

# Positives

## from the ashes...



A VMR volunteer works with paramedics to treat a jet ski accident victim during a recent training exercise.

The fire that destroyed the QAS training facility at Pimpama in February has resulted in some new training opportunities for both the QAS and other emergency response organisations.

Since the fire, the Regional Staff Development Unit has accepted offers from other organisations to use their facilities for training, with one of these being the Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) unit at Jacobs Well.

As a result, when QAS student paramedics underwent training recently as part of their studies to become advanced care

paramedics, they coordinated with the VMR in their role as first responders.

In two scenarios, one involving a shark attack and the second a jet ski accident, the VMR members at the scene of the incidents assessed the extent of the injuries and radioed this information to the QAS students on shore.

The VMR then transported paramedics to the scene to enable them to provide the necessary treatment before the victims were returned to shore for further medical attention.

Mark Nugent, the Senior Clinical Educator in

the Regional Staff Development Unit said the opportunity for the two units to train together had proved very valuable.

“It provided both groups with improved knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities and skills of the other, and will contribute to improved understanding and cooperation when they work together in real emergencies in the future.

“We were devastated when fire destroyed our training facilities, but it’s also satisfying to be able to achieve some positive outcomes in this way,” he said.

### Were you a WRAN?

A reunion of Ex-WRAN and RAN women is being organised to take place in Adelaide in April 2009. Many ex-service members are now believed to be working in emergency

services units across Australia and Eileen Dunlop, of the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission wants to contact them in relation to the reunion.

**Further information can be obtained by contacting**

[wrans.reunion2009@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wrans.reunion2009@yahoo.com.au) or

**The Registrar,**  
WRANS-RAN Reunion 2009  
PO Box 7250, West Lakes, SA 5021

Each edition, 'Emergency' will review recent additions to the DES library.

## Books

### Do unto others :

*extraordinary acts of ordinary people* by Samuel P. Oliner (2003)

Shelf location: 171.8 OLI 2003

"A Holocaust survivor and sociologist sheds light on the motivations behind the benevolent actions of ordinary people. A passing motorist stops to help the passengers in a car crash. A hospice volunteer cares for people with AIDS. A firefighter responds to a routine call. These people are considered heroes, but what motivates such brave and altruistic acts, whether by trained professionals or just ordinary people. Weaving together moving personal testimony and years of observation, Oliner makes sense of the factors that elicit altruistic behaviour – Titan's fan Ken Coughran meets NRL player Scott Prince and the paramedics who came to his aid. exceptional acts by ordinary people."

### Extreme events :

*a physical reconstruction and risk assessment* by Jonathan Nott (2006)

Shelf location: 363.347 NOT 2006

"The assessment of risks posed by natural hazards such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis or tropical cyclones is often based on short-term historical records that may not reflect the full range or magnitude of events. In Extreme Events Jonathan Nott demonstrates how long-term (multi-century of millennial) records are essential in gaining a realistic understanding of the variability of natural hazards and how short-term historical records can often misrepresent the likely risks. This book will be valuable for urban planners, policy makers and non-specialists as a guide to understanding and reconstructing long-term records of natural hazards."

" Journal article

### What's burning?

*Fire Australia Autumn 2008*; pp.29-30

"The fire alarm that can distinguish between a burning kitchen and burnt toast is currently under development at City University, London. It is hoped the technology will eventually reduce false alarms, saving fire service resources and increasing public safety. A study of residential smoke alarms in the US demonstrated that nuisance alarms were the leading cause of smoke alarm disconnection, leaving residents at risk of injury or death from fires."

## Firefighter retires after 41 years at the top

Desk work never appealed to Cleveland Senior Firefighter Alan Hoare.

So after a visit to the Redland Show in 1967 to watch rural fires demonstrate their skills, the veteran of Queensland's firefighting industry was sold on his new career.

"I was 24-years-old and working as a public servant," Mr Hoare said.

"I already had a developing interest in what they did and I didn't like sitting behind a desk, so when I saw them at the Redland Show that led me to signing up."

In a career which spanned more than 41 years Mr Hoare saw numerous changes of the guard, starting off as a volunteer with the Redland Rural Fire Brigade before working as an auxiliary with the South Coast Fire Brigade Board at Southport.

In 1972 he became a permanent member of the brigade which eventually merged as part of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in 1990.

During his career Mr Hoare worked at six stations in the Brisbane and

Gold Coast areas and has always been highly regarded among his peers.

Mr Hoare said he was privileged to be part of the many advances the service has seen, from open wheelers with bells to the highly advanced, multi-skilled professionals which protect the community today.

As a tribute to his love of the job, Mr Hoare received a Diligent and Ethical Service Medal.



QFRS Assistant Commissioner Ian Mitchell presents Alan Hoare with his Diligent and Ethical Service Medal.

## 2 mins with

**Mark McGrath**  
Senior Firefighter,  
Hervey Bay Station



<b>Job Title</b>	Senior Firefighter
<b>Location</b>	Hervey Bay Station
<b>Length of service</b>	19 years
<b>Best part of job</b>	Helping the community and involvement in RAAP and Fire Education programs
<b>Favourite read</b>	Australian Muscle Car Magazine
<b>Hobby</b>	About to do up a 1974 Falcon sedan
<b>Favourite movie</b>	Blues Brothers
<b>Ideal weekend</b>	Spent with family on beautiful Fraser Island



# QFRS profile Hervey Bay Fire Station

*Above: Today Hervey Bay has 20 permanent and 10 auxiliary staff operating from the station.  
Below: One of Hervey Bay's first fire appliances purchased in 1958.*

Hervey Bay Fire Station is located just one minute's walk from the sandy beaches and clear blue water of the Fraser Coast.

The area's first fire service was started during the 1950s with a Land Rover four-wheel-drive being one of the first vehicles used to protect the town.

The station was first staffed on a permanent basis in about 1975 and this was only during the day.

It wasn't until about 10 years ago that the station began operating 24 hours a day.

The fire service's current headquarters, on the corner of Torquay and Taverstock streets, Torquay, stands on the same site as the original station which was built during the 1960s.

In 1992 a freak storm, reported by the Fraser Coast Chronicle as a mini tornado, ripped through the 40-year-old station and left a pile of rubble in its wake.

Two years on a new station was constructed with a duty office, two engine bays, kitchen, toilet and shower facilities and sleeping quarters.

Today the station houses two fire

appliances, 20 permanent and 10 auxiliary staff.

The nearby Pialba auxiliary station is home to another appliance and eight part-time staff.

Station Officer Neil Lesmond said road crash rescues made up a large amount of the station's overall workload and he expected these types of callouts to increase with the booming population.

"As an example, there were no traffic lights when I first came here," he said.

"We've just got our seventh set recently."



"The fire service's current headquarters, on the corner of Torquay and Taverstock streets, Torquay, stands on the same site as the original station which was built during the 1960s"



# QAS profile Hervey Bay Ambulance Station

*Hervey Bay paramedics Mike Chapman, Derek Hegh and Sandy Thornton.*

**H**ervey Bay is located about 300 kilometres north of Brisbane and is known to most as the gateway to Fraser Island.

But in years gone by some Hervey Bay paramedics were more preoccupied about the station's supernatural presence than pristine beaches and golden sand.

In fact, for one former ambulance officer-in-charge it was a case of, who you gonna call?, after a number of ghost sightings at the old Scarness station.

Before the new station was built in 2004 on Torquay Road Scarness, stories were rife about ghosts stalking the old station's living quarters at night.

According to Officer-in-Charge Mike Chapman, the story involved a ghost living in what used to be the superintendent's residence.

"Officers who were working at Hervey Bay told stories of being dragged out of bed by the ghost," he said.

"Others wouldn't go into the back area of the old residence during the night.

"Anyhow, a past officer-in-charge of the

station decided that something should be done about this unwelcome visitor, and that it should be invited to leave.

"He enlisted the services of a team of exorcists to come to the station and get rid of this ghost.

"Did it work, who knows? Some of the guys still believe it did and others, well it's good for a laugh when the story is told at the Christmas barbecue."

Today's ghost-free station has come a long way since the original was built in 1947 on the corner of The Esplanade and Zephyr Street.

The new building houses nine vehicles including five ambulances and two emergency response vehicles.

It operates with about 40 staff to cater for the ever-increasing residential population and tourism market in the area.

Mr Chapman said the station is one of the busiest in the Wide Bay Burnett region.

"Hervey Bay is the busiest station in Wide Bay Burnett for Code 1's, the highest percentage of these occurring

"Officers who were working at Hervey Bay told stories of being dragged out of bed by the ghost"

between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m.," Mr Chapman said.

He said some of the challenges in the area included negotiating the terrain of nearby Fraser Island and the increasing traffic to the region.



# SES profile

## Hervey Bay SES Unit

*Hervey Bay SES members (from left) Brad Payne, John Tracey, Michelle Gracie, Mike Rogers, Ian Boyd, Russell Wardrope, Steve Thomas and John Hamilton.*

The Hervey Bay SES Unit is renowned for one of the biggest and best field kitchens in the business.

Largely thanks to Rotary's trailer donation and community support, the field kitchen has become an invaluable tool for the unit with the capacity to feed more than 100 people at activations or training exercises.

Located on Old Maryborough Road at Pialba, the unit also owns three vehicles, a floodboat and a soon-to-be complete mobile operations centre.

The unit which now has more than 60 active members on the books, ranging from surgeons to labourers, was one of many formed after the 1974 floods.

These days the unit prides itself on being an integral part of one of the fastest growing communities in Queensland.

Local controller Steve Thomas said Hervey Bay was a flat, low-lying coastal area with a high potential for flooding.

"The unit's biggest concerns are cyclone, storm surge and isolation by flooding," he said.

"We also have a lot of storm damage and land search activations."

Mr Thomas said during the state's recent deluge the unit's volunteers were activated almost everyday.

"We had 186 calls for assistance after one storm and we completed 56 jobs in one day."

He said one job included building a sandbag wall about 700 metres long and three bags high.

The unit is also regularly involved in deployment of its members to other centres with volunteers sent to Cyclone Larry in 2006, the Newcastle Floods in 2007 and the recent floods in Emerald.

Hervey Bay SES is also heavily involved with other emergency services in the area's Emergency Service Cadet Program which has about 30 members.

"The unit's biggest concerns are cyclone, storm surge and isolation by flooding"

