

in times of need



Government
of South Australia



RESCUE



THE STORY OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE



Our deep thanks to all who contributed
images and information for this book (Jon Carr, Editor).

ISBN number 978-0-9923171-0-2

Printed by Openbook Howden Design and Print
2015



South Australian State Emergency Service

Level 8, 60 Waymouth Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Postal Address GPO Box 2706, Adelaide SA 5001
Telephone: [08] 8463 4171 Facsimile: [08] 8410 3115
Website: www.ses.sa.gov.au

To volunteer, call 1300 364 587.
For emergency help in floods and storms, call 132 500.
(For life-threatening emergencies, call 000.)



in times of need

CONTENTS

1	Saluting half century of service	6
2	The SES today: An established force	10
3	Civil defence and early SES era	16
4	Developing skills and resources	36
5	The case for change	58
6	The volunteer family	64
7	Community engagement	80
8	The future – with a past	86

THE STORY OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE





1 SALUTING HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE

The story of the SA State Emergency Service began with a culture formed in Civil Defence

Camaraderie, passion, effort shine on



The half century of Civil Defence/SES in South Australia was marked in effect on November 2, 2012, with the unveiling of a plaque to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first unit Edinburgh (formerly Salisbury Civil Defence, then Northern Districts SES).



Another important memorial – to mateship and friendly rivalry built up between SES units over the years. The B.F. Lancaster SES Cricket Trophy (named after the Director at that time), lists winners of a series of “Ashes” grudge cricket matches between Murray Bridge and Kensington & Norwood (later Eastern Suburbs) units during the late 1970s/early 1980s.

Our review of the 50 years of SA Civil Defence that became the State Emergency Service is not a complete detailed history.

Information has been gathered from dozens of sources and every effort was made to find early employees and volunteers.

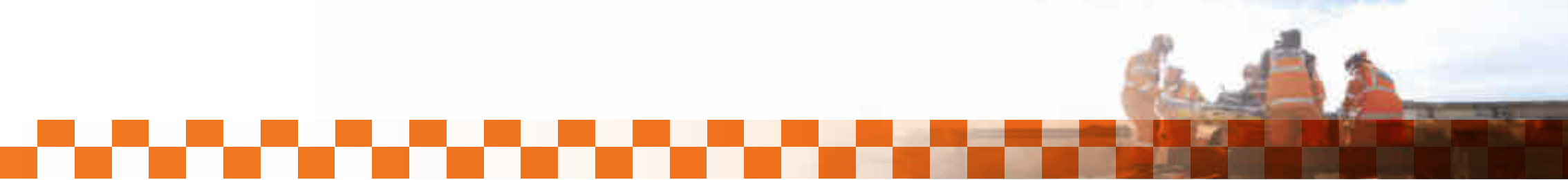
Part of the SES spirit has been an aversion to “non-essential administration” overtaking operational needs, and it quickly became apparent there wasn’t one single source for most information, no archives and only fragmented “history”.

But the flood of anecdotes, documents and boxes of photographs that were contributed reflected a passion to help

tell the story. Regrettably, it was impossible to include all of them. Some units have been featured, but only as examples of an extraordinary or typical statewide SES situation.

We apologise to those who have not been mentioned or who would have liked more information. But we hope that this book has plenty to revive special memories: the camaraderie, passion, effort, heartaches, gratitude, lessons, frustrations, politics and games of the past.

But, most of all, be proud of the other aim of this book: to show the SES growing into a vibrant and professional organisation that has never lost its founding spirit.



YOU GIRLS AND GUYS ARE HEROES, heroines and lifesavers in the truest sense,” wrote Tony and Kym Holde of Port Pirie to *The Recorder* newspaper in 2011, thanking SES volunteers for rescuing them in dark and rough conditions after their boat sank. This book salutes all those heroes and their half century of volunteer emergency service to South Australia. It also aims to capture the SES’s community and family aura that’s been such a special and invaluable foundation.

1 SALUTING HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE

The volunteer ethos of the SES has proved to be a marvellous asset for South Australia



Minister for Emergency Services Tony Piccolo:
“Across this great state, the role of the SES goes well
beyond emergency response.”

ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS about South Australia is that, in times of trouble, there are so many people who are ready to roll up their sleeves and help others out. It's this community spirit that is the backbone of the State Emergency Service in South Australia.

We're fortunate to have so many men and women around our state who are prepared to give their time and energy to help others in often incredibly challenging circumstances. Across this great state, the role of the SES goes well beyond emergency response. The people who make up our State Emergency Service units in South Australia are an integral part of the community. They are people who are respected and whose presence during a disaster or major incident is a reassurance to the general public.

It's often difficult work. SES volunteers are frequently asked to some confronting scenes – be it major storm damage, flooding, rescues or road crashes. However, it's work that is often rewarding and vital to the ongoing health and wellbeing of our communities.

This book tells the story of our State Emergency Service – looking at the history of this great organisation and the volunteers who have made the SES what it is today. It also looks to the future and the changing face of the SES.

It's a fitting tribute to the dedication of all State Emergency Service volunteers and, importantly, features some personal stories of the many thousands of people who have volunteered with the SES. If you've never thought about getting involved with your local unit of the State Emergency Service, I hope the stories told here inspire you to consider volunteering.

To those SES volunteers across South Australia who have already given so much, I thank you for your time and your service. You remain an essential part of our community.

TONY PICCOLO MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Government of South Australia



Chief Officer Chris Beattie: "Today's SASES is a highly professional, disciplined and well-trained rescue service."

THIS BOOK IS A TRIBUTE to the thousands of South Australians who have been involved with the State Emergency Service (and Civil Defence) since the 1960s. Our volunteers give their time and skills, not for financial reward, but rather for the satisfaction from service, achievement, personal development and camaraderie.

The South Australian State Emergency Service (SES) is a volunteer emergency service organisation which gives immediate assistance during emergencies and disasters. It provides community response to day-to-day incidents such as vehicle accidents, searches, cliff rescues, flood and storm damage and any other incidents that might require rescue or search services.

The SES is part of a national network of services in each state and territory around Australia. More than 1700 SES volunteers are members of 67 units across South Australia. Volunteers provide emergency response to the community of South Australia 24 hours a day, seven days a week and we simply couldn't do without them. They are always ready to help out in a storm, fire, road accident, flood and other major incidents right around our state and their commitment is the core strength of the service. The SES also cooperates closely with other statutory emergency services and we value and respect their skills and support. SES has storm and flood response as responsibilities in state legislation, and it is the hazard leader and control agency for extreme weather in SA. Part of our role is to increase community awareness and preparedness relating to extreme weather events and our Community Engagement Unit is helping to raise our profile and increase recruitment.

Today's SASES is a highly professional, disciplined and well-trained rescue service that protects the community of SA from the effects of a very wide range of emergency incidents and particularly those requiring professional rescue services. A well-prepared community is better able to respond to and recover from an emergency.

CHRIS BEATTIE
Chief Officer
SA State Emergency Service

2 THE SES TODAY: AN ESTABLISHED FORCE

The SES has earned a firm place in the state's emergency response

Defining who we are and SES's role in emergencies



Being ready to tackle emergencies means hours of training for SES volunteers who also front up on a chilly weekend morning (above) to test their skills in a rescue challenge. Chief Officer Chris Beattie (far right) addresses teams from units taking part in the annual State Rescue Challenge.

The South Australian State Emergency Service (SES) is a community-based volunteer organisation, drawing on a half century of history.

The SES's role and entity as provider of emergency response service across SA was made official by the state government in 2005. The main roles of the SES include:

- Control agency/hazard leader for flood and extreme weather.
- Responding to floods and storms.
- Helping police, health, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) to deal with any emergency (e.g. air observation, evidence search, and operational and logistics support including lighting, shelter, bushfire response staging area management).
- Helping with prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies.

- Road crash, vertical, land search and swiftwater rescue, marine search and rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse and animal rescue.
- Community education.
- Contributing to emergency management (state emergency planning, training and executive support to zone emergency management committees).

Within the statewide roles, the SES's 67 volunteer units have developed their own identities through local demands. For example, some country units have a high incidence of road crash rescue because of their location.

The SES has a focus on increasing its units' links to their communities and their needs, but also it is a highly-trained versatile volunteer force that is able, as it has proved, to confront wider major disasters in SA and interstate.



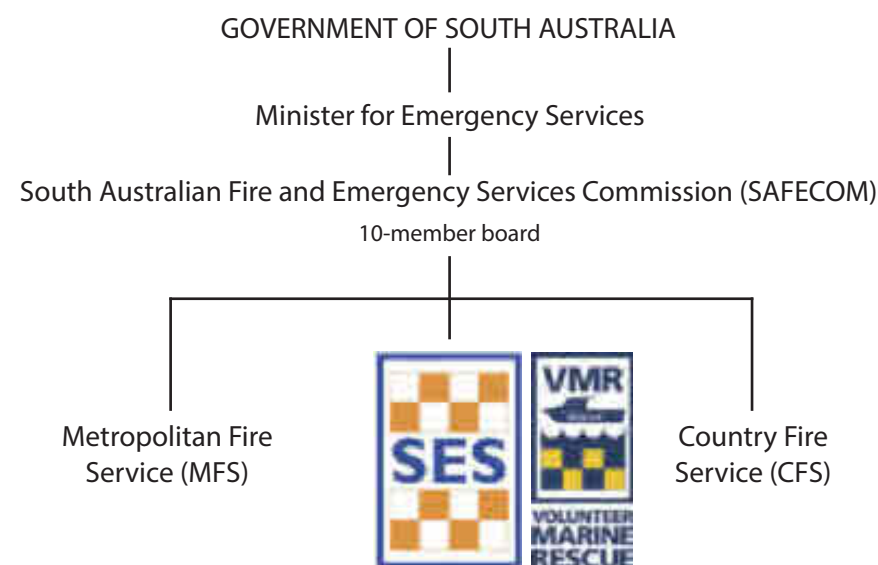
The SES Chief Officer Chris Beattie, second from right, with (from left) SA Police Commissioner Gary Burns, Metropolitan Fire Service Chief Officer Grant Lupton, SAFECOM Chief Executive David Place, then-Minister for Emergency Services Michael O'Brien and CFS Chief Officer Greg Nettleton.

FINDING A PLACE AND IDENTITY is integral to the history of the SES. For a start, the name South Australian State Emergency Service (SES) didn't come into being until 1974 – more than 10 years after its origins as SA Civil Defence.

Even after 1974, the SES remained under the patronage of SA Police (close links remain today) and later under the Emergency Services Administrative Unit (ESAU) in 2000.

The SES became a separate corporate entity in 2005 when the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission Act was proclaimed.

This Act created the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) to support the SES, the Country Fire Service (CFS) and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) in resources and strategy.



2 THE SES TODAY: AN ESTABLISHED FORCE

With 67 units, 54 in rural areas, the SES is woven into the fabric of its communities

Units flying SES flag far and SA wide

South Region

SOUTHERN ADELAIDE

Community Engagement
 Metro South
 Mount Barker
 Noarlunga
 Prospect
 State Operations & Support
 Sturt
 Western Adelaide

NORTHERN ADELAIDE

Campbelltown
 Central Operations Coordination
 Dog Operations
 Eastern Suburbs
 Edinburgh
 Enfield
 Onkaparinga
 Tea Tree Gully

SOUTH EAST

Bordertown
 Keith
 Kingston
 Millicent
 South East Operations & Support
 Mount Gambier

RIVERLAND

Barmera
 Berri
 Blanchetown
 Kapunda
 Loxton
 Renmark
 Riverland Operations & Support

HILLS/FLEURIEU

Kangaroo Island
 Meningie
 Murray Bridge
 South Coast
 Strathalbyn
 Yankalilla

North Region

MID NORTH

Burra
 Clare
 Hallett
 Laura
 Spalding
 Saddleworth



Kingston unit is part of the South East, one of 10 SES districts across the whole of SA.

FLINDERS/GULF

Parachilna/Angorichina CRT*
 Booleroo Centre
 Cleve
 Hawker
 Kimba
 Port Augusta
 Quorn
 Whyalla
 Wirrealpa CRT*

YORKE

Bute
 Maitland
 North Operations & Support
 Port Broughton
 Port Pirie
 Warooka
 Snowtown

OUTBACK

Andamooka
 Beverley CRT*
 Coober Pedy
 Innamincka CRT*
 Leigh Creek
 Marla CRT*
 Mintabie
 Roxby Downs

EYRE

Ceduna
 Cummins
 Nullarbor CRT*
 Port Lincoln
 Streaky Bay
 Tumby Bay
 West Operations & Support
 Wudinna

* CRT = Community Response Team

SES UNITS COVER every square centimetre of SA, but, in the vast mostly-empty far north, their resources are thinly stretched.

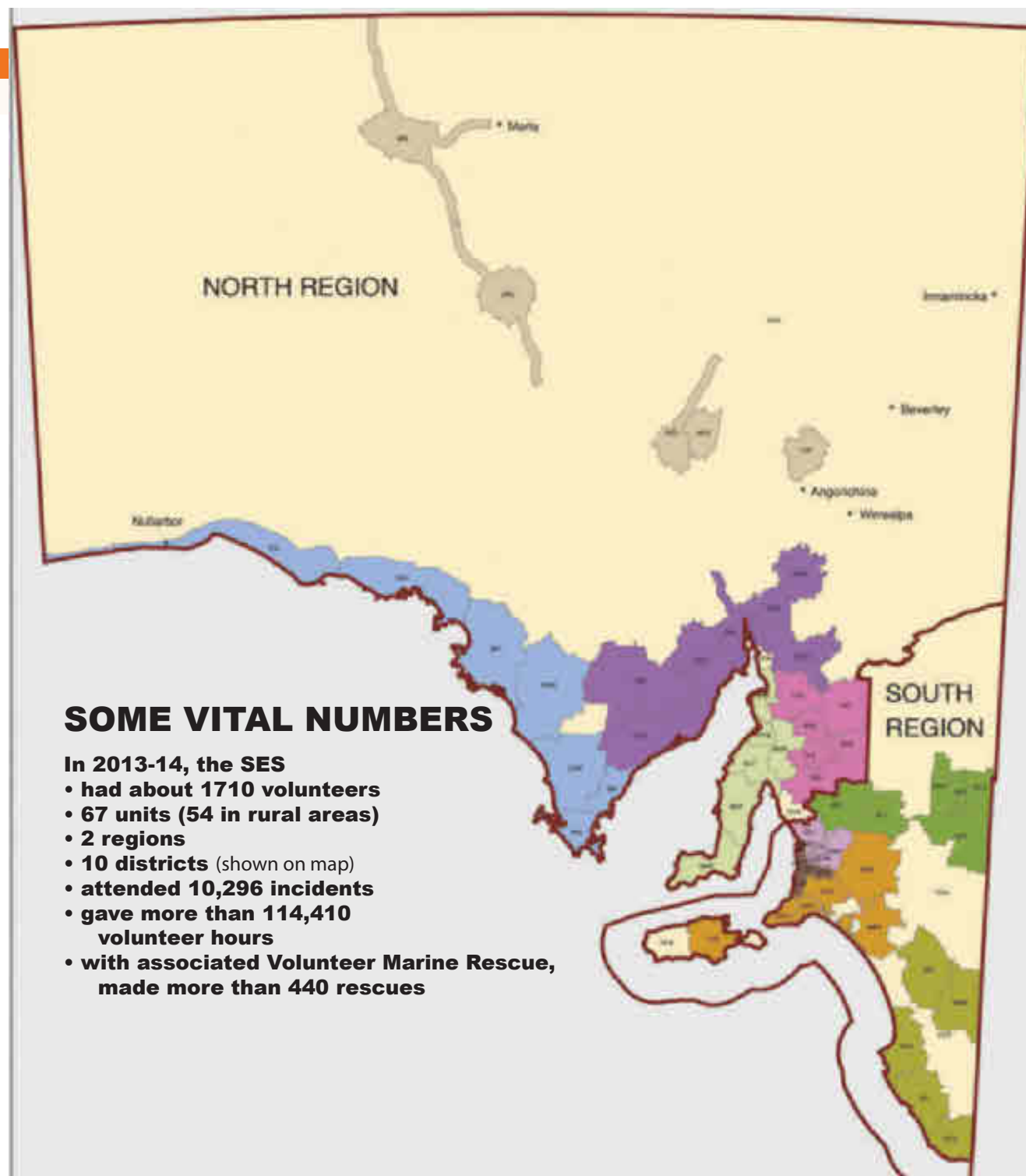
For example, Hawker SES looks after almost 40,000 square kilometres – roughly the size of nations like Holland and Belgium.

This means it may take Hawker SES a long time to reach a road crash, say, between Blinman and Arkaroola.

The Hawker unit's solution, guided by unit members Sindy and Brian McCourt, with the Fargher family from Wirrealpa Station keen to participate, was a Community Response Team (CRT).

The Farghers were given gear to get into action to save lives. Hawker SES and SES HQ came up with a trailer, generators and road crash rescue equipment to get the scheme on the road, and the State Government Insurance Commission (SGIC) gave a \$5,000 grant.

When assessed, this new concept for SES was considered so effective that other locations, including Arkaroola, Angorichina Village and Parachilna, established CRTs.



2 THE SES TODAY: AN ESTABLISHED FORCE

How we got here: some milestones and the ongoing incidents that shape the SES

SOME OF THE SES MILESTONES

- 1962** • The SA Government appoints a part-time Commissioner and full-time Deputy Commissioner (Ron Nichols) of reborn Civil Defence Organisation, based at Thebarton police barracks.
- Salisbury (later Northern Districts, Edinburgh) Civil Defence Unit opens.
- 1963** • Laura Civil Defence Unit opens.
- 1965** • Mayor announces unit for Enfield.
- Prospect and Mitcham units open.
- 1960s** • Kings College Civil Defence (later Norwood/Kensington, Eastern Suburbs) Unit established.
- 1971** • Prospect Unit's first vehicle arrives.
- 1974** • Name change from Civil Defence to South Australian SES.
- 1975** • State Government announces that SES "could provide leadership for the public" in an earthquake.
- Formation of State Disaster Committee.
- 1977** • State Disaster Plan written.
- 1978** • Stuart Macleod (Central), Peter Tobe (South) and Darian Stringer (North) appointed as Regional Officers.
- Port Lincoln Council supports forming SES unit.
- Tumby Bay, Western Adelaide, Noarlunga units formed.
- 1970s** • Volunteer Marine Rescue groups come under SES administration.
- 1983** • Ron Nichols made SES Director.
- Orange uniforms first seen in major exercise.
- 1984** • Brian Lancaster returns to SES as Director.
- First divisional officers appointed.

Five permanent full-time chiefs span the history of SA's SES



Ron Nichols Brian Lancaster



David Place Stuart Macleod Chris Beattie

1962

1974

1988

1965

1980

EXAMPLES OF INCIDENTS BIG AND SMALL



- 1970** • SA's worst bus smash at Wasleys level crossing near Gawler. Bus collides with Bluebird train; 16 killed, 40 injured.
- 1974** • River Murray flood 8.5m at Morgan.
- Cyclone Tracy hits Darwin.
- 1975** • Cliff rescue of 18-year-old at Second Valley.
- Land search for elderly woman in Adelaide Hills.
- 1976-77** • Severe drought.
- Heavy hailstorm at Port Broughton.
- 1980** • Ash Wednesday bushfires.
- 1982-3** • Most severe SA recent drought.
- 1983** • Ash Wednesday
- Major flooding, Adelaide and Barossa Valley.
- 1985** • Danggali Park fire near Renmark
- 1986** • Severe storms in Adelaide.
- 1987** • Mini tornados hit Port Parham and Armagh.
- Train derailment at Long Plains.
- Flooding in Mount Barker.
- Fatal vehicle crash at Sheoak Log.
- German tourist rescued at Wilpena Pound.
- Scouts die in canoe tragedy on Lake Alexandrina.
- 1988** • Bushfires in Flinders Ranges, Billiatt Conservation Park.
- 1989** • Outback floods.
- 1990** • Bushfires in Adelaide Hills.
- Innamincka floods.
- 1991** • Severe hailstorms, Adelaide, Mid North, Yorke Peninsula, Coorong, South East.
- 42 bushfires, storm damage, hail.



- 1990s** • SES staff moves from Thebarton police barracks to police headquarters in city.
- 1993** • SASES Volunteers' Association formed.
- 1994** • Tea Tree Gully Unit wins first of three national rescue challenges.
- State Headquarters Unit set up with members from old Headquarters reserve list.

- 1996** • First SES parade during SES Week.
- 1999** • Emergency Services Levy introduced.
- 2000** • SES comes under Emergency Services Administrative Unit (ESAU).
- 2002** • Salisbury Level Crossing Crash.
- 2004** • Director Brian Lancaster resigns; moves to the Premier's Department.
- Nat Cooke appointed Acting Director.

- 2004** • CFS/SES HQ opened at Mount Barker.
- Custom-built SES rescue boat for Tumby Bay.
- 2005** • David Place appointed Chief Officer.
- SES gets corporate identity under SAFECOM.
- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Force formed.
- Shark patrols start.

- 2007** • First major interstate deployment after storms in NSW.
- 2008** • Stuart Macleod appointed Chief Officer.
- Volunteers' Charter signed.
- SA Community Floodsafe campaign launched.
- 2009** • SES takes on heatwave risk response.

- 2010** • Chris Beattie succeeds Stuart Macleod as Chief Officer.
- 2011** • National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience.
- 2012** • Community Engagement Unit based at Adelaide Airport.
- Major exercise: Operation Northern Strike.

- 2012** • Tour Down Under involvement.
- First CALD trial at Riverland and Edinburgh units.
- Tumby Bay SES and Marine Rescue Headquarters opened.
- Campbelltown Unit new headquarters opened.
- 2013** • Revised charter for volunteers.

1992

2005

2010

1996

2007

- 1992** • Oil slick, Spencer Gulf near Port Pirie.
- North Brighton petrol station explosion.
- Grand Prix events: Car crashes through barrier at Colonnades.

- 1994** • National Crime Authority office bombed.
- Severe storms hit Brighton, Henley, Semaphore jetties.
- Kangaroo Island ferry runs aground.
- 1996** • Snowtown bus crash.
- 1999** • Murder victims discovered at Snowtown.
- Land search at murder scene near Gawler

- 2005** • Wangary bushfire
- Weapon search, Adelaide.
- Haystack fire, Clare.
- Long Plains silo incident.
- 2006** • Cow rescued from well at Two Wells.
- Search for missing Italian tourist at Wilpena Pound.
- Car over cliff, Ceduna.
- Land search, Deep Creek.

- 2007** • Kangaroo Island bushfires.
- Fierce storms, floods, Mid North.
- Outback Cleanup on Strzelecki Track by Andamooka, Roxby Downs units.
- 2008** • Land search for man near Bute.
- Boat sinks in Stansbury.
- 2009** • Port Lincoln and WOSU buildings destroyed by fire.

- 2010** • Widespread storm damage, Penola.
- Stockport flooded

- 2011** • River Murray floods
- 2012** • Wingfield rubbish dump fire.



3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

The origins of SA Civil Defence – which led to the SES – are in WWII and the Cold War



Civil Defence reborn beneath cloud of fear

Out of Cold War nuclear attack fears, the SA Government in 1962 appointed a part-time commissioner and full-time deputy commissioner of Civil Defence.

They were based alongside the Emergency Fire Service (originally the wartime Air Raid Precautions Organisation and later the Country Fire Service) in the old infirmary building and later in the deputy police commissioner's residence at Thebarton police barracks.

Local councils were directed to begin educating the public and training volunteers in civil defence. The dual mission of the revived organisation was to act on natural disasters and respond to enemy attack.

“Nuclear weapons exist. The means to deliver them exist ... How can South Australians shut their eyes to the possibilities of the situation?”

Ron Nichols
Deputy Commissioner, SA Civil Defence

The public's concerns about Cold War nuclear attacks gradually waned in the later 1960s, but not for lack of warnings by Civil Defence deputy commissioner Ron Nichols.

Largely driven by volunteers, Civil Defence's role in the early 1970s became geared to responding to natural disasters. This saw a change of name to the SA Civil Defence and Emergency Services. At the national level in 1974, the Commonwealth Directorate of Civil Defence became the Natural Disasters Organisation. Each state and territory's Civil Defence and Emergency Service was given the new name of State (or territory) Emergency Service: SES.

“In 1964, we had Dr Rex Senior come along and teach us Geiger counters and aspects of nuclear warfare. This took place every Wednesday night.”

Bill Brassington
Tea Tree Gully Civil Defence Unit



An atomic bomb test during the 1950s at Maralinga in South Australia's far north.

“The Civil Defence scientific section, which had Geiger counters among its equipment, gave instructions on how to survive an atomic blast by, at the flash, throwing oneself face down in the nearest gutter.”

Arno Attema
Enfield Civil Defence Unit

THE FIRST LIFE OF CIVIL DEFENCE was during World War II as volunteers trained to prepare for possible enemy attacks on Adelaide.

The volunteers were stood down in 1944 and the organisation was disbanded nationally in 1945.

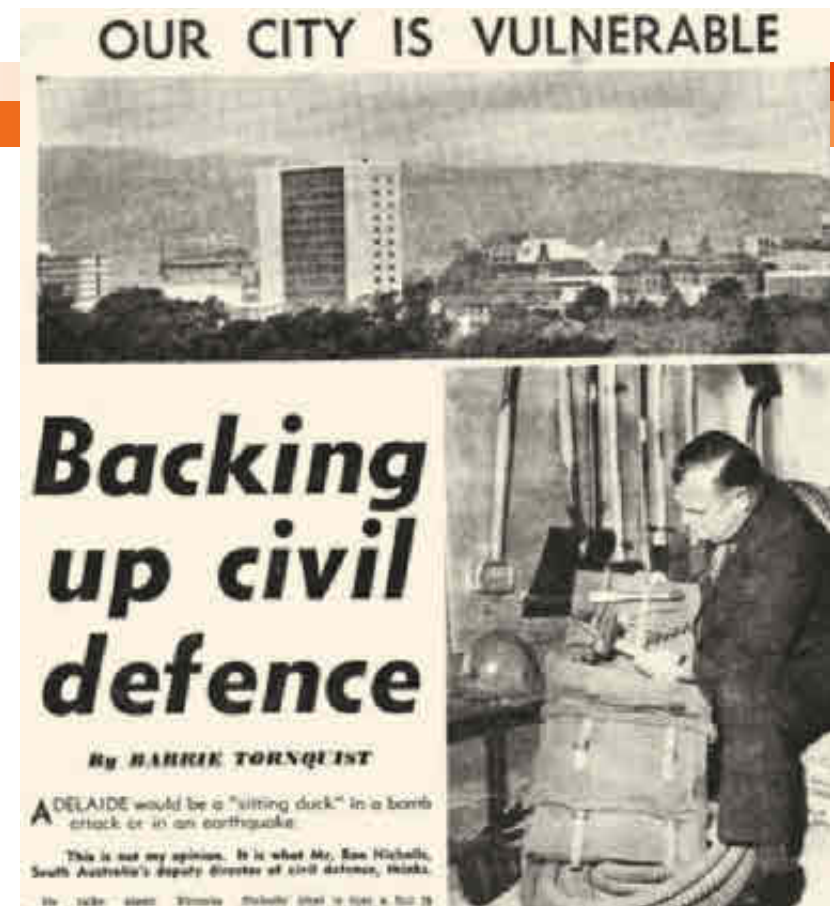
The revival of Civil Defence could be traced to 1949 when the Cold War fears escalated after the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb. This built on memories of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

South Australia had the added concern of international attention because of British nuclear weapons tests in its far north in the 1950s.

But progress towards a rebirth of Civil Defence, strongly championed by SA Premier Tom Playford, was hampered by debate over the effectiveness of such a force in the wake of nuclear attack plus differences between the Commonwealth and state governments over cost sharing and the role of the Civil Defence organisations.

Not until the 1960s did the Commonwealth agree to pay for the salary of permanent Civil Defence staff in the states, as well as providing specialised radiation-monitoring equipment and national guidance.

The states then agreed to organise and finance Civil Defence units in municipal council areas.



Articles in *The News* (above) and *The Advertiser* (below) in the mid 1960s feature SA's Deputy Commissioner of Civil Defence, Ron Nichols (left), warning of a possible nuclear bomb attack on Adelaide.



3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

Resilience and adaptability were ingrained into resources-poor Civil Defence units

In State Parliament, the declining interest and funding to Civil Defence was raised by MP Heini Becker in 1971. “There is a general lack of knowledge surrounding the Civil Defence movement ... Some people seem to object to the name ‘civil defence’ because they immediately think of war, but the movement does a good job in civil emergencies.”

The change from the Civil Defence Organisation to “Civil Defence and Emergency Services” better reflected the changing and more relevant role.

It became increasingly clear Civil Defence could undergo no further practical developments without a significant and far-reaching change. Despite the limits on what could usefully be achieved by Civil Defence as the organisation’s Cold War role abated, the framework put in place during the sixties had potential for the service to be developed further.

Given this, and the myriad political difficulties associated with the organisation, it was a natural evolution for Civil Defence units to place an increased emphasis on their skill and ability (and potential for further development) in response to natural disasters and man-made accidents. It was realised at government level that volunteers with such enthusiasm could be used to the advantage of communities. This is evident in the Parliament’s increasing concern about impacts of flooding in SA.

Extracts from *Fallout from Failure: The Transformation of the Civil Defence Organisation into the State Emergency Service in South Australia 1949-1974*, a thesis by Zoe Joy Easterbrook for her bachelor of arts (history) degree.

Civil Defence units create a service vanguard



The official commissioning of new Enfield Civil Defence headquarters in 1972.

The two vans (above), parked proudly alongside the parade of volunteers, say it all about the resourcefulness of SA’s first Civil Defence units that later would become the core of the SES.

The occasion was the official commissioning in 1972 of the Enfield Civil Defence HQ, replacing the original base opened in 1965. The two ex-bread vans had been acquired by the unit and given a makeover. The one on the left was for the warden service and the one on the

right, complete with antenna, safety warning light and rear spotlight, was fitted for signals operations.

Civil Defence training was mainly devoted to preparing for nuclear attack. The scientific service gave training with radiation meters; the signal service laid miles of cable for field phones; and the welfare service dug pits and built barbecues out of secondhand bricks and corrugated iron to feed everyone soup and scones.

SA CIVIL DEFENCE IN 1965 could boast having three big rescue trucks (see press clipping at right) based at the police barracks in Thebarton.

But the level of Commonwealth Government money that funded those trucks was not flowing down to Civil Defence units.

The units carried on bravely as they adapted and set the first standards of emergency help and made the best of limited resources coming mainly from local councils.

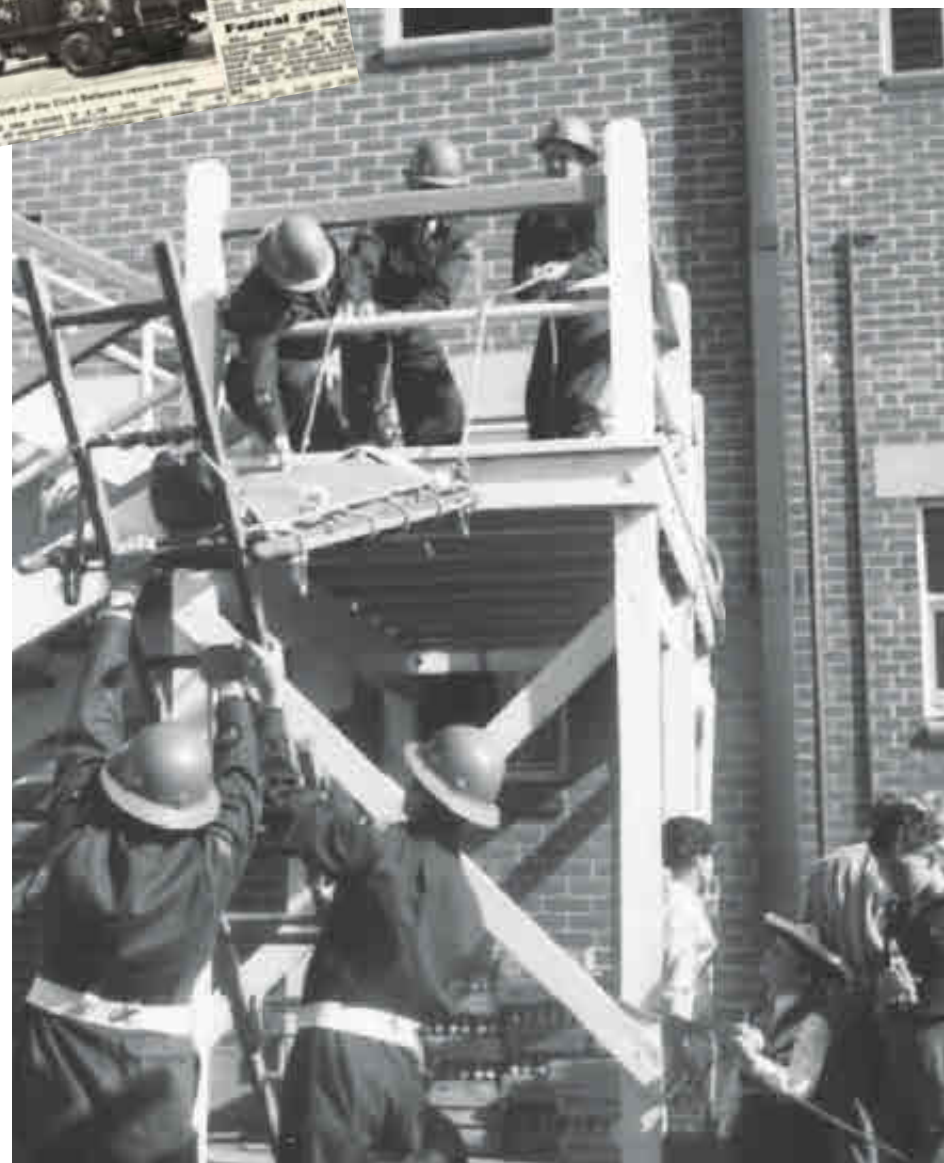
The first Civil Defence units – Salisbury (now Edinburgh), Laura, Enfield, Mitcham (Metro South), Prospect and what is now Eastern Suburbs – in the 1960s set a standard in resilience, adaptability and dedication that has carried through to the SES. The very first of those units, Salisbury (now Edinburgh), began in 1962 with 10 members in an Education Department building so dilapidated that the floor boards kept collapsing and the council eventually had to close it.

In 1979, the unit relocated next door to the old police station in Ann Street, Salisbury, where it took over the sleeping quarters, old stables and the cells for a while before moving into the station itself a year later.

“It was great,” former unit member Shane Leedham recalls.

“We had secure storage for our gear in the cells.”

Shane says the unit’s first vehicle was an old LandCruiser “which, when I joined, wasn’t even going. The weight in the rescue trailer had done in the poor old thing. Our next vehicle was an old ex-police International troopy from state headquarters, and then we got an old Canter bus. We saw it at Ajax Motors on Port Wakefield Road and the council bought it for us.”



An SA Civil Defence unit enacts a rescue exercise at a school fete in the late 1960s to publicise the organisation and attract recruits.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA Thebarton barracks era sets up key elements for emergency services

Turning a keen Dad's Army into professional structure

Civil Defence phase

Public servant Ron Nichols had the primary task of setting up Civil Defence volunteer units in SA when he was appointed deputy director of SA's State Civil Defence Organisation, established in 1962 under the Commonwealth Government's National Civil Defence Directorate.

Police Commissioner Brigadier General Raymond Leane was director but Ron Nichols did day-to-day organising.

Police senior constable Brian Lancaster was seconded to Civil Defence as Staff Officer Operations. Another senior constable, Ian Jackson, was brought in as State Communications Officer. Ian (ex Police Emergency Operations Group; later the STAR Force) looked after rescue and training.

In 1979, Brian Lancaster left to become director of regions and branches at the Australian Red Cross.

He would return later for another important era in what became the SES.

The SES phase

The name Civil Defence was replaced by South Australian State Emergency Service in 1974.

The next major phase came in 1979 when Regional Officers – Stuart Macleod (Central), Peter Tobe (South) and Darian Stringer (North) – were appointed. Between 1979 and 1983, these officers created today's SES. Darian Stringer more than doubled the units in North Region as did Peter Tobe in the South.

Stuart Macleod cleared the books of moribund Civil Defence units, including Unley, Burnside, Henley and Grange, Blyth and Balaklava.

Ron Nichols was appointed Director of SES in 1983, replacing Police Chief Superintendent Ernest Aston. But Ron promptly announced his retirement, and did so in 1984.

Brian Lancaster became Director; Ian Jackson retired.

The regional officers worked with Brian on major renewal: uniforms, equipment, vehicles, training, communications and volunteer support.

In 1984, Stuart Macleod became State Rescue Officer and Darian Stringer the State Communications Officer. Peter Tobe, who spent a lot of time on sick leave, due to war wounds, retired. Macleod worked with volunteers to create the training system as a state standard, while Stringer designed communications and vehicle fleet programs.

Another major move in 1984 saw SES divisional officers working with police divisions in emergency planning. The first divisional officers were – John Thorne; Alan Cormack; Noel Hodges; John Hynes; Gordon Hartley; Denis Rayner; Ian McDonough; Graham Porter; Greg Malseed; and Keith Harraway.





Brian Lancaster

Stuart Macleod

In the 1980s, Nat Cooke from the CFS became SES Deputy Director, with Ray Thompson as Administration Officer until the late 1990s when Eileen Dunlop took over. Linda Palm joined as secretary.

The Thebarton era ended in the 1990s when the SES moved to Police headquarters at 30 Flinders Street in the city. Stuart Macleod left in 2010 as the longest-serving operational member, reflecting SES's growth out of Civil Defence. He joined Mitcham unit in 1966 as a volunteer, became Local Controller Mitcham (1973), Regional Officer (1979), State Rescue Officer (1984) and Chief Officer (2008).



NICHOLS, LANCASTER, JACKSON, STRINGER, TOBE AND MACLEOD are key names in the early history of Civil Defence and the State Emergency Service in SA.

Ron Nichols, Brian Lancaster and Ian Jackson could be credited with creating SA Civil Defence in the 1960s. In turn, Brian Lancaster, Darian Stringer, Peter Tobe and Stuart Macleod forged the SES into an operational front-line service in the 1970s.

Together, they took a committed, adaptable, but poorly resourced Dad's Army and gave it the structure to build a professional emergency force.

This was the Thebarton era, when Civil Defence and then the SES were under the patronage of SA Police.

In the 1960s and into the 1970s, the Civil Defence staff of four worked from the former infirmary at Thebarton police barracks, before shifting into the house formerly used by the police commissioner.



Legendary Enfield Unit Welfare Officer Lily Willetts with a warden at a rest centre, made from local materials, during an SA Civil Defence exercise at Echunga in 1968.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES

Some legends of Civil Defence and the SES recall emergency service life in hardier days

Memories are made of tasks and other mixed adventures



“I remember in the early days of weekend training, we had to go out and bunny bash on the Friday nights. We’d skin and cook the rabbits to make a stew, and sleep on the hard depot floors in sleeping bags.”

Gordon Hartley, Port Lincoln

“In the late 60s, we were lucky if we got two or three jobs a year. I remember a flooding at Pooraka that was only the second job for our unit that year.”

Arno Attema, Enfield

“We went to a callout for a tree on house. The tree had done a lot of damage but the chap tried to blame us. We always took photos of the damage and a lot of what he said we’d done was long-term damage and he was claiming off SGIC. We had the photos. SGIC was very grateful for our preparedness.”

Greg LePage, Eastern Suburbs

“We had a call to Blythe Street, Semaphore. As a unit, we did some storm work, but usually only kept a few tarps. We generally only used one tarp on a roof. We got there and it was huge. We needed two or three big tarps per house. The last job was a block of flats and it took seven tarps. We were working from about 4am, and by 6am we had it covered. The guy gave us \$50 for our trouble and that bought us all breakfast at McDonald’s. After that incident, we were given lots of new poly tarps.”

Ross Johnston, Prospect

“In 1977, we had no pagers; only phone calls for callout. I got a phone call. It was for a bomb blast in a car yard on Main North Road. The blast just missed a bus, threw a car body onto a house and left a big crater in the car yard. Someone had used 150 sticks of gelignite!”

Ross Johnston, Prospect



“A big incident was the fire at Blue Gums Hotel off Hancock Road in the early 80s. When the bushfires came, we helped with water runs to the fire ground, road blockades and directions.”

**Bill Brassington
(with son and SES District Officer Craig),
Tea Tree Gully**

“After Third Creek flooding, we were called to an Osmond Terrace house with a swimming pool filled with mud. Our guys had already been on three or four shifts. We rocked up to this house and asked the chap to use his phone because the radios were flat. He said: ‘Yes’. I went inside and he was sitting with his three big teenage sons watching footy on TV! I said: ‘Are you going to help?’ ‘Oh, no,’ the dad replied. ‘They’re at uni. They have to study.’”

Greg LePage, Eastern Suburbs



HUMOUR OUT OF HARD TIMES helped forge camaraderie among volunteer groups that has been a hallmark of the SES in SA since its earliest Civil Defence days. Bonds were strengthened by their experiences at tasks and occasional frustrating interaction with the public.



An SA Civil Defence exercise in the early 1970s.

“ At a chainsaw-training weekend at Keynton, near Angaston, we were in several tents. One member’s father, Graham, was reserved about using a joint long-drop loo, so he grabbed a newspaper and shovel and walked several hundred metres downhill to a gum tree. He settled in, removed his attire and proceeded with his business. But entering the scene was the whole Barossa Valley Hunt Club riding past him. He couldn’t stand or he’d be more embarrassed. He just waved. They waved and went on. It took a long time for him to settle.”

“One afternoon we set alight a couple of tree stumps. The land owner wanted them burnt to save having to grub them. One stump was just below the dam near the camp. We settled down after tea to chew the fat with the odd drink. After a couple of hours, heavy rain started. We all ran into the tent, but one lad grabbed a bucket, ran outside to the dam, filled the bucket with water and put out the burning stump. He was proud when he walked back, drenched, into the tent. We were killing ourselves laughing as we tried to explain what he’d done. City boys!”

Greg LePage, Eastern Suburbs

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES Women overcame official obstacles to them taking part in rescue operations

Lead roles for females in high drama* at Mitcham

(*and a fair bit of romance)



Mitcham Civil Defence (later Mitcham/Metro South SES) Unit gave the big break to adventurous women. Mitcham allowed the first female rescuers but also possibly the first women in Australia to do vertical rescue.

Stuart Macleod, pictured at left during his climbing days with Mitcham Civil Defence, recalls:

“We were running basic light rescue courses from 1968-69.

“We had nurses from Blackwood Hospital training as fully-fledged members of Mitcham Civil Defence rescue. Dawn Lynch (now Mayman), Carmel Lee, Bronwyn Goudie, Jayne Dow all came from Blackwood Hospital.

“Others recruited included Liz Caris (now Hofmeyer), Rebecca Kling, Gladys Huxley, Shirley Ginsberg, Helen Gardner, Christine Gardner (now Southby), Sue Southby and Vanessa Standing.

“In the 70s, school chums Jeanine Boxall and Lorraine Udy joined Mitcham and, until Jennifer Vincent came along, these two set the pace for women in SES rescue. They were rescue and first aid trainers, and the first women in SES vertical rescue. Police owned vertical rescue and they wouldn’t have women in that role in those days at any cost.

“My deputy controller at Mitcham, Phil Green, married Jeanine Boxall, and, not to be left out, I married Lorraine Udy. When I joined paid staff in 1979, I was there to start



Pioneering efforts of Mitcham (now Metro South) unit opened the way for women to take part in rescue at the highest level.

and support the new Noarlunga and Western Adelaide units. Lorraine would come with me to train basic rescue. The first women to do the SES basic light rescue course were Rebecca Kling, Gladys Huxley, Christine Gardner, Helen Gardner (no relation) and Elizabeth Caris.

“Again, it was Mitcham CD/SES that infected the entire organisation, but its policy of women in rescue ran afoul of state headquarters (who didn’t like it at all). Some units thought it was ridiculous to have women in rescue.

“I should also point out here that, apart from Philip and me, there were a number of Mitcham unit marriages. Dawn Lynch, Liz Caris, and Christine Gardner all married Mitcham members – and there were others.”

Women’s auxiliaries, such as Murray Bridge’s, were a huge source of funds for fledgling SES units. Member Viv Heitmann recalls: “It was not unusual to raise over \$1000 per street stall, which was a lot of money in those days. Our kitchens, freezers and cupboards were full to the brim with cakes, biscuits and slices leading up to the stalls.” Fundraisers included barbecues, family fun days, film evenings, produce stalls, gala days, fashion parades, Melbourne Cup lunches, morning teas, trash and treasure days, and catering. It funded lights and sirens, new tyres and rims, radio antennae, jaws of life and even the painting of the SES unit’s vehicles.

THE 2,000 WOMEN IN 1960s-70s SA Civil Defence were seen as having an especially vital role in welfare.

They were ready to care for people after an enemy attack or a natural disaster, help in evacuations, and provide food for Civil Defence workers, emergency hospitals and people trapped in buildings.

Women also trained as wardens, signals officers and some for the scientific section. The first training was first aid and home nursing. But Louise Reynolds (formerly of Enfield and Sturt units, now at South Coast) found hurdles beyond that:

“In the early 70s at Enfield, I was in communications and I asked if I could do a rescue course because, being comms, I was often asked to get certain equipment for crews. I was told no, because I was a female.

“Stuart Macleod was Rescue Officer at Mitcham, and there was another woman who wanted to do basic rescue too. So we asked and it was approved ‘provided it was for interest only, not to participate in rescue’.

“It was the first time we were allowed to wear pants (jeans, under our navy wrap tops). At the end of the course, we had to fix a ladder to a rescue tower and I was picked to go up and tie it off. We had a wonderful time; got our accreditation – but we were not allowed to take part in a rescue.”

“In the early 1970s, the men had white gaiters and white belts with dark navy uniforms. Women wore a sort of navy wraparound dress. Later, a few women got white overalls. When orange came in, women could wear that. In the early 80s, I was pregnant with my second child and a member at Meadows. There were four girls in the unit and, because it was ‘country’, they were a bit more rescue focused and we were allowed to do stretcher lashings and some basic rescue.”

“ There was another woman who wanted to do basic rescue too. So we asked and it was approved, ‘provided it was for interest only, not to participate in rescue.’”

Louise Reynolds, SES life member



Civil Defence women in the candlelight parade at the 1968 Adelaide Festival of Arts opening.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

Equipment evolved from scrounged basics in the 1960s-70s to today's sophistication

Improvising, bending rules, relying on council handouts

The early days of gaining and using equipment for emergency services in SA were a triumph of improvising.

Recalling the Civil Defence days, Enfield's Arno Attema says that in the 1960s the basic equipment for volunteers was "a transistor radio and a torch".

"When the unit needed to be called out, it was done by telephone on the pyramid system," Arno says. "Signals called one person and that person called two more and so on down the line. No pagers or mobiles!"

"Signals training included laying miles of cable to connect ex-WWII field phones and turning the handle to make it hopefully ring at the other end. It was quite usual for the rescue section to consist entirely of a small and very heavy trailer of equipment towed behind a private car."

A Civil Defence officer issued equipment to the units via local councils, but often the equipment received was not what the units wanted. Thus volunteers played "a huge part", Arno says, in changing the emphasis and making more equipment available.

Once a unit got going, it would have 10 times the equipment compared to that which it received from headquarters.

“ The unit inherited a lot of Civil Defence equipment, but sometimes there was a drawback. We had a radiation calculation meter and were using dummies that had been at Maralinga. They gave off a lot of radiation and we had to dispose of them quick smart.”

Mike Whitcher, Eastern Suburbs

Former SES CO Stuart Macleod jokes that the principle in those days was to "beg, borrow or steal" equipment. Trevor Heitmann of Murray Bridge recalls: "We gathered equipment to use and, in the beginning, our entire equipment fitted under a bed at the hospital. We had blankets, man packs and ropes. No uniforms, no boots, no protective gear and what we had was begged, borrowed or stolen."



Kangaroo Island volunteers with the slingshot used to send a small bag of shot tied to a lightweight cord over a house and then haul a safety rope over the roof for a rescuer to be tied off.

FAR FROM THE POORER days of making do with the basics, equipment used by the SES has evolved to the level where volunteers now have towers to practise their vertical rescue techniques.

Bill Brassington shows how far we have come when he describes the rough-and-tumble start to the Tea Tree Gully (TTG) Unit in 1964:

“Ron Nichols (Civil Defence Deputy Director) came out and we started the TTG Unit with the two Milton boys, Peter and Tom, and their father Bill, along with myself, Jim Costello, Noel House and Reg Maloney.

“The Miltons loaned their truck and we used my car. We would load them up with equipment and off we would go to a job. We had no chainsaws.

“Later, we were given a crosscut saw: a two-handle job about five feet long.

“Things got better in the 1960s. The council got us 500 sandbags and chainsaws. We had an amazing relationship with TTG Council (and we still do) . . . It was so good that, if we wanted something, we simply went to the council and asked, and it came – even petrol. They had their own bowsers in those days.”

(Bill Brassington was known as “One Cut Bill”. He thought it was easier to cut a tree/branch down from on high and then cut it up on the ground.)



Ken Spicer, Deputy Controller at Enfield Unit, with the tetra line gun.



(Above) The *Loxton News* reports on equipment given by the SES to the new local rescue squad in 1975.

(Middle right) The rope store at Eastern Suburbs unit in the late 1980s.

(Bottom right) Today's vertical rescue training is conducted on special towers.



3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

The dubious quality of rescue vehicles stretched units' adaptability in 1960s-70s



Eastern Suburbs Unit set a trend with John Gibson's orange VW and its flashing light.



The classic SES vehicle rescue combo of a Ford 250 dual cab and trailer at Sturt Unit.

“Our first truck was an old International fire truck with no roof, all open to the elements, with a ladder on top. We fitted it out ourselves. The brakes were so bad that you had to stand on them with two feet.”

Arno Attema, Enfield Unit, 1960s

“Our first vehicle was an old Land Rover. It was so slow that semi trailers would pass us on the road to an incident.”

Trevor Heitmann, Murray Bridge Unit, 1970s

Have wobbly wheels, we'll still rescue

Grimly humorous stories are typical of the vehicle experiences of SA's cash-strapped units in the 1960-70s era.

“Every training night, the (Murray Bridge) members used to put in \$5 each to pay for fuel for the vehicles,” Trevor Heitmann says.

When Ceduna SES started in the mid 1970s, its only equipment was a few shovels. When the unit eventually

did get its own vehicle, a two-tonne truck, it was hard to start. So volunteers returned to using their own vehicles. Ceduna's second vehicle, a secondhand LandCruiser, only presented more problems with its starter motor – and a dodgy door that occasionally flew open.

Noarlunga SES was happy to receive a donated ex-MFS fire extinguisher service vehicle in 1982. This Dodge V8 light truck was two-door with a bench seat. With three

in the vehicle, the middle passenger had to change gears at times, due to it having a floor shift lever that moved a very long way. The Noarlunga response, again typical, was to put in hundreds of hours of volunteer work into restoring this vehicle. Part of the floor was replaced and the whole vehicle was repainted. A member with his own crash repair shop donated time and equipment for the work.



This International troopy was one of Salisbury (Edinburgh) Unit's first vehicles.



Oh what a feeling! A whole fleet of new SES vehicles arrives in 2005.



Campbelltown Unit's mini 4 x 4 in full flight in the 1960s.

WAITING FOR AN SES FLEET of uniform good-standard vehicles continued until the 1980s.

Before that, the SES relied on donations, sponsors, loans, fundraising or councils to finance its vehicles. Once the Emergency Services Levy arrived, funds were available for special-purpose vehicles bought by the state government.

The SES was able to introduce 10-12 new vehicles a year. For the first time, the branding, signs and SES logos were all uniform and in place from handover. Richard

Today, the SES fleet of more than 200 vehicles includes 87 for quick response and 22 motor bikes. The SES has nearly completed a cost-saving move to own all vehicles, rather than leasing them.

Coombe joined SES in 2002 to manage procurement of vehicles. There were two key types of vehicles. The heavy rescue, such as the Isuzu cab chassis trucks, had their pods built by Moores. The light vehicles (Truck Class LR Mitsubishi Canter) were a smaller version. They could carry out all rescue functions: storm, flood and road crash. These were generic vehicles, allowing units to store their specialty equipment.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

Orange became the identity of SES via several other colours



The white overalls at this Eastern Suburbs Unit exercise (above) during the late 1970s gave way to today's orange outfit, standing the test at the 2013 State Rescue Challenge (right).



Colourful approach to orange uniform

“ I remember some major changes; some took years, others came quickly. When (CO) Brian Lancaster retired on February 8, 2004, the next day staff went from brown to khaki uniforms!”

John Thorne
 former Divisional Officer

“We were supplied with orange overalls and boots. If you were an officer, and wanted to wear ‘browns’, you had to pay for it. I got into a battle on behalf of those who didn’t wear browns. Those of us with browns could wear ribbons for dress occasions, but those in overalls were not allowed to wear their ribbons. They had earned the ribbons. Didn’t seem fair to me.”

Barbara Bray
 former Unit Controller, Prospect

“In the 1970s, we wore white overalls and red helmets (red for rescue) which we paid for ourselves. The communications people had blue helmets. State issued blue uniforms but we had white overalls for vehicle accident rescue, and we looked pretty spiffy.”

Trevor Heitmann
 former Unit Controller, Murray Bridge



The dark blue Civil Defence uniform in the early 1970s.

OUT OF THE BLUE, the now-familiar uniform of the State Emergency Service appeared in 1983 when all volunteers took part in a major exercise in orange overalls.

Dark blue was the colour of uniforms for SES in its previous identity as Civil Defence. The federal government provided the blue uniforms – surplus air force overalls – to Civil Defence.

Each Civil Defence unit had its sections wearing different coloured helmets: scientific (yellow), rescue (red), first aid (white), signals (blue), wardens and welfare (green) and headquarters (gold).

By 1977, with the name change to SES, there was a mix of blue uniforms in some units, with rescue crews changing to white overalls. By 1981, most crews seen in photographs appear in white overalls, with the officers in full blue dress.

While the orange uniform appeared in 1983, it was not until 2008, at the Unit Managers' Forum, that the long-awaited dress regulations were released. Although most members were wearing the new uniforms, by the end of that year it was clear that there was another problem: confusion over the insignia for ranks.



Edinburgh Unit Manager John Lawrence in today's orange SES uniform with the old Civil Defence helmet and shoulder bag.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

Isolation forced SES west coast units into greater drive and inventiveness



Port Lincoln's former 40-seater command bus. The unit's first vehicle was a trailer. "We had to tow it with our own private vehicles," Gordon Hartley recalls.



Founding members of Port Lincoln SES: Bob Cooke, now a CFS member; Gordon Hartley, now Unit Manager of West Operations and Support Unit (WOSU); Bob Pycroft, Unit Manager of Tumby Bay SES.



A major local fundraising push to raise \$25,000 helped Port Lincoln SES to buy and launch its first rescue boat in the early 1980s.

Making West Coast strong SES coast

Port Lincoln

Hartley's Heroes are still going strong. Port Lincoln SES Unit earned that name under Gordon Hartley, its first Controller from 1978.

To help lead his team, Gordon appointed Bob Cooke as Deputy, Lesley Watts as Administration Officer and Bob Pycroft as Training/Rescue Officer.

The unit's first vehicle was a two-wheel trailer. "In those days, we had to tow the trailer with our own private vehicles," Gordon Hartley recalls. "For communications, we were given our first radios: three 27MHz hand-held CBs. We thought it was Christmas."

The Hartley's Heroes legend was enhanced by a bold effort to set up its headquarters. The unit moved the old police barracks, a transportable structure, to a site two kilometres away with good radio coverage and outside possible disaster areas such as the grain silos and fuel storage tanks.



A block in scrubland on Les Watts Road was chosen. The new headquarters established here was eventually destroyed by bushfire – and replaced in 2010 by state-of-the-art emergency services premises.

In 1980, the unit started sea rescue operations and training in the boats of unit members Adrian Polomka and Trevor Hombsch. After numerous sea rescues, and

with Port Lincoln having the biggest fishing fleet in the southern hemisphere, it was decided the unit should get its own boat: a five metre aluminum Star Craft with diesel inboard motor – at what was then a major cost of \$25,000.

Out came the bingo tickets and raffle books. The National Bank assisted with a \$10,000 loan – paid back in three years. All electronic equipment was fitted by volunteer Bill Berkhuisen, saving a lot of money.

Gordon Hartley left Port Lincoln Unit in 1984 as the first regional officer for Eyre Peninsula. He was at the unit's 30 year celebrations and the handover of a new rescue boat.



DARIAN STRINGER'S dynamic efforts as Regional Officer helped get all units up and running on South Australia's vast and remote West Coast in the 1970s.

West Coast SES units such as Port Lincoln, Tumby Bay, Ceduna and Streaky Bay have made a virtue of their remoteness.

An independent community spirit has driven big fundraising projects to increase equipment. Not only do these units serve vast arid inland areas of Eyre Peninsula, but they also look after the magnificent sea around the Great Australian Bight.

Consequently, they have set the pace in marine rescue aspects such as air observers, dropmasters and dispatchers.

Ceduna

If a whale off the Great Australian Bight gets tangled in a net, Ceduna SES is trained to go to its rescue in the *MV Protector* Noosa cat boat.

Whale rescue is one of the special challenges thrown up by Ceduna's location. Five hundred kilometres from the WA border and 800 kilometres from Adelaide, Ceduna is bordered by the sea and the Nullarbor's Bunda Cliffs, the Googs Lake and the vast Nullarbor Plain.

This isolation forces Ceduna SES to rely on its own resources, ensuring all equipment is kept up to date and replenished. One vehicle is equipped with food, drink and basic needs for two or three days.

Training and equipment have been put to rigorous tests. Callouts have included a girl lost in the sandhills near Smoky Bay and a search for a captain missing from a ship at Thevenard.

Police Sergeant Peter Codrington (now Unit Manager) was the impetus in 1999 for Ceduna's marine rescue operations. In an exercise with National Parks, SES volunteers tagged seals at the Head of the Bight. This involved being lowered down 100 metre cliffs to narrow platforms at sea level. Seals were fitted with transmitters. Each named after a person on the exercise, the seals were tracked for many kilometres out to sea.



Disentangling whales from nets, tagging seals or shark attacks are part of West Coast SES units' range of marine tasks.

Tumby Bay

Tumby Bay Coastguard came under the banner of the SES in 2003.

It is run by SES volunteers Garry and Sue Smith. Volunteer Marine Rescue Tumby Bay also acts as a 24-hour SES radio station. Tumby Bay, along with Port Lincoln and Streaky Bay, was instrumental in forming air observers, dropmasters and dispatchers. Tumby Bay Unit has three air observers, with two being qualified in RDF equipment. It undertakes marine, road crash rescue, search, storm, air observers, communications and welfare. The unit has had only five controllers over 30 years: Ned Roberts, Jim Darling, Peter Fry, Matthew Carr and Bob Pycroft.

3 THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND EARLY SES ERA

The SASES showed the way to the rest of Australia in vertical rescue techniques

At cutting cliff edge of vertical rescue

SA's SES took the big leap into vertical rescue – a leap that made us leaders in Australia – in the mid 1970s.

The leap came, firstly, from Port Elliot/Goolwa Unit (now South Coast), led by Michael Scott and later, Ian Peese. Primarily, because the police's EOG (Emergency Operations Group – now the STAR group), without helicopters at that stage, couldn't get down to the south coast quickly, the local SES unit stepped up its role in cliff rescues, working with Ian Jackson at SES headquarters.

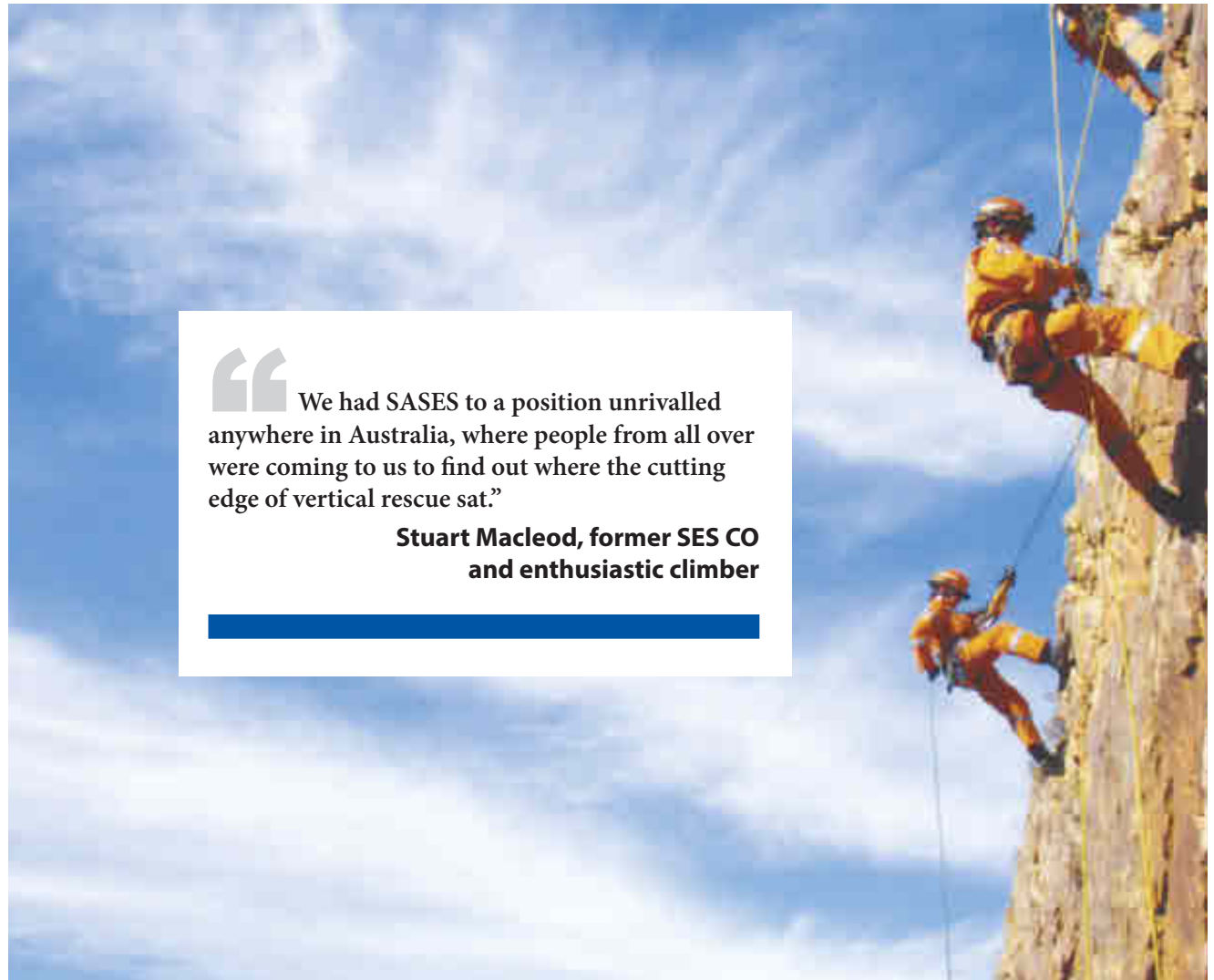
At the same time, Stuart Macleod (later SES Chief Officer) was at Mitcham (Metro South) with what he says were “a bunch of red hot lads and lassies, many of whom were rock climbers (like me). I had guys like Phil Weston and Kevin Gogler who were simply brilliant at cliff work.”



Carrying on from “the big sweep of SES into cliff rescue from those two units,” Stuart Macleod wrote up all the notes, with help from volunteers and workshops, to develop an entire ethos and procedure for cliff rescue.

“For quite a while we had more rescues from towers, mine shafts and masts than from cliffs,” Stuart says, “so we changed the name and, incidentally, paved the way across the entire country for serious volunteer vertical rescue. For many years, I would traipse off to the NT, NSW and ACT, among others, to teach the trainers, and they all worked off our notes at one time or another.”

“ We had SASES to a position unrivalled anywhere in Australia, where people from all over were coming to us to find out where the cutting edge of vertical rescue sat.”

**Stuart Macleod, former SES CO
and enthusiastic climber**





LEADING AUSTRALIA in vertical rescue skill and techniques. That's the proud claim that Stuart Macleod, mover and shaker in the early days of SA Civil Defence and SES vertical rescue, could make by the time he retired as Chief Officer in 2010.

"At the time I left, Noarlunga and some other units were way ahead of any other vertical teams in Australia," Stuart says.

"People like Jennifer Vincent and Trevor Arnold raised the bar so high that, if STAR Group was advised that Noarlunga was on a rescue, they would most often stand down and let it flow. Now that's the end play of a lot of incredibly hard work.

"By 2010, our vertical trainers were teaching the STAR Group, CFS in key places, ambulance special operations, Santos at Port Bonython and Moomba, BHP at Whyalla, ICI chemicals, Port Augusta power station and many others.

"We had SASES to a position unrivalled anywhere in Australia where people from all over were coming to us to find out where the cutting edge of vertical rescue sat. Working with people like Judith Bateman and Philip Toomer from Rescue Equipment in Sydney, we field tested, evaluated, designed and refined much of the equipment in use everywhere today.

"It's interesting to speculate where vertical rescue in Australia would be if we hadn't started with such a passion."



SA's SES vertical rescuers show the way in developing techniques.

Accident horrors become bridge too far

Based near Highway One, Murray Bridge is one of the SES units that has developed an unwelcome specialty in attending horrific vehicle accidents.

In the first six months of 1983, the Murray Bridge SES responded to 32 accidents and had to cut seven bodies from the wrecked cars.

“It is something that you never get used to,” Trevor Heitmann OAM, Murray Bridge SES Unit Controller at that time, said. “It is a tragic possibility that there will be a body trapped inside every wreck that we go to.”

The Murray Bridge SES started in 1971 with 10 members, mostly former or current Army members based locally. They included SES stalwarts John McEvoy and Peter Tobe.

Trevor Heitmann said SES crews worked under police direction and liaised with the ambulance service.

“The police call us as soon as they think we might be needed. But, as accidents get more horrific - and lately they appear to be getting worse - we find we are needed more often.

“Cars used to just bend, but now they are all crunched up. You almost need a tow truck to pull them apart if there’s been a head-on smash. A whole family was wiped out in one smash.

“We are trained to use and carry the specialty equipment like the jaws of life, power saws, chisels and lighting equipment. Whenever we get a call, there are always four squad members ready to ride on the truck – we need at least four to operate effectively – and one to man the base radio.”



Rescuers prepare for the real thing as they attend victims of a simulated bus crash at SES's State Rescue Challenge.



COOBER PEDY IS A CLASSIC example of local circumstances shaping an SES unit with its own characteristics.

The unit at Coober Pedy is now merged with the local mine rescue squad that began in 1972 after horrific accidents at the opal mining community.

Cave-ins, falling down shafts, explosives accidents, people caught in mining machinery and carbon monoxide poisoning were everyday incidents.

Nobody in the original rescue group had any formal knowledge of rescue procedures. But they were hardy people, mostly migrants, with mining and technical skills and the famed Outback ability to solving problems. The sign used to warn tourists of mineshaft danger was created for the mine rescue squad by the late Konnie Rowe and is known worldwide.

Shaft-top rescue equipment developed in Coober Pedy is unique and the rescue style has become a speciality.

Members designed harnesses for the extraordinary feat of getting people with spinal injuries out of confined spaces.

Today, safety standards and equipment are improved and accidents are less frequent but just as severe.

When the SES approached the mine rescue squad to take on storm damage and road crashes, it was, at first, not an onerous task. There were very few tourists using the unsealed roads, unlike today when perhaps 100,000 people pass through Coober Pedy each year. The blending of roles eventually resulted in the Coober Pedy Mine Rescue/SES.



Coober Pedy Mine Rescue/SES Unit confronts the two main dangers: accidents underground and on the tourist-filled roads.



4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Learning cooperation has been an important part of the maturing SES



A closer relationship between the CFS and SES has been nurtured by opening shared headquarters, such as at Clare in 2007.

Melting divide between city and country

A “quantum change” in the SES happened between the two Ash Wednesdays (1980 and 1983) bushfire disasters in the Adelaide Hills.

“When the first Ash Wednesday came, SES had never been used for such incidents,” says Trevor Heitmann from Murray Bridge unit.

“We arrived in uniform, 60 to 70 people from city and country units, ready to help but we did nothing all day and they sent us home at night. It was realised that we hadn’t ever worked together. We didn’t know each other. City and country had never worked together.”

Nat Cooke, retired SES Deputy Chief Officer, confirms the divide: “In the 1970s, city and country SES members didn’t mix. They met only at the controllers’ conferences. We were fairly independent.”

By the second Ash Wednesday, the SES became more cohesive. Trevor Heitmann outlines how it evolved:

“Police chief inspector Ross Bowles was in charge at Stirling and he knew Murray Bridge unit’s reputation for car accident rescue.

“We arrived and the police welcomed us. We patrolled burnt-out houses looking for looters and we did a range of support tasks in 24-hour shifts over five days.



“I was put in charge of the contingent and I immediately split the volunteers up and mixed the units. The first 12 hours were shocking. Members were not used to working together. Schedules went out the door but, after that first 12 hours, it was fantastic.

“We were based at Arbury Park. Stirling Council footed the bill for such things as meals and fuel. They were amazing. The second Ash Wednesday was the first really united SES involvement in a major incident.”

“ In the 1970s, city and country SES members didn’t mix. They met only at the controllers’ conferences. We were fairly independent.”

**Nat Cooke, former
Deputy Chief Officer**





RIVALRY WITHIN ITS OWN RANKS and between SES and the CFS is an undeniable part of the history of the SES. But this rivalry has become a creative sorting-out process that has made a stronger emergency response structure in SA.

The origins of the SES and CFS go back to World War II when their predecessor organisations, the Civil Defence and the Emergency Fire Service, were formed.

Former SES Deputy Chief Officer Nat Cooke says a city-country divide developed in the 1960s, due to the different ethos of the urban Civil Defence and the rural Emergency Fire Service (EFS).

“EFS was all about self help; one farmer helping another farmer to protect their properties and in turn calling on each other when the need arose. The Civil Defence was mostly town-based. Volunteers in city units would help the general population when a storm or flood hit. A lot of the politics and games played in the 1960s-90s were to do with money. Although Civil Defence and EFS were sister services, there was rivalry for funding, locations and volunteers. Competition also extended to state and federal funding.”

Nat Cooke says that, in the 1980s and 1990s, legislation changed the emphasis of the rivalry: “CFS was enshrined in an Act of Parliament and SES – seen as the Chainsaws and Tarps Brigade – was not official. Sentiments of waste of resourcing emerged. It was considered foolish to have both CFS and SES units in the same location.”

- During 2012-13, SES volunteers and staff assisted the CFS with tackling significant fires. This included setting up and managing base camps, managing staging areas and a range of other logistical support at incidents including:
 - Fires in the North West and North East Pastoral districts in August 2012
 - Fires at Tulka and Coomunga, both near Port Lincoln, in November 2012, and
 - Scrub fire at Cherryville in May 2013.



Sturt volunteers were at the launch of the bushfire season by Premier Jay Weatherill and then-Minister for Emergency Services Jennifer Rankine on the 30th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday fires (1980 and 1983) in which the SES had an active role – along with major blazes on the lower Eyre Peninsula and interstate.



Members of Mount Barker (formerly Adelaide Hills) Unit at a memorial service for the 25th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday bushfires.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Unit stalwart Peter Higgins outlines typical stages that formed the Noarlunga SES spirit:

1979

Born with little funds, no HQ and 15 members

Noarlunga SES was born at a meeting in the Noarlunga-Christies Beach RSL hall. First-year funding was \$5,000 from the council and \$2,500 from the state government. Twenty-five prospective members had been identified, but 15 turned up for training in first aid, map reading and communications. Meetings were at Mitsubishi Motors canteen in Lonsdale.

1980

Volunteers build three iron sheds

The second building was the first of three galvanised iron stores sheds constructed by volunteers. A cutlery set is imbedded into the front of Shed No.1, from someone getting up from a makeshift lunch seat and the items spilling into wet concrete. The sheds, mainly donated secondhand, were painted green at the council's request.

1982

Hundreds of hours by volunteers restores vehicle

A third vehicle, an ex MFS fire extinguisher service vehicle, was donated. This Dodge V8 light truck had a storage locker on the rear. Hundreds of hours of volunteer work restored this vehicle. A member with his own crash repair shop donated time and equipment. A fourth vehicle (a Toyota 4WD troop carrier) was bought from an organisation on Kangaroo Island in 1988.

1980s-90s

Welfare section provided meals up to 24 hours

The welfare section was a force in its own right. Volunteers had their own camps to hone their skills. The welfare was mostly to provide members with meals during callouts. The unit often operated for 24-hour periods in the early days.

1980s-90s

Distinctive black caps become unit's identity

The unit developed an identity by wearing distinctive black caps for 15 years, before reverting to the state-issued blue caps. The black caps became nearly legendary.

Christmas parties part of social bonding

The unit also bonded with social activities such as Christmas parties in the 1980s.

1979

1989

1980

1990

1979

Original headquarters

First headquarters and training area at Lonsdale were in a transportable building.

Original vehicles rundown

First response vehicle was a Toyota 4WD wagon. Second vehicle, a Toyota 4WD donated by Mobil after being a water pump for fire fighting at Lonsdale refinery, was rundown. Onkaparinga Council had the same model in its workshop and fitted this on to the chassis.

1981

Improvements and new uses for the buildings

Shed No.2 housed welfare and two rescue vehicles. Parking both vehicles in this shed demanded trepidation and skill. Shed 2 has had major changes and is now a training room. A unit member fitted the lecture room with an insulated false ceiling. Carpet transformed the training area, along with the air conditioner. The smaller Shed No.3 now houses a trailer with a water pump and search-and-rescue bikes.

1980s-90s

First mobile phone was 3kg 'brick'

The unit's first mobile phone was known as the brick or bag phone. It weighed about three kilograms, with the handpiece connected to the main unit by a cord. The battery life was about two hours. The range was limited but it allowed the duty officer to be mobile. Calls for assistance came via a landline diverted to the mobile.

1980s-90s

From individual phone calls to pagers and GRN

A 24-hour phone answering system was installed, with a response usually within 40 minutes. Members were called to tasks individually. Later, group calls could be made. Pagers bought in 1991 only emitted a tone. In 1999, the alpha numeric pagers took over with GRN (Government Radio Network). Some members have carried a pager for more than 23 years: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

1992

Rescue truck from raffles, donations, hard work

Raffles, donations and hard work by fundraisers enabled the purchase of a brand new Toyota Dyna 300 heavy rescue truck. At last, a four-door vehicle could carry six members in comfort but, due to the weight, it was very underpowered.



Noarlunga SES Unit members (left) geared up in 1986. Above right: Unit members, including Peter Higgins (third from right) receiving a cheque in 2013 from a supportive business.

1993

First of brand new fleet vehicles from State SES

The unit received its first brand new fleet from the State SES. This Nissan Patrol 4WD, known as 380, was followed by other Nissan replacements.

1990s-2000s

Big new building provides proper home for vehicles

The unit's largest building, constructed in 1992, houses all emergency response vehicles and three trailers.

2003

New heavy truck and breathing-apparatus trailer

The old 382 Toyota Dyna 300 was replaced by a new Isuzu 550 heavy rescue truck and a purpose-built breathing apparatus trailer was made to suit SES requirements.

2005

At last, after many requests, a toilet block

Newest building is the toilet block. After many years of requests, this was a welcome addition.

2010

A new kitchen and the shed area bituminised

Two great new assets. Many thousands were spent replacing the kitchen, while the area outside of the vehicle shed was bituminised.

Now

A proud fleet of 5 trucks and 4 search bikes

Noarlunga's vehicle fleet boasts five vehicles – Isuzu 550 heavy rescue truck, Isuzu 550 heavy rescue truck, Nissan Navara 4WD Utility with a canopy, Toyota LandCruiser 4WD wagon and 43 Ford F250 4WD utility – and six trailers. There are also four search pushbikes.

1999

2009

2003

2013

1993

Four bicycles gained for search and rescue team

Four bicycles were donated to the unit to start a pushbike search and rescue team.

25m tower for training in rescue from heights

The unit gets a 25-metre tower to be used for rescue-from-heights training and basic rescue.

2000s

State search and rescue training centre on site

The site at Noarlunga now houses a state training centre. A tunnel system is used for confined-space training and a rubble pile on top for search and rescue training. There is also a collapsed building scenario, along with hundreds of tonnes of concrete slab.

2003-2009

Completely new fleet all diesel, aircon, 4-door

The Toyota Dyna 200 383 was replaced with a new Isuzu 550 heavy rescue truck and, in 2007, the Toyota troop carrier 384 made way for a Ford F250 V8 utility.

Now

Unit fully equipped to handle 400 calls a year

After the struggles of the early years the Noarlunga SES unit is equipped to handle the full gamut of operations. Noarlunga SES responds to over 400 calls for help each year covering general rescue, storm damage, land search, air observers, dropmasters, confined space rescue, vertical rescue, bike search and rescue, and urban search and rescue.

Now

Support of council, companies, community

The growth and development of Noarlunga Unit owes much to community support of the council and businesses within its area: big companies such as Solar Optical, Lonsdale; Mitsubishi Motors Lonsdale plant; Mobil Oil refinery, O'Sullivan's Beach; and many other smaller enterprises.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

The SES opened up to ideas from overseas and interstate to broaden its capabilities.

Getting on the bike for an even wider range of skills



Bike squad members on parade during SES Week.

An SES bike squad was among several additions to the SES skills base initiated by Trevor Arnold (see panel at right) in 1993.

Trevor and Jennifer Vincent gave the initial push to the bike squad while at Noarlunga Unit. “We can do this,” the

Noarlunga pair decided after seeing research from overseas where bikes were being used very effectively by emergency organisations. They arranged for the first bikes to be donated.

The bikes have proved great for search exercises. In terrain where horses were traditionally the only option, a mountain

bike is ideal. For events like the Clipsal 500, bikes have been used for ambulance escorts and crowd dispersal.

Western Adelaide Unit also became another keen force behind the pedal push. It started SES involvement with another natural fit for the bike squad: the Tour Down Under.



Trevor Arnold (left) brought urban search and rescue (USAR) to SA after attending a Category 2 course by Melbourne Fire Brigades in 1996.

Trevor was undaunted by being the only volunteer on a course of full-time firefighters.

He returned with a vision for an SA USAR Taskforce. Incidents like Riverside Golf Club’s roof collapse provided even more incentive.

In 2005, with Jennifer Vincent, Ian Bonython and Ray Arbon and four firefighters from the SA Metropolitan Fire Service and paramedics from the SA Ambulance Service, Trevor attended a three-week urban search and rescue course with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. (Jennifer was the first female rescuer in the country to complete this gruelling course.)

The SA USAR Task Force is made up of SES with the fire service and other specialist agencies. There are more than 600 USAR Category 1 operators, and 41 Category 2 USAR technicians in the SES.

Trevor became an SES Regional Commander in 2013.

CYCLONE TRACY IN DARWIN, Christmas Day 1974, generated one of the first major operations faced by the SES.

Noel Hodges, Controller of Enfield Unit, says that from the time the news of Tracy came through, he was besieged with calls from his unit members and offers of help.

Throughout the operation, Enfield provided radio links with Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Alice Springs, receiving reports on evacuees arriving in cars from Darwin.

As soon as the evacuees' vehicles reached Gepps Cross, Enfield SES flagged them down and diverted them to assistance points. Salisbury unit was at Port Wakefield doing the same thing.

SES units volunteered to help at Adelaide Airport. "People were coming down from Darwin with nothing but what they were wearing which, in some cases, was nightwear," Arno Attema of Enfield recalls. "There were piles of clothing in the shed one and a half metres high."

Two SES teams helped evacuees from planes to the terminal. SES members carried babies, small children or assisted casualties. The SES registration teams obtained vital details from the evacuees such as where they were going.

Small working parties cleaned out the RAAF Hercules aircraft, some of them having been flown non-stop for more than 24 hours.

Noel Hodges of Enfield Unit says: "Our members spent their New Year's Eve at the airport from 4pm until January 1 at 8.30am: more than 16 hours. Enfield Base Radio and Headquarters worked 153.5 hours from Thursday 26 December to January 2."



Shortly after being made SES life members in 2010, Enfield Unit Manager Arno Attema and Prospect Unit's Ross Johnston and Peter Mundy told the *City North Messenger* about strong memories of their part in the operation to help victims of Darwin's Cyclone Tracy (above) arriving in Adelaide.

“With about 70 volunteers, this meant about 4,000 man hours. I was proud to be involved in the operation and proud of the Enfield Unit members who gave so much time and showed their efficiency to all.”

Noel Hodges, Enfield Unit

“In between the plane loads of arrivals, some of our SES guys could be seen having wheelbarrow races on the tarmac.”

Arno Attema, Enfield Unit

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Brian Lancaster paved the way in the 1980s for SES's role in planning for disasters

Lancaster lifts SES profile in disaster planning



An SES crew swings into action working with the police, ambulance and fire services in Operation Northern Strike.

Brian Lancaster was, fittingly, among the first to receive the Emergency Services Medal (ESM) of the Order of Australia. That honour, in 2001, capped off a decades-long career in emergency services that included putting the SES on a solid footing.



As a policeman, Brian Lancaster first became involved with emergency services in the mid 1960s when the SA Police managed Civil Defence. He left to work with

Red Cross but returned to the SES as Director in the early 1980s.

The period after the Ash Wednesday fires was “great” and “exciting” for SASES, says Nat Cooke, who became Brian Lancaster’s deputy in 1984. “The emergency management side was blossoming and the police commissioner David Hunt was anxious to have the disaster management planning well thought out.” Nine divisional officers were appointed to prepare disaster management plans through the nine police divisions.

As Executive Officer on the State Disaster Committee, Brian Lancaster focused on developing the SES disaster management structure and planning.

Brian ensured state disaster management people (local government and other authorities) went to Mount Macedon for training. He also set out to give SES a foundation (alongside the CFS and MFS) and authority through an act of Parliament.



OPERATION NORTHERN STRIKE was another chance for SES members to show their skills, alongside SA police, ambulance and fire services.

The large-scale emergency exercise in 2012 at Dry Creek rail depot acted out as a response to a terrorist attack. The SES's role in major disaster structure and planning goes back to the groundwork of Brian Lancaster, SES Director in the 1980s. (See story at left.)

Today, as SA's control agency and hazard leader for extreme weather, the SES works with zone emergency management committees and other relevant groups on comprehensive risk assessments at the zone level for flooding, extreme storm and extreme heat events. In 2012-13, the SES contributed to 58 national and 303 state, sector and regional committees and working groups on emergency risk management.



The SES orange is prominent among the colours of other response organisations during Operation Northern Strike.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

After relying on British manuals, SES gained the confidence to develop its own techniques

Finding our own ways to do it better



The honing of the SES techniques goes on. South East units (Bordertown, Keith, Millicent, Mount Gambier) combined with Victorian SES members in 2013 at Canunda National Park for a day of learning to advance their driving skills with 4WD vehicles in difficult sandy terrain.



Parallel with SES growth was a raft of home-grown procedures for all kinds of emergencies.

Emergency services started here with only British Home Office manuals of the 1940s to 1960s as their official guide. These manuals “were just picked up and coopted for use here,” says Nat Cooke, former SES Deputy Chief Officer. “In 1980, Stuart Macleod (as Regional Officer) converted these manuals into what we were doing here, and you can still see an element of this in what we do today.”

Local emergency needs forced specialised knowledge to be developed. “Each unit specialised in whatever

was needed locally, whether it was storm, flood or VAR (vehicle accident rescue) as in our case,” says Trevor Heitmann of Murray Bridge.

In the 1970s, Trevor and Keith Harraway, with Stuart Macleod, wrote the first vehicle accident rescue manual for SA. Before that, it was all American techniques.

Trevor’s Murray Bridge unit was first to do vehicle accident rescue and the first to custom build a “real” rescue vehicle. “Our involvement started with a crashed vehicle wrapped around a pole near the hospital,” Trevor says. “Nobody had any idea of how to get the

victims out of the car, so we improvised. We used our Civil Defence hydraulic equipment and adapted that for vehicle accident rescue.” In other areas of expertise:

- Mitcham Unit led the SES to being a national leader in vertical rescue techniques.
- Dealing with fallen trees was a focus of Adelaide’s leafy eastern suburbs and this led to Mike Whitcher (Eastern Suburbs Unit) writing a draft for the chainsaw manual.
- Through Alan Cormack, the SES had a key role in forming the Volunteer Marine Rescue Council of SA procedures.

A MASS-CASUALTY EVACUATION exercise, at Banksia Park Primary School in 2012, tested all the years of perfecting a wide range of procedures and techniques.

An explosion at Banksia Park Primary School, with early reports suggesting many casualties.

That was the chilling scenario facing crews from Tea Tree Gully SES Unit, along with volunteers from Enfield and Edinburgh, who responded to a pager (exercise) on August 1, 2012. When the SES volunteers arrived, two crews from SA Ambulance (SAAS) were already on site. Reports suggested about 50 students and staff were inside the building.

Tea Tree Gully Rescue Officer David Zakrzewski was incident controller and SES crews were split into five rescue teams. After reconnaissance, team leaders were briefed and set to work. Four out of the five teams were in the “hot zone” at any one time and casualties came flooding out.

The fifth crew assisted SAAS crews with the clearing post.

After just over 1.4 hours, all casualties were treated, packaged and removed from the building and passed through the clearing post.

Participation by the teachers and students of Banksia Park Primary School ensured a realistic exercise and allowed them to learn more about how the SES operates.



Banksia Park Primary School mass-casualty evacuation exercise. Top: The briefing after initial reconnaissance. Middle: The exercise being coordinated in the control room. Bottom: “Victims” being evacuated, after treatment and packaging.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

In the 1970s, SES became administrator of volunteer marine rescue groups in SA

‘Admiral’ Al steered a shipshape future for marine rescue flotillas



Alan Cormack

Alan (“Admiral”) Cormack was a key figure in navigating SA’s Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) services into a well-funded coordinated force.

Originally, volunteer marine rescue services operated separately as private bodies. In the 1970s, four services – SA Sea Rescue Squadron at West Beach, Victor Harbor-Goolwa Sea Rescue, Whyalla Sea Rescue and Cowell Sea Rescue – came under SES administration.

SES handled a limited government subsidy to these groups to buy equipment. In the 1990s, funding was extended to Australian Volunteer Coast Guard.

Alan Cormack, a Counter Disaster Planning Officer, suggested to Director Brian Lancaster that the SES create a position of Manager of Volunteer Marine Rescue. Alan took on this position, combining his paid and voluntary services to the various areas of volunteer marine rescue.

The big breakthrough for Volunteer Marine Rescue services came in 1998 when they were recognised for funding from the new Emergency Services Levy.

Alan Cormack led the way in policy and procedures for managing funds: “We also commenced the vessel replacement fund, so funds were set aside to purchase offshore vessels. That ensured the standard and safety of offshore vessels.”

A Volunteer Marine Rescue Council of SA was recommended by Alan Cormack. This was endorsed in 2000, with the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol added to the original four groups.



The Volunteer Marine Rescue Council of SA develops procedures for all the marine rescue groups.



Port Pirie (and Port Augusta) SES Unit Manager Ray Owen with SA Sea Rescue Squadron Communicator Ray Bradley relaying coordinates to search vessels during a multi-agency marine rescue exercise.

THE SIX VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE associations representing 14 flotillas, and the 14 SES units with a marine capability, are strategically located through coastal and inland waters of SA, providing the primary response to marine incidents and emergencies coordinated by the police.

During 2012-13, VMR and SES made more than 427 marine rescues. New vessels were delivered to the SES, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, North Haven Flotilla and Cowell Sea Rescue Squadron.

Key achievements for 2012-13 included the first Volunteers in Marine Rescue Conference. Major multi-agency exercises were conducted at West Beach, Victor Harbor, Port Victoria and Port Lincoln. VMR conducted workplace safety audits on all volunteer marine rescue buildings and vessels, and the SES is integrating its health and safety education and training into volunteer marine rescue.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

SES opened up to ideas from overseas and interstate to broaden its capabilities



Swiftwater rescue demands very high fitness and confidence in the water, and a strong knowledge of vertical rescue techniques.

Saving lives in a swirl of floodwater

The SES took its first swiftwater rescue skills on board in 2005 when a team comprising Trevor Arnold, Jennifer Vincent, Ian Bonython and Ray Arbon went to a week's training in Colorado, USA.



The Colorado training – in melted snow water – was a very new experience for South Australians used to the driest state on the driest continent, but the skills the trainees brought back were very relevant to the SES in swiftwater rescues along flash-flooded creeks, including

Sturt Creek. The Colorado course knowledge has been passed on to around 600 SES volunteers trained to Level 1 in swiftwater rescue and 18 trained as swiftwater technicians. One hundred employees from eight local government councils were trained in 2012-13.



INLAND MARINE RESCUE is the SES response to Australia's most costly and dangerous natural hazard: flooding.

In 2011, the SES commissioned three new inland marine rescue boats and two flood response trailers at the Lake Bonney Yacht Club, Barmera on the River Murray.

The three inland rescue vessels at Blanchetown, Loxton and Renmark significantly improve the marine capability of these units.

Redeployed vessels from these units were sent to Berri, Port Broughton and Meningie.

The flood response trailers were part of a 12-trailer initiative to increase the SES's ability to meet flood-related risk.

One trailer launched at Lake Bonney had an automated sandbagging machine while the other had a range of flood response equipment.



SES volunteers and staff taking part in a crew member course on Lake Bonney at Barmera, as part of the inland/inshore rescue boat operations. They learnt boat skills and how to rescue and recover casualties and objects from waterways.



4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

SES search skills are not only valued by police but are used at the national level



Land searches, especially on behalf of SA police, are a common part of the SES tasks. (There were 132 in 2012-13.)

Searches take on a much higher degree of difficulty when dealing, as Ceduna Unit does, with a vast outback area.

An example was a March 2012 search when nine Ceduna members (at left), led by Unit Manager Peter Codrington, helped police conduct a search in an area north of the dog fence out from Penong. The area covered was in very thick scrub and the searchers had to be airlifted into the location by helicopter (see inset). The missing motor vehicle was found – with human remains alongside it.



SES **SEARCH** duties have a high-flying national dimension. Air observers from the SES have been trained to provide support to searches conducted by the federal government's Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). Air observers are specialists in searching from an aircraft for missing persons or objects. SES air observers can spend a long time in small aircrafts in turbulent conditions, so volunteers for this task have to pass medical and survival criteria. SES air observers are highly regarded by the search and rescue authorities and regularly operate in very remote locations which involves staying away from home for several days.



The SES has signed an agreement with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to continue providing air observers for search and rescue services. In 2012-13, SES air observers joined maritime searches by AMSA planes off the coast of north-west Australia.



4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

The SES has an affinity with creatures great and small – as rescuers and rescued

Cute animals for acutely serious searches



SES Dog Operations Unit members (above) and (at right) trainer Karl Beer with Ralph, learning to search for a person or object and then give a bark alert.





They are seriously cute, but also strenuously trained for a serious job.

The SES Dog Operations Unit includes smaller dogs and some breeds that don't fit the usual trained-tracker image.

The unit has adopted a best-practice policy to ensure its pack is one of the best trained in the world, with dog handlers working several times per week in all kinds of conditions, to ensure dogs and handlers are ready to face many challenges.

The SES Dog Operations Unit has been active in SA for more than a decade. It is able to assist South Australian police with tracking people and objects.



RESCUEING ANIMALS -
everything from goats and birds
to cows and sheep - brings its
own joys for SES volunteers.

Volunteer Lisette Reinke of Edinburgh Unit says it is “one of the greatest honours of being an SES member to have the opportunity to save a life”.

Edinburgh Unit gets plenty of chances to do that, sometimes working with the MFS or the RSPCA, and even farmers and plumbers, to rescue trapped, injured, exhausted or bogged animals.



This six-month-old puppy was rescued after being trapped between two buildings at Edwardstown. It took three hours and a team effort between the MFS, SES and Marion Council staff to free the staffy cross.



This cat had been stranded 10 metres up a tree for days before Edinburgh SES was alerted and saved it.

4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

The ongoing focus on skills and knowledge takes the SES on new and well-worn paths

Building on their skills
– below and on high



Strathalbyn Unit members went underground at the nearby Terramin Angus zinc mine, learning where emergency equipment is stored and how the mine worked. Their tour gave them an understanding of the challenge in the case of an accident at the mine.



Ladder access for roof safety – along with water plumbing and sandbagging – was practised by Bordertown, Kingston SE and Mount Gambier members at a storm and water damage course.



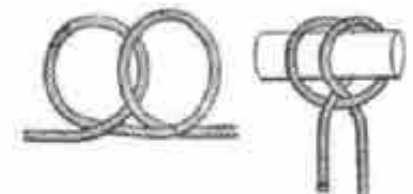
SES PROCEDURES and technique development have been recognised at the national level. In 2012-13, SES led a state submission to the federal Senate inquiry into trends and preparedness for extreme weather events, but at the front line of SES units, the push to improve and build on the basic emergency and rescue skills and knowledge goes on as it has over the half century of emergency service.



Kuitpo Forest was the setting for chainsaw practice by Noarlunga Unit. All aspects of operating chainsaws were covered, including safety.



A new skillset being introduced to SES is shoring. This means learning techniques to shore up or temporarily stabilise a collapsed building or other structure to maintain a safe environment.



Clove hitch instructions from the SA Civil Defence days.

5 THE CASE FOR CHANGE

The late 1990s brought a major transformation to the way the SES was equipped and presented

ES Levy brings a huge change for SES

The most dramatic change in funding for the SES came in July 1999, when the fire services levy on insurance premiums was replaced with a new broader-based emergency services levy (ESL) on property.

The new levy funded emergency services in SA and it was applied to all fixed property and some vehicles.

The levy money is placed into a fund for the exclusive use of emergency services including:

- SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM)
- Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)
- Country Fire Service (CFS)
- State Emergency Service (SES)

Volunteer Marine Rescue SA and the rescue components of:

- Surf Life Saving South Australia.
- South Australian Police Rescue
- State Rescue Helicopter Service

After decades of struggling to raise funds, the SES and its units experienced a huge change in the quality and availability of rescue equipment of all sorts, including vehicles and boats necessary to allow volunteers to carry out their duties safely.



The emergency services levy gave a major lift to the quality of equipment for the SES. For example, the SES now has the resources to set up base camps with accommodation, catering and support for personnel engaged in emergencies. A Central Region base and staging workshop (above) taught volunteers to use equipment and (at left) to adjust to living close together at a campsite.



A **WAVE OF STAFF CHANGES** for the SES started in the 1990s and coincided with administration moving from Thebarton to police headquarters at 30 Flinders Street, city.

Before the current structure of two regions and 10 districts, the SES had nine divisions with a relatively small headquarters staff.

Some of the staff members in the divisions over the years were as follows:

MID NORTH

- Ian McDonough
- Gerry Habils
- Robyn Holthouse (nee Roberts)*
- Anne Jones
- Kaylene Willson (nee Hanlon)*
- Natalie Pisani

FLINDERS

- Denis Rayner
- John Thorne
- Pieter Scott
- Joanne Strahan
- Pamela Case

EYRE PENINSULA

- Gordon Hartley
- Robert Charlton*
- Claire Swalue
- Moira Clarke

BAROSSA/YORKE

- John Hynes
- Jenny Jones

RIVERLAND

- Graham Porter
- Glenise Mack
- Greg Reedman
- Caren Lawrenson

MURRAY

- Keith Harraway
- Ian McDonough
- Peter Tobe
- Paul Dickson
- Ty Lloyd
- Pam Hundertmark

SOUTH EAST

- Greg Malseed
- Jenny Kelly
- Ramona Mahoney
- Aileen Clarke

METRO EAST

- Al Cormack
- Cheryl Carter
- John Thorne
- Gill Hall
- Nick Robins

METRO NORTH

- Noel Hodges
- Faith Church*
- Leonie Hines*

STATE HEADQUARTERS

- Brian Lancaster
- Nat Cooke
- Stuart Macleod
- Darian Stringer
- Frances Thorne
- Ray Thomson
- Eileen Dunlop
- Linda Palm
- April Cooper
- Richard Coombe
- Terri Purvis*
- Matt Maywald
- Jennifer Vincent
- Tamara Houghton
- Robyn Faraguna*
- Judith Bleechmore
- Mary Camilleri*

DISASTER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Fred Fairhead
- Allan McDougall
- Jo Brooks (nee Sydor)*
- Bob Stevenson*
- Andrea Geytenbeek (nee Haig)*

*denotes current SES staff members (as of 2015).

5 THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Public awareness of the SES was among priorities for David Place who became chief officer in 2005

A time and a Place to raise SES media profile



David Place (left), Chief Officer 2005-08, and Greg Reedman (right), who wrote a case for change in the organisation.

When David Place became SES Chief Officer in 2004, he could see obvious areas for change – first among them being to increase public awareness.

David realised that the SES, with its limited public profile, was still much like the Civil Defence of the 1960s. “Because of this, there was little recognition of the value of SES in the political arena. The government doesn’t increase funding unless the cause is seen as essential.”

His first step was to appoint a passionate communications person, Judith Bleechmore, “who took on SES as a mission in life. We went from little media presence, mostly generated by the units, to a focused 24-hour media response. Press clippings showed the change, averaging around 100 media mentions per month, with some months up to 300.”

David threw himself into other aims for the SES: creating a business, supporting volunteers where he visited every SES Unit and developed a professional relationship with the state government. Reviewing his time with SES, David says the highlights were the warmth of people, the “family” attitude, and the passion for helping communities.



Campbelltown and Eastern Suburbs volunteers and the SES Dog Operations Unit provided the background action for a television weather report by Network Ten presenter Kate Freebairn.



STARRING ROLE TO THE RESCUE. Four members of Edinburgh Unit – Lisette Reinke, Matt Brooks, Jesse Bull and Stuart Smith – were at the centre of action on the small screen in 2013 when they staged a rescue for the children's television series *Sam Fox: Extreme Adventures*.

The location was north of Mallala. At a second shoot at SA Film Corporation's Glenside studios, Lisette got to say a few words of the script.



5 THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Within the changes to its structure, the SES has kept its people-friendly focus



SES Chief Officer Chris Beattie (second from right) shares a laugh with North Region Unit Managers Scott Schulz, Keith Copley, Roger Murdoch, Jeff Kerley, Ros Allen, Deidra Klemm and Sally Lightburn at one of the regular UMAG meetings. Inset: With Anthony Whiting, Jake Noack and Axel Larsen.



Unit managers get chance to hail chief

Informality within professionalism is a characteristic of the SES. That characteristic is evident at Unit Managers Advisory Group (UMAG) meetings.

Unit Managers' Advisory Groups in each region meet every four to six weeks, either face to face or by teleconference, to discuss matters of mutual relevance. These meetings allow unit managers to discuss many common issues.

The unit managers also have the chance to raise these issues with multiple presentations to the chief officer in an open way. This is one of the most effective ways of bridging the gap between volunteers, represented at the unit level by their managers, and staff headquarters. It is a vital level of communication.

Each year conferences are organised for unit managers to discuss issues and opportunities, to hear updates on strategic planning and to mix with staff and network amongst themselves. The changes to regional structure over decades has seen these meeting change to reflect the current system.



MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE were retained by the SES when it formed the State Headquarters Unit (or State Operations Coordination Unit: SOCU) in 1996.

The unit was formed from members on the headquarters reserve list: SES members who could not continue their commitment to a rescue unit.

Of the 12 people who began training for the headquarters unit, five were former controllers of rescue units. The headquarters unit provides operations staff for the SES state control centre, state emergency operations centre and field command.

During its first 10 years, the headquarters unit volunteers:

- gave operational assistance to SES paid staff
- responded to the 132 500 statewide phone number, taking calls from the public during incidents
- processed, recorded, allocated and despatched statewide taskings to units
- liaised with SES units and other emergency services, and
- managed SAGRN radio operations, logging and documenting, and gave intelligence and analysis to paid staff before and during high-risk storms.

Headquarters unit members have travelled to provide field command for search, flooding, major sporting fixtures, the Tulka fire operations in 2001 and Lyndhurst for the solar eclipse in 2002.

The unit has to maintain enough members to allow it to provide volunteers to staff multiple operation centres at the same time, 24 hours a day for multiple days if required.



SES Deputy Chief Officer Dermot Barry and State Emergency Management Planning Officer Bob Stevenson confer at the State Emergency Operations Centre.

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

The volunteers' association ensures that members are represented at every level of the organisation

A forceful voice for the volunteers



All SES members are represented by the SASES Volunteers' Association.

SES volunteers gained a strong voice in the early 1990s to make sure their interests were considered in the interaction between the state government and its bureaucracy.

The SASES Volunteers' Association (SASESVA) was born in 1993 when concerned volunteers met to discuss a rumoured merging of the SES with the Country Fire Service. Founding members and first office holders included Trevor Heitmann (Chairman), Keith Lane (Vice chairman /Treasurer), Janet O'Hehir (Secretary), Keith Smith, Graham Farrell, Bill Job, David Ward, Trevor Arnold, Wayne Palmer, Max Coulson and Jennifer Vincent.

The SASES ultimately provided some funding and in 2004 agreed to pay for a part-time executive officer for the association. The association was recognised in the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission Act in 2005, and in the 2008 Volunteer Charter.

The Volunteers Charter, updated in 2013, promotes the interests of volunteers and guarantees consultation regarding decisions impacting on their interests.

The association addresses issues raised by volunteers and promotes their needs.

It liaises on issues regularly with the minister, shadow minister, SAFECOM, SES, interstate associations, CFSVA and interested parties.



SASES VOLUNTEERS'

Association is now heavily immersed in the decisions made by the SES.

Reflecting the association's valued role today, its representatives sit on all panels for SES staff appointments.

They also attend meetings of the SAFECOM Board, Sector Advisory Committee, the Executive Advisory Group, E-Connect Program, Training Review, Awards Panel and other subcommittees.

Other support given by the association includes:

- attending careers expos and university visits,
- coordinating volunteer exit surveys, and
- helping volunteers to access grants.



SASES Volunteers' Association Chairman Warren Hicks signs the Volunteers Charter in 2008, watched by Premier Mike Rann, then-Minister for Emergency Services Carmel Zollo and Chief Officer Stuart Macleod. The Volunteers Charter was reviewed and relaunched in 2013.

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

Recruiting, as well as supporting existing volunteers and their employers, remains a constant challenge

Recruiting's new expectations

“It is rewarding that I become part of an elite and professional group of volunteers who unselfishly choose ‘to live a life that matters.’”

Zandro Sta-Maria
Bordertown volunteer

“I was recruited through a Prospect recruiting display at West Lakes Mall. As an engineer, I have always been interested in maintenance and solving problems. I figured I had five to 10 years active response left in me and I ought to get as much training as quickly as I could. It gives me a good feeling of achievement and giving something back. You need a bit of masochism to be in SES; to get out of a warm bed on a cold and stormy night and go out to do rescue.”

John Lawrence
Edinburgh Unit Manager

SES continues to focus on the essential: attracting new volunteers.

In 2012-13, the SES established a program to recruit volunteer recruiters in its 10 districts. Funded from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program and state government, they work with their own unit, SAFECOM Volunteer Services Branch and SES Community Engagement Unit.

Early on, recruiting was hampered by fuzziness over the SES role. People often referred to the SES as the CES or confused it with the CFS. In the 1990s, SES found it tough to find people willing to give their free time to help others. For example, Port Pirie Controller Graham Hill in 1996 said his unit was “too understaffed to respond to any major incident”.

Units with a focus on road crash rescue find only certain people can cope with accidents. Family situations, illness and relocating for work also causes a loss of members. High burnout among volunteers was due to overcommitting early, losing interest or becoming stressed.

In 1997, volunteers devoted about 165 hours a year to training. The 2000s saw resistance when veteran volunteers had to train for higher certificates.



Bordertown member Zandro Sta-Maria, pictured with Unit Manager Brendon Jones and SASES Chief Officer Chris Beattie, fulfils a SAFECOM CALD program aim to attract volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Many volunteers don't believe the community appreciates their efforts. “People appreciate our help if their roof comes off in a storm,” says Graham Porter, Riverland Divisional Officer in 1997. “But I don't know whether they appreciate the time involved in training.”

A Riverland forum found factors affecting volunteer numbers included:

- rising levels of hazards
- concern about legal/ financial indemnity and compensation for volunteers and their families
- lack of public recognition, and
- down time for employers who allow volunteers to leave work.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES BRANCH (VSB) of the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) plays a key role in recognising the volunteers and the employers of volunteers in the SES.

VSB runs the Volunteer and Employer Recognition and Support Program (VERSP) that began in 2008 with events at unit level. At these events, certificates of recognition and promotional items are presented to volunteers and their employers. The events allow the SAFECOM Board to meet volunteers in regional areas.

More than 700 certificates have been presented and more than 2,300 volunteers and their employers have attended VERSP events. The VSB has two recruitment promotion trailers to assist SES and CFS brigades and units in recruiting and public relations.

The Volunteer Services Branch also supports the SES through non-operational training, unit-specific recruitment plans and support for young people and cadets.



SES, CFS and marine rescue volunteers, MFS retained members and their employers at Port Augusta with their certificates of appreciation, presented as part of one of the regular Volunteer and Employer Recognition and Support Program (VERSP) events.

VITAL BACKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

WorkCover

New regulations now make SES and VMR members “prescribed volunteers” for WorkCover, bringing them in line with the Country Fire Service.

SPAM

The Stress Prevention and Management program (SPAM) and the staff Employee Assistance Program (EAP) continues to deliver valuable support to members seeking assistance with challenging issues that face them and/or their families.

Peer Support

The volunteer Emergency Services Peer Support Team gives frontline care to other volunteers following critical incidents. The team increased to 21 during 2012-13. Team members complete a nationally accredited Certificate III in Community Services Work. This course involved on-the-job training as well as classroom practical sessions and theory.

Leadership chance

The SES encourages volunteers who want to achieve higher roles, such as unit manager, to take part in volunteer leadership development run by the Australian Emergency Management Institute and the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum.

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

For volunteers, success in competitions takes special effort – exemplified by Laura and Tea Tree Gully units

Gully breezes to 11 state and three national challenge wins

Tea Tree Gully Unit has continued its dominance of SES Rescue Challenges.

In 2013, the Gully won its eleventh state title. Since its first win in 1992, it has taken the trophy in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011. This has been crowned by three national titles: in 1994, 2001 and 2011.

The 2013 Gully state champion team – Nigel Woods, Ian Baxandall, Mary Lamont, Matt Skeldon, Viki Paxtyn and team leader Andrew Buckle – finished third in the nationals.

For the 2013 State Challenge, eight SES teams spent a gruelling



two days in cold, wet and wind at the Metropolitan Fire Service's state training facility at Angle Park. Teams dealt with realistic emergency situations and rescue scenarios, including a mass casualty exercise, vertical rescue, storm damage and an evidence search inside a train.

Other metro teams in the 2013 challenge were Metro South, Western Adelaide, Eastern Suburbs and Edinburgh. They were joined by teams from Port Lincoln and Yankalilla-South Coast, and a composite team from Mount Gambier and Western Adelaide units.



Raising the bar. The Tea Tree Gully team – Back row: Matt Skeldon, Ian Baxandall, Nigel Woods and team leader Andrew Buckle. Front: Viki Paxtyn, Mary Lamont – at the 2013 SES State Rescue Challenge where the Gully won for the eleventh time.





LAURA UNIT BECAME LEGENDARY when it swerved past all kinds of obstacles to clinch the vehicle rapid extraction event at the World Road Crash Rescue Challenge in Cape Town, South Africa in 2005.

The venue was the huge Tygerberg Hospital, and Laura was competing against mostly full-time paid emergency service teams. Laura was one of just three teams out of the 26 to successfully remove the casualty from the vehicle.

Laura's battle to get to the Cape Town titles, after winning the state and Australasian challenges, is nearly as heroic as winning the world trophy.

Laura SES was cash-strapped.

There had been a drought in the district for years and the traumatic Gladstone explosion had left the district focused on supporting families of the men lost or injured.

The unit went into full swing fundraising with raffles or anything, anywhere where they could pass a bucket around.

In nine weeks, it had \$17,000 and state Headquarters pitched in.

The team flew out of Adelaide after a typical SES farewell by families and supporters from units and state headquarters, including then-Chief Officer Stuart Macleod.

The team's trip was long and they missed their connection but arrived in time to make history.

The team's triumphant return to Adelaide Airport was a rowdy affair.



The Laura SES team – Eddy Davenport, Robbie Klemm, Michael Victory and Scott Watson – on its way to winning the vehicle rapid extraction event (right) at the World Road Rescue Challenge in Cape Town in 2005.



6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

SES volunteers show they can mix it with other emergency services in all sports

All-round skills fire up at SAPES Games



David McDonald (left) at the SAPES Games, and (below) with other SES rifle shooting medallists: Robbie Klemm (Laura), Adrian Marlow, Alex McDonald, Norma Mayne (all Hallett), Sue Gage (North Region District Officer) and Darren Beck (Western Adelaide)



SES members have proved their all-round skill and fitness since 2004 as one of 23 organisations competing in the SA Police and Emergency Services (SAPES) Games.

At the 2009 games, Peter Larvin followed up a silver medal in the 40 kilometre cycling road race at Outer Harbour with gold in the hill climb time trial up Norton Summit. SES won silver in the mountain bike short course with John Lawrence and John Smith from Western Adelaide. John Lawrence won gold in the 5 kilometre cross-country run. Sue Gage took silver in the two-gun aggregate and bronze in the rimfire. Matt Fitzpatrick from Metro South won bronze in the two-gun aggregate.

Tony Brown, Gordon Hartley, Ernie Irwin and Michael Geeves won gold in 2010 in the lawn bowls fours. John Lawrence (Western Adelaide) took gold in the 60-64 age 10 kilometre cross-country run and finished third overall. Equestrian entrants Judith Hackett, Melinda Nitschke, Toni Young and Rachell Incoll from Kapunda unit, and Christine Phipps from Strathalbyn, scored gold, silver and bronze in hacking, dressage and novelty.

Metro South's Narelle Kavanagh won gold in rowing, Diedra Klemm (Laura) took gold in table tennis, and Karren Clarke from Campbelltown gold in the 1500 metre run. The shooting teams won multiple gold, silver and bronze medals.

In 2012, fielding only 25 competitors, SES won 21 medals and the Mike Bentley trophy for showing commitment, sportsmanship and competing in the "spirit of the Games". Robbie and Deidra Klemm won the SES Agency Award for commitment to the competition and gold medal performances. In 2013, of 21 SES competitors, 13 won a total of 27 medals. Roseanne Cruickshanks (Mount Gambier) won medals (four gold and a silver) in five track and field events. Darren Beck (Western Adelaide) clinched five shotgun and rifle medals. Other golds went to Dean Garrett (Western Adelaide) in the 10 kilometre road run, Sue Gage and Norma Mayne (Hallett) in rifle shooting and Rachel Incoll in equestrian obstacle.



Kapunda's Rachel Incoll, gold medallist at the SAPES Games.

KAPUNDA UNIT dominates the SES equestrian teams for the SAPES Games, but the unit takes its affinity with horses into other groundbreaking territory.

In a first for Australia, Kapunda unit joined with Horse SA in 2012 to present a local information session for horse owners on large animal rescue.

The session highlighted the scenarios of how things can go wrong with the rescue of large animals, especially horses, unless owners have the proper LAR (large animal rescue) techniques and new equipment available to handle it. The risk to the horse and the owner is reduced by calling an emergency service.

Judith Hackett, horse owner and Kapunda SES member, says: "It is important not to put yourself in danger of serious injury or death by entering any water body, a fire or the interior of a float after an accident." Horse SA also has been working with Mount Barker and other SES units on LAR training.



Other members of SES equestrian team at the SAPES Games: Christine Phipps (Strathalbyn), Sally Equid (Tea Tree Gully), Naomi Wigzell and Judith Hackett (Kapunda).

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

Recognising some extra special contributors to the SES family

KEITH LANE MEMORIAL AWARD

Honour for going beyond duty's call

Keith Lane, an inaugural member of the SASES Volunteers' Association, is remembered through an annual award honouring outstanding contributions by individual members.

The first Keith Lane Memorial Award, a trophy and perpetual shield, was presented in 2004. The award winners are selected by a committee of three volunteer association representatives. The emphasis of the award is not based just on an individual's skills, but on commitment to his/her unit and the SES in general.

The award reflects the attitude of Keith Lane who always went beyond the call of duty, especially during his time with the SES and the volunteers' association.

The Lane family itself have put in around 80 years of service, mostly to Metro South SES. Keith joined when SES was still known as Civil Defence and he was controller at Metro South and then continued on with many years' service to the volunteers' association.

His wife Sheila worked in administration when the unit was still the Mitcham SES Unit. His son Chris attended as a cadet and then went on to complete 24-years' service, mostly as rescue officer, and his daughter-in-law Karen was training officer and spent 15 years at Metro South.

Keith did everything at his unit, from the books to training.

He died suddenly in 2004 and the SASES Volunteers' Association decided to name an award for outstanding individuals after Keith.



Brian McCourt with the 2009 Keith Lane Memorial Award plaque and trophy.

- 2004** Ian Bonython
- 2005** Graeme Olsen
- 2006** Brian Hunter
Laurel Shaw
- 2007** Stuart Lambert
Peter Larvin
- 2008** Keith Smith
- 2009** Brian McCourt
- 2010** Peter Cumberworth
- 2011** Judy Schriever
Colin Schriever
- 2012** Robert Bowley
- 2013** Gavin Tunks
- 2014** John Lawrence
Chris Tarran



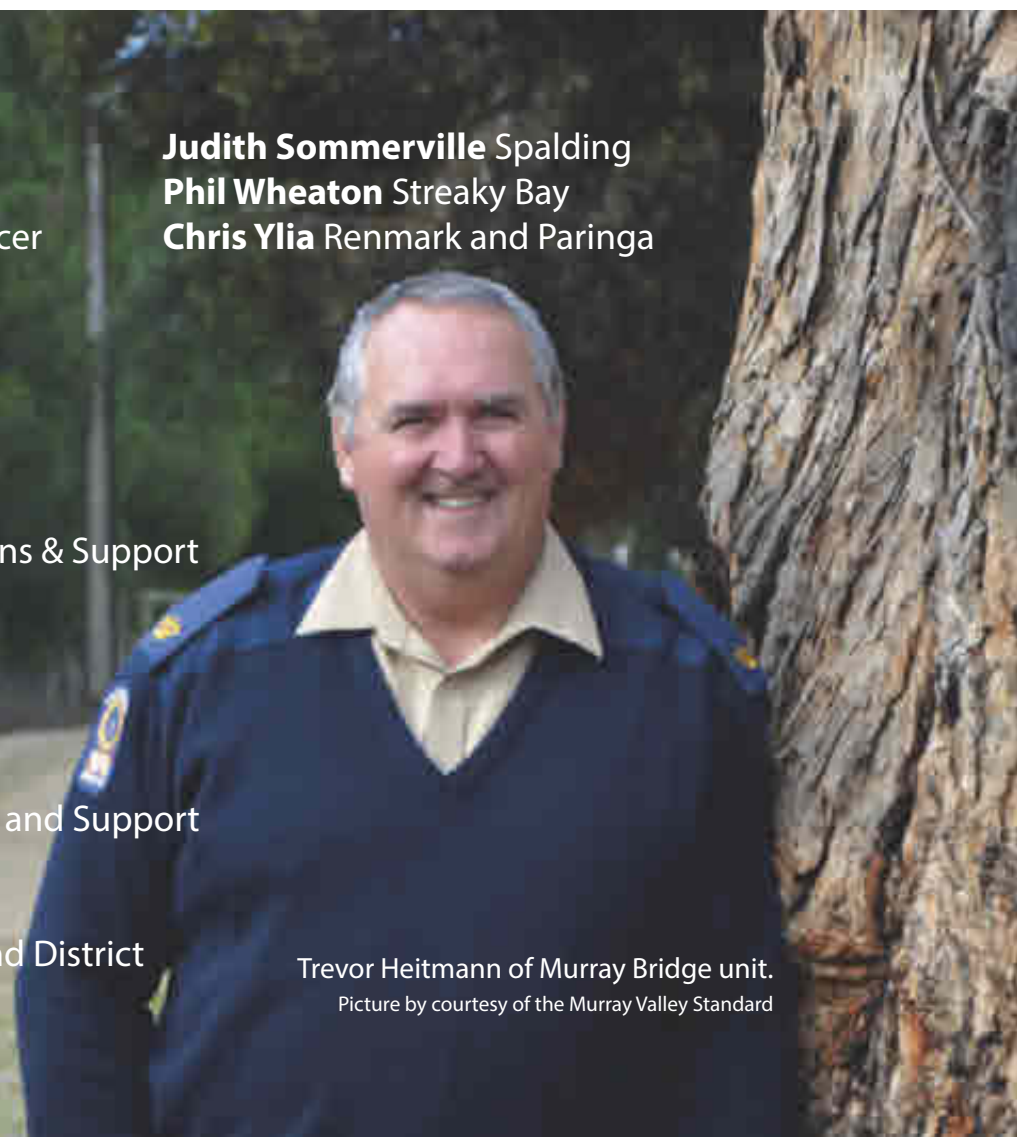
LIFE MEMBERSHIP honours volunteers and staff who have given 35 years of service to the South Australian State Emergency Service. Among the life members is Trevor Heitmann of Murray Bridge who also has received the national and state Emergency Services Medals, as well as a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

SES LIFE MEMBERS

Gordon Creaser Bordertown
Alan Lusher Bordertown
Desmond Whitmarsh Ceduna
David Lloyd Clare
Arno Attema Enfield
Dean Overton Kangaroo Island
William Noack Kapunda
Graham Davenport Laura
Leonard Klemm Laura
William Pearce Laura
Roy Darling Maitland
Lyall Schulz Maitland
Trevor Heitmann Murray Bridge
Campbell Stafford Onkaparinga
Graham Weyland Onkaparinga
Peter Wicks Onkaparinga
Ross Johnston Prospect
Peter Mundy Prospect
Kerry Stephenson Spalding
Geoff Weidenhofer Onkaparinga

Stuart Barrett Warooka
Roger Murdoch Warooka
Stuart Macleod former Chief Officer
Donald Skinner Ceduna
Peter Rawnsley Whyalla
Louise Reynolds South Coast
Chris Rowley South Coast
Colin Sandercock Maitland
William Skinner Whyalla
Malcolm Bethune State Operations & Support
Peter White Spalding
Roger Beames Clare
Jim Darling Tumby Bay
Leigh Dreckow Cleve
Neil Gibson Clare
Gordon Hartley West Operations and Support
David Kumnick Onkaparinga
Stuart Lambert Barmera
Greg Malseed Mount Gambier and District
Bob Pycroft Tumby Bay

Judith Sommerville Spalding
Phil Wheaton Streaky Bay
Chris Ylia Renmark and Paringa



Trevor Heitmann of Murray Bridge unit.
Picture by courtesy of the Murray Valley Standard

Joining the elite medal winners group

NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

2000

George Averis
Leonard Klemm
Brian Lancaster
Darian Stringer

2001

William Noack
Frederick Lane
Ricardo Santucci
John Thorne

2002

Trevor Arnold
Gordon Hartley
Dean Overton
Lyall Schulz

2003

James Darling
Allan McDougall
Andrew Sheils

2004

Peter Codrington
John Dyett
John Hynes
Rosemary Wilkinson

2005

Alan Cormack
Robert Klemm
Stuart Macleod
David Ward

2006

Tony Fahlbusch
Vaughan Mustard
Louise Reynolds

2007

Roger Murdoch
Jennifer Vincent

2008

Donald Skinner
Graeme Wynwood

2009

Grant Geyer
William Lambert

2010

Robert Pycroft
Brian Underwood

2011

Ross Johnston
Paul Ortmann
Warren Hicks

2012

Lynette Berghofer
Donald Rose
Peter Willmott

2013

Trevor Bond
Susan Gage
Trevor Heitmann

2014

John Edge
Theresa Purvis
Danny Wood

2015

Stefan Bilka

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

2002

Trevor Heitmann OAM
William Lambert

2004

Paul Muir
June Radeka

2006

Gregory Reedman

2007

Sindy McCourt
Theresa Purvis

2008

Jennifer Vincent

2009

Trevor Arnold

2011

Garry Smith
Stefan Bilka

2012

John Edge
Axel Larsen
Robert Stevenson
Brenton Whitcher

2013

Robert Suba
Scott Turner



EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDALS have been won by an elite band of SES members. The medals are awarded nationally for distinguished service and at state level for distinguished and/or meritorious service of the highest order. State Ministerial Commendations also are awarded for meritorious or courageous action.



The 2012 State Emergency Services Medal and Ministerial Commendation winners Ray Owen, Brenton Whitcher, Bob Stevenson, Axel Larsen, Bev Bedson and John Edge with Minster for Emergency Services Jennifer Rankine.

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

The SES really lives up to its reputation as a family organisation – within families

Where helping others is all in the family

The McCourts of Hawker

SES volunteers for three generations, Trav and Anne McCourt helped to found Hawker SES two decades ago. Brian McCourt is the Unit Manager with 20 years' service. His wife Cindy was a volunteer at Hawker Unit and had staff positions with SES and now CFS. Daughter, Alissa Jolly, was also a member.

The Codringtons of Ceduna

Peter Codrington is Ceduna Unit Manager and wife Joy is a member, as are daughters Jane and Emma and son Paul. "They help out as best they can, having to fit in work and child rearing," Peter said. "I guess they joined up out of loyalty and support for me. It is another way of doing things together as a family, particularly with Joy."

The Pepes of Port Pirie

The Port Pirie *Recorder* reported in 2000 that eight of the Pepe family were in Port Pirie Unit – at that time an Australian record for SES family membership. The Pepe crew was Deputy Controller Cosie Pepe and wife Val and her brother Bill Morrison, Cosie's daughters Donna Nicks and her sisters Roseanne Pepe and Jenni Angel, Jenni's husband Dudley Angel, and training officer John Murphy. "The family that works together, stays together," Val Pepe said.

The Salmons of Enfield

All four of the Salmon family were with Enfield Unit: Noel Salmon (Controller), wife Roxy (Welfare), and daughters Beverley (Communications) and Vicki (Rescue Operations). "The best thing about having the family involved is that it only takes one phone call to get half the squad out," Noel said.

The Attemas of Enfield

Arno Attema joined Enfield SES (then Civil Defence) in 1968 in signals. In 1976, he married Lesley Wickes from the welfare section. She had joined Civil Defence in 1966. Arno became Communications Officer and moved to Deputy Unit Manager

and Unit Manager in 2002. Lesley took an operations support role in 1977 and became Enfield Administration Officer in 2002. Louise Attema joined Civil Defence in 1969, working in operations/signals. After marrying Maurice Reynolds in 1973, she moved to Meadows/Happy Valley Unit (now Sturt) in 1980 and in retirement shifted to Victor Harbor and South Coast Unit in 2007. She was one of the first two females allowed to do a basic rescue course in 1970 "for information only".

The Leedhams/Littles of Enfield

Shane Leedham joined the SES in 1974 at Smithfield and later at Salisbury and he has been on interstate and intrastate deployments. Shane moved to Enfield Unit where he has been Deputy Unit Manager since 2002. Lyn Little, a Community Engagement Unit member and long-term Enfield member, joined in 1986. Lyn's daughter Jaclyn Bishop is an Enfield member and son Michael is an Enfield cadet and active in the Community Engagement Unit and a FloodSafe volunteer. Kevin, Shane's eldest son, was an Enfield member for 10 years. Josephine Bishop, another of Lyn's daughters, was a member at Enfield.

The Heitmanns of Murray Bridge

The Heitmann family has been involved with Murray Bridge Unit for more than 40 years. Trevor Heitmann, with a few army mates, set up the unit in 1971. He was Unit Manager from 1975 to 2007 and returned in 2013. Trevor's mother and father, Les and Rose Heitmann, with wife Viv, served on the unit's auxiliary fundraising committee for 20 years. Hundreds of hours were spent by Viv, Rose and other auxiliary members baking goods for stalls to raise funds. Les sold bingo tickets at shopping centres. Trevor's daughter Jodi joined as a rescue member in 1991 and became Unit Manager when Trevor retired in 2007. Jodi is now South East District Officer.

More special SES families on Page 78

SEVERAL MEMBERS from several generations of one family is not unusual in an SES unit. The Klemms of Laura are a prime example.

Laura Unit Manager Robbie Klemm's family is known throughout the SES. His late father, the legendary Len Klemm, won the first SES Emergency Services Medal. Robbie's mother Gloria, sister Vanessa Watson, and brother-in-law Scott Watson are all unit members.

Robbie Klemm married Deidra Woolford in 2008 at a very SES ceremony. Deidra and father Allan Woolford have been loyal unit members. Janelle Greaves-Klemm, wife of Robbie's brother Geoffrey, is a member, and son George attends training.



When Robbie Klemm married Deidra Woolford, the groomsmen brought a truck.



**LEONARD (Len) KLEMM
(1933-2012)**

NATIONAL

Emergency Services Medal, 2000
National Medal with 1st, 2nd
and 3rd Clasps

SES

Long Service Medal (with 20-,
30-, 40-year Bars)
Life membership

LAURA

Citizen of the Year

ST JOHN

Most Venerable Order of St John
of Jerusalem



Laura's Len Klemm was an eminent founding father of the SES. One of the first SES volunteers to receive an Emergency Services Medal in 2000, he epitomised community service. Len started in emergency services in 1953 with the then-EFS unit and its Maple Leaf truck converted into a fire appliance. In 1965, after 12 years of volunteer fire fighting, he switched to Civil Defence (later the SES).

In 1983, Len became local SES Controller and led Laura Unit's development, including its first response vehicle – a yellow Chevrolet. Under Len, Laura SES

acquired a new headquarters, new primary and secondary response vehicles, a complete upgrade of rescue gear and upgrades to training. This relied on fundraising, canvassing, cajoling council help, donations and lots of goodwill.

When Len stood down as Controller in 1999, Laura SES was one of the most professional and capable rural units. Beyond Laura, Len and sons Robbie and Geoffrey helped form Booleroo Centre SES Unit. Len also had a major role with St John Ambulance (later SA Ambulance Service).

6 THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

The SES really lives up to its reputation as a family organisation – within families

The Coates of Port Lincoln

Robyn Coates, Port Lincoln Unit Manager, and husband/Rescue Officer Colin, have been members for more than 15 years. Sons Jason and Michael are members, as are Jason's wife, Michelle Wilson, and son Josh as a cadet. Robyn's daughter Erin was a member and her husband Adam Brown is Deputy Unit Manager.

The Schulzes of Maitland

Lyall Schulz joined in 1972 and is Unit Manager. Son Scott is Deputy Manager and son Brett is a Team Leader, both with more than 10 years' service.

The Poels of Mount Gambier

Three generations of Poels have been involved in Mount Gambier rescue unit. Tom Poel joined in 1984 and has been rescue member, Business Coordinator and Unit Manager. Tom is still Administration Coordinator and Finance Officer. Tom's son Simon joined in 1984 and has been Unit Manager since 2006. Simon's daughter Rebekah joined as a rescue member in 2008. Tom and Simon have been on many SES committees/workgroups. The Poels have been community pillars in one of the busiest road crash rescue units, with two or three callouts a fortnight. Mount Gambier has honored Tom and Simon as citizen of the year and Rebekah as young citizen of the year.

The Woods of the Riverland

Danny Wood (District Officer and former Loxton Unit Manager) and his daughter Gemma from Loxton are just part of their SES family story. Gemma has been Training Officer and senior rescue member at Loxton. Danny joined in 1974 as a "kind of unofficial cadet character" and rejoined in 1985 and brought father Don with him.

Helping others is all in the family



Jacquelyn Cutting made an early start on continuing the SES tradition of her mother Rebekah and the Poel family in Mount Gambier

Danny's brother Peter was in the unit for six years, and son Ben also joined. Danny's mother Roma was Welfare Officer for a time; cousin Keith Rollins was a member and Deputy Controller with Danny.

- At Spalding Unit, when Kerry Stephenson died, his wife Pauline and son Tyler took on the farm as well as continuing SES involvement.
- Neil Gibson is Clare Unit Manager, wife Julie does administration/communications, and son Paul is Deputy Unit Manager.
- At Quorn, when long serving and well-known Quentin Smith died, his wife Margaret stepped up as Unit Manager. Sons Hamish and Angus are members.
- Many SES members have married through SES. These teams are often the backbone of a unit, such as Andamooka's Stefan and Diane Bilka. Fleurieu District Officer Terri Purvis and husband John have been part of Meningie Unit for years and son Ryan is a rising senior rescue member and daughter Bec has joined the unit.
- Family involvement is a hallmark of Murray Bridge SES. Examples include: Charlie and Julie Marshall and son Jamie; Phil and Heather Swinburne and daughter Jasmine; Ray and Kerry Davis, daughter Kylie (unit Administration Officer) and son Troy; Richard Grantham and daughter Tara; Roy (deceased) and Kay Hopper and son Neil; Ken and Sue Fiebig and daughters Hailey and Connie (and husband Sean Schrapel); Gwen Mason and son Jamie; Tim Hobbs and son Aaron; Teddy and Heather Allen and son Noel.



CADETS ARE ANOTHER PART OF THE SES FAMILY. Actually, one of the earliest (1960s) cadet units was Kings College (now Pembroke School) which became what is now Eastern Suburbs SES Unit.

Only a third of SES units today have cadets. Some units (such as Enfield) run an official cadet program. Some have a non-official approach, simply encouraging teenage children of members to join in where they can. Units with cadets include – North Region: Cummins, Port Lincoln, Tumby Bay, Booleroo Centre, Clare, Hallett, Laura, Andamooka, Coober Pedy, Warooka. South Region: Murray Bridge and District, Yankalilla, Enfield, Berri, Kapunda, Loxton, Renmark and Paringa, Millicent, Community Engagement, Mount Barker.

In 2006, a brochure was produced to promote the cadet scheme. The induction and basic skills package was accredited towards the SA Certificate of Education (SACE). The SES cadet program is open to those aged 13-18. They can develop self esteem, learn skills, have new experiences, grow in confidence and become team members. It promotes an understanding of community service.

Each year some SES cadets attend a camp for training, fun activities and to meet cadets from other units.



SES 2013 Cadet of the Year, Shona Mayne, from the Hallett Unit.

The Anzac Day eve all-night vigil has become a tradition upheld by SES and CFS cadets at the war memorial in North Terrace, Adelaide, and elsewhere.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2012, SES gained a unit devoted to increasing the links with communities

Engaging with community via floods, storm, heat awareness



SES plays a key part in educating the community to enable it to protect itself, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability to disasters.

To focus on this, the SES Community Engagement Unit was launched in 2012 with three main roles:

- Community education incorporating the FloodSafe, StormSafe and HeatSafe programs
- Advising and supporting SES units on recruiting, retaining volunteers, and
- Supporting SES promotions and public relations.

The SES FloodSafe program is a partnership between the SA Government and local councils. It uses SES volunteers to engage with, and assist, high-flood-risk communities to understand their risks and to increase their level of resilience to flooding.

The program delivered 100 presentations and activities across 32 council areas throughout 2012-13. This involved about 2,330 hours of volunteer time on site, excluding travel time between base and sites.



The public gets to know more about the SES through the Community Engagement Unit's travelling show.

StormSafe

As part of the SES website, Stormsafe offers emergency alerts; information on what to do before, during and after a storm, general information for schools, and an emergency kit for the home or business.

HeatSafe

From November to March, the SES issues regular heat-watch messages. During January 2013, the Emergency Alert location-based technology was used to issue a heat warning message (watch and act) to areas in the north of the state. About 45,000 targeted emergency public information warning messages were issued.



AWARD-WINNING CAMPAIGN SA Community FloodSafe has been a flag bearer for SES community engagement.

FloodSafe began in 2008 after 5,000 Adelaide suburban homes on the Brownhill and Keswick creeks floodplains were shown to be at risk of \$200 million damage. Only six regions in Australia have more homes susceptible to such flooding.

The program was initially a partnership between the SES, the Bureau of Meteorology and Marion, Mitcham, Holdfast Bay, West Torrens and Unley councils.

FloodSafe raises community awareness of the flood risk, informs residents on how to help themselves, and increases the profile of local SES units.

Stronger links have been forged between FloodSafe volunteers and local SES units through the cleaning of local creeks. Flood mapping, flood history and stormwater issues, together with the vast knowledge of the councils' works staff, helps to target primary risk areas and bolster SES readiness.

Floodsafe volunteers present flood information to schools and communities across SA. A number of other councils have since joined the original five in supporting FloodSafe, along with the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Natural Resource Management Board, the Stormwater Management Authority and SA Water.



Adelaide suburbs are among the most flood-prone in Australia.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The SES has an active presence at a range of major events as well as backing other causes

Out and about for big and small events



Paddy the Platypus has become a popular mascot for the SES, bobbing up at a range of events from the Tour Down Under (above) to the Two Wells Christmas Pageant (left).

Paddy was born out of the SA Community Floodsafe campaign started in 2008. He fronts promotions and school visits by the Community Engagement Unit.





HAVING SERIOUS FUN. SES members are on hand for emergency response at major events such as Clipsal 500, Royal Adelaide Show, Christmas pageants and Anzac Day parades.

On a smaller level, SES members can be seen out promoting other causes – and the SES – in a fun or serious way.



Belinda and other Campbelltown Unit members joined Chief Officer Chris Beattie during SES Week to give blood at the Red Cross Blood Service in Adelaide.



Tea Tree Gully volunteers set the pace in a Little Heroes fun run, raising funds to buy a playground for children with cancer – in special support of the unit's award-winning training coordinator Phil Tann.



GPA Engineering's Therese Colmer and Akalia McDonald bring novelty to Wear Orange Wednesday, arranged by SES stalwart John Lawrence.



Adding to the SES presence at Yorke Peninsula field days: Wendy Williams (Burra), Dennis Murphy (Bute) and Robyn Holthouse (North Region RAO).

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SASES has confidently and enthusiastically answered calls to help out with interstate natural disasters

Flying in to fight storms – that’s Australia all over

2007 NSW

The first big interstate deployment saw 120 SASES volunteers and staff travel to help the recovery, with NSW facing 2,549 tasks after storms and flooding. SA volunteers were called for on Sunday afternoon and numbers grew with amazing speed. As the first group flew to Sydney, the Qantas pilot recognised their effort and thanked them.

Tea Tree Gully team leader David Zakrzewski said: “My team was put with another and given heavy tasks – jobs requiring cranes and cherry pickers. We had two four-wheel drives and one trailer loaded with chainsaws, chaps, roof access kits and tarps.

“Our largest job took just over 16 hours. There were multiple trees on the property. One tree, across the long driveway, had a 2 metre circumference.

“For the job we used a crane, a 45-foot cherry picker and light towers for lighting. The trees were enormous; often twice the height that we South Australians were used to. We finished the job with absolutely no damage to the buildings. The taskings challenged us. The hillsides were steep and rocky. The trees had surface roots; some trees four or five metres in diameter.”

2010 Victoria

Fifty-one SASES volunteers arrived in storm-hit Victoria with the SES there having 5,500 requests on its books. Crews were assigned to trucks and briefed on the Victorian SES rooftop safety system. They were deployed to Knox Unit. Most work in the hardest-hit areas was repairing rooftops and structures. In that regard, SASES gave Victoria extra knowhow. It introduced them to using corflute, silicone and staple guns.



South Australian SES volunteers leaving Adelaide Airport to help with storm damage relief in Bunbury, WA, in 2012.

2010 Western Australia

Only two weeks after deployment to Victoria, SASES sent another team of 17 storm and flood specialists to WA in the wake of a wild thunderstorm hitting Perth. On arrival, 1,200 tasks were outstanding and another 3,000 calls received. Perth experienced extensive floods and hail damage to roofs, windows, vehicles, fences and roads.

2012 Western Australia

In June, 24 volunteers from units, including Strathalbyn, Meningie, Mount Barker, Noarlunga, Eastern Suburbs, Tea Tree Gully, Enfield, Metro South and Western Adelaide went with task force commander Andrea Geytenbeek. They were based out of Bunbury Unit. Taskings were P1 and P2 and assisting with evaluating and repairing damaged buildings.

ANSWERING CALLS for help with interstate natural disasters gave SES community engagement a much wider meaning.

In 2007, SES volunteers started flying in force all over Australia to answer those calls.

A stringent test came in 2011. In January, Queensland was hit with huge storms and floods. Ten people were killed, 40,000 properties threatened and damage hit \$11 billion.

SASES quickly had two taskforces departing out of Toowoomba. Around Laidley, the SA team doorknocked flood areas, conducted rapid damage assessments, helped residents remove household effects and gave information on welfare services.

While SASES had volunteers in Queensland, record floods peaked in Victorian towns. SA volunteers helped in Horsham and Bendigo and then assisted Victorian SES and CFA with sandbagging in Warracknabeal, Brim and Beulah. A team also went to Mildura.

Victorian floods impacted on SA's South East. River Murray flows peaked and many volunteers worked hard in the Riverland.

Next came Queensland's Cyclone Yasi. Worst affected were Mission Beach, Cardwell, Tully, Innisfail and Silkwood. Three SASES taskforces went to Tully. Primary tasks were working at heights and chainsaw operations.

“ Generally, people were very surprised that we were from SA and just so happy to see us. A lady with a blocked driveway was exceptional; she baked us scones and served them with coffee! ...The jobs were completely serious, but the group dynamics made the experience so much fun.”

David Zakrzewski
Tea Tree Gully Team Leader



“I really enjoyed the deployments; taking a team, working with other units and other agencies such as police, Salvos, fire services and other SES teams. Gave me great satisfaction.”

Peter Larvin (left)
Western Adelaide Unit

INTERSTATE DEPLOYMENTS

			No. Deployed
NSW Dep	Storm	2007	50
NSW Dep 2	Storm	2007	52
Victoria Black Saturday	Bushfires	2007	16
Qld Cyclone Yasi TF1 Romeo	Cyclone Yasi	2010	53
Victoria	Storm	2010	52
WA	Storms	2010	18
Victorian Swiftwater	Flooding	2010	6
Vic Floods - IMT	Flooding	2010	2
Victoria Floods	Flooding	2011	21
Bendigo IMT	Storms	2011	3
Victoria Horsham IMT	Storms	2011	2
Qld Floods TF1 Lima	Flooding	2011	21
Qld Floods TF2 Quebec	Flooding	2011	21
Qld Floods TF3 Zulu	Flooding	2011	21
Qld Cyclone Yasi TF2 Sierra	Cyclone Yasi	2011	52
Victoria Support Force Crew Mildura	Storms	2011	22
Victoria Swan Hill IMT	Storms	2011	4
Qld Cyclone Yasi TF3 Alpha Quebec	Cyclone Yasi	2011	18
Cyclone Yasi TF 4 Alpha Sierra	Cyclone Yasi	2011	6
Christchurch NZ USAR Wayne Palmer	Earthquake	2011	1
Victorian	Hail damage	2011	25
Western Australia	Storms	2012	26
Christmas Island	Search	2013	4
Penrith	Bushfire	2013	6
Western Australia	MH370 Search	2014	4

8 THE FUTURE – WITH A PAST

Building on a foundation of community and preparing for major disasters gives SES the strength to face the future



Units and their bases will remain the mainstay of the State Emergency Service into the future. Kangaroo Island is an example of a unit that has come a long way since its birth was announced in September 1980, after a public meeting addressed by SES pioneer and Southern Region director Peter Tobe.



Today, SES volunteers at a major exercise can enjoy food prepared by, for example, the Salvation Army emergency services. It's a far cry from the mid 1960s when members of Enfield Civil Defence welfare section (inset) were cooking scones in a dustbin oven.

Bases loaded for online future of SES

The SES goes into the future with its bases continuing to be upgraded to a standard unimagined in its early days.

In 2012-13, the Community Engagement Unit, State Operations Coordination Unit, FloodSafe and Western Adelaide unit moved to a new and much-needed building at the former Fleet SA site at Netley. This follows new unit buildings opened recently at Campbelltown (see back page), Whyalla and Tumby Bay, and smaller improvements at places such as Mount Barker.



Communications online will become an increasingly important focus for the SES.

In 2013, the SES Volunteer Portal was launched, replacing the old "Members Only" intranet. All volunteers were issued with a new SES email address and user name to log on.

The SES has invested significant resources to provide training courses online for members to complete in their own time in the comfort of their own surroundings. The E-Connect program, providing improved volunteer access to broadband, email and training resources, was completed. The new volunteer portal is critical in making important information more accessible, delivering new online training, and communicating more effectively with volunteers.

SES has made a major revamp of its website. Monthly newsletters improve the scope and regularity of communication across the organisation. *EM News* highlights emergency management issues among SA stakeholder groups.

Use of the increasingly popular social networking and micro-blogging service Twitter markedly increased during 2012-13, with the aim of issuing at least one tweet each day. Most tweets provide important safety messages, particularly during extreme weather. SES now has more than 8,500 followers on Twitter.



FACING FUTURE challenges is shaping up as an exercise that will draw heavily and richly on the SES's past.

Those challenges have been made more complicated through the uncertain impacts of changing climate patterns. Evidence suggests the magnitude of extreme weather events is increasing significantly every year. This has implications for the capacity and resilience of SES when severe events occur.

The SES, going back to its Civil Defence origins, started as an organisation preparing to face severe events. More crucially, it was an organisation that built itself at the grassroots community level.

The SES spirit that grew on the foundation of harder times is being revived with the emphasis on communities that are resilient and adaptable in their readiness to face big events.

The SES's past has given it a solid grounding for the future.

