Emergency Service Unit
Frequently asked questions

What is an Emergency Service Unit (ESU)?
An ESU is a volunteer emergency services group established to provide two or more of the functions traditionally associated with Rural Fire Service Brigades, including fire fighting and fire prevention, State Emergency Service (SES) units and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Community First Responder Groups from a single, co-located group in a rural and remote community.

The mission of ESUs is to provide effective and timely volunteer emergency services in rural and remote areas of Queensland.

What will happen to the existing SES Unit, Rural Fire Brigade and QAS Community First Responder Group?
These groups will only combine if the groups and the community support a change.

How are ESUs supported?
ESUs are supported by a partnership between the Department of Emergency Services and the local council within the ESU area.

Are ESU members paid or are they volunteers?
No remuneration is paid to volunteers.

What are the responsibilities of becoming an ESU volunteer and how do I join an ESU?
ESU volunteers provide assistance to the community in times of emergency and disaster.

Volunteers are responsible for delivering two or more of the ESUs functions, which may include multi-functional delivery of SES functions, firefighting and/or fire prevention functions and also QAS Community First Responder functions.

An ESU volunteer has the choice as to what function/s they wish to perform as part of an ESU or they may prefer to take on a non-operational role by providing welfare or other administrative support to ESU volunteers and their community.

The key obligations of ESU volunteers include:

- attending training activities and become proficient in required skills so that the ESU is able to perform its functions within the community;
- employing safe work practices and observing all relevant safety precautions;
- participating in emergency response operations or providing support to the ESU;
- maintaining in good order, all clothing and equipment.

If you live in an ESU area, please contact your ESU Coordinator for information on how to join the ESU.

What do I need to join an ESU and will I receive training and equipment?
All ESU volunteers receive the appropriate training, protective gear, uniforms and equipment, to enable them to perform their functions safely and effectively.

ESU volunteers participate in nationally-accredited training and non-accredited training courses and exercises offered through the SES, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service training support program and QAS Community First Responder training.

How will I recognise an ESU volunteer?
No matter what function they are performing, ESU volunteers wear a navy blue polo shirt with yellow sleeves. These polo shirts are easily identifiable with the appropriate badging and the words 'EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT' on the back. They also wear yellow fire trousers and jacket when attending a fire scene. Depending on the emergency or disaster situation, the volunteer will be recognisable by the equipment they are carrying. For example, a volunteer performing the QAS Community First Responder role maybe carrying a first aid kit and defibrillator.

What do I do in an emergency?
In an emergency situation, community members within an ESU area are to call Triple Zero (000) or their primary health centre.

The ESU will respond accordingly and, depending on the situation, will deliver one or more of the following operational functions:

- QAS Community First Responder functions (until assisted by other medical care)
- Rural Fire Brigade functions

In a situation that requires the SES, it is appropriate for most communities to call their local council.

If I call an ambulance will an ESU QAS Community First Responder turn up?
Yes. If you live in an ESU area that has QAS Community First Responder trained members, an ESU Community First Responder will first arrive at the scene.

ESU Community First Responders are specifically classified as personnel of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Their role is to stabilise the patient until medical care arrives. They fulfill a vital first link in a range of care for local communities medical or emergency incidents, from administering first aid to providing life-saving patient care until assisted by medical care.

They provide high quality, life-saving pre-hospital care. They are local people looking after local people.

If my rural or remote community has an ESU, do we have all three services?
Not all ESUs will have all three functions. Depending on the priority risks of the community, ESUs can be made up of two or more of the functions traditionally associated with Rural Fire Service Brigades, SES Units and QAS Community First Responder Groups.

For further information on ESUs
Department of Emergency Services Community Contact Centre on 1300 369 003 or visit www.emergency.qld.gov.au/esu

Queensland Government
Department of Emergency Services

Remember ... in an emergency, always call Triple Zero (000).

St Pauls ESU

How do I contact the St Pauls ESU?
Community members in St Pauls are to call Triple Zero (000) in an emergency situation or the St Pauls Primary Health Centre on 07 4069 4348 in a medical emergency.

The ESU Community First Responder, as well as the Primary Health Centre, will be contacted to attend to the medical situation. If the patient needs further medical attention, they maybe required to be evacuated to Thursday Island. The ESU Community First Responder will deliver emergency medical assistance until further medical care arrives.

In situations that require Rural Fire and SES type services please call Triple Zero (000) or contact the St Pauls Council on 07 4069 4124.

For further information
For information on the St Pauls ESU or if you wish to enquire on becoming an ESU member, please contact the St Pauls Council on 07 4069 4124.

For all other information on ESUs please contact the Department of Emergency Services Community Contact Centre on 1300 369 003 or visit www.emergency.qld.gov.au/esu