



Government
of South Australia



RESCUE

Emergency Management

November 2020

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE NEWSLETTER

BUSHFIRE ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT TABLED IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT



Photo credit: Ethan Jones

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was last month handed down after it was established in February of this year, unveiling a broad spectrum of recommendations aimed at both preventing and limiting the devastation caused by natural disasters like the Summer 2019-2020 bushfires. The report acknowledged the significant impact of climate change on extreme weather events moving forward, both in terms of frequency and severity. "Disasters have changed", the report states, drawing particular attention to the risk posed by bushfires in our changing climate. "Catastrophic fire conditions may render traditional bushfire prediction models and firefighting techniques less effective," the report states.

The Royal Commission made a number of recommendations – 80 in total – covering everything from suggestions around controlled burning to advice around where Australians live. Here's just a small sample of the report's key recommendations:

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Each decision and action makes us more vulnerable to disasters – or more resilient to them. Thus disaster risk reduction involves every part of society, every part of government, and every part of the professional and private sector." United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

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- **National State of Emergency**

The commission recommends the Federal Government be able to declare a national state of emergency. The purpose of this would be two-fold – it would allow the Federal Government to take action without the specific request of state governments, and communicate to the Australian public the severity of the situation at hand.

- **Fire Rating System**

Noting the importance of warnings, the commission recommended a nationally consistent fire danger rating system, which should be visual and clearly indicate the actions to be taken by the public at each fire danger level.

- **Emergency Warning App**

According to the commission, state and territory governments should facilitate the roll out of an “all-hazard Australian warning system”, with governments also investigating the feasibility of creating a national app to easily communicate information around this warning system.

- **Better Communications**

Echoing the Keelty report, the Royal Commission recommended improvements to communication technology and strategy, specifically to facilitate communication across state borders.

- **Climate Change**

Whilst the report acknowledges the drastic and negative impact of climate change on natural disasters, its recommendations stop short at attempting to mitigate climate change itself. Instead, it recommends that states and territories work together to ensure better information sharing around climate data, and that climate models be created that can produce projections for smaller geographic regions, allowing for improved preparedness around natural disasters.

The full Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements report [can be found here](#).



Photo credit: Scott Gibbons



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LA NIÑA - SUMMER OF 2020-21

What is it?

Part of the natural cycle known as the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ESNO), El Niño and La Niña are the strongest influences on annual climate variability for most of Australia.

La Niña occurs when equatorial trade winds strengthen, leading to changes in ocean temperatures and atmospheric conditions that impact Australia's climate. In the case of atmospheric changes known as the Walker circulation, these changes in climate may be felt around the world.

What does it mean for Australia?

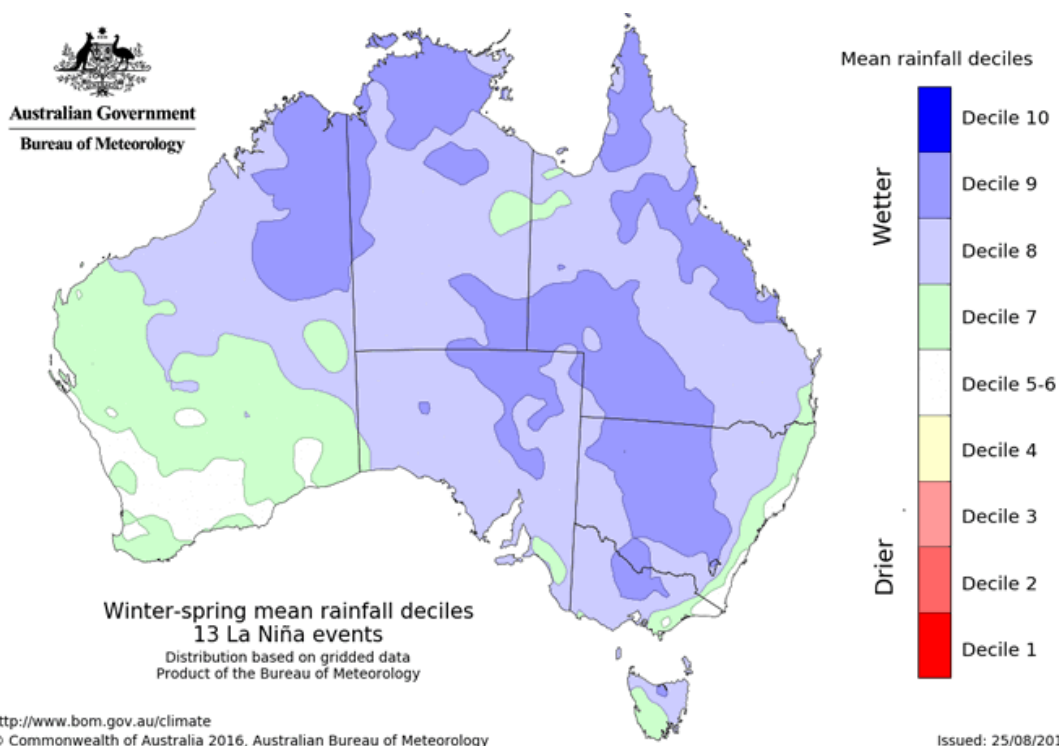
Put simply, El Niño events are usually associated with drier than normal conditions across eastern and northern Australia, while La Niña events are associated with wetter than normal conditions across the same area.

Along with increased rainfall across the country, La Niña is ordinarily associated with:

- Warmer overnight temperatures (in the north)
- Tropical cyclone numbers
- Monsoon onset
- Cooler daytime temperatures (south of the tropics)
- Frost risk
- Shift in temperature extremes

Summer of 2020/2021

Australia's last La Niña event lasted from 2010 – 2012 and resulted in one of Australia's wettest two-year periods on record. Whilst the last event saw significant flooding, it's unclear as yet whether this current La Niña will bring with it the extreme weather events of its predecessor. Modelling indicates that this La Niña event will likely continue until at least the end of summer 2020–21, and indicates above average rainfall for the duration. A silver lining to flood, cyclone and monsoon concerns: according to the Bureau of Meteorology, the increased rainfall generated by La Niña should facilitate a milder-than-usual bushfire season.





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SES VOLS PROVIDE COVID SUPPORT



LEFT: SES Chief Chris Beattie address SES volunteers. RIGHT: volunteers prepare for their induction course.

More than 40 State Emergency Service volunteers have answered the call to support police officers with COVID-19 duties.

The SES recruits participated in an induction course with training for COVID-19 legislation, and refresher training on traffic management, infection control, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), radio communications and turnover drills.

SES Chief Officer Chris Beattie said recruits would divide into six teams of seven people with a designated team leader. "This is a fantastic example of agencies from the Emergency Services Sector working together to keep the South Australia safe from COVID-19," Mr Beattie said.

The program is expected to be in place for five months and will be supported by a small team of SES staff. They will carry out their duties on a three-week roster.

Crews have been deployed to locations based on operational requirements and will mostly assist SAPOL in interstate airport arrivals, border control as well as Operation Nomad. For the volunteers, this is a great opportunity to gain paid operational experience.

COVID-19 DASHBOARD

Last updated Sunday 29 November 2020 with data for Saturday 28 November 2020.

This information is updated every day at approximately 4:30 pm.

New cases today	1	Patients in hospital	0	Deaths	4
Active cases	17	Patients in ICU	0	Tests yesterday	3,455
Total cases	562	Recovered	541	Total tests	718,124

[Dashboard source.](#)

Words by Liz Connell. Photography by Charlotte Dige.



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NEW HAZARD ICONS TO ROLL OUT

Work has been progressing at a national level in respect to implementing consistent hazard icons. The new hazard icons – for fire, flood, heat, storm and cyclone – are expected to be rolled out in the next few months after formal sign off by the emergency services authorities in each state and territory.

The hazard icons will have three escalating tiers going from yellow through orange to red and be triangular with a black outline.

More information about the hazard icons and their application will be published in future editions of EM News.

Fire



Storm



Examples of the soon-to-be-launched hazard icons.

Words by Jon Carr

NEW TRAINING COURSE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Two more virtual 'Introduction to Community Engagement' courses will be held next March. The courses start either on Wednesday 3 March, 7-9pm, or Monday 15 March, 7-9pm, one night a week for three weeks.

Interested volunteers should look at the skills and knowledge needed for the roles of Unit Community Engagement Coordinator or Unit Community Engagement Crew – both will require good public speaking and presentation skills.

Discuss with your Unit Manager and/or Unit Community Engagement Coordinator as places are limited on both nights.

[Click here to register for the course today.](#)

For further information, please contact:

Oshanna Alexander, SES Community Engagement Coordinator at
oshanna.alexander@sa.gov.au

Words by Oshanna Alexander



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REVAMPED EMERGENCY+ APP NOW FEATURES WHAT3WORDS

A revamped Emergency+ app was launched late last month (October, 2020) and now features what3words.

The app works across Australia using GPS functionality built into smartphones to help a Triple Zero (000) caller provide critical location details required to mobilise emergency services.

The major modification to the app, what3words is a software enhancement allowing Triple Zero (000) callers to provide their exact location quickly and accurately with just three words describing their address. What3words complements other address identifiers – such as a street address or GPS coordinates – to communicate precise locations. The system has given every three-metre square in the world a unique three-word identifier: a what3words address.

Emergency+ also has a 'pin drop' function to locate and report an emergency more accurately along with CPR videos (provided by Royal Life Saving Society Australia) to equip people with lifesaving resuscitating skills.

When callers need to report an emergency in hard-to-find locations, the Emergency+ app gives them the option to tell the call taker their location either in the form of their closest street address, their GPS coordinates or their what3words address.

The new app has a newly designed logo and colour scheme and is available free from the Apple and Google Play app stores.

The end user licence agreement has been updated to allow international students and international travellers to Australia to access the app.

The Emergency+ app has been downloaded more than 2.1 million times since its 2013 launch.

IN AN EMERGENCY



Words by Jon Carr



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PORT VINCENT AVCG WELCOMES 'VINCENT STAR'



FROM LEFT: Chief Officer SASES Chris Beattie, the Hon. Minister Vincent Tarzia, Chief Executive SAFECOM Dom Lane, Manager Marine Operations Darryl Wright

The Port Vincent Flotilla of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard (AVCG) last month welcome their new boat the *Vincent Star* into service at an official commissioning ceremony.

The new rescue vessel was built in SA by Nautic Star Marine, commissioned by Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Vincent Tarzia MP, and formally named by AVCG Life Member Christine Robinson.

The new vessel will significantly enhance the operational capability of the Flotilla, additionally contributing towards crew safety and comfort.

SA Commodore Bill Taylor and Flotilla Commander Ross Evans welcomed all and thanked the SA Government for the contribution of over \$500,000 towards the project which included a new tow vehicle, both delivered under the VMR Vessel and Tow Vehicle Replacement Program, along with funding for modifications to the storage facility.

The name of the new boat wasn't lost on the Minister and while it would have been just as fitting to be named after him, *Vincent Star* was chosen to honour the community that she will serve.

Words by Volunteer Marine Rescue SA. Photography by Russel Millard.



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