said although it was essentially a fun event for charity, all members put in a mighty effort.

“We had the maximum number in our team with 18 rowing in each race, including our drummer and sweep,” Kellie said.

“The paddling was rotated so that most people got a break. It was intense, tiring stuff and there were definitely a few sore arms and muscles the next day.

“The race also involved a few capsizes, which added to the excitement.

“We went flat out in the three heats and two finals. It was looking very good for us as we ended up beating all our competition right through to the final.

“That was when the reigning champions Surf Life Saving moved past to take it out by just a dragon head and claim the overall win.

“We all enjoyed participating and were pleased with our second prize of a dinner out for team members.”



The combined Broome Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Bush Fire Service team enjoy the dragon boat regatta.

The team was supported by Acting District Officer Jeremy Crawley, Acting Area Officer Steve Longo and Area Officer John Wheelock.

Jeremy confirmed that the event had been a great experience for everyone involved.

“It was very entertaining and fiercely contested,” he said.

“An added bonus was the excellent exposure it provided for volunteer recruitment opportunities.”

Co-ordinated by the Broome Rotary Club, the regatta is their major fundraising activity for the year.

The amount donated to local and international Rotary projects this year was \$20,000.

Wet season risks highlighted



Kimberley Cyclone and Flood Tour team members at the Kalumburu Airstrip (l-r): Nigel Mules (BoM Darwin), Phil Kuhne (DCPFS), East Kimberley District Officer Graham Sears and Kimberley District Officer Matt Reimer.

A series of community meetings in northern parts of WA gave people living in the Pilbara, Kimberley and Midwest Gascoyne the opportunity to find out how they can prepare for the wet season and keep their families safe.

Country Assistant Commissioner Chris Arnol said the annual tour, hosted by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and DFES, allowed new and current residents in these areas of the State to learn about cyclone and flood preparation.

“Last season five cyclones formed off the North West coast and two crossed land, with Category 3 Severe Tropical Cyclone Rusty being the most significant,” Chris said.

“A Red Alert was in place across the Pilbara for several days with flooding and emergency evacuations taking place.

“It is vital that residents and visitors know the cyclone alerts system and what to do for each level.

“The cyclone and flood meetings are a great way for them to get this information first hand.”

The meetings included information on tropical cyclone and flood risk, community alert levels, advice on appropriate preparedness activities, evacuation for storm surge and flood, and welfare and recovery arrangements.

On tour

The Kimberley tour launch was in Broome and the Remote Indigenous Community of Kalumburu was also on the itinerary.

Kimberley District Officer Matt Reimer said that as well as addressing community members, presentations were made to Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC).

“At the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre near Derby we drew a large audience of staff members,” Matt said.

“Many were from the Eastern States and had little or no experience of cyclones or the wet season, so the information was new for them.

“Our regional DFES staff also conducted educational visits to regional industry groups like mining camps and aged care facilities.

“The main focus of presentations delivered in Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek was on flooding and isolation issues.”

BoM and DFES staff in the Pilbara invited community members from eleven east and west Pilbara towns, and five Remote Indigenous Communities in the Western Desert, to attend the presentations.

Pilbara West District Officer Peter Cameron said there was a positive response and good attendance at the meetings across the region.

“Local DFES staff and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers collaborated with several stakeholders to deliver the wide ranging program,” Peter said.

“This included explaining why taking early action, based on worst case credible scenarios, was important to building community resilience.

“Some of the best turnouts on the tour were in smaller towns like Onslow, Marble Bar and Wickham.”

Midwest Gascoyne District Officer Tim Dalwood said the tour visited the towns of Shark Bay, Carnarvon and Coral Bay.

“There was a good mix of community members and representatives from the emergency services in attendance at Shark Bay, and local SES volunteers also held an awareness day at the shopping centre,” Tim said.

“It was great to see a strong response at presentations to the LEMCs in Carnarvon and Coral Bay that ensured local plans were up to date.

“Carnarvon SES volunteers also assisted with a community display at the shopping centre that reinforced key messages.

“It was reassuring to see that many people had already prepared their homes thanks to Shire clean up days organised well before the season began.”

Other agencies involved in the presentations were Local Government, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, and Main Roads WA.

Changes to fire management in Kimberley

A new agreement that reflects the unique environment and circumstances of the Kimberley has been entered into by DFES and regional Local Governments to streamline firefighting in the remote region.

The Shires of Wyndham/East Kimberley, Halls Creek, Derby/West Kimberley and Broome recently handed over responsibility for fire response management to DFES in a three year trial.

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson was in the region to meet with shire representatives and sign a memorandum of understanding documenting the arrangement.

“We are pleased that DFES has been able to accommodate a request by Kimberley Local Governments for increased fire management support,” Commissioner Gregson said.

“It allows for DFES to have direct day to day management over local Bush Fire Brigades in the Kimberley region and appoint the four Chief Bushfire Control Officers.

“There will no longer be the need for Local Governments to transfer the management of fires during an incident as the Department will directly co-ordinate the response within Local Government and DFES areas.

“However, Local Governments will continue carrying out mitigation planning and issuing of burn permits, and they will work closely with their Shire Chief and other DFES staff.”

Kimberley Superintendent Grant Pipe explained that there were several factors that made the approach to firefighting unique in this remote North West region.

“In this part of the State, where much of the terrain is isolated and inaccessible, DFES tracks the fires by satellite and does not always go to the scene,” Grant said.

“The long travelling time to and from incidents is also a consideration, along with the fact that roads, highways and pastoral land often come under threat. This makes the consequences of fire different to what they may be in other places.

“Our regular monitoring means that we can get on the front foot and quickly notify pastoralists about fire outbreaks on their land, enabling them to take prompt remedial action using their own equipment.

“In the Kimberley it is necessary to rely heavily on the use of machinery such as dozers and graders to contain blazes, while another common firefighting technique is back burning.”

Grant added that feedback from Local Government on the first seasonal trial had been positive and the new regime was working well.

Foyer feature



A gleaming fully restored 'T' model Ford firefighting appliance circa 1925 is now on display in the entrance foyer of the Emergency Services Complex at Cockburn.

It is part of the DFES Fire and Rescue Service Vintage Fleet Collection and was donated by a private collector eight years ago.

Community Engagement Director Suellen Flint said the exhaustive

restoration project was carried out by members of the Vintage Fleet Restoration Team who are based at the WA Fire and Rescue Emergency Services Academy in Forrestfield.

"Restoring the vehicle was a painstaking process because the truck was originally delivered in pieces," Suellen said.

"Much of the meticulous work, which included restoring the motor, was done by hand to maintain authenticity.

"It is a wonderfully evocative piece of Western Australian history and a credit to each of the volunteers who contributed to the project.

"The result reflects their expertise and dedication, and the truck is now a focal point for staff and visitors to the Cockburn Complex."

Further displays are planned for the building foyer, including other combat service items held in the DFES Heritage Collection.

In Memoriam

Sincere condolences go to the family, friends and colleagues of these personnel who have passed away.

- Jeff Barrett** – Ledge Point Bush Fire Brigade
- Robert (Bob) Burgoyne Snr** – Brunswick Junction Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Brian Hamence AFSM** – Bridgetown Bush Fire Support Brigade
- Gary Haythornthwaite** – Quairading Volunteer Fire Rescue Service
- Gordon Matthews** – Moora Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Ron Morton** – Merredin Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Leslie Murphy** – Augusta Volunteer Sea Search and Rescue
- Eric Patten** – Toodyay Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Stan Tait** – Albany Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Merv Williams** – Eaton Australind Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- John Wright** – Bunbury State Emergency Service
- Ron Zatella** – DFES Manager Strategic Procurement



Regional approach to Bushfire Ready forums a winner

Bushfire Ready forums are now being held in individual regional areas to provide training, networking and planning opportunities for volunteer facilitators and street co-ordinators.

Three separate forums were held recently in the Lower South West and Midwest Gascoyne regions, as well as metropolitan Perth.

Hazard Planning and Response Assistant Commissioner Gary Gifford said the agenda for each of the forums was tailored to meet the specific needs of local volunteers and the communities they work with, and this approach was very well received.

"The recent increase in facilitators, particularly in the regional areas, has resulted in the Community Engagement team investigating alternative ways of conducting training and development," Gary said.

"The growing importance of the Bushfire Ready program has meant that we are now developing a stronger strategic approach in line with the Department's vision of building resilient Western Australian communities.

"Earlier this year consultation between facilitators, street co-ordinators and relevant operational staff from around the State provided feedback that has been used to identify key program outcomes and actions to be completed as part of a five year strategy for Bushfire Ready.

"This will ensure that the program is strengthened, facilitators are well supported and have opportunities to work together as a region, and importantly that it continues to achieve core outcomes."

Forty Bushfire Ready facilitators and street co-ordinators from the Lower South West Region participated in the Margaret River forum.

Lower South West Superintendent John Tillman provided the latest information on local bushfire risk management plans, while operational staff also gave a pre-season briefing that included details on building protection zones and key bushfire messages.

The Community Engagement team presented on key actions and support tools from the recently completed Bushfire Ready Five Year Program Strategy and demonstrated an online tour of the new Community Engagement Online Toolbox.

Facilitators also discussed the challenges and benefits of Bushfire Ready, and how it is run in their individual communities.

Addressing the Metropolitan Forum held in Cockburn, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson acknowledged the program's success.

"Bushfire Ready has grown over the years to become Western Australia's leading hazard focused community action program and is recognised nationally," Commissioner Gregson said.

"Currently there are a total of 146 trained volunteer facilitators working with local residents to prepare properties, protect families and respond effectively to bushfire.

"The effort and commitment of these volunteers across the State are a great example of how we can share the responsibility of being prepared for the threat of bushfire."

For more information on the Bushfire Ready Program contact your Regional Community Engagement Officer or Bushfire Ready Program Manager, Rachael Parkes on 9395 9302.

World Games inspire local firefighters

Local firefighters were among 7,000 competitors who descended on Belfast in Northern Ireland to contest a diversity of sports during the biennial World Police and Fire Games (WPFG).



The West Aussies returned home with a clutch of gold, silver and bronze medals which is a testament to their fitness and sporting prowess.

The medals were gained across a range of sports that included gaelic football, swimming, karate, indoor rowing, ultimate firefighter, an eleven kilometre mountain run and rugby sevens.

First time games participant Firefighter Kellie Betts said a total of 23 WA fire personnel competed in a wide range of events.

"With the weather turning it on for the games and the hospitality of the Irish in full swing, many in the team returned home with great stories, medals or both," Kellie said.

"The WPFG was a very well organised event and the Irish people were incredibly friendly and courteous, often going out of their way to assist us with directions, information or a good yarn about local history.

"The WA team was on hand to support their fellow competitors in the main feature event, the Ultimate Firefighter.

"We had a fantastic day, losing our voices cheering and yelling words of encouragement to our mates."

Kellie said she entered the eleven kilometre mountain run and dodgeball events.

"I had been in a lot of running events before, although nothing compared to the Mourne Mountains I ran over in Belfast," she said.

"The scenery was spectacular, but I just had to keep moving. It was certainly the toughest run I have ever done and worth every gruelling step to receive the silver medal in my age group, and gain bronze overall."

"Dodgeball was a fantastic game. I had never played it and most of our team were learning the rules 20 minutes before our first game which we lost. We were quick learners though and soon fought back with some flashy moves.

"We put up a good fight and even beat some of the favourites, namely the New York Fire Department, but it was not enough to get us into the finals.

"All that I experienced in Belfast has inspired me to train hard and set my sights on competing in several events at the 2015 Fairfax WPFG in the USA."

Firefighters and officers who would like to participate in future games can subsidise their attendance through the sale of the current Firefighters Calendar, while raising much needed funds for the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation. Since 2009 the calendar has raised over \$500,000.

WPFG is made up of serving and retired fire, police and prison officers from across the world. Their mission is to create community interaction and awareness, educate children on the benefits of sport, and develop camaraderie between members of the emergency services from around the globe.

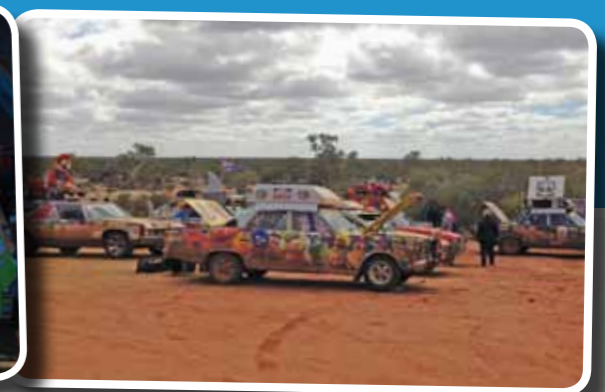
WA career firefighter placegetters:

- **Phil Badaraco**
Silver Medal Karate – Individual
Bronze Medal Karate – Team
- **Tony Bennett**
Silver Medal (age group) Ultimate Firefighter – Team
- **Kellie Betts**
Silver Medal (age group) 11km Run
Bronze (overall)
- **Scott Gamble**
Gold Medal 3200 metre Open Water Swim
Bronze Medal 50 metre Freestyle Swim
- **Andrew Lightbody**
Silver Medal Rugby Sevens
- **Frank Martinelli**
Silver Medal (age group) Ultimate Firefighter – Individual
Silver Medal (age group) Ultimate Firefighter – Team
- **Paul Paardekooper**
Silver Medal (age group) Ultimate Firefighter – Team
Bronze Medal Ultimate Firefighter – Individual
- **Mark Peterson**
Silver Medal (age group) Ultimate Firefighter – Team
- **Bec Sattin**
Gold Medal Indoor Rowing 2000 metre
- **Doug Spear**
Bronze Medal Karate – Individual
- **Nathan Wilcock**
Bronze Medal Gaelic Football Masters

Firefighter supports carnival on wheels

What do you call a convoy of more than 40 brightly decorated cars of all descriptions making their way through Western Australian country towns and generating a lot of fun, mayhem and good deeds along the way?

A carnival on wheels is how Variety WA describes it, with the latest event being the '25th Anniversary Silver Bullet Bash'.



The nation's most successful charity motoring event, the Bash raises funds for sick, disadvantaged and special needs children.

The trek was certainly a novel experience for Firefighter Paul Hockley of Welshpool D Platoon who, along with sidekick Christian Moore of St John Ambulance Red Shift, volunteered to perform the key role of route markers.

"We were responsible for travelling a couple of hours ahead of the 'bashers' to lay out the more than 2,700 kilometre route and ensure it was safe for the group to drive through," Paul said.

"Most of the vehicles were standard pre 1983 road cars with minor modifications, and we had to check that they could all get through unimpeded or find a way to alter the course to make it safer for the drivers.

"A lot of the roads were dirt or gravel, and if anyone failed to arrive at the appointed final checkpoint for the day, we were required to locate them. As it happened, there were few problems,

with only a couple of cars getting bogged.

"Although mobile communication was patchy at best in remote areas, we used HF radios and satellite phones to communicate."

The week long event began in Exmouth and included the regional towns of Onslow, Coonantha, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Kalbarri and Jurien Bay. It also took in Wooleen Station in the Murchison and ended at Kings Park in Perth.

"Although our days were long and accommodation was mainly in swags on the ground, we were very well looked after and it was great to be out in places we had never seen before," Paul said.

"The kindness of country people was incredible and often when they caught sight of our lone vehicle doing reconnaissance, they rushed up and started handing us donations on the spot.

"The joy on the kids faces was really special too when the convoy rolled into the various towns with sirens sounding, lights flashing, loud speakers blaring and often a Police escort.

"A lot of the themed vehicles were a big hit, including the Wiggles, Flintstones, Thomas the Tank Engine and even a Monsters Inc stretched limousine.

"Several schools that taught children with learning and physical disabilities were also visited along the route, and they were grateful for the book grants and iPads presented to them by Variety WA.

"What also impressed us was the camaraderie between the bashers, who contributed \$10,000 per vehicle to take part in this fantastic experience."

Paul said that he and Christian were happy to have played a role and humbled by the remarkable generosity of Western Australians and business sponsors who helped the event raise a total of more than \$1 million.

Beyond the blaze



Hundreds of firefighters battled extreme weather conditions during a destructive bushfire in the Perth Hills communities of Parkerville, Stoneville and Mount Helena. Their courageous and determined efforts on the frontline helped to save more than 400 properties in the path of the fire. Sadly, despite the best endeavours of response crews, a number of properties were lost.

It is 9am on Sunday 12 January and the mercury is close to 40 degrees, and still rising.

Strong easterly winds are swirling and firefighters are bracing themselves for what may come. It is not long before their concerns are realised.

At 11am reports were received of an unpredictable and fast moving bushfire near Granite Road in Parkerville.

The area was quickly blanketed in smoke and roads were closed as fire crews, supported by the aerial fleet, fought the blaze which was fanned by strong winds and scorching heat.

As the fire increased in intensity, residents on the ground received telephone warning messages and made the critical decision to either relocate or remain at home and defend their property.

The bushfire had spread across parts of Parkerville and Stoneville, and along Riley Road to Alice Road in Mount Helena by 4pm. Flames were leaping up to 20 metres in the air and spot fires were starting more than three kilometres ahead of the fire.

All metropolitan aerial resources were committed to the suppression effort including four Perth based Helitacs, the Aircrane and two fixed wing water bombers. Two Helitacs were also brought in from Busselton to assist.

In combination they released nearly 1.6 million litres of water, making it the largest water drop at a single incident in Western Australian firefighting history.

State perspective

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson said crews worked in extremely tough conditions to protect lives, homes and the environment across the State during what was a very challenging weekend.

“There were more than 200 reported fires that burnt across the State on the weekend of 11-12 January with no less than five major fires in the Perth metropolitan area, a number of blazes in regional WA and a structural fire in Canning Vale,” Commissioner Gregson said.

“A co-operative multi-agency effort was essential to overcome such difficult conditions across multiple locations.

“In the face of forecast weather conditions, total fire bans were put in place across the State and preparations were centred on the highest risk areas including the Pilbara, the Perth Hills and the South West.

“DFES also proactively told the community to act decisively and prepare for the possibility of bushfire.”

Commissioner Gregson thanked everybody for their comprehensive response in such trying circumstances, and levels of complexity and magnitude.

“The response to these bushfires and incidents across the State was a remarkable logistical effort,” he said.

“Numerous state preparedness teleconferences were held with Local Governments to ensure everyone was ready.

“We stood up four additional crews and developed a list of career staff and volunteers who were on standby, ready to assist at a moment’s notice.

“I am proud of the dedication of the fire and emergency services community who rallied together to operate as a formidable team to defend and protect Western Australian communities over this weekend of extreme weather.

“I am also particularly appreciative of the skills, experience and knowledge these personnel bring to the task.”

Commissioner Gregson also added that the multi-agency response was well co-ordinated, with effective command and control of resources.

“A number of combat and support agencies worked tirelessly to assist the community by providing essential services including health, welfare and crisis support, policing, traffic management, community safety and protection, as well as fire suppression services.”

Stoneville-Parkerville response

The Stoneville-Parkerville bushfire required an unprecedented response which involved, at the height of the incident, 385 firefighters including taskforces from Bunbury and Northam, 100 appliances and 18 aerial suppression appliances.

Firefighters, volunteers and pilots alike operated in difficult conditions, poor visibility and across multiple locations.

Critical decisions were made regarding resourcing and planning which led to hundreds of homes being saved as a result of firefighters’ actions.

Despite the combined preparations taken by DFES and the community in advance of the weekend, including having appliances and incident management teams on standby, the bushfire caused widespread devastation in the Hills area which was further compounded by searing heat.

Incident Controller North East Superintendent Craig Waters said fire suppression crews faced several constraints on the day of the fire.

“The extreme weather conditions, combined with steep, undulating terrain and limited access in some areas, made firefighting operations challenging,” Craig said.

“Due to risks posed by ongoing spot fires ahead of the main fire, the objectives established by the Incident Management Team included keeping the community informed, protecting life and property, and establishing containment lines ahead of the fire.

“The fire ground comprised three divisions with a total of 14 multi-agency sectors. One division was strategically positioned ahead of the main fire to undertake rural urban interface firefighting.

“Over ensuing days firefighters continued to strengthen containment lines and burn out pockets of dangerous unburnt ground.”

The fire was declared contained and under control on the morning of Tuesday 14 January. The final count on property loss was 57 homes.



Returning home

After a significant bushfire it can be some days before people are allowed to return home due to hazardous conditions on the fireground.

In a first for DFES, people were allowed restricted access and issued with permits to return and inspect their homes. Speed limit restrictions were in place and travel was limited to essential journeys only.

Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey said this arrangement worked really well, with the department issuing more than 600 permits.

“We wanted to allow people to look at their homes and have some private time to come to terms with what had just happened.”

Lloyd explained that in emergency incidents DFES designates three zones – hot, warm and cold.

“The hot zone is the area impacted by the fire, while the warm zone is immediately outside the hot zone, but within the area of the vehicle control points or road closures. The cold zone is anything outside the warm zone,” Lloyd said.

“Residents in the warm zone were able to access their properties upon presentation of personal identification and proof of residency.

“They were then able to remain at home so they could start the process of cleaning up.

“At the same time DFES personnel and volunteers were working hard to make the area accessible, and utilities were working to restore power infrastructure, telephone lines and water.

“Those residents who had lost their homes and had not been back to view them were escorted into the hot zone area. DFES operational personnel accompanied them onto the fire ground to provide protection, advice and support.

“We are always looking at innovative ways to better serve the community and this initiative was a good example of how that can be achieved.

“We will learn from it to ensure we continue to provide the best possible service for the community.”

DFES personnel and volunteers worked around the clock to allow people to return home as soon as possible, while utilities were working to restore power infrastructure and other services such as telephone lines and water.

Urban Search and Rescue personnel also provided rapid damage assessment and chainsaw teams, inspecting all structures and clearing away debris.

Busy weekend

On 11-12 January communities across the State faced bushfires that posed a significant threat to lives, property, critical infrastructure and the environment.

Seventy career Fire and Rescue Service and volunteer Bush Fire Service firefighters were kept busy at a fire in bushland near the University of Western Australia research facility in suburban Jolimont on Saturday 11 January.

On the same day more than 100 Bush Fire Service and DPaW firefighters responded to a blaze that broke out near the Pinjarra-Williams Road south of Boddington.

There was also a major fire in Baldvis that threatened homes on Sunday.

It was fought by 80 career and volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, Bush Fire Service and DPaW firefighters.

State donates \$1m to Parkerville fire appeal

The Lord Mayor’s Distress Relief Fund has been activated to raise donations to support people impacted by the fire that burnt parts of the Perth Hills in early January.

This official state emergency fund provides relief for personal hardship and distress arising from natural disasters occurring within Western Australia.

Visiting the fire affected area with the Acting Premier Kim Hames, Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis said the State Government will donate \$1million to the fund.

“These fires have caused terrible destruction and I want to offer my sincere sympathy, and the State Government’s condolences, to people who have lost their homes and possessions,” Mr Francis said.

The Acting Premier thanked DFES, WA Police, St John Ambulance, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, the Shire of Mundaring and other agencies involved, for their efforts in fighting the fire and keeping people safe.

“Given the extreme weather conditions and intensity of the fire, fire crews did a remarkable job to save the homes they did,” he said.

Donations to the Parkerville Fire Appeal can be made at any BankWest branch, in person at the Customer Service counter at Council House in Perth, by calling 08 9461 3886 or by mail to LMDRF, Perth Hills Fire Appeal, c/- City of Perth, GPO Box C120 Perth WA 6839.



Spring rains set scene for bushfire season

The first month of spring saw the rains come and go, with only ten days when the sky did not open up.

More than 144 millimetres fell in the Perth metropolitan area, making it the wettest September in 40 years. Above average rainfall was also recorded across the rest of the State.

Hazard Planning and Response Assistant Commissioner Gary Gifford said two significant cold fronts brought thunderstorms, gusty winds and heavy rainfall between 21–23 September.

“There was a return to winter weather across the metropolitan area as well as southern and central parts of the State,” Gary said.

“The State Emergency Service (SES) answered almost 170 calls for help, with 51 of these coming from Perth suburbs. Gosnells and Maddington were the worst hit with more than 30 calls for help.

“More than 100 SES volunteers attended to major structural damage, roof damage and water inundation.”

SES volunteers were supported by career Fire and Rescue Service and volunteer Bush Fire Service firefighters as well as personnel from Local Government, WA Police and Western Power.

The season soon shifted from wet to warm, with early indications that Western Australia could be facing a long and challenging bushfire season.

“The late rainfall, followed closely by a period of hot weather, led to higher grass growth and an increase in fuel loads across the State,” Gary said.

“It was not long before the impact of the spring rainfall was proving to be a concern for the looming southern bushfire season.

“As the leading fire agency, we were well aware that these conditions meant more vegetation was likely to burn if a bushfire started, so we needed to make sure everyone in Western Australia was prepared to the highest degree.”



Lucky rescue for stranded fishermen



© WATC

Four fishermen who struck trouble off a remote part of the Western Australian coast were lucky to be plucked to safety by the RAC Rescue helicopter following a multi-agency response.

The men were fishing when a cray boat broke loose from its anchor in heavy seas and hit Dirk Hartog Island off Shark Bay, 850 kilometres north of Perth.

Shark Bay Volunteer Marine Rescue was dispatched to the emergency by WA Police.

Group President Greg Ridgeley said rescuers had been working in some of the most treacherous conditions imaginable.

“The conditions out there were horrific,” Greg said.

“Sea conditions prevented the rescue boat from getting close, or allowing the men to swim out and clamber on board.”

Midwest Gascoyne District Officer Tim Dalwood also described the weather as horrendous with extremely large swells with seas on top.

“To effect the rescue three Shark Bay SES volunteers and two Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) officers were flown to the island landing strip,” Tim said.

“They were carrying first aid equipment, food and water, and once on the ground the party drove over rough terrain along sand tracks in a DPaW vehicle.

“When it became impossible to continue by road, the SES volunteers then trekked about six kilometres on foot to reach the stranded fishermen.”

Tim said that after providing them with sustenance and aid, the rescuers carried an injured casualty by stretcher back along the beach to the RAC Rescue landing area.

It was then that the RAC Rescue flight crew piloted by Michael Perren stepped in to play their part.

“It was a marathon long haul flight and in order to rescue the men safely we had to land on an adjacent beach,” Mick said.

“The group included an elderly gentleman who had suffered a spinal injury, so we delivered three of the men to safe ground at Shark Bay and transported the casualty to Geraldton

where he could receive medical treatment.”

Mick added that the round trip totalled 1,500 kilometres and required four refuelling stops.

“Since its inception RAC Rescue has responded to a diverse range of significant emergencies throughout WA,” he said.

“We normally have an operating range of between 200 and 250 kilometres from Perth, and this was one of the furthest rescue missions to date.

“Due to flight time limits, the crew spent the night in Geraldton before returning to Perth.”

“Since inception RAC Rescue has responded to a diverse range of significant emergencies throughout WA.”



© The West Australian

Christine hits on last day of year

Shortly before the New Year, communities in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Midwest Gascoyne were on high alert as severe Tropical Cyclone (TC) Christine brought strong winds, heavy rain and dangerous storm tides.

Swathes of the Pilbara region from Pardoo to Mardie, and as far inland as Paraburdoo, were on Red Alert as Christine tracked across the State.

The cyclone formed north of Broome before making a beeline for Whim Creek.

TC Christine crossed the coast between Karratha and Port Hedland as a Category 3 system in the early hours of 31 December.

The system was remarkable for its large size and maintained its severity further inland than most tropical cyclones. It was not downgraded to below cyclone strength until 50 kilometres from Wiluna.

Significant rainfall was recorded near the cyclone path. The heaviest falls were at Abydos North, southeast of Port Hedland, where 168 millimetres fell in 24 hours.

Other notable falls were 134 millimetres at Roebourne airport, 123 millimetres at Port Hedland and 113 millimetres at Karratha.

DFES and the SES respond

DFES established incident management teams to help people affected by the cyclone and State Emergency Service (SES) personnel were on standby in the days leading up to TC Christine crossing the coast.

Thirty SES volunteers responded to more than 70 calls for help from Wickham, Roebourne and Karratha. They also assisted Western Power by giving them the go ahead to start inspecting their network as Christine moved inland.

The worst of the damage occurred in Wickham, east of Karratha, where the system caused roofs to be torn off and trees uprooted, including one that fell onto a house trapping a family inside.

Fire Safety Officer and onsite Media Liaison Officer Rik Mills said the roof was ripped off a house in Wickham as the owners and their two children hid inside fearing the worst.

“The family took cover under a mattress in the bathroom as the roof disintegrated,” Rik said.

“They ended up being uninjured and were very brave.”

Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service firefighters from Wickham and Port Hedland assisted with the cleanup, while the Urban Search and Rescue Taskforce from Perth conducted damage assessment in the region.

Emergency Management and Hazard Planning Superintendent Merv Austic said despite the damage, the town got off lightly.

“Christine crossed the coast about midnight and even though there were strong winds, damage was minimal,” he said.

DFES worked closely with other agencies, in a collaborative and co-ordinated response to ensure the impact on the community was minimal.



Rare waterspout impacts building site

A North Coogee construction site was damaged when a waterspout with wind speeds estimated at close to 100 kilometres per hour moved across it.

The relatively rare weather event saw scaffolding collapse and several workers on the site were injured after falling a few metres.

Two crews from Fremantle Fire and Rescue Service responded to the incident.

Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) Senior Forecaster Neil Bennett confirmed that weather conditions on the coast could have created the waterspout.

He indicated that the waterspout vortex width was approximately 20 metres as it moved over the site.

"Waterspouts are very localised events and we do see them off the coast, however they are difficult to predict and sometimes cannot be seen on the radar," Neil said.

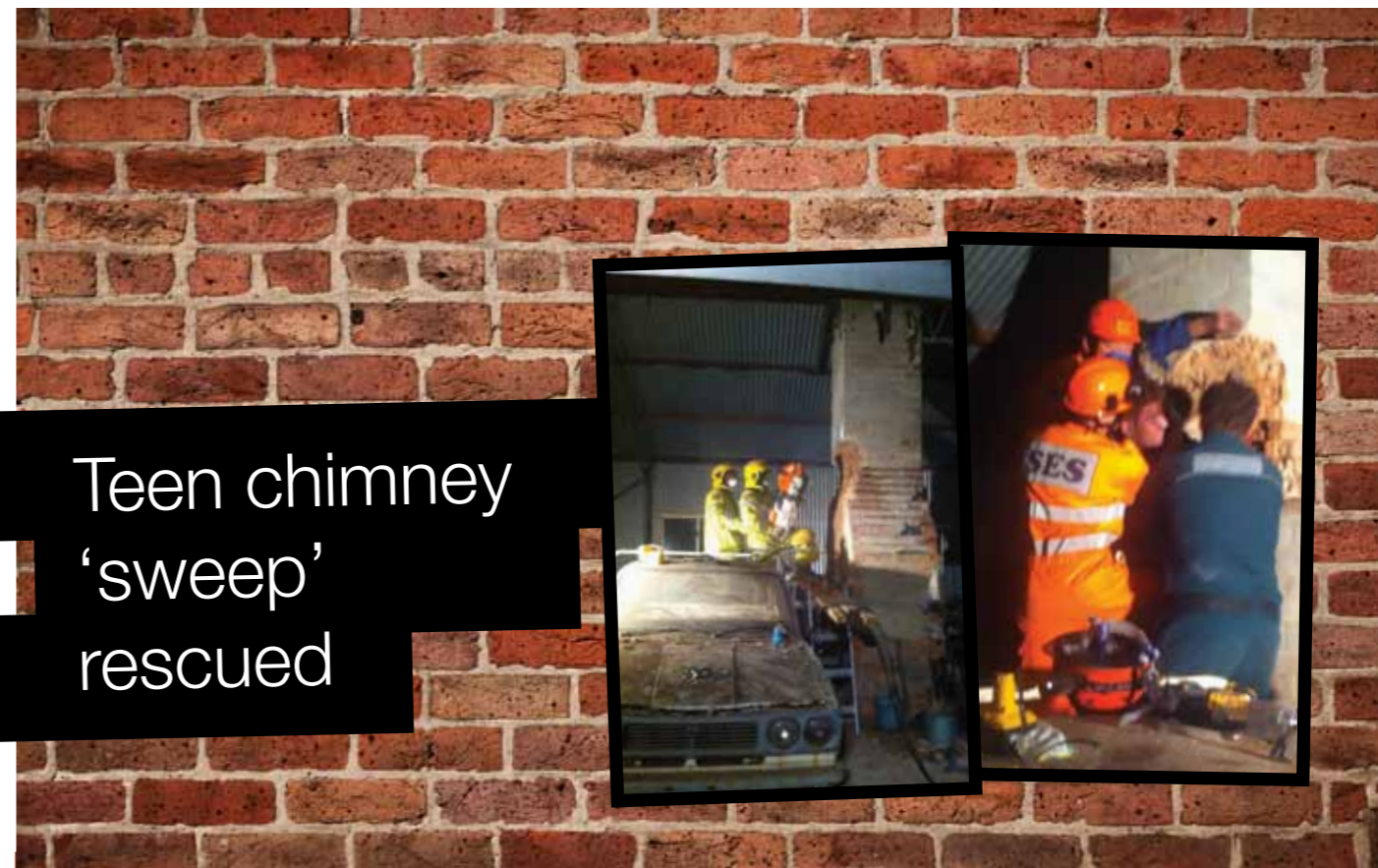
Waterspouts can be dangerous for boaters and shoreline locations but are no threat further inland as they collapse soon after moving onshore.

Cockburn Sound District Officer Tony Nicholas said the firefighters undertook an immediate assessment.

"We were called to a structural collapse of scaffolding due to swirling wind conditions, possibly a mini tornado," Tony said.

"Although there was widespread damage to formwork, a close inspection revealed that no shoring was required.

"The site was then left in the hands of Worksafe and the construction managers."



Teen chimney 'sweep' rescued

Shortly before Christmas a young man was rescued after he became stuck while shimmying down the double brick chimney of a large shed in Gracetown.

South West firefighters and local State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers were called to the scene. After five hours of cutting the chimney away brick by brick, the man was freed unharmed.

Media Liaison Officer Russel Jones said the teenager had no keys and attempted to gain entry by climbing down the chimney.

"The man and his friends were staying on the rural bush block and without a key to unlock the premises, he decided to descend down the chimney," Russel said.

"Very quickly, however, he discovered there was no way out of the confined space after coming to rest about seven metres down."

Around 8pm a call for help went out from his friends and the first responders were Margaret River Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

(VFRS), and Augusta Margaret River SES, followed by a career crew from Bunbury Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

St John Ambulance from Margaret River also attended the scene and the local shire provided concrete cutting equipment.

Margaret River VFRS Captain Jeff Bushby said he had never been involved in an incident like this in his 13 years of volunteer firefighting.

"This was a first for me, but it was a matter of quickly sizing up the situation and getting to work," Jeff said.

"On the plus side it was clear that the young man was uninjured and able to communicate.

"He was in a sitting position on a smoke ledge, in the narrow chamber, above the foot of the sealed off chimney.

"We were able to pass him a helmet, goggles, respirator, blankets, fluids and food. He also remained calm throughout the protracted incident."

Jeff said crews had good access from the back of the chimney which was estimated to be about 30 years old.

"A few of our volunteers with building experience determined it to be structurally sound and for the first 90 minutes we took it in turns to chip away at the bricks using hand tools," he said.

"Concrete cutting equipment was then made available from the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and later on Bunbury FRS provided a quick cut saw and jack hammer which was put to good use.

"It was a slow and laborious process, but we were very careful and after more than five hours our combined effort and patience was rewarded.

"We eased the teenager out of the opening sideways and he emerged covered in brick dust and soot, but unhurt and relieved to be free."

Jeff said the advice provided at the scene by Leeuwin Acting Area Officer Garth Lawrence, who has urban search and rescue experience, also proved very helpful.

"Everyone involved worked well together and the incident was a great example of inter-agency co-operation," he said.

2014 Western Australian Fire and Emergency Services Conference



Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre
Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 October 2014



The WA Team completes the rescue from height stand and at right the collapsed building stand.



Kimberley SES volunteers sharpen skills in national contest



National Disaster Rescue Competition WA Team Manager District Officer Matt Reimer with (l-r) front: Andrew Klepacki, Team Leader Laurie Hicks, Craig Starceвич, reserve Tracey Chamberlain and back: Jeremy Van Schie, Matt Puncher and Rob Philips.

A team of State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers from the Kimberley recently pitted their skill, knowledge and teamwork against representatives from every Australian State and Territory at the 2013 National Disaster Rescue Competition.

The biannual event was held at Fiskville in Victoria, with each contest simulating a different SES related emergency.

These included rescues conducted in a rubble pile and collapsed building, as well as a plane and train crash and sandbagging challenge.

Central West District Officer Matt Reimer said the Kimberley volunteers were pleased to represent the State.

“It was a great way of fostering teamwork and promoting solidarity among this group of local volunteers.”

“This was a unique opportunity for SES personnel from around

Australia to get together and learn from each other,” Matt said.

“Our team began training in various forms of general rescue

in the months leading up to the competition, and their capability and skills base increased over time.

“It was a great way of fostering teamwork and promoting solidarity among this group of local volunteers.”

Matt added that the organisers hailed the national competition a great success, with a positive spirit of co-operation and friendly rivalry evident between the teams.

“The judges made mention of the high calibre of the competition generally and referred to some innovative methods used by our team to complete several of the stands,” he said.



Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM accepts JAFFA donation from General Manager Julian Burton Burns Trust Deborah Bates, WA Sales Manager Schneider – Shannon Wong and Julian Burton.



Grant to provide new JAFFA resource

The awarding of a \$15,000 community grant from the Julian Burton Burns Trust has secured production of a DVD that will help to reduce the incidence of juvenile fire lighting and burn injuries in young people.

Acting Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness (JAFFA) Co-ordinator Rebecca Moran said the provision of funding to develop this new educational resource for use by the JAFFA program was very welcome.

“A graphic representation of the consequences of fire lighting will be of great benefit in educating the younger demographic about fire safety,” Rebecca said.

“Arson accounts for almost half of all known causes of bushfires in Australia and juveniles are believed to be responsible for approximately one in five deliberate ignitions, as well as for lighting a significant proportion of structure fires.

“Many young people do not understand the dangers of experimenting with fire. The Bi-National Burns Registry based at Monash University has identified that the highest risk of burn injury for young males is in the area of flame burns which are exacerbated by the addition of accelerants like petrol.”

Rebecca said the DVD focused on a variety of key themes and included what to do if caught in a burning house.

“JAFFA Support Officers will use the DVD when delivering the program to young people aged six to sixteen years and their families. It will also be included in the family information kit,” she said.

“As well as helping to mitigate the effects of juvenile fire lighting, the DVD also aims to enhance knowledge of appropriate first aid, and decrease damage or loss of property.”

The grant application was submitted jointly by DFES and Royal Perth Hospital Adult Burns Unit, with contributing stakeholders being the WA Police Arson Squad, Fiona Wood Foundation, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children Burns Unit and Department of Corrective Services – Youth Justice.



Photo courtesy of Matt Hayes.

Biggest aerial firefighting fleet takes to the sky

The State's aerial firefighting capacity has been significantly enhanced for the 2013/14 bushfire season, with more water able to be dropped than ever before.

This increase in capability will greatly assist crews when protecting lives and properties on the frontline.

In another welcome move, the Erickson Sikorsky 64E Airplane has become a permanent addition to Western Australia's fire suppression arsenal.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis welcomed the \$12 million support for firefighters on the ground.

"The Airplane is part of a new look fleet that now has a total water bombing capacity of 48,600 litres, making it more effective than previous years," Mr Francis said.

"The investment in the aerial firefighting fleet reinforces the Government's commitment to bushfire preparedness.

"More than 3,800 bushfires occurred across the State last year. A total of 2,500 drops were made and more than 250 properties protected by the Helitacs."

The aerial firefighting fleet, which is jointly managed by DFES and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW), comprises 22 helicopters and fixed wing fire bombers.

This includes the Erickson Airplane, six Bell 214B Helitacs and eight fixed wing fire bombers, as well as six Air Attack Supervisor aircraft and one Air Intelligence helicopter. These aircraft are variously located at bases in Jandakot, Bunbury, Busselton, Manjimup and Albany.

Director Aviation Services Derek Parks said the State Government, in partnership with the Federal Government, funds the air fleet through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre.

2012/13 Snapshot

- The rotary fleet was activated 188 times, flew more than 442 hours and dropped nearly 4.3 million litres of water and foam.
- More than 3,800 bushfires occurred across the State last year. A total of 2,500 drops were made and more than 250 properties protected by the Helitacs.
- In addition, the fixed wing water bombers completed 2,200 missions including water drops and fire detection activities.

"This is a great example of the national co-operative approach taken in sharing specialised resources and addressing the nation's bushfire risk," Derek said.

"The aerial fleet not only plays an important role by supporting firefighters on the ground, but it also provides vital intelligence for incident management teams."

The joint DFES and DPaW State Operations Air Desk, a dedicated unit at the DFES Emergency Services Complex, has also been enhanced to help dispatch and co-ordinate aerial fire suppression.

New home serves SES volunteer capabilities

Belmont Victoria Park State Emergency Service (SES) and the SES Mounted Section have celebrated the official opening of their new purpose built \$1.8 million base in Kewdale.

The unique facility has also been designed to function as a Local Emergency Operations Centre to enable SES volunteers to co-ordinate incidents and respond faster to requests for assistance.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis said the resource will better support the SES to help the community recover from emergencies, as well as enhance training opportunities for volunteers.

"The new facility gives volunteers the space and resources to maintain their skills, and also store valuable and lifesaving equipment in their own dedicated headquarters," Mr Francis said.

"Volunteers from the SES Mounted Section, which provide specialised skills on horseback during search and rescues, now have a home where they can meet, train and assist in providing communications support to other emergency services during major incidents.

"Having well trained and experienced SES volunteers with these capabilities enhances the State's ability to respond to the variety of emergency situations we face.

"The Belmont Victoria Park SES unit has already enjoyed an increase in membership enquiries since the move."

At the opening, Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey praised both the SES

Mounted Section and the Belmont Victoria Park SES unit as valuable assets for the local community and the State as a whole.

"The new Kewdale facility provides a base for two specialist SES services whose talented volunteers demonstrate the great diversity of the SES in Western Australia," Lloyd said.

"The Mounted Section has a unique capability to respond in challenging environments.

"The benefits of searching on horseback include faster travel, as well as the ability to cover more ground and carry on for longer periods of time.

"The Belmont Victoria Park SES unit is a multiskilled resource. Members respond to a range of incidents and also volunteer their expertise to St John Ambulance as a water ambulance during the City of Perth Australia Day Skyworks.

"The SES continues to be a strong and skilled service that carries out an immensely valuable role assisting people in their time of need."

The new headquarters was built with support from the City of Belmont and DFES, as well as the community through the Local Government Grants Scheme which is funded through the Emergency Services Levy.



Top: Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey AFSM, Town of Victoria Park Director Business Life Program Nathan Cain, Member for Belmont Glenys Godfrey, Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis, retiring Belmont Victoria Park SES Local Manager Peter Hayward, City of Belmont Mayor Phil Marks, current Belmont Victoria Park SES Local Manager Craig Romero and Mounted Section Local Manager Stuart Jones.

Middle: Craig Romero, Stuart Jones, Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis MLA and SES Mounted Section Deputy Manager Natalie Beard on Scarlett.

Lower: Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey AFSM with SES Mounted Section Deputy Manager Natalie Beard.



Mental management of emergencies critical

The annual Operations Forum provided an informative look at the neuroscience of high stress, high consequence decision making and the processes for developing and maintaining situational awareness.

It was presented by retired American Fire Chief Dr Richard Gasaway, founder of Situational Awareness Matters, USA.

Dr Gasaway pointed out that despite state of the art equipment, sound strategy and tactics, well developed Standing Operating Procedures and command training centres, incident scene casualties were still being experienced in the United States.

“The solution to improving your safety lies with improving your situational awareness and decision making, and learning how to see the bad things coming in time to change the outcome,” Dr Gasaway said.

“It is important to be aware of how the brain uses pattern matching, mental modelling and information chunking to make high stress decisions.

“The leading contributing factors to near miss events are not strategy, tactics, equipment, procedures or training.

“Rather, they are flawed situational awareness, poor decision making and human error.”

South Coastal District Officer Will Blackshaw said he found it valuable to learn about developing and maintaining levels of situational awareness, and the process for making decisions in high stress, dynamic, rapidly changing environments.

“It was fascinating to see the theories and concepts of neuroscience applied to an emergency service model,” Will said.



Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey and Dr Richard Gasaway.

“I thought it was a brilliant, thought provoking presentation from an expert with industry knowledge.

“The content was relevant and presented in a way that challenged us to think differently.

“It also reinforced existing knowledge, and it was good to see that we had already implemented many of Dr Gasaway’s recommended actions prior to the conference.”

Belmont ‘bunker’ gets new lease of life

The former State Emergency Services bunker in Belmont has a new purpose these days, having recently been modified to become a dedicated Fire and Emergency Services Academy Simulation Centre (SIMCEN).

Professional Development Assistant Commissioner Darren Klemm said the SIMCEN Emergency Management Incident Simulation capability would be statewide and apply to all hazards.

“We aim to deliver the best possible simulation learning and assessment outcomes for all participants undertaking both accredited and non-accredited training,” Darren said.

“The SIMCEN is an integral part of the C3IS project and aims to ensure that DFES command, control, co-ordination, capacity and supporting information systems are at the highest standard.

“Improved capacity to manage major incidents at all levels will be enhanced through dedicated training, assessment and evaluation of personnel and teams in a simulated environment.

“It is essential that there are a sufficient number of trained and experienced members of staff and volunteers to support successful response operations.

“The new facility will form the basis of DFES being recognised as a centre of excellence for world class emergency management.

“It will also help to ensure the level of preparedness, response and recovery expected by the Western Australian community.”

The SIMCEN offers a realistic, scenario driven incident management and co-ordination environment, and operates within a discussion and operations based training and exercising framework.

It combines quality training methodologies, adult learning processes, emergency management experience and computer supported simulation.

The SIMCEN began training and exercising personnel in October 2013, ahead of the 2013/14 bushfire and cyclone seasons.

All Terrain Utilities a safer capability

All Terrain Utilities (ATUs) will soon replace the former quad bikes used by brigades, groups and units. This is in line with review recommendations and legal advice obtained by DFES following safety concerns related to use of quad bikes.



ATU Project Manager Implementation Glenn Hall said the ATUs offered considerable benefits and were regarded as a safer substitute vehicle.

“The utilities are a two person operation and have rollover protection, seatbelts and a longer, wider wheelbase which in effect ‘engineers out’ many of the issues associated with quad bikes,” Glenn said.

“Service requirements and specifications for tender purposes were developed by the project team. A group of SES volunteers from metropolitan and country regions then conducted field trials of the various vehicles submitted for testing.

“The ATUs were put through their paces at two sites, one being a beach/sand dune environment and the other bush/gravel.

“All operators were asked to document their evaluation of the John Deere XUV 825i ATU – Petrol, and Gator XUV 855d – Diesel.

“Team members provided excellent feedback, and the results were very close.

“The recommendation finally went to the petrol powered model which was selected for overall performance capability.”

Following evaluation of the results, an order valued at approximately \$440,000 was placed with the chosen supplier for eleven new ATUs and their associated transport trailers.

These have now been manufactured and will be ready for roll out when licensing and registration details have been finalised.

The necessary Training Resource Kit is nearing completion and training will be staged to coincide with delivery of the ATUs to selected units.

Glenn expressed appreciation to everyone involved in the ATU evaluation and selection process.

“I would like to highlight the involvement of the volunteers, Volunteer Associations and DFES staff who contributed to both the risk assessments and evaluations,” he said.

“Their efforts have helped to ensure that the best capability was secured.”



ATU evaluation team members test vehicles in the field (l-r): Ken Dewhirst (Wanneroo Joondalup SES), Bradley Western (Port Hedland SES), Greenline Perth Branch Manager Josh Schreurs, Jim MacLean (Northshore SES), Bradley Skipworth (Wanneroo Joondalup SES), Wayne Credaro (Augusta Margaret River SES), DFES Senior Procurement Officer Randy Stone, ATU Project Manager Implementation District Officer Glenn Hall, William Norris (Mandurah SES), SES Volunteers Association of WA President David Price and (kneeling) Ant Rees – (Rockingham Kwinana SES).



New metropolitan brigade formed

Western Australia now has a new resource with the formal establishment of the Metropolitan Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) brigade.

A combined working party of members from the former Guildford and Bassendean VFRS brigades and Capability Command collaborated to discuss options and develop the concept for the brigade.

Metropolitan Assistant Commissioner Brad Stringer said the decision to close both volunteer fire stations was not made lightly.

"The primary reason was that the affected brigades have not had designated response areas for some time, and accordingly their valuable skills and knowledge were not being utilised effectively," Brad said.

"The new metropolitan brigade has multi-hazard responsibilities including bushfire, structure fire and logistics.

"Initially its key operational role is deployment as a taskforce for campaign emergencies or where local resources require assistance.

"This allows for members to be drawn from a larger geographical area without affecting performance. Additional roles will be developed over time."

Located at the WA Fire and Emergency Services Academy in Forrestfield, the brigade is managed by the District Officer Applied Training, with activations generated by the Metropolitan Operations Centre.

As well as active members who have transferred from other brigades, there are approximately 15 support members, with the majority being competition members for the WA Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services Association Championships. In addition there are 15 Junior and Sub Junior members.

Farewell to Guildford and Bassendean VFRS

The highly valued contribution of the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service in Guildford and Bassendean was acknowledged as they closed the

doors of their respective fire stations for the last time.

Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey said that in the early days of both brigades, fighting fires involved basic equipment, less than practical protective clothing and a bell as the only means of summoning crews.

"Things of course changed and evolved over the years, but one attribute that has remained steadfast is the unquestionable commitment of VFRS brigades across the State to turn out, at any time of day or night, to wherever required and without hesitation, to serve and protect their local communities," Lloyd said.

"Like many other WA fire brigades, both Guildford and Bassendean firefighters have always put the safety of the community first, and we salute and sincerely thank them for this.

"It is pleasing that a number of these volunteers have now become foundation members of the new metropolitan brigade. In doing so they have started a fresh new chapter for the VFRS in Western Australia."



Extreme weather focus of conference

More than 600 fire and emergency services volunteers from around the State converged in Perth for the third annual Western Australian Fire and Emergency Services Conference.

A key focus of the event was how emergency services can better prepare and respond to future extreme weather events.

The conference explored the theme *A collaborative future: the changing face of emergency services*. It looked at the importance of working together to tackle the shared challenges that emergency services face now and into the future, particularly the changing needs of the community and environment.

In his opening address, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson said DFES had partnered with Volunteer Associations to plan a dynamic two days that offered a unique opportunity for delegates to increase their knowledge and interact with their fellow fire and emergency services personnel.

"This approach has worked extremely well, ensuring that key matters relevant to the concerns of volunteers are on the agenda," Commissioner Gregson said.

"Volunteers are vital to emergency services in WA and play a fundamental role in protecting local communities.

"We are all striving to build safer and more resilient communities, and the annual conference allows us to regularly provide our people with the necessary information and tools to prepare and respond to emergencies.

"It is through this continual collaboration that we not only accomplish the best outcomes for volunteers, but also for the wider communities they serve."

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Tim Flannery, former Chief Climate Commissioner and Australian of the Year, who emphasised challenging and complex climate change issues, and what this means for fire and emergency services.

Commissioner Gregson said the conference had been a great success and it was evident that a proud culture of excellence existed in the emergency services volunteer community.

"Once again I was impressed with the calibre of volunteers who attended and those who were nominated for awards," he said.

"Their dedication and commitment to supporting emergency services in Western Australia is admirable."

Two live practical demonstrations showcased the latest operational techniques and equipment for a car versus house incident and a vertical rescue.

More than 50 workshop and panel sessions also provided updates on new emergency services initiatives and projects.

On the social side, four award ceremonies highlighted the achievements of outstanding volunteers from each of the services.

Delegates joined Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis and Commissioner Gregson as they jointly closed the conference and celebrated the conclusion of an outstanding event.

Delegate Feedback:

"The conference program and networking opportunities were great."

"A highlight was the keynote address by Professor Tim Flannery about preparing for more extreme weather in the future. He was very engaging and I hope he can return for another WAFES conference."

"The conference scored well on several fronts and increased my knowledge of other services. I would recommend it to others."

"I particularly enjoyed Brad Santos's presentation from the Bureau of Meteorology. The conference certainly updated my training and skills."





Firefighter graduates boost WA's frontline

Western Australia's frontline fire service has been boosted, with 28 new firefighters joining the ranks.

Recruits from Firefighter Training School No.74 recently graduated from the WA Fire and Emergency Services Academy.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis said the 28 graduates had faced a competitive recruitment process and rigorous training to become fully fledged firefighters.

"Firefighters are on the frontline protecting the community in dangerous conditions and the choice they have made to serve the people of Western Australia is commendable," Mr Francis said.

"These graduates are embarking on their career at the start of a challenging bushfire season and they need all the community support they can get.

"They are a really talented bunch and it goes without saying that they have set themselves on a life changing journey."

The group includes mechanics, metallurgists, physiotherapists and landscapers.

Seven graduates have been posted to regional career fire stations including Bunbury, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, with the remainder based in the Perth metropolitan area.

School No.74 also saw three graduates who became the next generation of firefighters in their families.

Russ Meaden, a firefighter of 23 years, said he wanted his daughter Jamie to follow in his footsteps and enjoy her new career.

"It's a great job and I'll leave her to find her own feet," he said.

Fellow graduates Kyle Ajduk and Jake Wilson were also joined by their proud fathers and families.

For Kyle, the day was made even more special because he was joined by his dad Anthony who retired at the ceremony after 32 years of service and his grandfather Des Moore who was a firefighter for 34 years.

"I'm very proud of what Kyle has done, he has wanted to do this since he was eight years old," Anthony Ajduk said.

Below is the address given by newly graduated firefighter Mathew Hartwich on behalf of the school.

Sixteen weeks – what can happen in 16 weeks?

Well... Australia can go through three Prime Ministers, Perth can have over 450 millimetres of rain (each drop of which we all felt), an entire season of Big Brother can come and go, and a group of trainee firefighters can randomly combine in Perth to embark on a life changing rollercoaster ride.

So what have we learnt in the past 16 weeks?

Well, we now know what WATER ON and WATER OFF mean!

What is it that we have learnt about ourselves and about the kind of people we are, whether leaders or followers, motivators or listeners. Importantly, can we make the correct decisions?

As a group we have learnt about responsibility, about respect, about discipline and about uniformity.

It is these key elements that have turned this incidental group of people of different ages, nationalities and genders into a reliable, trustworthy and sincere group of graduates.

It was hard work, but I will not dwell on this because we all knew what we signed up for and that is what it takes to become elite in the firefighting profession.

It is this intensive training and high standards that we should expect not only from the Academy, but from the years to come in our new careers.

We thank the Academy staff who have made this all possible for us and have singled out a few.

Firstly, the students' number one man - Senior Agnew now known as Uncle Spiro.

You spent countless hours making sure that we were always equipped with everything we needed and being the only guy on our side, and we always appreciated it.

Secondly, DO Bowring - because of you we have never shined our shoes harder, but you also put in many long frustrating hours, were great fun and are someone whom we all greatly respect.

Thirdly, to our three main instructors Station Officer Hosking, Senior Firefighters McLaughlin and Borrett, thank you for standing out there in the rain with us, for your patience, your firm instruction and for getting us to graduation day.

To all the instructors who have helped us along our way, we also thank you for your time and effort.

Our biggest thanks go to our wives, girlfriends, boyfriend, kids, mums, dads and extended families for putting up with us when we were tired, grumpy and stressed out.

In addition, for help with study, baking and for just being there when we really needed your support. I hope we have made you proud.

We are about to leave the controlled environment of the Academy and will be placed in difficult situations where the skills we have learnt and developed during this period will allow us to give the best service to the people of this State.

It is a service which we undertake with honour, respect and humility.

Members of Firefighter Training School 74

Award winners announced at the graduation ceremony pictured above:

John McMahon Dux Award for Excellence
Firefighter Laurance Woollard

Institution of Fire Engineers Award for Highest Academic Results
Firefighter Jake Wilson with President Terry Jackson

United Firefighters Union 'Bob Woods' Award for Highest Practical Results
Firefighter Morgan Cooper with Acting District Manager Frank Martinelli

At the graduation ceremony six retired firefighters were recognised for their service:

Station Officer John (Skip) Gordon AFSM
38 years and 3 months of service

District Officer Paul Gibbs
33 years of service

Station Officer Anthony Ajduk
32 years of service

Station Officer Gregory Latham
36 years and 4 months of service

Station Officer Alan Bender
39 years and 1 month of service

Station Officer Bohdan (Bob) Hawrylak
33 years and 7 months of service

Geraldton marine rescue attracts new recruits



Geraldton VMR stalwart Leonie Golding at her recruiting post.

An idea that surfaced at one of Geraldton Volunteer Marine Rescue's (VMR) monthly meetings has yielded tangible results, with interest from new recruits soaring.

Ian Beard from the group said that volunteer numbers had dwindled over the past few years due to several factors.

"Some of our volunteers moved away from the area, others changed working hours which ruled many out from weekend rosters, and advancing years had caught up with a number of dedicated group members," Ian said.

"It was suggested at a monthly meeting that a recruiting post be set up at the two major shopping centres in Geraldton.

"A space was booked in the mall at Centro Stirling Centre for a weekend and also at the Northgate Centre for the following Saturday and Sunday.

"Long time member Leonie Golding was given the task of organising the initiative and in her usual thorough style she set about doing just that.

"Leonie was on hand at the post to promote the group and happily reported that the drive had been very successful, with 31 new active members signed up."

Flushed with success, group members undertook a repeat performance a few months later.

Based on what had been learnt from their previous recruiting experience, they went armed with a newly designed banner.

A monitor screen and speakers were also set up so that the WAVMR videos and relevant DFES CallOut DVDs could be downloaded and shown to interested community members.

Ian said their efforts again bore fruit with an additional 24 volunteers being signed up.

"It was an extremely worthwhile exercise which bolstered our membership by a total of 55 volunteers overall.

"A large number of these new members have now been trained and are actively participating as boat crew or radio operators."



WA firies shine on international stage

A Western Australian career Fire and Rescue Service contingent has claimed victory in the inaugural 'Rip it off' road crash rescue challenge staged by the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF).

The team took part in the five day Global Firefighter and Paramedics Challenge, International Elite Rescuers Exchange Workshop and Civil Defence Day Parade in Singapore, along with representatives from 18 other countries.

Countries represented at the event included Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Brunei, Macau and England.

Senior Firefighter Paul Rogers said that after touring the world class training facilities at the SCDF Academy, participants shared skills and new innovations with other international teams.

"We displayed our special vehicle stickers used to warn firefighters and other emergency representatives like police and ambulance officers about existing and potential bio hazard contaminants at crash sites," Paul said.

"These stickers are placed on car windscreens, windows and doors as a safety precaution.

"It was good to see this innovation received with interest.

"After the medical extrication, road crash rescue and height techniques workshops we also attended some interesting lectures on building collapse and were briefed on the technical approach to rescue operations."

Paul said each team in the road rescue challenge comprised a leader, two rescuers and one paramedic, with the top four teams progressing through to the final.

"Teams were judged on scene assessment, vehicle stabilisation, extrication techniques and medical intervention," he said.

The final event was held at the Singapore Expo Centre before senior officers from many of the competing Fire Services, including WA Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson and Professional Development Assistant Commissioner Darren Klemm.

"Under the expert guidance of our Team Leader Simon Harrison and Station Officer Kevin Landwehr who worked on the spreaders, we won the heats and scored the fastest time," Paul said.

"In the final we were up against teams from the Singapore Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (DART), Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates, in a scenario involving a vehicle on its roof with a live casualty inside.

"Similar to the way we had operated in the heats, our WA firefighters worked swiftly, safely and effectively to come out on top.

"In this challenge the United Arab Emirates placed second, Malaysia third and Singapore fourth."

Team Leader and Station Officer Simon Harrison said that a professional display of extrication and casualty management techniques, combined with seamless teamwork

between the WA fire and paramedic crews was the key to their success.

"International teams and senior officers were very complimentary about the DFES performance and as Team Leader, I was extremely proud of their efforts," Simon said.

"The visit enabled us to share techniques and skills with other countries, ultimately increasing their ability to improve road crash rescue response within their own jurisdictions.

"The effectiveness of future international missions will be greatly enhanced in light of the relationships we built during these events."

Paul added that it was very gratifying to be at the winners' ceremony on the final day representing WA.

"We very much look forward to the opportunity of being invited to return to Singapore to compete again in 2014," he said.

"Throughout the event all teams shared accommodation within the National Service Training Institute which assisted them to bond professionally and socially.

"We were very impressed with the consideration shown by our hosts, the SCDF and Singapore DART.

"There is great respect for how our neighbours go about their business, and our aim is to consolidate our relationship with them into the future."

Other contests included an individual challenge consisting of technical rescue skill sets like vertical rescue, breathing apparatus, and casualty and ladder handling.



There was also a mixed International Urban Search and Rescue challenge where groups of six worked to complete a series of tasks including cutting through steel, breaching through concrete, shoring up a confined space and rescuing a casualty at height.

The contingent from the Western Australian Urban Search and Rescue Taskforce was led by Superintendent Rick Curtis and supported by Station Officers Simon Harrison and Kevin Landwehr, Senior Firefighter Paul Rogers and St John Ambulance Special Operations Paramedic Ben Harris.

K-9 classified

Two Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) canines, Samson and Zena, recently flew to Karratha on board a Virgin Airlines 737 plane. Both passed their in cabin test with flying colours, making them the first USAR canines in the nation to do so.

USAR Dog Handlers Firefighter Serena Monk with Samson and Mike Rooke with Zena.



USAR Dog Handler Mike Rooke said that when the dogs are required to work at an incident away from Perth, they need to be in optimum condition on arrival.

"The expectation is that the dogs are taken direct to the scene of an emergency and get straight to work searching," Mike said.

"The best way to achieve this is if they can travel in the aircraft cabin with their handlers.

"In the past I have flown to New Zealand and Queensland with my USAR canines. On these occasions they had to make the journey in the cargo hold of the plane and that concerned me.

"The advantage of being close to the animals is that as their handlers we can monitor them the whole time.

"This drastically reduces their stress levels and their sense of smell is not impaired by being close to aviation fuel fumes."

Mike made enquiries with the airlines and contacted organisations that were able to facilitate the required Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) endorsement.

"I discovered that the USAR canines needed to be classified as assistance dogs," he said.

"Fortunately they complied with this requirement because their purpose is to find trapped live casualties in building collapses and save their lives.

"We gained CASA approval with the help of Disability Aid Dogs, an organisation that is very passionate about supporting our cause.

"The process involved three written assessments and two rigorous practical assessments before we were approved and could proceed with booking the flights.

"Karratha was considered a good destination, being a regional centre that is regularly subjected to cyclones and a relatively short flight from Perth.

"In addition, the local volunteers have a strong, well established working relationship with the USAR Taskforce."

Firefighter Serena Monks, who is the handler for Samson, said that seats had to be allocated according to the Assistance Dog policy.

"The dogs were issued a free seat alongside both Mike and myself, and next to the exit aisle behind business class," Serena said.

"Secured to the front of the seat, they sat on mats on the floor at our feet and did not move for the entire flight.

"Both dogs were curious when the plane was noisy and very bumpy just before takeoff and after we started to ascend.

"On descent Samson shook his head a couple of times, trying to clear his ears, but still did not get up.

"On arrival in Karratha we were last to disembark and were taken to our hotel. The CASA endorsement meant that the hotel allowed the dogs to stay with us in our rooms.

"We then went to the Karratha Volunteer Fire and Rescue fire station to give a presentation on USAR canines."

Serena said that on the return flight the dogs were noticeably more relaxed and less concerned about their surroundings, and slept for most of the time.

Once home they stuck close to their handlers for a while, but were fine.

She added that the captains on both the outbound and return flights had asked to see the CASA endorsement certificates for the dogs.

"We were able to produce the necessary paperwork before being given approval to board," she said.

"The excellent behaviour of the dogs on each flight and also when involved in a search, is a reflection of the high standard of training we require for USAR canines.

"They are taught to be prepared for almost any situation and we could not be more pleased with how things turned out.

"We also received overwhelming support and encouragement from passengers and people we met during all stages of the trip, which was something we had not expected.

"In fact, the passenger sitting next to Samson and I on the way to Karratha later sent an email saying how well behaved the dogs were and how impressed he was with their training."

Pathways on track

The focus of the Pathways Project for the next six months is on the development and implementation of pathways for volunteers and public sector staff, and identifying specialist roles within DFES.

Professional Development Assistant Commissioner Darren Klemm said a Learning Management System would be in place early this year.

"The system will enable delivery of learning through different training modes such as online or eLearning," Darren said.

"Face to face learning, however, will always be a major component of the training that DFES provides to career and volunteer personnel.

"A Beyond Pathways central repository has also been developed to capture additional learning resources and information.

"This is in the initial development stage and provides training resources, case studies and recommended viewing for use on station, and by brigades, units and groups to apply during training events."

The Pathways Project is scheduled for implementation over the next two and a half years. It will provide a framework for the professional development of career and volunteer personnel by stipulating the skills, knowledge and training requirements for each rank, role or level.

Pathways milestones

- Engagement of volunteer and career user group to act as a reference group to guide project development.
- Development of priority Pathways for Operations and Incident Management roles.
- Launch of the Pathways website.
- Development of a course catalogue available to career and volunteer personnel via the Pathways website.
- Consolidation of a statewide training calendar accessible through the Intranet and Volunteer Portal.
- Completion of DFES Senior Officer Pathways including Community Emergency Services Manager, Area Officer, District Officer and Superintendent.

Access the Pathways website

You are encouraged to explore the Pathways website and share the site with your team.

Career staff: enter via the DFES Intranet by clicking on the Pathways button.

Volunteers: enter via the Volunteer Portal by clicking on the Pathways button.

If you are not registered for the Volunteer Portal go to the DFES website: www.dfes.wa.gov.au/volunteers and follow the prompts. You will need your volunteer ID from your Service to register.

If you are already registered for the Volunteer Portal you can log in to Pathways at <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/pathways>

A User Guide and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the Pathways home page to assist you navigate around the website.





Station Officer Mark Papadopoff is the winner of the WA Police and Emergency Services Child Safety Award.



Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM congratulates Air Operations Officer John Landwehr on receiving a Certificate of Merit for the WA Child Safety Volunteer Award.

Firefighters dedicated to child safety

Four firefighters who have made a valuable contribution to protecting children from harm and creating child safe environments were recognised at the Constable Care Child Safety Awards.

Butler Station Officer Mark Papadopoff received the WA Police and Emergency Services Child Safety Award for his work in raising fire safety awareness in culturally diverse communities.

Mark identified the need for a targeted fire safety education program after noting an increase in kitchen fires in non-English speaking homes.

He organised customised workshops for young people in families with English as a second language, covering fire safety awareness, installing smoke alarms and contacting emergency services.

The successful program educates families by teaching children how to act safely around fire and encouraging them to relay the safety messages to other family members.

In the WA Child Safety Volunteer Award category, Air Operations

Officer John Landwehr was acknowledged as a finalist and received a certificate of merit recognising his work with the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness (JAFFA) program.

John has helped to educate young people about fire safety and the risks of fire lighting for the past 18 years. He often deals with the more complex cases, and is a trainer and mentor to new JAFFA Support Officers.

Also nominated in the same category were Chris and Maxine O'Connell, Captain and Secretary of the Tom Price Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service.

They devised a new way to teach Aboriginal communities about fire safety, and developed an effective and culturally sensitive education program.

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson said this public recognition was a reflection of the innovative and dedicated work of these four fire personnel and a credit to them all.

"A key part of our mission at DFES is to build community resilience and this includes a commitment to support and educate children and young people in how to be safe," Commissioner Gregson said.

"Mark Papadopoff's efforts in developing a comprehensive home fire safety package for children to relay to their extended family, is a brilliant achievement that aligns well with this mission.

"The JAFFA Program is also central to the Department's objectives and it is pleasing to see John Landwehr's long standing voluntary work acknowledged.

"In addition, dedicated volunteer firefighters Chris and Maxine O'Connell are to be commended for their valuable community education initiative that is making a difference to communities in the North West."



First Lieutenant Michael Hall and Lieutenant Nino Scidone.

© The West Australian.

Brave and brilliant

Volunteers from Bedfordale Bush Fire Brigade who battled the 2011 Roleystone-Kelmescott bushfires in some of the worst seasonal conditions the State had encountered for several years, have been recognised for their bravery.

Their efforts in rescuing a group of stranded residents were recently acknowledged at the highest level when they were announced as recipients in the prestigious national 2013 Australian Bravery Awards.

At the time the crew of six was directed to drive along Keays Road in Roleystone and work to suppress the head fire.

Passing other fire units on their way, they stopped to try and prevent the blaze from crossing the road.

Very quickly, however, the volunteers found themselves facing thick smoke and intense heat, with flames leaping skywards on both sides.

First Lieutenant and Officer in Charge Michael Hall instructed the driver to move the appliance further along the road to allow crew members to continue chasing the head fire.

On the way they came across a house fully engulfed in flames with two vehicles alight in the driveway.

Having quickly assessed the area, they were about to leave when Michael said he could hear faint voices calling for help. He and fellow volunteer Lieutenant Nino Scidone decided to head down a vehicle track to the west of the house, where the cries became louder.

Nino said they ran about 250 metres through smoke, with fire surrounding them.

"When we got to a point where the track forked out in two other directions, we came across four people," Nino said.

"There was an elderly man and woman and two middle aged males, one of whom was lying on the ground. We soon learnt that one of the men

was a paraplegic who had been carried out of the burning house.

"With the fire approaching from all sides, Michael remained with the stranded residents. Meanwhile, I sprinted back to the appliance which was moved in closer to them and got busy extinguishing the fire burning around and under the vehicle.

"Our crew helped the group into the appliance and we made our way to where we could deliver them into safe hands. We then immediately returned to continue fighting what was by now a massive fire."

For their actions during this extremely challenging incident Michael Hall, Alexander Leach, Michael McCavanagh, Mark Puttick, Antonino (Nino) Scidone and Stephen Smith were honoured with a national Group Bravery Citation.

Michael and Nino were also acknowledged in their own right and will receive their Bravery Medals at a presentation ceremony in April.

★ ★ ★ Awards tell story of outstanding service ★ ★ ★

The efforts of outstanding fire and emergency services personnel took centre stage at the annual awards ceremonies held during the WA Fire and Emergency Services Conference.

It was a time to reflect on and applaud the achievements of individuals, brigades, units, groups and teams for their ongoing contribution to protecting and educating Western Australians.

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson said the 2013 awardees had all done an excellent job in their own unique way.

"The common thread between all the finalists is a sense of initiative, combined with a keen dedication to

helping members of the community who find themselves caught up in emergencies," Commissioner Gregson said.

"It is essential that emergency responders are recognised for their dedicated service to the State and these annual award programs provide the opportunity to highlight our best."

Keeping with tradition, the Firefighting Awards breakfast presentation kicked off the ceremonies.

An afternoon cocktail function followed to honour members of the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services.

Later that evening the Volunteer Marine Rescue Services (VMRS) and State Emergency Service Awards were announced.

His Excellency Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, Governor of Western Australia presented an award at the VMRS event in his capacity as their Patron.

The Governor said all the VMRS award recipients possessed a strong commitment to the service and had shown exceptional marine rescue skills.

"Not only do these awards recognise excellence at search and rescue incidents through preparedness, response and safety, but also those who go above and beyond the call of duty," Governor McCusker said.

"Their wonderful civic spirit sees these dedicated volunteers spring to the aid of the boating community without hesitation and I am proud to be their Patron."

2013 Volunteer Marine Rescue Services Awards



VMRS Award recipients pictured with Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM, Governor of Western Australia Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, VMRWA Commander Jeff Howe and Department of Transport Peter Beattie (back row centre L-R).

VMRWA Award for Excellence in Volunteer Marine Rescue Services Group Operations

* RECIPIENT: Shark Bay Volunteer Marine Rescue

Paul Kimber Award for Excellence in Volunteer Marine Rescue Services

* RECIPIENT: Kalbarri Sea Search and Rescue

DFES VMRS Award for Outstanding Member

* RECIPIENT: Roger Martin, VMRWA Vice Commander

DFES VMRS Award for Youth Achievement

* RECIPIENT: Iesha Gaitskill, Carnarvon Volunteer Sea Rescue

Department of Transport (Marine) Award for Excellence in Marine Safety

* RECIPIENT: Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue Group

VMRWA Commanding Officers Award

* RECIPIENT: Albany Sea Rescue Squad

2013 Firefighting Awards



Career Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
John Landwehr, Aviation Services
☆ FINALIST
Ross Kitson, Armadale Fire Station



Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Darren Smith, Wagin VFRS
☆ FINALISTS
Travis Hutchinson, Carnarvon VFRS
Warren Hatt, Carnarvon VFRS
Shane Munro, Coolgardie VFRS



Murray Lang Bush Fire Service of Western Australia Award

* RECIPIENT
David Hasted, Ivanhoe BFB
(award accepted by family members and pictured with Murray Lang)
☆ FINALISTS
Derek Jones, Childlow BFB
John Matten, Molloy Island BFB



Youth Achievement Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Matthew Bartels, Morangup BFB
☆ FINALISTS
Rik Mills, Baldivis BFB
Paul Munro, Coolgardie VFRS

2013 State Emergency Service Awards



Peter Keillor Award

* RECIPIENT
Martin Hale, Bayswater SES Unit
(pictured with Barbara Keillor)
☆ FINALISTS
May Bowser, Cockburn SES Unit
Phillip Bresser, Mandurah SES Unit



Team Achievement Award

* RECIPIENT
Bayswater SES Unit Bike Team
(pictured l-r: Martin Hale, Mandy O'Brien, Shane Gallaher, Jane Campbell)
☆ FINALISTS
Karratha SES Unit
Northshore SES Unit



Youth Achievement Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Melusha Robson, Communications Support Unit
☆ FINALIST
Sarah Hamilton, Belmont SES Unit

2013 Volunteer Emergency and Fire Services Awards



Outstanding Volunteer Emergency Service or Volunteer Fire Service Brigade Award

* RECIPIENT
Morawa VFS
(represented by Lynette Varris and CSM Richard Ryan)
☆ FINALIST
MAPS-WA VES
Bremer Bay VES



Outstanding Volunteer Member Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Helen Smith, MAPS-WA VES
☆ FINALIST
Wes Thomas, Bremer Bay VES



DFES Award for Excellence

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Laurie Hull, Tambellup VES



Youth Achievement Award

* RECIPIENT (pictured)
Thomas Garner, Fitzroy Crossing VES



International Firefighters' Day Department of Fire and Emergency Services Memorial Service

In recognition of International Firefighters' Day, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services will hold a Memorial Service to acknowledge Western Australian firefighters who have passed away in the line of duty.

The service will include the unveiling of two life-size bronze statues in tribute to WA's fallen firefighters.

Sunday 4 May 2014

11.30am – 12.00pm

*Firefighters' Memorial Grove
Forrest Drive, Kings Park*

The Department welcomes the attendance of past and present career and all volunteer firefighters. Most importantly, family members of those who are being remembered are also invited to the service which will publicly recognise the dedication of Western Australian firefighters.



Champions of resilience named WA winners

An Australian first system that manages health risks posed by clandestine drug labs and a program that raises awareness of first aid in rural communities were WA State winners in the 2013 Resilient Australia Awards.

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson commended all entrants on their ability to innovate, collaborate and deliver better outcomes for WA communities.

"It is great to see community and government programs making a significant difference in supporting people to be well prepared and recover quickly following a major emergency," Commissioner Gregson said.

"These winners demonstrate the commitment of Western Australians to their communities and what can be achieved when we work together.

"Our ability to do things in new and different ways is how we build resilience, and create stronger and safer communities."

One of the State winners, the Clandestine Drug Lab Management System identifies and supports the quick clean-up of drug related health hazards.

It is a multi-agency government project managed by Department of Health, Department of Environment Regulation, Department of Housing and WA Police.

The other State winner, the Emergency Care and Injury Management project runs workshops on first aid and other practical emergency information for rural environments. Farmsafe WA Alliance, St John Ambulance, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and WA Police jointly manage the project which also received a National Highly Commended Award.

Commissioner Gregson said it was inspiring to see how community and government programs can make a significant difference in supporting people to be well prepared and recover quickly following a major emergency.

"Western Australia has been a consistent source of quality entries over the 12 years of the awards, with many entries being recognised at the national level," he said.



State Government – Winner

PROJECT

Clandestine Drug Lab Management System

ORGANISATIONS

Department of Environment Regulation*

Department of Housing

Department of Health

WA Police

Not for Profit Sector – Winner

PROJECT

Emergency Care and Injury Management Project

ORGANISATIONS

Farmsafe WA Alliance*

Department of Fire and Emergency Services

WA Police

St John Ambulance

Not for Profit Sector – Commended

PROJECT

Rio Tinto Life Flight Jet

ORGANISATIONS

Royal Flying Doctor Service Western Operations*

Rio Tinto

Royalties for Regions

Local Government – Highly Commended

PROJECT

Communicating Heatwave

ORGANISATIONS

City of Mandurah*

Department of Health

Local Government – Commended

PROJECT

Can You Do 72 – Are You Prepared?

ORGANISATION

City of Cockburn

* lead organisation



Resilient Australia Awards WA State recipients with Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis MLA (eighth from right), flanked by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM.



2013 Volunteer Employer Recognition Program award recipients and nominators at Government House Perth with Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson APM and Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis MLA (centre front).

Gold fever for employers

The largest ever number of gold award recipients were recognised at the 2013 Volunteer Employer Recognition Program award ceremony.

A total of 69 employers were recognised for the support they provide to emergency services volunteers, while an additional six self-employed volunteers were acknowledged for their strong commitment to volunteering.

Thirty nine employers achieved the highest commendation of gold award status, while a further 31 received a silver award and five a bronze.

Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis said the annual awards highlighted the important role that

businesses and organisations play in championing volunteers.

“Western Australia has experienced major bushfires, floods, cyclones and storms over the past year and these have placed significant demands on the State’s emergency services volunteers,” Mr Francis said.

“The Department of Fire and Emergency Services relies on the goodwill of employers to release their volunteers from paid work when incidents or training requirements arise.

“A dedicated group of business owners across the State regularly demonstrate their support by doing this, in spite of the disruption it may cause to their workplace or customers.

“While we rely on emergency services volunteers to keep our community safe, we also recognise and acknowledge the instrumental role that employers play in supporting them.

“This diverse and committed group is setting a wonderful example to others and these awards acknowledge the way they assist the delivery of fire and emergency services across Western Australia.

“We are extremely thankful for their ongoing contribution.”

A total of 375 employers and self-employed volunteers have been recognised by the Volunteer Employer Recognition Program to date.

Merredin volunteer fire brigade reaches centenary

Merredin has been loyally served by its volunteer fire brigade for more than 100 years. Recently a group of current and former members got together to celebrate this special milestone.

Located in the eastern Wheatbelt, the area faces several potential risks including rail, road transport and aircraft incidents, as well as chemical and hazardous material spills.

Throughout its long history the local Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) has responded to a range of significant emergencies. These include a fire at the Mobil fuel depot, the 1982 school bus crash near Nangeenan where several people died and others were injured, as well as three hotel fires in Kellerberrin, Doodlakine and Kunnonoppin, and a blaze at Allways food warehouse in 2013.

Another major incident involved one of the largest rail emergencies to occur in Western Australia, the fatal 1996 Hines Hill train collision on the Eastern Goldfields Railway.

The brigade has benefited from the experience and knowledge of longstanding members including the late Ronald (Soss) Morton, who held the rank of captain for two decades and was a member for 39 years.

When the brigade was founded in 1913 it was first based in temporary quarters behind the town hall. Its second home was a timber and iron fire station constructed in 1920 which was moved to the rear of the same block of land 15 years later.

New brick premises were then built at the front of the site and the brigade remained at that location until 2008 when they moved to a modern purpose built fire station in Mitchell Street.

The Merredin Brigade’s earliest equipment was a hose reel appliance and 13 years later their first fire truck arrived. Today members operate contemporary fire appliances that enable them to respond to a diversity of incidents.

Merredin VFRS Captain Mark Bertolini said the centenary was an important landmark.

“The brigade is a cornerstone of our local community, and we are all very proud of our firefighters past and present,” Mark said.

“It was great to take time at our recent celebration ball to reflect on our history and some of the more memorable incidents attended over the years.

“We have an active membership of 25 volunteers as well as a team of Juniors and are looking forward to the brigade still going strong and continuing to protect people in another 100 years.”

Fire and Emergency Services

Commissioner Wayne Gregson said that like VFRS brigades across the State, Merredin volunteers have always put the safety of the community first.

“I have no doubt that the foundation of this culture is linked to the history and tradition of

the Merredin VFRS that stems from its infancy in 1913,” he said.

“In addition to incident response, members also help to increase community awareness about hazards and how people can keep themselves safe.

“It is an amazing feat for a brigade to serve the community for 100 years, particularly considering the enormous changes that have occurred over that time.

“The people of Merredin are extremely fortunate to have the services of this group of dedicated and skilled volunteers.”

“The brigade is a cornerstone of our local community, and we are all very proud of our firefighters past and present.”

Queen’s Birthday Honours recipients



State Emergency Service volunteer Joseph Taylor ESM and Metropolitan Chief Superintendent Gary Kennedy AFSM receive their respective medals from Governor of Western Australia His Excellency Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC at a special presentation ceremony held at Government House Perth.

Australian Honours – nominate now

We are now seeking nominations for Australian Honours Meritorious Service Awards, including the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and Emergency Services Medal (ESM).

Through the Australian system of honours and awards the community can recognise the gallantry, bravery, achievement and service of Australians.

Being nominated is a great honour. This is your opportunity to recognise and reward someone who inspires you.

You are encouraged to nominate any career or volunteer member that you consider worthy of recognition at this prestigious level.

Recognition may be considered in relation to an isolated event, for distinguished service given over and above call of duty, outstanding leadership, demonstrated creativity and/or development of a new and unique system, procedure or technique.

For more information contact Media and Public Affairs by emailing rewards@dfes.wa.gov.au or download nomination forms at DFES Intranet or Volunteer Portal.



NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons (centre in uniform) with WA Fire Cadet Championships participants, coaches and assistants.

WA victorious in Cadet Championships

Three teams from Western Australia travelled to Myuna Bay in New South Wales to compete in the 2013 Australian Fire Cadet Championships, with the SJ Green team from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale emerging triumphant.

They defeated more than 150 young firefighters from across the country to claim the top title ahead of 25 other teams.

The WA teams included one from the City of Wanneroo and two from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale which co-ordinated and managed the local bid.

The Championships involve cadets aged between 11 and 16 years who take part in a series of events based on real firefighting.

This includes structural and rescue events designed to test their ability, initiative and safety skills in a safe environment.

Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades of WA Vice President Dave Gossage said months of training and hard work in the lead up to the competition had been worth the effort.

"It was a rewarding experience for the cadets with SJ Green finishing first, SJ Blue third and Wanneroo coming in tenth overall," Dave said.

"It is extremely important that we encourage the next generation of firefighters to develop their skills and this competition is one way for cadet crews to enhance their abilities.

"The championships are of great value and are held in a spirit of friendly competition that brings out the best in the cadets.

"Teams participated in training, team building and leadership activities, as well as traditional events.

"Our WA bushfire cadets set new all time records and placed exceptionally well. We are very proud of them."

Dave added that the Championships were an opportunity for cadet firefighters from around Australia to socialise and also for team leaders to meet interstate colleagues to share ideas about their cadet programs.

In Western Australia, hundreds of young people have now passed through Local Government Bush Fire Brigade and

DFES Youth Development programs designed to teach them life skills including leadership and teamwork within an emergency services environment.

Many have gone on to become members of volunteer brigades, groups and units, and some have joined DFES and Local Government as employees.

Manager Volunteer and Youth Services Wayne Fanderlinden said it was a credit to those young people who have taken on the challenge to become cadets and aspired to become future emergency services volunteers.

"We are all very aware of the threat from bushfires and just how valuable Bush Fire Brigades are to the communities they serve," Wayne said.

"It is really inspiring to see so many cadets eager to join their ranks and go on to take up adult volunteering."

Major sponsors of the competing WA cadet teams were local businesses, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, City of Wanneroo and DFES.

"The championships are of great value and are held in a spirit of friendly competition that brings out the best in the cadets."



Big day out for cadets



Excitement was at an all time high when 200 Emergency Services Cadets gathered eagerly to participate in the fun of their annual 'muster'.

The action packed event, at Kingsway Christian College in Darch, gave cadets the opportunity to meet, mingle and experience a diversity of emergency services related activities and demonstrations.

The cadets came from Toodyay District High School, Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon, Lake Joondalup Baptist College, Woodvale Secondary College and Kingsway Christian College. They were supported by 30 teachers and instructors.

A wide range of fire and emergency services were on show, including the career Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), Wanneroo Bush Fire Brigade (BFB), Joondalup/Wanneroo State Emergency Service (SES) and the SES Search and Rescue Dog Unit, plus the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability.

In addition, the WA Police Tactical Response Group (TRG), St John Ambulance and Orienteering WA were in attendance to demonstrate their services.

Volunteer and Youth Services Project Officer Jo Scardigno said each cadet was able to view the type of skills that were required when volunteering with the emergency services.

"Firefighters from Wangara FRS demonstrated how to tackle a road crash rescue, while a crew from Osborne Park fire station brought along the Specialist Equipment Tender and conducted a HAZMAT scenario," Jo said.

"Wanneroo BFB showed how to properly extinguish a stove top fire, ran through some fire hose activities, and explained the use and features of their incident control vehicle.

"Joondalup/Wanneroo SES volunteers supplied pulleys and trolleys, and involved the cadets in various operations, while the SES also demonstrated forensic search activities.

"Both the SES and USAR team members had their search and rescue and agility dogs on hand, and explained their use during incidents.

"The RAC Rescue helicopter was also a huge drawcard, with the crew going through its paces and answering many questions posed by the cadets."

Of the external visitors, the WA Police TRG showed off their Bear Cat Armoured Vehicle, while St John Ambulance demonstrated first aid, CPR and bandaging.

Finally, Orienteering WA conducted a popular night activity where students had to navigate around the campus to complete the team challenge, receiving stamps at every required location.

Jo said the idea for a cadet muster originated three years ago during a casual discussion between a group of like minded high school teachers. They had been brought together for a Cadet Instructor Development Course run by DFES (then FESA).

"It was decided between four of the group that they hold a combined annual cadet camp to be known as a muster," Jo said.

"Each school would take a turn in hosting it, alternating between the country and city.

"Lake Joondalup Baptist College was selected for the first event in 2011, the Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon in 2012 and this year it was Kingsway Christian College."

Cadets Larischa Roth and Jason Moir from Kingsway Christian College provided this personal view of their time at the muster:

This amazing experience started on a Friday afternoon. We set up our tents, were placed in sections and soon started playing ice breaking and team building games to bond with our fellow cadets. The best part was the African Rhythm Drums taught by two guys.

We continued on with some bush dancing which was extreme fun. Later on we had some fire safety demonstration lessons and learnt how to deal with different fire situations, a skill we might need later on in life.

After dinner we learnt some basic first aid training followed by rotations that included forensic searches and other exciting activities. The final event of the night was dessert! The groups gathered around camp fires spread across the oval and made a yummy sweet Canadian dish called smores (abbreviation: "delicious, could I have some more").

The morning started at 5am with all the cadets clearing the oval of tents waiting for the arrival of the RAC Rescue helicopter. Then boot camp started, and big tyres and ropes were brought in. It almost felt as if we were in the Army, but it ended up being a great bonding experience.

After breakfast we began our rotations between the RAC chopper, jaws of life, car dismantling, reptile handling, rescue dogs, firefighting, inspecting communications vehicles, hazardous chemical trucks and the Police armed response vehicle along with other fun activities. The 2013 City Muster Camp was definitely the biggest and best yet.



Cockburn State Emergency Service volunteers Matt Thomas and Teagan Buss give Hamilton Senior High School Emergency Services Cadets some helpful instruction on techniques and safety.

© Cockburn Gazette Community Newspaper.

Cadets learn new tricks

A group of Hamilton Senior High School emergency service cadets recently added a number of new skills to their tool kit.

When visiting Cockburn State Emergency Service they got the opportunity for a few hours of expert training, leaving a little wiser

and more capable after being put through their paces.

The 13 students were then required to scramble up ladders safely, install rescue lighting and start up a stand alone generator.

Cockburn SES Training Manager Karen Brozek said everything the cadets were shown and experienced was standard procedure on a SES call out.

“Safety always takes a high priority, and we emphasised this to the cadets,” Karen said.

“It was great to see their enthusiasm for what we do.

“We are always pleased to show students the ropes as they are our future volunteers.”



Have your say on future direction of emergency services legislation

DFES’ review of the emergency services Acts is well underway. The next stage is the release of a concept paper that outlines possible future directions of the legislation.

As a member of the fire and emergency services community, we will be asking you to provide us with your thoughts on which concepts will improve community safety and better support all emergency services workers.

Your knowledge and experience is essential to ensuring our legislation is current and meaningful.

The concept paper will be released for public comment and you will be able to download a copy via the DFES website and Volunteer Portal.

For more information on the review process and release of the paper visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au/legislationreview