

Our volunteers and partners

Ordinary people, extraordinary contribution

Our department is focused on preventing, preparing for and responding to emergencies and disasters, and developing the capacity of communities to become more resilient. This could not be realised without the dedicated efforts of our volunteers. Each day, many thousands of Queenslanders voluntarily play a part in responding to disasters and emergencies that occur across the State. This section highlights the services that depend on such volunteers.

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Our volunteers

Volunteering is a key feature in the *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* initiative. The department relies heavily on its volunteers and others who partner with DES in providing for a safer Queensland. This section of the report addresses those vital people and organisations.

QFRS Rural Operations

QFRS Rural Operations provides fire management for rural and semi-rural communities across 93 per cent of the State. Pre-fire management is administered by the volunteer Fire Warden network through the Permit to Light Fire system, whilst actual fire management is provided by volunteer Rural Fire Brigades.

Queensland has 34,000 volunteers in 1,491 Rural Fire Brigades established to provide assistance to the local community in rural fire management. Volunteers undertake tasks to mitigate and respond to fires in their local area. They are also involved in community education activities as well as hazard reduction to reduce the risk from fire to people and property.

How to get involved

To qualify as a rural fire volunteer you must:

- be at least 16 years of age
- undertake a criminal history check
- possess physical and mental fitness to undertake the duties of a volunteer firefighter
- be available for volunteer firefighter training and operations in your local area.

In addition to a role as a firefighter there are many other roles within a Rural Fire Brigade that greatly assist the Brigade in providing services to the community.

For further information, please contact the Rural Operations Central Office on (07) 3247 8130 or alternatively visit: www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au.

QFRS Scientific Unit

The Scientific Unit is the specialist advisory arm of QFRS. The unit provides expert advice across a range of areas, in particular for the safe management of hazardous materials incidents.

The advice ranges from the reactivity and toxicity of materials to community protective actions and strategies to resolve incidents.

The Scientific Unit draws on the expertise of professionally qualified chemists and chemical engineers from across regional Queensland to provide a prompt, at-the-scene response to chemical incidents.

The unit provides a 24-hour, seven day-a-week scientific advisory service in collaboration with Queensland Health Scientific Services, responding primarily within the South-East corner of the State, and comprises support to 40 on-call scientific volunteers located across regional Queensland.

During the year, volunteers attended a range of incidents, including chemical spills in Townsville and Toowoomba, as well as transport incidents from Moura to Mackay.

How to get involved

For further information, please contact QFRS on (07) 3247 8100.

Emergency Services Cadets

The Emergency Services Cadet Program is a whole-of-department youth development program providing young Queenslanders with opportunities for personal development, skills development and community service. The purpose of the program is to introduce Queensland's young people to emergency services training that will better equip them for community life, and is an invaluable training ground for those aspiring to a career in the emergency services.

Cadets attend weekly training sessions to develop essential life and emergency related skills, enabling them to build their leadership potential in a structured and safe learning environment.

Queensland was the first state in Australia to establish Emergency Services Cadets involving SES, QFRS and QAS training. There are approximately 650 Cadets supported by 280 adult leaders in 49 cadet groups throughout Queensland. Many of these cadet groups are in rural and remote communities.

The Emergency Services Cadet Program has been accredited through the Australian Council of Children and Youth Organisations since February 2006. The accreditation process recognises that the Cadet Program is operating as a national benchmark for children and youth organisations in the area of child protection policies.

The Emergency Services Cadet Steering Committee oversees the strategic direction of the Emergency Services Cadet Program. The committee comprises representatives from EMQ, QAS, QFRS, SPES, Surf Life Saving Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue Association of Queensland (VMRAQ) and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association of Queensland (AVCGA).

How to get involved

To qualify for enrolment as an Emergency Services Cadet, the young person must:

- have commenced Grade 8 at high school but not reached the age of 16 years
- have their parent's or guardian's permission to enrol
- be a resident of Australia
- be certified by their parent or guardian as being capable of carrying out the normal duties and activities of Emergency Services Cadets.

To qualify for enrolment as an Adult Member the adult must:

- be 18 years of age or over
- undertake a Working with Children Check in order to obtain a current valid 'blue card' to work with children
- have a commitment to upholding youth friendly work practices
- satisfactorily meet the requirements of the application process
- be committed to participating in ongoing education and training to improve their knowledge and skills to work more effectively with young people
- have a demonstrated interest in youth training and activities and an ability to work effectively with young people
- possess or have the ability to quickly obtain sufficient knowledge to effectively supervise the activities of Cadets
- be medically fit to cope with the relatively demanding task of supervising and participating in activities involving young people
- have sufficient time and level of commitment to give to the program.

For further information, please contact EMQ on (07) 3635 1877 or visit: www.emergency.qld.gov.au/cadets.

Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR)

VMR organisations contribute to the safety of people who use the marine environment for recreation, sport, tourism and industrial pursuits. In general terms, the marine environment can be classified as either white (surf) or blue (beyond the surf zone) water. White water organisations include Surf Life Saving Queensland, which provides active volunteer lifesaver patrols on most Queensland beaches; and the Royal Life Saving Society Queensland who provide water safety educational programs particularly in schools.

Blue water organisations include the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ) and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA), which both operate in the offshore and estuarine blue water.

The VMRAQ and the AVCGA are an important part of Australia's National Search and Rescue Plan. Collectively they have 47 blue water units stretching from the New South Wales border to Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The department continues to provide financial support to Surf Life Saving Queensland. The organisation maintains a network of 59 clubs and six branches throughout the State, and a state headquarters that provides management, administration and training coordination. Surf Life Saving Queensland volunteers conduct beach patrols, surf rescue, surveillance, resuscitation and limited medical evacuation and provide public awareness and education campaigns concerning surf safety.

The VMR Program was instrumental in the establishment of the QAS Community First Responder group 'on the water' in Queensland at VMR Jacobs Well. This project was launched in December 2008.

Thirty VMR Jacobs Well members applied to QAS to undertake Community First Responder training. At the launch the Minister presented Statements of Achievement from the QAS Community First Responder Program to 15 members of VMR Jacobs Well who completed their training.

How to get involved

For further information, please contact EMQ on (07) 3247 8357 or visit www.emergency.qld.gov.au/ses.

Emergency Service Units

Emergency Service Units were established under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. These units are volunteer emergency services groups located in rural and remote areas of Queensland providing their communities with some or all of the functions traditionally associated with Rural Fire brigades, SES units and QAS Community First Responder groups.

The key rationale for the integration of these functions was that many rural and remote communities do not have the infrastructure or human or physical resources to be able to sustain multiple volunteer emergency response agencies.

Emergency Service Units operate in St Pauls, Talwood, Rolleston and Tambo.

State Emergency Service

The SES is a vital part of Queensland's emergency management system and provides assistance to Queensland communities in times of disaster or emergency. State and local governments maintain an important partnership in assisting SES volunteers to provide a valuable volunteer emergency service to their local communities.

SES groups perform search and rescue or similar operations, help injured persons or protect persons or property from danger or potential danger in a disaster or emergency situation. The SES also provides valuable assistance to other emergency services and helps communities prepare for, respond to and recover from an event or a disaster. Flood and storm response is a significant part of SES activities.

In July 2007, Queensland's SES joined with other states and territories in becoming part of the national SES telephone network. 132 500 is now the single telephone number for contacting the SES across Queensland in times of flood and storm emergency.

During the year, 6,300 active SES volunteers from 342 groups in Queensland committed 71,578 hours to protect and assist their local communities. Each year, SES volunteers spend many hours training and preparing for operational activities and providing operational assistance to other emergency services and government agencies. SES volunteers are not paid for the work that they perform.

The SES played a vital role in providing operational responses to numerous weather events in Northern, Central and South-East Queensland since November 2008.

Members of the SES come from all walks of life with varied skills and capabilities. Training and equipment are provided to members who join and complete their probationary period.

How to get involved

For further information, please contact Smart Services Queensland on telephone number 1300 369 003 or the SES recruitment line on telephone number 1300 759 737 (1300 QLD SES).

Alternatively, visit:
www.emergency.qld.gov.au/ses.

QAS volunteers

In many of the remote parts of Queensland, some ambulance services are provided in partnership with the communities with trained volunteers undertaking a range of roles. There are 420 such volunteers across the State including:

- Honorary Ambulance Officers—volunteers trained to a minimum standard of Certificate IV in Basic Emergency Care. They provide support to QAS paramedics, or in some cases provide ambulance services in locations where the workload does not support the placement of permanent paramedics
- Community First Responders—volunteers who attend local accidents and medical emergencies to provide life saving advanced first aid level treatment while an ambulance vehicle is en route to the scene
- Emergency drivers—volunteers who drive operational ambulance vehicles and provide physical support under the direct supervision of an authorised QAS paramedic in some rural and remote locations.

Through our partnerships with these volunteers, QAS will continue to deliver services to the people of Queensland in rural, remote and isolated locations whilst fostering positive relationships in the local community.

How to get involved

For further information, please contact Smart Services Queensland on telephone number 1300 369 003 or your regional office, the address and contact number of which is on the inside back cover of this report.

Alternatively, visit: www.ambulance.qld.gov.au.

Our departmental volunteers

Volunteer Service	Number of units/ groups	Number of volunteers	Division responsible
Rural Operations	1,491	34,000	QFRS
QFRS Scientific Unit volunteers	1	40	QFRS
Honorary ambulance officers	*	155	QAS
Community First Responders	33 groups	225	QAS
Emergency Drivers	*	40	QAS
State Emergency Service	342 groups	6,300 active volunteers	EMQ
Emergency Service Units	4		EMQ
Emergency Services Cadets	49 groups	650 (cadet members) 280 (adult leaders)	EMQ
Approximate total (Emergency Service volunteers):	1,920	41,700	
Our network of supported volunteer organisations			
Surf Life Saving Queensland	59 clubs and 6 branches	33,000	EMQ
Royal Life Saving Society Queensland	2 clubs	120	EMQ
Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland	25 squadrons	1,550	EMQ
Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association	22 flotillas	1,680	EMQ
Approximate total:	2,034	78,000	

* Various response locations.

Our Partners

State Disaster Management Group

Established under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) is the peak disaster management policy and decision making body in Queensland. The role of the SDMG is to establish the strategic direction for disaster management and to ensure that relevant, best practice disaster management planning, disaster mitigation (prevention and preparedness), operational response and recovery are conducted at all levels within the state disaster management arrangements.

The SDMG has 11 permanent members including the Executive Officer. The Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is the Chair, our Director-General is the Deputy Chair and the Executive Director of EMQ is the Executive Officer. Other members include the Chief Executive Officers of the departments of Communities; Local Government, Sport and Recreation; Primary Industries and Fisheries; Public Works; Tourism, Regional Development and Industry; Queensland Transport; Queensland Health; and QPS. The SDMG reports to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (former Minister for Emergency Services) regarding disaster management in the State.

- providing advice in respect to ambulance services in their community
- carrying out fundraising activities for the benefit of ambulance services in their community
- managing money held in trust for the benefit of ambulance services in their community.

LACs throughout the State are highly valued members of the ambulance family.

The tireless, positive support given to QAS officers contributes greatly to the high level of patient care QAS is able to deliver. LACs have raised considerable funds which have been used to provide medical and training equipment to enhance the delivery of the ambulance service throughout the State.

In 2008-09, contributions of \$210,734 were received by LACs through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and the Jupiter's Casino Benefit Fund.

How to get involved

Community members interested in joining or establishing a LAC should telephone 1300 369 003 for further information.

Community advisory bodies

Queensland Local Ambulance Committee Advisory Council (QLAC)

Community input is vital to ensure the QAS is an efficient and effective ambulance service that meets the needs of communities across Queensland.

QLAC plays a vital role in providing advice to the Commissioner, QAS on the extent to which the delivery of ambulance services meets community needs. As elected representatives, QLAC members serve as a conduit for QAS to identify the needs and expectations of the community. They offer options to achieve desired outcomes.

QLAC continues to provide valuable input on community feedback to the Commissioner on the delivery of ambulance services throughout Queensland by providing reports, attending meetings, teleconferences and conferences.

Local Ambulance Committees

LACs make an invaluable contribution to QAS through their crucial role in:

- promoting community participation in and an awareness of ambulance services

SES Volunteer Executive Committee

The SES Volunteer Executive Committee is a key member of the SES Subsidy Program State Assessment Committee and is represented on that body by a nominated delegate. Its role is to determine the State's priorities for the SES Subsidy Program funding and advise the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (former Minister for Emergency Services) of priorities and recommendations for funding.

Emergency Services Cadet Steering Committee

The Emergency Services Cadet Steering Committee provides strategic guidance to the Emergency Services Cadet Program. The committee comprises representatives from EMQ, QAS, QFRS, SPES, Surf Life Saving Queensland, VMRAQ and AVCGA.

The committee supports Queensland communities by enabling the provision of personal development opportunities for Queensland's young people through a volunteer emergency services skills development program, the Emergency Services Cadet program.

Achievements include:

- initiation of a statewide award ceremony for Cadets and adult volunteers in 2009

- supporting nominations for the Queensland Youth Alliance Awards in July 2008
- supporting statewide adult leader workshops
- supporting the development of resources to support volunteer adult members and Cadets.

The Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee

The Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee is a multi-agency committee established by Queensland Cabinet on 18 May 1987 to provide advice to the Queensland Government and voluntary organisations involved in maritime rescue activities, investigate and provide advice on matters referred to the committee and to provide a forum to achieve coordinated volunteer marine rescue services in Queensland.

The committee comprises two representatives each from VMRAQ; AVCGA; Surf Life Saving Queensland; QPS and one representative each from Maritime Safety Queensland and the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA). The committee met twice during the year to discuss volunteer issues and address issues affecting the marine industry.

Achievements include:

- providing recommendations on the implementation of amber flashing lights on rescue vessels
- ongoing negotiations with ACMA regarding traffic

congestion on Very High Frequencies (VHF) marine channels

- providing advice to VMRAQ and AVCGA units regarding the misuse of VHF marine channel 16
- agreement to assist Maritime Safety Queensland with the distribution of Marine Incident Reports to mariners who require them
- distribution of information on the new 406 MHz distress beacons and the associated *Transport Operations (Maritime Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008* which was enforced on 1 November 2008
- investigation of appropriate signage for the boating community for installation at selected boat ramps
- clarification of the regulation relating to use of lights and shapes when towing vessels.

Rural Fire Brigade Association of Queensland

The Rural Fire Brigade Association of Queensland comprises 15 volunteer representatives out of the 17 Rural Operations areas. The association met quarterly during 2008-09 to provide QFRS Rural Operations with advice on policy, training, equipment and safety issues.