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of South Australia



RESCUE

# Emergency Management

April 2014

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE NEWSLETTER

### A hot , wet and windy summer impacts South Australia

The 2013-14 summer season saw intense and prolonged periods of heatwave conditions that scorched most of South Australia as well as a severe wind event and widespread flooding that impacted the Adelaide metropolitan area, the Mid North and Riverland districts.

Adelaide experienced 13 days of maximum temperatures above 40°C – when the average is two days – and this included a record-breaking five consecutive days above 42°C.

Three distinct periods of extreme heat were followed by a severe wind event that caused considerable damage in Adelaide's eastern suburbs and, a few days later, widespread flooding.

The February severe wind event resulted in the State Emergency Service (SES) responding to more than 1000 calls for assistance from the general public. To better handle the operational response to this event, the SES established an Incident Management Team (IMT) at the Campbelltown SES Unit.

Falling trees and branches during the severe wind event resulted in considerable damage to the state's electricity distribution system. SA Power Networks worked around the clock to restore power to the tens of thousands of customers impacted – some of which lost power for more than 24 hours.

The heavy rain that fell on the Adelaide Metropolitan, Mid North and Riverland districts resulted in the issue of a Flood Watch and localised flooding with a number of houses at Peterhead, in Adelaide's north western suburbs, particularly badly affected.

Numerous arterial roads and streets in the Adelaide metropolitan area were covered with water – many as a result of drains being blocked by leaf litter, rubbish and other material – resulting in particularly dangerous conditions for motorists.

Over this period of heightened operational response, the SES activated its State Control Centre for an extended period to coordinate cross-government activity in response to these events.

The Country Fire Service (CFS) also kept its State Coordination Centre continuously activated for almost four consecutive weeks responding to more than 600 rural fires, among them the Bangor fire in the Southern Flinders Ranges which drew most of the public and media attention.

The Bangor fire resulted in unprecedented demands for CFS firefighters and partner agencies including the SES, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and Forestry SA. Support was also received from Victoria's Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) as well as an army of local farm fire units.

During the 13-18 January heatwave, the SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) responded to nearly 3,800 emergency and urgent incidents. This represented an increase in workload of 17 per cent compared to the same week in 2013.

Surf Life Saving SA (SLSSA) was also busy over summer with a significant increase in people visiting the beaches looking for some respite from the heat.

Volunteer surf lifesavers provided extra patrols on weekdays and extended weekend patrols to cater for the increased use of the coast. Professional lifeguard services were also increased with both volunteers and lifeguards dealing with an increase in many incidents.

This included first aid incidents from sun burn through to near drownings and also treating hundreds of people for marine stings from the jumble, a small clear bell shaped jellyfish which is common during hot still periods.

Numerous public safety warnings were issued by various agencies during the three heatwaves, including the SES, SA Health, SafeWork SA, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

The SES Community Engagement Unit (CEU) played a key role in disseminating extreme heat safety information to the general public, with unit members visiting shopping centres, the Adelaide Railway Station and other locations to hand out material. The CEU also handed out extreme heat safety information to arriving passengers at the international terminal at the Adelaide Airport.

On February 14, 31 days after it began, the Bangor fire was finally declared "Controlled" having swept through more than 35,000 hectares and destroying five houses. Dozens of homes however were saved.

A number of sheds were lost, with extensive damage sustained to fencing, and at least 700 sheep perished.

CFS Regional Commander Bluey Devine said bringing Bangor under control required a remarkable effort not only by the CFS, but from other supporting emergency services, multiple government and community agencies and numerous private farm fire units.

"The Bangor fire was challenging not only for those involved in firefighting, but for the communities who anxiously awaited the fire to impact," he said.

"The resilience of the rural communities was outstanding."

**Chris Beattie (SES), Chris Metevelis (CFS), Simon Nankivell (SA Health) and Shane Daw (SLSSA)**

*Firefighting aircraft supporting ground crews at the Bangor fire which swept through 35,000 hectares of scrub, grass, forest and stubble with a perimeter of 195 kilometres in the Southern Flinders Ranges. Photo: Naomi Jellicoe. News Ltd Newspapers*



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



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## 2014 Resilient Australia Awards - SA Nominations Now Open



*All 2013 Resilient Australia award winners. (Source: Commonwealth Attorney General's Department)*

Five South Australian projects were recognised at the Resilient Australia Awards National Ceremony held in Canberra last December.

An initiative of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and the South Australian Government, the Resilient Australia Awards recognise innovative practices and achievements that are helping to make the nation's communities stronger, more resilient and better prepared to manage emergency situations.

The 2013 National Winners are as follows:

- Department of Environment, Water & Natural Resources (DEWNR), Climate Change Unit –and the Local Government Association of South Australia
- ABC Local Radio - Emergency Broadcasting

The 2013 National Highly Commended awardees are as follows:

- Port Neill Emergency Ready Committee (PNERC)

- Central Local Government Region of Councils, in partnership with Regional Development Australia, and the Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management Board
- SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM), in partnership with SA State Emergency Services (SES), Zone Emergency Management Committees, and the Department of Planning, Transport, and Infrastructure (DPTI), Building Management

Nominations for the 2014 Resilient Australia Awards are now open and close on Wednesday, 2 July, 2013.

All nominations can be submitted online. Details are available on the SAFECOM website: [http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au/site/emergency\\_management/resilient\\_australia\\_awards.jsp](http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au/site/emergency_management/resilient_australia_awards.jsp)

For more information on the 2013 SA winners, go to:

[http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au/site/emergency\\_management/resilient\\_australia\\_awards/2013\\_resilient\\_australia\\_awards\\_sa\\_winning\\_entries.jsp](http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au/site/emergency_management/resilient_australia_awards/2013_resilient_australia_awards_sa_winning_entries.jsp)

## Common Alerting Protocol Updated

Late last year an updated version of the Australian Government standard for Common Alerting Protocol (Australia Profile) was released.

The Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is an international standard that facilitates the construction and exchange of emergency alert and warning messages between various systems and networks. CAP can be used to alert and inform emergency response agencies, media and the general public. CAP ensures that messages remain consistent and clearly indicate to the recipient the severity of the threat and best response.

The standard should be used by governments, organisations and all agencies seeking to provide a common standardised approach to distributing alerts and warnings.

It can also be used by organisations seeking to interoperate with emergency alerting agencies or internally with their employees. A copy of the standard is available from <https://www.govshare.gov.au/item-details/?rid=57>



## Alert SA campaign extends to radio

The Alert SA campaign has once again featured in South Australian newspapers, digital media, bus shelters, and this time even radio!

A broadcast approach has been taken to ensure as many South Australians as possible are made aware of the Alert SA website [www.alert.sa.gov.au](http://www.alert.sa.gov.au). This will continue throughout April and May 2014 so keep an ear out for the ads.

The Alert SA site has undergone some enhancements to ensure it is now mobile and tablet friendly so that people can easily view the site on their hand-held devices.

An additional tab for current alerts has been added which allows the viewer to see in one consolidated place all current warnings that have been issued under the Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning framework.







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## Signing of Common Incident Management Framework – Control

### **In February 2014 a Common Incident Management Framework (CIMF) Control Agency Agreement was signed by all control agency chief executive officers.**

This is a first in Australia and will now see all South Australian control agencies working under a common framework, with consistent terminology and standards at local, regional and state levels.

In addition, the framework commits control agencies to the application of functional management, aligns management to the ten responsibilities of a control agency, provides for a common diagrammatic representation of the management structures and nominates that the person leading the control agency in the response is to be known as the Incident Controller.

This last point will reduce a large amount of confusion that arises with multiple persons wearing similar tabards.

This new framework builds upon the April 2011 agreement signed by the Country Fire Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Police which at the time was also a first across the nation.

The 2011 agreement received recent praise at the last State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) by the CFS Chief Officer Greg Nettleton.

Mr Nettleton asserted that one of the reasons for the successful management of the January (2014) fires, heat and flood events was in part due to the seamless integration between the emergency services, due to the common incident command systems in use between emergency services and police in this state.

The commonality of this system with national systems also allowed seamless integration of the fire fighting resources from New South Wales, Western Australian and Victoria. Given that praise, it can be reasonably assumed that the new agreement will have similar benefits for the community.

The State Coordinator, Commissioner Gary Burns, congratulated all signatories for their unity and commitment, noting that such cooperation between the agencies significantly contributes to ensuring that the South Australian community receives the best possible response from all agencies during an emergency.

For further information on this agreement please contact SAPOL's Emergency Management Coordinator, Senior Sergeant Russell Dippy on ([russell.dippy@police.sa.gov.au](mailto:russell.dippy@police.sa.gov.au)) or 08 732 24251.



*Pictured at the signing of the agreement are back row (from left) Rick Janssan (DMITRE), Don Frater (PIRSA), Bret Morris (DPC), Grant Lupton (MFS), Stephen Christley (SA Health) and Rod Hook (DPTI). Front row (from left) are Greg Nettleton (CFS), Gary Burns (SAPOL) and Chris Beattie (SES).*

## National taskforce established to review the Bureau's emergency management services

### **In July 2011 the Commonwealth Government commissioned a review of the capacity of the Bureau of Meteorology to respond to future extreme weather and natural disaster events and to provide accurate and timely seasonal forecasting services.**

A copy of the review's report is available from <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/review-bureau-meteorology-extreme-weather-and-seasonal-forecasting-capacity>.

A new national taskforce has been established to progress three of the Review's Priority Actions and Options:

- Priority Action 3: Formalise and standardise service levels provided to emergency services

- Priority Action 4: Agree clear allocation of responsibilities to state and local government for flood management, with defined boundaries on the bureau's role
- Option 21: Apply a consistent cost-recovery model to all services delivered to state/territory fire and emergency service agencies

The taskforce has been charged with developing an approach for the bureau to provide a nationally consistent set of services to emergency management agencies, making recommendations on measures to harmonise and standardise the bureau's services; making recommendations on the future allocation of responsibilities across all three spheres of government for flood management; and preparing an implementation plan to accompany any recommendations.

As project outputs are developed and delivered there will need to be a mechanism by which end-users are engaged and kept informed and a reference group of stakeholders established to facilitate timely exchange of information and updates on the project.

Should your agency wish to receive updates on progress with this project please contact SES ([Camilleri.Mary@ses.sa.gov.au](mailto:Camilleri.Mary@ses.sa.gov.au)).



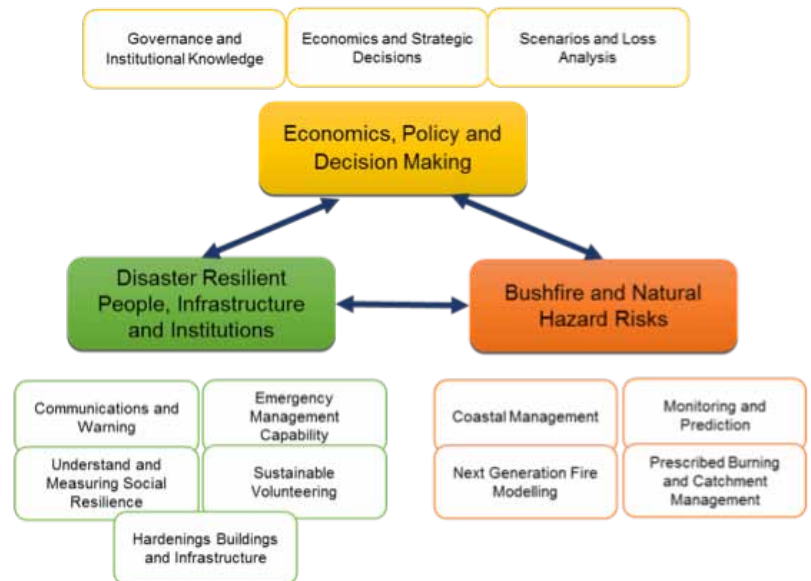
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## Research Agenda for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards

The research program for the new Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC kicked off in March with 170 project end users and researchers attending the Establishment Research Advisory Forum which was held in Adelaide over 18-20 March 2014.

Established in 2013, the program of research will span eight years with a global budget of over \$130 million in cash and in-kind contributions from the Commonwealth, all states and territories and a number of universities and non-government partner agencies. There are three themes covering 12 clusters of projects, most of which span the priorities for those working in a multi-hazard environment.



- **Governance, policy and decision making.**

This theme deals with the economics of disasters and the interface between risk-based priorities and the practice of resource allocation, where the greatest tangible benefits can be made.

- **Resilient people, infrastructure and institutions.**

Five clusters of projects contributing to this theme aim to improve the conceptualisation of resilience and the factors that both promote and inhibit its development. Improved understanding of these factors is intended to contribute to and optimise the development of a capability to identify vulnerability and manage the risk and enable resilience.

- **Bushfire and natural hazards risks.** Four clusters of projects focus on coastal management, fire modelling, monitoring and prediction and prescribed burning and catchment modelling will seek to provide better forecasts for events with greater accuracy and timeliness.

More information on the 35 projects being undertaken by the CRC is available from <http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/research/overview>

## New Emergency+ app launched

Over 66 per cent of incoming calls to Triple Zero (000) are now made from mobile phones and callers often do not know exactly where they are – creating delays in call-processing.

Without an accurate location emergency responders cannot be dispatched or their arrival on scene is delayed.

To combat this growing issue, a new app has been launched called “Emergency+”. It has been developed to enable Triple Zero callers to tell emergency services call takers their location coordinates using their smartphone’s existing GPS functionality.

Call centre numbers for the State Emergency Service (SES 132 500) and Police Assistance Line (PAL – 131 444) have also been included in the app. This will assist in calls being directed to the most appropriate number.

“Emergency+” is available for free download from iTunes and Google Play

app stores. Aztec and QR codes have also been developed to allow users to be taken directly to the “Emergency+” app in the respective app store.

All South Australian organisations are encouraged to promote the app as an important public safety initiative and to include the Aztec and QR codes in relevant safety material and campaigns.

