



REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE



Melbourne
12 - 14 October 1999

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

12 October 1999

Official Opening

Victorian Police Assistant Commissioner Ray Shuey welcomed delegates and observers to the 23rd National Search and Rescue Conference held at the Centra Hotel, Melbourne. He noted that the Conferences have been hosted by the State and Territory Search and Rescue Authorities on a rotational basis. This is the third conference hosted by Victoria since the inaugural conference was held in Melbourne in 1976.

Assistant Commissioner Shuey acknowledged AusSAR's role as providing the chair and secretariat to the Conference. He noted the agenda and commented on the breadth of issues to be covered. He commented on the spirit of cooperation between SAR Authorities and how that cooperation has been highlighted by operations such as the Southern Ocean rescues of 1997; Thredbo landslide, making special mention of Stuart Diver and how he is likely to become a promoter of search and rescue in Australia; the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race operation; and the search for the four snowboarders in the Thredbo area conducted by New South Wales Police in cooperation with Victoria Police and the Australian Federal Police from Canberra.

He mentioned the presentation of the National Search and Rescue Award to Mr Ronald O'Connor to take place during the Conference.

In closing, the Assistant Commissioner commented on the national and regional focus that the Conference took with regard to search and rescue, stating that the Conference is made particularly relevant by the dedication and effort shown by the Australian SAR organisations represented.

Mr Shuey concluded by opening the 23rd National Search and Rescue Conference.

Introduction by the Chairperson

As the Chairperson, Ms Rowena Barrell thanked the Assistant Commissioner for opening the Conference and thanked the Victoria Police for taking on the host's role. Ms Barrell asked that, during the Conference, delegates build on the spirit of cooperation referred to by Mr Shuey, noting that the Conference has traditionally been an opportunity to address operational matters relating to search and rescue.

Ms Barrell pointed out that there were a number of strategic issues that required the attention of delegates. These issues would be introduced through two papers. The first, relating to the National SAR Plan, offered an entree for discussion on the structure of the Conference and how the SAR Agreements between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories should be handled. The second paper discussed the strategic directions of the Conference which presented an opportunity to address the Terms of Reference for the Conference.

Ms Barrell asked that delegates focus on the question of the relevancy of the existing SAR agreements between the Commonwealth and the States/Territory given the growing synergies between aviation, maritime and land SAR. The delegates were requested to explore the possibility of developing the National SAR Plan as the basis of a new Agreement.

Ms Barrell concluded by welcoming new delegates to the Conference and wishing delegates well during the conference and seeking their full commitment to making the 23rd conference both successful and relevant.

Conference Administration

The Secretary and host delegate raised a number of administrative issues and outlined the programmed additional Conference events.

Ad hoc Item - Police SAR Course Workshop - Scheduling

The West Australian delegate, Superintendent Bob Coops requested that the Police Search and Rescue Course Workshop being held in Perth in November be rescheduled to run from Monday 8 November to Friday 12 November. Delegates agreed.

Agenda Item 1: Approval of Agenda

WP23/1/1 - Provisional Agenda

Ms Barrell introduced the agenda. There were no calls for other business items. The AFP delegate, Sergeant Steve Sargent requested that the Agenda item discussing the next conference be brought forward. It was agreed that the item would be the second item discussed on day three.

Agenda Item 2: Secretary's Report

WP23/2/1 - Secretary's Report

Conference secretary, Mr Steve Langlands presented the Secretary's report of the 22nd Conference. The report was accepted.

Agenda Item 3: National SAR Manual

WP23/3/1 - National SAR Plan

The AusSAR delegate, Mr Brian Riches introduced the AMSA paper on the National SAR Plan. He apologised for the lateness of the paper and emphasised the importance of the paper which warranted full consideration.

Mr Riches explained that the paper built on issues discussed at the 22nd Conference. The discussion paper set out a proposed framework and guiding principles and sought agreement from the delegates.

The National Search and Rescue Plan is proposed as an umbrella document setting out SAR Authority responsibilities at the strategic level. The broad document should be short and to the point and describe the SAR Agreements between the Commonwealth and States and Territories. It should revisit and update the current maritime agreements converting them to a single agreement to be signed by all authorities that reflects current practices in all environments.

The SAR Plan should have some form of validity such as endorsement at Heads of Agency or Ministerial level and be underpinned by three volumes of the National SAR Manual addressing the aviation, maritime and land environments. There would be a further level of supporting documentation reflecting an agency's specific internal procedures.

The National SAR Conference could be the appropriate forum to establish a process of review of SAR matters at a national level and therefore manage the National SAR Plan and manuals.

The Tasmanian delegate commented that the manual should only contain those elements that are national. Ms Barrell explained that the Plan would be a short document setting the overall framework but asked delegates to comment on what should be contained in the manual given there are standing operating procedures in each jurisdiction.

LTCOL Mickleberg, a Queensland observer, sought clarification on the purpose of the manuals. It was agreed that the National SAR Manual was to bring together and address issues that are common on a national level. The manual would refer to the international procedures contained in IAMSAR and would contain detailed procedures in those areas where Australia varied from those covered by the international manual.

The delegate from Victoria explained that the National SAR Manual was the only SAR manual when first written. EMA has since developed a number of manuals relating to SAR in the land environment. It is still the only national aviation and maritime manual in Australia.

The Queensland delegate stated that the manual needs to change to meet the times. Roles and responsibilities need to be reflected. Such issues as physiology relating to search and rescue are drawn from a number of documents and through various avenues. The national manual needs to incorporate these types of issues for the national needs. Land SAR is drawn from EMA and some States have coastal maritime manuals, but the aviation and oceanic manuals should continue to have a national focus so that the States and Territories know the search plans being used by AusSAR so that they can coordinate local land and maritime searches.

The AusSAR delegate commented that the manual needs to be improved and that a new agreement needs to be set in place to give a solid basis for SAR over the next five to ten years. He continued that a Ministerial or heads of agencies agreement is required to give the National SAR Plan authority but still allow easy amendment of the Manual.

Mr Riches stated that it was important to highlight those sections of IAMSAR that Australia does not subscribe to and those parts of local manuals that are national in nature. This forum should be the one that manages the amendment and control of the Plan and Manual.

The AFP delegate questioned whether all states and territories would be required (by legislation) to maintain a SAR response. The Queensland delegate pointed out that State and Territory legislation reflect the role and responsibilities of the Police Services. The National SAR Plan would better describe the current SAR responsibilities for police.

However, the current SAR Agreements need to be updated and be included in the new SAR Plan. With the AMSA Act and State legislation and the Plan, SAR Authorities should be able to ratify the agreements between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Ms Barrell explained that AMSA had considered issuing a Regulation under the AMSA Act to give the SAR Manual some authority noting that would need complementary State/Territory legislation. AusSAR has now decided that it would be preferable to seek Ministerial agreement, desirably through a single document such as the National SAR Plan. Any such agreement should reflect current arrangements for SAR response and therefore should probably be agreed under State and Territory police portfolios rather than transport. The Commonwealth Ministers for Transport and Defence would be the appropriate federal ministers to sign any such SAR Agreement.

Delegates agreed that the current SAR Arrangements needed to be revisited to ensure relevancy is maintained.

Delegates were asked if they were prepared to agree to the framework proposed in the paper or if they would prefer an alternative model. The framework proposed in the paper was accepted. Delegates agreed that the proposed SAR Plan should address responsibilities in a single document (if possible) rather than separate agreements with each state/territory.

Ms Barrell suggested that the Agreements needed to be changed to reflect technology, for example distress beacons. The location of a distress is more often known before the type of platform in distress, whereas it was the reverse when the current Arrangements were signed. The Arrangements do not reflect the current practices.

Ms Barrell proposed divisions of responsibility based on geographic terms. State and Territory governments should consider how they could react to a SAR alert and what circumstances cause transfer of responsibilities.

LTCOL Mickleberg suggested that the criteria could be based on what levels of response are beyond a State's capabilities.

AusSAR reassured delegates that whatever criteria were decided they would not exclude a handover of coordination if a State's capability was exhausted.

The NSW delegate suggested that the situation has changed since the current agreements were made and any new agreement should be generic. He also stated that the problem with geographic delineation is that the state or territory governments may use territorial waters as grounds for who does what and not based on what resources are available.

The Defence delegate suggested that if geographic delineation were to be considered then the Offshore Constitutional Settlement could be used as a basis to determine geographic responsibility.

The Queensland delegate believed that to delineate geographically would be very difficult in his state. He suggested that there was a similarity to the National Anti-Terrorist Plan where States and Territories respond as required.

Mr Riches supported the NSW view that there should only be one agreement. He suggested that delegates look at the proposed framework and agree that there is a need to have an agreement embedded in the SAR Plan.

The delegates settled on the notion of the plan.

ACTION REQUIRED: Delegates were asked to respond to AusSAR with their views of the Plan by 15 December 1999.

ACTION REQUIRED: AusSAR will then draft a focussed generic agreement reflecting current practices to distribute by 17 December for comment.

Discussion again turned to the make up of the manual. The Tasmanian delegate suggested a National SAR Plan that includes responsibilities, handover procedures, liaison, etc and the elements of search would be laid down in separate manuals. The Conference agreed that the National SAR Manual would include a section addressing administrative matters.

The Conference agreed the manual would enable individual agencies to include their own Standing Operating Procedures.

Ms Barrell sought to check the proliferation of manuals. She suggested the National SAR Manual should cross-reference documents which are already prepared (such as the EMA booklet on land SAR) and the remaining issues could be included in the National SAR Manual.

ACTION REQUIRED: AMSA to draft an outline of the Manual by mid March 2000 and circulate for comment.

It was agreed that the National SAR Plan, signed by Ministers or Heads of Agencies, should authorise the Conference to amend the manual.

WP23/3/5 - Strategic Directions

The delegate from Tasmania introduced the Terms of Reference document for consideration by Council.

In the context of strategic direction to be taken by the Conference, Ms Barrell raised the issue of the group's name. Delegates agreed to rename the group the National Search and Rescue Council.

Delegates agreed that the Council should report to the Senior Officers Group of the Australasian Police Ministers Council.

ACTION: Secretary to prepare range of issues for endorsement by the Senior Officers Group of the Australasian Police Ministers Council including the name change and the proposed Terms of Reference for the National SAR Council.

Delegates **agreed** that the membership of the National Search and Rescue Council should be included in its Terms of Reference.

The Queensland delegate explained that Police now have a greater emphasis on the Australasian region and therefore requested consideration for New Zealand to be considered as a full member of the Council. If this course of action were to be pursued it was agreed that an invitation would need to be extended to the New Zealand CAA as that country's national SAR authority.

During discussion on membership status, the Queensland delegate, in looking at the strategic direction being pursued by the Council, suggested that the direction of some other forums to include New Zealand should be followed.

This led to a discussion on observer and member status. The issue of a budget was raised in this context. The question of increasing membership to include SAR operatives such as Coastwatch, SES, volunteer Coastguards, etc. was discussed.

Delegates noted that SAR operatives have input through the State/Territory SAR Committees. The Council **agreed** that if particular groups had input on a particular agenda item being addressed by the Council, it would be canvassed on an as required basis.

The Council finally **agreed** that membership would remain the National SAR Coordinating Agencies; with ACA and New Zealand Police having standing observer status. The draft Terms of Reference for the National SAR Council would be amended to reflect the agreed membership.

A new Mission Statement to supplement the proposed Vision Statement was agreed to read: "To develop and maintain an effective, efficient and integrated national search and rescue system that meets international obligations and domestic requirements." Agreed amendments were made to the Council's objectives. The agreed Terms of Reference for the National Search and Rescue Council are at Appendix 2.

The Queensland delegate raised the issue of international Arrangements. Australia has a number of International SAR Arrangements with neighbouring countries. Senior Sergeant Dawson pointed out that when the Arrangement with PNG was being renewed, Queensland had the opportunity to provide input to the revised Arrangement. He made delegates aware of the various Arrangements and suggested that relevant State and Territory SAR Authorities should be consulted when Arrangements are being drafted or revisited.

Ms Barrell stated that the Arrangements are developed as a requirement of Australia's obligations to the ICAO and IMO Conventions.

ACTION: Secretariat to distribute current international Arrangements to SAR Authorities and involve relevant States and Territories in the drafting and review of International SAR Arrangements.

The Council then discussed the potential impact of major ADF operations, such as the deployment of the peace-keeping forces to Timor, which may affect the availability of resources for SAR operations.

ACTION: Authorities must let each other know about events and operations that may affect the effectiveness of their SAR operations.

WP23/3/2 - Emergency Management Plans for a Major Maritime or Aviation Incident

Mr Riches introduced this paper provided by AusSAR. He stated that AusSAR has undertaken a review of its contingency measures. This has led to the suggestion of setting up a Workshop to examine facilitating a coordinated approach to development of contingency arrangements for response to major SAR events.

The Victorian delegate pointed out that such contingencies are already well covered in most states. Specific contingency plans exist for incidents involving the Spirit of Tasmania and the Incats.

The Tasmanian delegate asked if AusSAR is asking for plans or a plan of coordination.

Mr Neil Ada of AusSAR suggested that his organisation was seeking knowledge of what resources States and Territories have for meeting large-scale rescue responses and how these resources may be used and coordinated.

Ms Barrell suggested that AusSAR is looking at the scenario of a large civilian aircraft or large commercial passenger vessel incident. There is scope to work together on the recovery but a bridging mechanism between the search and recovery phases is required.

The ADF delegate suggested that EMA's database of equipment should also be examined.

It was suggested that the Workshop needs to look at what procedures are needed between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories that would make coordination more effective and efficient.

ACTION: AusSAR to discuss with individual States and Territories and discover what they have in the way of liaison and communication plans.

WP23/3/4 - Introduction of a SAR Transfer Form

The Queensland delegate introduced this paper for discussion. He explained that the paper was raised because of a number of incidents where there was some doubt as to who was coordinating the operation. The transfer form has been developed to clearly delineate who has control of an operation.

The delegates agreed that the SAR Coordinator is the appropriate level to carry out the transfer. The form is not to replace the phone contact that initiates any transfer of coordination responsibility, but is to be used to confirm the transfer.

The Council **agreed** that the use of the transfer of responsibility form is to be implemented forthwith.

ACTION: AusSAR will further develop the layout of the form after seeking advice from legal counsel.

WP23/3/3 Sailboarders/Windsurfers

The Tasmanian delegate introduced this discussion paper. He sought advice from other delegates on regulations imposed and actions taken by other governments and authorities to control sailboarders. The paper also suggested that a national approach should be taken. The issue was discussed at length.

The Council **agreed** that the issue should be passed to the National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) for action.

ACTION: Secretariat to approach the NMSC secretariat to have the topic included in NMSC business.

WP23/4/1 - Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Update and 23/4/2 - Topical Issues from COMSAR 4

Ms Barrell called on delegates to review these information papers and raise any questions at the beginning of the day two session.

WP23/4/3 - Phasing Out of 121.5 MHz Satellite Services

Mr Riches introduced this paper. Discussion centred on costs and the potential for problems associated with the disposal of unwanted beacons. Mr Riches pointed out that the introduction of 406 MHz as an alternative potentially comes with its own set of problems. Unless beacons are registered, the proliferation of 406 MHz beacons may just transfer the problems associated with 121.5 MHz beacons from one frequency to another.

WP23/4/4 - Disposal of EPIRBs

The Tasmanian delegate introduced this discussion paper on the disposal of EPIRBs.

The Victorian delegate advised the Council of his state's efforts to advertise the collection of EPIRBs and the limited success they are having.

The NSW delegate suggested that loose-leaf advertisements might be a better way of attracting interest in the issue.

The Queensland delegate explained that Queensland Transport now accepts EPIRBs through their regional harbourmasters.

Delegates **agreed** that a national approach through ANZSBEG is required. An easy, legitimate alternative for people to dispose of EPIRBs is required.

The Tasmanian delegate pointed out that distributors had a moral obligation and should be involved in any discussion.

Consideration was given to asking the distributors to accept, disarm, and dispose of unwanted beacons.

ACTION: AusSAR is to liaise with distributors about options with regard to disposal sites.

The need to educate the public to prevent inadvertent activation of incorrectly disposed of beacons was discussed. Beacons need to have their batteries removed and wires cut before being disposed of. Delegates agreed that an educative process was required.

If the Cospas-Sarsat Council takes a decision to cease processing 121.5 alerts by the satellites, Ms Barrell advised that it was intended to start the educative process in 2000.

Agenda Item 6.

WP 23/6/2 - Review of Civil SAR Unit (CSU) Program and WP 23/6/3 - Joint AMSA/ Defence Review

Neil Ada from AusSAR introduced these papers. He explained that there had been a number of concerns with the current CSU system, in particular the reliance on aircraft of convenience and balance between training in search techniques and training in stores dropping. AusSAR has developed a strategy for better use of the CSU program.

The intention is to restructure the CSU program to provide:

- an effective pool of fixed-wing aircraft operators and observers trained to conduct electronic and visual searches;
- a more effective, responsive and appropriately equipped search and drop capable fixed-wing operators at strategic locations; and
- an increased focus on training and using dedicated emergency rotary-wing operators.

Mr Ada explained that a tiered response concept has been developed.

The second paper discussed a joint review being conducted by AMSA and Defence.

The Queensland delegate asked about the use of non-SES personnel as observers. Mr Ada responded by explaining that AusSAR is looking for a pool of observers around Australia that can be drawn upon to meet large scaled operations.

He concluded by explaining that performance criteria would be introduced when contracting CSUs.

Day 1 session closed at 1700.

Day 2 - Wednesday 13 October 1999

Comments on Terms of Reference Document

Agreed amendments were made to the document.

The National Search and Rescue Council agreed that it would report to the Senior Officers Group of the Australasian Police Ministers Council. The chair thanked the delegate for Tasmania for his work in conceptualising and drafting the document.

Acceptance of Previous Days Record of Discussion

Amendments were made to the previous day's record.

Agenda Item 9 - Information Systems

WP 23/9/1 - Statistics and Information Systems at AusSAR

Mr Scott Lillington, an IT consultant from AusSAR gave a presentation on Incident Register, a software package operated by AusSAR to capture statistics.

Mr Taffy Evans gave a presentation on the Victorian Marine Board/ Victoria Police marine incident reporting system.

Agenda Item 7 - Training

WP23/7/1 - Accreditation for AusSAR Competencies

Debra Galwey, AusSAR's Development Officer introduced the paper.

AusSAR aligned with the Public ITAB last year and has pursued national accreditation and recognition of qualifications in line with the National Training Framework.

AusSAR could align with Diploma level if 'police' could be taken out of the title. The Advanced Diploma put forward by the SES better suits AusSAR's requirements. However, this is also subject to the title being altered.

Helmut Winzler reported on a seminar on training competencies held 12 October. He stated the issue of titling could be investigated with APESC.

Delegates to the National Search and Rescue Council **agreed** to approach State and Territory APESC representatives to discuss the removal of 'police' from the title.

ACTION: State and Territory delegates to approach their respective APESC representatives as agreed.

WP23/7/2 - Search and Rescue Management Training

The delegate from Queensland introduced this paper relating to development of the policing component of the Public Safety training package.

The delegate advised that it was a matter of urgency and that it was necessary to agree to the Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course to be restructured and resumed as soon as possible.

Each jurisdiction was asked to report their positions on the training packages.

Victoria, Tasmania, Australian Federal Police, Northern Territory, West Australia New Zealand, Queensland and New South Wales reported that they have seen the training packages and are happy.

The AFP has referred to the training packages to develop a short SAR course for the AFP.

The South Australian delegate raised some concerns about certain core competencies in the package referring to liaison with media. Mr Winzler gave an undertaking to raise the delegate's concerns with the SA APESC representative.

The New Zealand observer pointed out that in the Management Advanced Diploma, all of the core competencies other than "Manage search and rescue operations" should have been attained by the time an officer reached this level.

Mr Winzler commented that the current Diploma course in search and rescue is closely aligned to the Diploma in Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue - Coordination).

Ms Barrell commented that Mr Winzler's view that the training packages are about attaining competencies rather than qualifications may not be accepted by the student who misses out on a diploma because his State or Territory did not require a particular core competency. In addition, she highlighted the fact that the attainment of a qualification by SAR personnel can lend credibility and authority in legal proceedings. Mr Winzler reiterated that the aim of the packages is for personnel to attain certain competencies rather than a qualification.

Ms Galwey pointed out that the police are the only organisations offering a SAR qualification but AusSAR does not require a number of the core competencies. Mr Winzler suggested that AusSAR could develop its own competencies at its own cost. Ms Barrell suggested that the original aim was to have common SAR competencies.

The Queensland delegate raised the issue of the benefits of cross training between organisations that would enhance national SAR networks and reinforce strategic alliances.

The Queensland delegate thanked other delegates for their frank comments and input and was satisfied with the information received from the Council.

Helmut Winzler agreed to discuss the training packages with delegates.

He can be contacted on 03 94575444.

Agenda Item 8 - SAR Award.

WP23/8/1 - Report of the Australian SAR Award Selection Committee.

Ms Barrell introduced the report of the National SAR Award sub-committee report. She also sought ideas on how to better promote the Award so that the number and standard of nominations could be increased. Superintendent Wellings reiterated the views expressed by Ms Barrell and also asked delegates to put some effort into this issue.

The Council **agreed** that AusSAR would prepare a circular explaining the National Search and Rescue Award which Council delegates would distribute widely.

ACTION: Secretariat to draft a SAR Award circular for distribution by delegates.

The sub-committee is looking to broaden the scope of nominations received, both geographically and by function. The recruitment of a high profile figure to promote the Award was suggested as an appropriate strategy to increase the visibility of the Award.

The Council broke for lunch after which delegates proceeded to Airlie College for the presentation of the National SAR Award to Mr Ron O'Connor.

Superintendent Peter Teather made the presentation of the National SAR Award to Mr Ronald O'Connor of the Australian Volunteer Coastguard, Solander Division, Sydney.

Agenda Item 7 - Training (cont)

The Tasmanian delegate suggested investigation of Emergency Management Australia taking on the role of assisting in coordination of the Police National Search and Rescue Course.

The Victorian delegate voiced his opposition because of the benefits gained by the host State or Territory when running the course. It offers the host State or Territory the opportunity to train a number of their operatives at one time.

The Tasmanian delegate said that the changed focus of the course to SAR management might be better suited to being coordinated by EMA at Mt Macedon.

The West Australian delegate stated that his jurisdiction is prepared to provide the facilities for the workshop to determine the syllabus of the National Police Search and Rescue Course, to be run in 2000.

The New Zealand delegate informed the Council of the way in which the New Zealand Police use an international consultant to facilitate their Search and Rescue Management Course.

The delegate from Queensland presented a number of issues that did not support using EMA to facilitate the national course. He pointed out that EMA liaises with a different Government Department in Queensland and he believes that state and territory police may lose control of their course.

The objective of the workshop in Perth in November is to develop course plan and documentation to provide a course that offers training in areas not otherwise provided by state and territory police.

Ms Barrell asked delegates if the Council should investigate the options for presenting the course. The delegate from Queensland discussed the role of the Council and suggested that the level of control over the provision of training would change depending on the avenue adopted to coordinate the training. The Council would have to retain control, as it is one of its roles.

Delegates discussed the likely objectives and aims of the workshop being held in West Australia. The West Australian delegate asked for the Council to give the workshop guidance. The Victorian delegate suggested that the Council give the West Australian and Queensland delegates the authority to manage the workshop so that it provides documentation to enable the running of a national course in 2000. The West Australian delegate asked for guidance on what the workshop should investigate and requested written submissions from those States and Territories who are not providing a delegate.

The West Australian delegate undertook to provide the report of the workshop to the secretariat for distribution to delegates out of session. The workshop is to ensure the next course will be run in May 2000.

ACTION: The West Australian delegate to discuss the possibility of running the course at the Australian Institute of Police Management in Manly, NSW.

ACTION: The report from the November 1999 workshop to be distributed by the secretariat and an out of session agreement reached on the future objectives and syllabus of the National Police Search and Rescue Course, together with the methodology for presentation, by 15 December.

ACTION: The Tasmanian delegate to make a preliminary approach to EMA to determine what assistance they can provide in running a National Police Search and Rescue Course, given the course objectives decided by the November 1999 workshop.

ACTION: The delegate from Queensland to make a preliminary approach to the Emergency Research Institute representative in New Zealand to determine what assistance they could provide to run a National Police Search and Rescue Course, given the course objectives decided by the workshop.

WP23/7/3 - AusSAR Field Exercises.

Mr Riches introduced the paper on AusSAR exercises and informed the Council of the criteria used to determine the locality and scope of the exercises. Mr Riches commended the exercises to the delegates. Ms Barrell pointed out that the benefits gained from being involved in the exercises are varied and very valuable.

The West Australian delegate sought to having the timings of future exercises coincide with future meetings of the National Search and Rescue Council.

The Council **agreed** that invitations be provided to Council members and the New Zealand observer to attend the exercises and that AusSAR take into consideration the timings of future exercises and meetings of the council.

The delegate from Northern Territory raised the issue of having assessment of the exercise to determine where weaknesses occur and should be improved. AusSAR members explained that the idea of the exercises is to show operatives how other facets of search and rescue occur and give them an appreciation of an operation from planning through to completion.

WP23/6/1 - National Air Search Observer Program

Mr Neil Ada, AusSAR, introduced the paper. He explained the strategy AusSAR is adopting is to revitalise and enhance the air observer program. He concluded that the trained observers would be available for use by SAR authorities other than AusSAR.

The number of observers and their location will be decided between AusSAR and the SES. AusSAR will try to collocate pools of observers with the new CSU sites.

The delegate from Queensland asked several questions with reference to the use of SES personnel. His concern was that in some areas the SES is a scarce resource and any call out by AusSAR may impinge on the ability of the SES to react to requests by other agencies. Mr Ada noted the comment in relation to remote areas but indicated that observers would only represent a small percentage of SES in most areas. The Queensland delegate also requested that AusSAR inform the State and Territory SAR Authorities of any tasking of volunteers in their area.

ACTION: AusSAR to check and, where necessary, amend procedures to ensure police are informed where volunteers are tasked.

Day 2 session closed at 1650.

Day 3 - Thursday 14 October 1999

Acceptance of Previous Days Record of Discussion

Amendments were made to the previous day's record.

Agenda Item 5 - Operations

WP23/5/1 - Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

Various issues arising from the 1998/9 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race were discussed by the Council.

Agenda Item 10 - Year 2000 Issues (WP23/10/1)

Mr Ada introduced the paper relating to AusSAR's Year 2000 contingency plans. AusSAR has completed some compliance evaluation of its hardware and software. Evaluations have also been done of third party communications systems. AusSAR systems have been assessed to have a low probability of failing but there is less confidence in the third party systems. Regardless, AusSAR has developed contingency plans.

ACTION: Delegates were asked to provide input on the contingency communications arrangements their organisation will have in place that may provide additional scope in support of SAR operations.

Ms Barrell explained some of the actions that AusSAR is taking to reduce the risk of a systems failure.

Agenda Item 11 - Cost Recovery

WP23/11/1 - Cost Recovery in Search and Rescue Under Certain Circumstances

The delegate from Queensland introduced this paper. The Council delegates discussed the various problems with introducing cost recovery. Ms Barrell discussed the actions taken at the federal level such as encouraging race organisers to introduce waypoints in the Southern Ocean to keep competitors within range of the SAR assets.

With regard to recovery of costs, AMSA believes that that it could be extremely difficult to introduce a cost recovery regime and agreed with the delegate from Tasmania who stated that it might not be in the best interests of search and rescue. If people involved in a distress situation believe they may be required to pay costs of a search and rescue operation, they may not seek assistance and by the time the alarm is raised the search area is so large that the operation is far more costly.

The Queensland delegate asked what the outcomes of the COMSAR 4 discussions on this issue were. Mr Riches replied on behalf of AusSAR.

Agenda Item 12 - Methods of Search and Rescue

WP23/12/1 - Volunteers and Canines in Search and Rescue

The delegate from Queensland introduced the paper. He wanted to highlight the fact that competencies for dog handlers were being developed and was seeking support from the other delegates.

The issue of costs associated with the training and use of dog handlers and their animal was raised. The delegate from Queensland suggested that there would be no direct cost to SAR authorities. The Police are insisting that any dog handlers should be affiliated with a recognised volunteer group so they can be controlled and SAR coordinators know that the handlers and dogs are capable.

Other Business

SAR Award Sub-Committee

Because of the number of new members to Council, the NSW delegate gave the Council a short brief on the membership and procedures of the sub-committee. He explained that the meetings are held using telephone conferencing.

The delegate from NSW, having been on the sub-committee for several years, suggested that he would stand down and called for a replacement nomination. The delegate from the Northern Territory accepted a nomination to join the sub-committee.

Cellular Phones in Search and Rescue

The Tasmanian delegate raised the issue of mobile phones as an issue that is important to the Council. Ms Barrell noted that AusSAR had just received a draft report on maritime safety communications that suggests that cellular phones are being considered by boat owners as a means of safety communications. Delegates will be kept informed on this matter.

Next Conference

It was agreed that the AFP would host the Council meeting in Canberra.

The issue of timing was raised and the delegate from NSW reported that they should be available later in the year, probably in November 2000.

Ms Barrell raised the length of the Council meeting and suggested that the meeting be over two, rather than three, days. The delegate from Northern Territory suggested that the length of the meeting should be decided once the agenda has been developed and the workload considered.

The Council **agreed** that the length of the annual meeting will be decided once the number of papers and workload are determined.

Mr Riches raised the issue of the scarcity of papers from some jurisdictions. Delegates raised a number of associated issues.

The NSW delegate raised the importance of networking between the SAR authorities.

Ms Barrell suggested that the formalities associated with the opening might be better done at the official dinner. The delegate from Tasmania suggested that the opening be scheduled into the morning break.

In closing the meeting, Ms Barrell thanked the participation of all delegates in the 23rd National Conference. In particular, she thanked the participation of Inspector Hank Timmerman (TAS), Commander Aaron Ingram (ADF) and Senior Sergeant Alistair Dawson (QLD) for their efforts and tireless commitment to the Australian National Search and Rescue Conference and Council on the occasion of this, their last Conference.

NATSARCON 23/1/1
5 October 1999
Originator: Secretariat

AGENDA

To be held at the Centra Hotel, Cnr St Kilda Rd and Park St, South Melbourne, Victoria.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER 1999

0945 Delegates assemble at the Centra Hotel. Tea and coffee on arrival.

1015 Official opening by Assistant Commissioner Ray Shuey.

1030 Introduction by Chairman

1045 Conference administration Secretary/Victorian Delegate

1100 **Agenda Item 1 - Approval of Agenda**

WP 23/1/1 (AMSA)

Provisional Agenda. Call for additional items for discussion.

1110 **Agenda Item 2 - Secretary's Report**

WP 23/2/1 (AMSA)

Secretary's report including correspondence sent.

1130 **Agenda Item 3 - National SAR Manual**

WP 23/3/1 (AMSA) - National SAR Plan

This paper introduces and discusses the draft of the proposed Volume 1 of the National SAR Manual.

1200 *Lunch*

1330 **Agenda Item 3 - cont.**

WP 23/3/2 (AMSA) - Coordination of a Major Incident

This paper canvasses the States and Territory for advice on when a major incident, such as an airliner crash or large ferry incident involving many casualties, should be handed over to the State Emergency System.

WP 23/3/3 (TAS) - Sailboarders

This paper discusses specific procedures and rules to deal with sailboarders.

WP 23/3/4 (QLD) - Introduction of a SAR Transfer Form

This paper introduces a generic transfer form that could remove potential misunderstanding about who has responsibility.

1430 *Afternoon Tea*

1450 **Agenda Item 3 cont.**

WP 23/3/5 (TAS) - Strategic Directions

This paper updates the submission to the 1998 National SAR Conference outlining the strategic direction that the Conference should take.

1510 **Agenda Item 4 - Distress and Safety Communications**

WP 23/4/1 (AMSA) - Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Update
Update on recent developments in relation to future maritime safety communications.

WP 23/4/2 (AMSA) - Topical Issues From COMSAR 4

This paper provides information on some issues discussed at COMSAR 4 held in London from 12-16 July 1999.

WP 23/4/3 (AMSA) - Phasing out of 121.5 MHz

At the request of IMO and ICAO, Cospas-Sarsat is expected to phase out satellite processing on 121.5/243 MHz in February 2008. Several matters need consideration for transition to 406 MHz beacons and recommendations have been made concerning these.

WP 23/4/4 (TAS) - Disposal of EPIRBs

Discussion of procedures to dispose of unwanted and out of date EPIRBs

1630 Agenda 6 - SAR Resources

WP 23/6/2 (AMSA) - CSU Mk II

Report of the progress with the review of the civil search and rescue unit program.

WP 23/6/3 (AMSA) - Joint AMSA/Defence Review

Report of the progress with the joint review of the civil/Defence search and rescue.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER 1999

0830 Acceptance of previous day's Record of Discussion

0845 Agenda Item 9 - Information Systems

WP 23/9/1 (AMSA) - Statistics and Information Systems at AusSAR

This paper provides an overview of the Incident Register software program newly introduced to AusSAR.

0945 Agenda Item 7 - Training

WP 23/7/1 (AMSA) - Accreditation for AusSAR Competencies

This paper summarises AusSAR's progress in gaining accreditation of competencies for SAR specialists employed in the Rescue Coordination Centre, Canberra.

WP 23/7/2 (QLD) - Search And Rescue Management Training

This paper raises the issue of SAR management training with the aim of reaching agreement about what is required.

1030 *Morning Tea*

1050 Agenda Item 7 - Training (cont)

1200 Agenda Item 8 - National SAR Award

WP 23/8/1 (AMSA) - Report of the Australian SAR Award Selection Committee
Report of the Selection Committee's 1999 meeting.

1215 *Lunch*

1315 Depart by bus for National Search and Rescue Award ceremony at Victoria Police Headquarters, Flinders St.

1400 Presentation of National Search and Rescue Awards

Mr Ronald O'Connor from Sydney will be accepting the award - Ronald has been with the AVCG for 15 years and has been heavily involved in boat rescues and, more lately, in operating extended hours radio service from his home during periods when the Solander base radio is closed.

1450 Return to Centra Hotel to resume Conference.

1530 Photograph Opportunity

1600 Agenda Item 7 - Training (cont)

WP 23/7/3 (AMSA) - AusSAR Field Exercises

An information paper describing the AusSAR Field Exercises held in 1998/99 and noting the benefits gained from the exercises.

1630 Agenda Item 6 - SAR Resources (cont)

WP 23/6/1 (AMSA) - Observer Program

This paper provides an outline of the Observer Program.

DAY 3 - THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 1999

0900 Acceptance of previous day's Record of Discussion

0910 Agenda Item 5 - Operations

WP 23/5/1 (AMSA) - Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

This paper discusses the report of the CYCA Review Committee into the Sydney Hobart yacht Race 1998. The aim of the paper is to bring certain issues to the attention of the Conference.

0940 Agenda Item 10 - Year 2000 Issues

WP 23/10/1 (AMSA) - Year 2000 issues

The focus of this paper is on the effect that Year 2000 problems may have on communications between AusSAR and the State and Territory police services.

1000 Agenda Item 11 - Cost Recovery

WP 23/11/1 (QLD) - Cost Recovery in Search and Rescue Under Certain Circumstances

This paper discusses the merits of cost recovery for search and rescue under certain circumstances.

1020 Morning Tea

1040 Agenda Item 12 - Methods of Search and Rescue

WP 23/12/1 (QLD) - Volunteers and Canines in Search and Rescue

This paper seeks support in the development of competencies for handlers and dogs working in search and rescue.

1100 Any Other Business

1140 Next Conference

Official Closing

NATSARCON 23/2/1
7 October 1999
Originator: Secretariat

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Action items arising from the report of the 22nd Conference:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Beacon Location | <p>Action item: <i>AMSA undertook to prepare an amendment for the National SAR Manual (NSARM).</i></p> <p>Action item: <i>Policy to be widely promulgated pending rewrite of manual. Awaiting rewrite of the appropriate section of the Manual. Changes were promulgated through Commissioners of Police with copies to SAR Coordinators (Appendix 2).</i></p> |
| ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue | <p>In discussing this item, the issue of registration of beacons was raised in the context of selling the beacon on to a new owner.</p> <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to progress beacon strategy. An overall beacon policy and strategy is being progressed and will include an education program as requested.</i></p> <p>Action item: <i>State and Territory delegates to review the various movement notices to include 406MHz identity numbers.</i></p> |
| SAR statistics and data collection | <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to develop a set of nationally agreed definitions and statistics out of session.</i></p> <p>Action item: <i>Delegates to provide statistics to AMSA as required.</i></p> <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to compile a report for the 23rd Conference based on statistics provided by AusSAR and State/Territory SAR authorities.</i></p> <p>Agenda Item 9 covers this subject.</p> |
| Air Observer Training | <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to supply State and Territory SAR authorities with lists of trained observers and update as required. Lists have been provided.</i></p> |
| Possibility of the cessation of 121.5 MHz beacons. | <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to keep delegates informed of developments. See WP 23/4/3</i></p> |
| Review of the National SAR Manual | <p>Action item: <i>AMSA to develop draft list of contents for National SAR Plan and distribute to delegates for comment by March 1999. See Agenda Item 3.</i></p> |

**SAR Responsibilities
- Commonwealth and
States/Territories**

There has been little movement on this issue since the last meeting.

**Search and Rescue
Responsibilities for
ultralight Aircraft**

Action item: *Secretary to amend Appendix 1.1 of NSARM to reflect interim solution and promulgate the change as appropriate.*

Appendix to NSARM updated and awaiting promulgation of National SAR Plan.

**National Search and
Rescue Conference -
Strategic Directions**

Action item: *Tasmanian delegate to progress the paper further and contact other delegates out of session for comment.*

See Agenda Item 3 WP 23/3/5

**Continuation of
SARMC Course**

Action item: *Delegates to nominate members for working group to the Secretariat by 4 December 1998.*

Action item: *Working Group, once formed, to complete task so that new format can introduced in 1999.*

Overtaken by events. 1999 course cancelled and training seminar being run in place.

**Disposal of
Unwanted Beacons**

Action item: *Delegates to resolve their position at a State/Territory level and advise Secretary by 31 March 1999.*

See Agenda Item 4 WP 23/4/4

AMSA Ref: 018774

Appendix 1 to
NATSARCON 23/2/1

See Distribution List

COMMONWEALTH/ STATE AND TERRITORY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAR ACTION IN THE EVENT OF LOCATION OF DISTRESS BEACONS OR AIRCRAFT IN DISTRESS

At the 22nd National SAR Conference, held in Sydney from 10 - 12 November 1998, discussions were held on the issue of Commonwealth/ State and Territory responsibility for search and rescue (SAR). In particular, the responsibilities for SAR coordination with respect to distress beacon location and for aircraft were debated.

In relation to responsibilities for the coordination of SAR action for the location of distress beacons, delegates reaffirmed their agreement to the policy tabled at the previous conference as attached. A summary of the policy will be included in a revised version of the National SAR Manual scheduled to occur in 1999.

In short, where there is a reasonable certainty that the transmission is from an aviation, maritime or land platform, the coordinating authority will be determined in accordance with the National SAR Manual.

In the event of an initial alert from an un-encoded beacon or initial detection by an aircraft, and the precise location or nature of the platform in distress is not known, AMSA will be the initial Coordinating Authority.

In the event of an initial alert from an encoded 406MHz distress radio beacon AMSA will seek to establish the nature of the incident (land, sea or aviation) by contacting the registered point of contact (unless it is immediately clear from the registration details). If the beacon is detected over land and there is no identified contact person, or the beacon is unregistered, the known details will be passed on to the relevant Police Headquarters by AMSA. Where the beacon is registered to a company which has previously advised AMSA that they have the capacity to respond to an incident involving their personnel, AMSA shall advise the Coordinating Authority of such information.

Once the nature of the platform in distress has been established, responsibility for any further action, and for meeting associated costs, will be transferred to the relevant SAR authority.

1998 International Year of the Ocean

25 Constitution Avenue, Canberra City ACT 2601 • GPO Box 2181 Canberra City ACT 2601

Telephone: 02 6279 5700 Facsimile: 02 6279 5757

With regard to responsibility for SAR actions with respect to aircraft in distress, the delegates agreed that AMSA has responsibility for all civil registered aircraft in accordance with the current SAR Plan. State and Territory Police have responsibility for all unregistered aircraft. Until it is determined whether an aircraft is on the civil register or not, the authority alerted will have coordination of the SAR action. In all cases where a State or Territory authority has coordination of a SAR action with regard to aircraft and the operation over-reaches that authority's capabilities, responsibility may, by mutual agreement, be transferred to the Commonwealth authority, namely AusSAR.

The delegates agreed that these responsibilities should be incorporated in the rewrite of the National SAR Manual and that the procedures should be implemented in the interim. Addressees are therefore requested to promulgate the agreed procedures in local orders to take effect immediately.

Yours sincerely

Bob Neale
Chairman
National Search and Rescue Conference

11 October 1999

Attachment:

1. SAR Coordination and Location of Distress Radio Beacons Operating on 121.5, 243 and 406 MHz

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Mr David Baird General Manager AusSAR	Mr B. Bates, APM Commissioner Northern Territory Police	Mr R McCreadie, APM Commissioner Tasmania Police
Mr M.J. Palmer, APM, AO Commissioner Australian Federal Police	Mr J. O'Sullivan, APM Commissioner Queensland Police	Mr M.N. Comrie, APM Chief Commissioner Victoria Police
Mr P.J. Ryan, QPM Commissioner New South Wales Police	Mr M.A. Hyde, APM Commissioner South Australia Police	Mr R. Falconer, APM Commissioner Western Australia Police

AusSAR
GPO Box 2181
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

SAR Coordination and Location of Distress Radio Beacons Operating on 121.5, 243 and 406MHz

There are a number of over-riding principles that will be considered when prosecuting a signal from a distress radio beacon operating on 121.5, 243 or 406MHz.

Every distress radio beacon activation will be treated as a genuine emergency until the situation is resolved.

Administration arrangements between the Commonwealth and State/Territory bodies must not prevent the timely location of a distress radio beacon or people in distress whether they be on land or at sea.

A Coordinating Authority must be defined immediately and, once defined, that authority shall liaise closely with other relevant SAR authorities at every stage of an incident.

Any SAR authority may transfer responsibility for overall coordination of the incident to another SAR authority if it is appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of the National SAR Manual.

The issue of assignment of costs shall not interfere with the prompt and effective response to an activation of a distress radio beacon.

Determination of Response Coordinator

Where there is a reasonable certainty that the transmission is from an aviation, maritime or land platform, the coordinating authority will be determined in accordance with the National SAR Manual.

In the event of an initial alert from an un-encoded beacon or initial detection by an aircraft and the precise location or nature of the platform in distress is not known, AMSA will be the initial Coordinating Authority.

In the event of an initial alert from an encoded 406MHz distress radio beacon AMSA will seek to establish the nature of the incident (land, sea or aviation) by contacting the registered point of contact (unless it is immediately clear from the registration details). If the beacon is detected over land and there is no identified contact person, or the beacon is unregistered, the known details will be passed on to the relevant Police Headquarters by AMSA. Where the beacon is registered to a company which has previously advised AMSA that they have the capacity to respond to an incident involving their personnel, AMSA shall advise the Coordinating Authority of such information.

Once the nature of the platform in distress has been established, responsibility for any further action, and for meeting associated costs, will be transferred to the relevant SAR authority.

Financial Aspects

The costs of a SAR response will be borne by the coordinating Authority. In the event of a transfer of coordination from one Coordinating Authority to another, costs incurred after time of transfer will be borne by the second Coordinating Authority.

NATIONAL SAR PLAN

SUMMARY

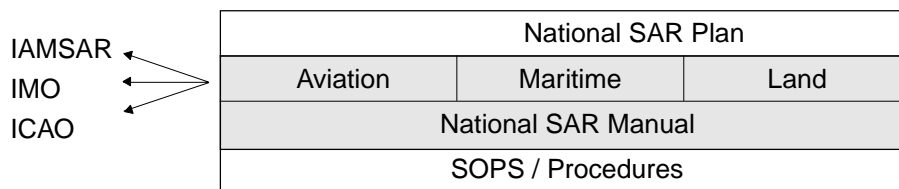
Executive Summary:	This paper identifies a proposed framework for the National SAR Manual, in conjunction with some guiding principles for the establishment of a National Search and Rescue Plan.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 9.
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. Agreement was reached at the 22nd National SAR Conference to review the format and content of the National Search and Rescue Manual. In doing so, it has been necessary to revisit the framework for guidance and documentation in relation to the provision of search and rescue services by the Commonwealth and States / Territories.
2. This paper identifies a proposed framework for the National Search and Rescue Manual, in conjunction with some guiding principles for the establishment of a National Search and Rescue Plan.

Framework

3. From a conceptual viewpoint, the following framework is proposed as a guide for discussion:



National Search and Rescue Plan

4. The National Search and Rescue Plan is envisaged as an umbrella document detailing the responsibilities of the Commonwealth and State / Territory search and rescue authorities at a broad strategic level. It could contain the details of obligations by search and rescue administrations under international conventions together with arrangements between States / Territories and the Commonwealth for the provision of search and rescue services.
5. Given that there are individual arrangements currently in place between the Commonwealth and State / Territory governments in relation to the provision of search and rescue services, it could be appropriate for those to be included in the National SAR Plan. Alternatively, it may be worthwhile exploring the option of incorporating a single agreement between the Commonwealth and States / Territory governments, signed by all parties, noting that in most cases, the current agreements are almost identical with the exception of those with Western Australia and Tasmania. The Tasmanian

and Western Australian positions could be accommodated by the inclusion of additional (State / Territory specific) text. Irrespective of the outcome, it is considered appropriate that whatever arrangements or agreements are in place between the Commonwealth and State / Territory administrations, those arrangements or agreements should be reflected in the National SAR Plan.

6. The National SAR Plan should also be afforded a form of validity, perhaps by endorsement at Ministerial or Heads of Agency level.

National Search and Rescue Manual

7. The National Search and Rescue Manual could comprise three volumes which would underpin the National SAR Plan. Those volumes would detail the specific search and rescue aspects associated with Aviation, Maritime and Land Search and Rescue. Linkages may also be made to other publications, such as the International Aeronautical and Marine Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR) or other relevant documents.

Standard Operating Procedures

8. Underpinning the National SAR Manual would be the agency-specific standard operating procedures. It is envisaged that such procedures would be internal publications only and would not be available for perusal or reference by other search and rescue authorities unless by mutual agreement.

Management of the National Search and Rescue Framework

9. The National SAR Conference could be an appropriate forum in which to coordinate the implementation and management of the National SAR Framework (excluding Standard Operating Procedures, as these should remain the responsibility of individual SAR authorities). The National Search and Rescue Conference could establish a process which would enable delegates to review search and rescue matters from a national perspective, and make recommendations for revision or amendment of the framework or its component parts.

Recommendations

10. Delegates are invited to discuss the issues raised above, and consider:
 - (a) the proposed National Search and Rescue Framework;
 - (b) the proposed composition of the National SAR Plan and the option of a single agreement between the Commonwealth and State / Territory governments;
 - (c) the proposed composition of the National Search and Rescue Manual; and
 - (d) the potential role for the National SAR Conference in relation to the implementation and management of the National SAR Framework

NATSARCON 23/3/2
6 October 1999
Originator: AusSAR

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR A MAJOR MARITIME OR AVIATION INCIDENT

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	The purpose of this paper is to invite a national approach to the development of contingency plans for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.
Action to be taken:	Establish a Working Group to facilitate a coordinated approach to development of contingency arrangements for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.
Related Documents:	State Disaster Plans. AusSAR contingency plans

INTRODUCTION

1. As part of risk management strategies, some 15 months ago AusSAR embarked, on a review of contingency measures. At the time, the review focussed on contingency measures to be adopted in the event of a major failure of AusSAR systems and major communications infrastructure and external threat to the Rescue Coordination Centre. Subsequently a number of contingency plans have been developed in conjunction with major shipping agencies to cover maritime catastrophes defining and refining contingency measures to be adopted in the event of major event involving their vessels. Antarctic Division also wishes to develop contingency measures for surface, maritime and aviation events in the Antarctic.
2. AusSAR sees a need to review contingency measures to be adopted in the event of a major SAR event involving large numbers of casualties and survivors from either a vessel or an aircraft inside and outside State jurisdictions. However, such a review needs to be conducted in context of both Federal and State responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

3. Australia's emergency management and counter-disaster arrangements reflect the fact that, under the Federal Constitution, State and Territory governments each have responsibility for the protection and preservation of the lives and property of their citizens. To achieve this they exercise control over most of the functions essential for effective disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, through:
 - a. Legislative and regulatory arrangements under which the community and various agencies operate;
 - b. Provision of police, fire, ambulance, emergency services, medical and hospital services; and
 - c. Government and statutory agencies which provide services to the community.
4. Local government plays a major role, as do many voluntary organisations, because of their intimate links with the communities they serve. The role of the Commonwealth (as directed by Commonwealth Emergency Management Policy) is to provide guidance and support to States and Territories in developing their capacity for dealing with emergencies and disasters, and to provide physical assistance to requesting States or Territories when they cannot reasonably cope during an emergency.

OBJECTIVE

5. AusSAR would like to establish a Working Group under the direction of the NATSARCON to facilitate a coordinated approach to development of contingency arrangements for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors. This approach will enable contingency measures and organisational arrangements to meet State needs and requirements, but will also allow a highly coordinated approach to the early establishment of a national strategy.

DISCUSSION

6. The AusSAR role in SAR for major events involving aircraft or vessels includes:
 - a. Overall coordination of the search and rescue operations of an aviation incident involving a civil registered aircraft. (This precludes incidents relating to activation of the Aerodrome Emergency Procedures)
 - b. Overall coordination of the search and rescue operations of a maritime incident involving a SOLAS Convention vessel, or for any other vessel for which AusSAR has accepted responsibility for coordination of the search and rescue effort.
 - c. To provide immediate advice to the State or Territory Police Service when an emergency is observed, has occurred or indications are that an emergency is likely to occur.
 - d. Provide information on the location or position of the emergency site, the actions taken to provide assistance and any pertinent intelligence.
 - e. By mutual agreement, following location of the site of the emergency, and the tasking of suitable rescue resources, arrange for the transfer of overall coordination for responsibility of the recovery phase to the State or Territory Police Service.
 - f. On request provide assistance to Department of Defence.
7. Each State and Territory has established a peak body comprising senior members of appropriate departments and agencies to consider emergency management matters. The names and functions of these organisations differ in detail from state to state, but they are mainly responsible for ensuring that plans and arrangements are in place for dealing with emergencies and disasters.
8. Each State and Territory has developed proper plans and arrangements for dealing with emergencies and disasters. Some arrangements are covered by legislation, others by State policy direction.
9. The extent of this documentation differs from State to State. For example New South Wales response is legislated under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989. New South Wales has also developed the New South Wales Aviation Emergency Sub-Plan which is a sub-plan of the NSW State Disaster Plan 1994.
10. Within Western Australia there is no specific emergency management legislation. However arrangements are established under a Cabinet Minute - Policy Statement Number 7. This policy assigns overall responsibility for coordination of emergency management arrangements to the Commissioner of Police.
11. Two comprehensive documents have been developed.
 - a. State Air Crash Emergency Management Plan: Westplan - Aircrash; and
 - b. State Marine Search and Rescue Emergency Management Plan: Westplan - WAMSAR.

12. Other States and Territories have legislation covering Emergency Management, but with no specific direction relating to a major maritime emergency, or aviation incident outside the immediate confines of an airport.
13. Most SAR incidents are coordinated either by AusSAR or the relevant State / Territory Police Force, but without a need for close coordination between both agencies acting in concert. This reflects the fact that SAR incidents, while sometimes involving a significant search effort, rarely have a significant rescue effort. SAR incidents typically involve small numbers of survivors that are easily within the capacity of local communities, medical services and Police to manage.
14. For example, AusSAR ran seven large-scale SAR operations during 1998-99. Searches in these operations were demanding, either conducted at long range, in adverse weather or intensively in remote areas. NSW and SA Police were involved with four of the searches, assisting the coordination of air searches and with intelligence gathering. However, action required after the search object was found was generally routine because the rescue effort was simple.
15. One exception, of course, was the series of SAR operations associated with the 1998 Sydney-Hobart yacht race. SAR assets rapidly delivered 50 survivors ashore to Merimbula and Mallacoota, and five to Eden. Post-incident debriefs indicated that local medical facilities received inadequate warning of the influx and that they were stretched to handle it. NSW Police on the spot were not adequately informed of ongoing operations and, consequently, were in reaction mode for much of the first 24 hours.
16. Two primary reasons might be advanced for those difficulties:
 - a. The first 24 hours comprised rescue operations, not searches. There were many more people involved than AusSAR is accustomed to handling. AusSAR lacks experience of effectively engaging the State / Territory disaster management infrastructure that is required to handle a large number of survivors.
 - b. AusSAR's resources were totally soaked up by the effort of acquiring suitable air SAR assets, tasking them and then following events. Little capacity remained for that broader task of coordinating community facilities to their key tasks.
17. The performance marking the Sydney-Hobart operations (multiple helicopters carrying many survivors) is perhaps our best indication of what to expect in the case of a SAR operation involving many people, eg. forced landing by a passenger aircraft or a fire / flood in a large ship. In essence, AusSAR could be expected to get hold of rescue assets quickly and efficiently and get them on-scene.
18. However, AusSAR is not organised or equipped to influence activities at the disaster site, to arrange triage and medical evacuation, to direct the flow of casualties to appropriate facilities or to ensure public safety on site. For a large scale incident with large numbers of people, State/ Territory disaster management plans are appropriate.
19. This implies an evolution of coordination, beginning with AusSAR but transferring to the relevant Police force as soon as the State personnel on site are capable of assuming it. This paper suggests that the evolution of coordination will be highly dependent on the remoteness of the incident.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

21. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked to consider establishment of a Working Group with the following draft Terms of Reference:
 - a. Assess the capabilities and preparedness of State or Territory Emergency (Disaster) Management Plans to accept responsibility for coordination of the recovery phase of a major aviation or maritime incident.
 - b. Assess the capability and preparedness within a State or Territory Medical Plan to handle the recovery of victims, survivors and deceased from a significant aviation or maritime incident:
 - i. In an urban area,
 - ii. In a remote area,
 - iii. Offshore beyond the range of small vessels.
 - c. Report to the next NATSARCON with recommendations for ensuring the quality of response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.

NATSARCON 23/3/3
6 October 1999
Originator: TAS

SAILBOARDERS/WINDSURFERS

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This item is included for discussion to canvass the possibility of approaches being made to relevant State authorities to have uniform laws for the control of sailboarders or windsurfers.
Action to be taken:	Paragraphs 6 and 7
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. Tasmania is proposing the introduction of by-laws to control sailboarders in navigable waters. This paper has been raised to canvass the possibility of having uniform national laws or regulations introduced.

Discussion

2. Approaches have been made through the Tasmanian Marine Search and Rescue committee to Marine and Safety Tasmania to have by-laws formulated to control sailboarders/windsurfers.
3. Marine by-laws control maneuvering of craft in navigable channels including right of way of all craft. The maneuverability of windsurfers and the perceived lack of attention the riders pay to sea safety rules suggest that they should be regulated so that action can be taken against irresponsible riders who cause collisions or near misses.
4. Currently the only regulations that apply to windsurfer type vessels are the International Collision Regulations.
5. Because of the maneuverability of the vessels local authorities may consider it suitable to provide for local regulations relating specifically to them, placing the onus onto the riders to take relevant action to avoid a collision, regardless of which side of a vessel they may be on.

Recommendations

6. Delegates are asked to **provide** details of any regulations introduced specifically to control windsurfers in pilotage waters.
7. Delegates are asked to **consider** a national approach to this issue.

NATSARCON 23/3/4
28 July 1999
Originator: QLD

INTRODUCTION OF A SAR TRANSFER FORM

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: Commonwealth/State and Territory search and rescue agreements allow for the transfer of search and rescue operations under specific circumstances. This paper introduces a generic transfer form that could remove potential misunderstanding about who has responsibility.

Action to be taken: Relative Paragraph

Related Documents:

Introduction

1. Arrangements of responsibility between the Commonwealth and the State and Territory Governments for maritime search and rescue operations make provision for the transfer of some search and rescue operations under specific circumstances.

Discussion

2. State and Territory search and rescue authorities are responsible for the coordination of SAR operations with respect to pleasure craft, fishing vessels and unregistered aircraft in distress.
3. Arrangements in place allow for search and rescue operations in respect of pleasure craft and fishing vessels that overreach the State or Territory capacity to be transferred to the Commonwealth. A decision by the 22nd National Search and Rescue Conference allows for a similar arrangement when operations with respect to aircraft in distress overreach the State's or Territory's capacity.
4. A number of incidents have occurred during the last twelve months where some confusion has arisen as to which search and rescue authority was coordinating the operation and whether a transfer of responsibility had actually occurred.
5. To alleviate any confusion and reduce the potential for misunderstanding that may impede the quick recovery of survivors, Queensland has drafted a transfer of responsibility form that can be used to confirm the transfer of responsibility from one authority to another.

Recommendations

6. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. to consider the need for a formal transfer of responsibility recognised by the exchange of the proposed form, and
 - b. to agree the content and structure of the form.

Attachment:

1. Draft Transfer of Responsibility Form

SAR INCIDENT TRANSFER FORM

SAR No. _____ (if applicable)

I, _____
(Name and Organisation)

as Coordinator of the incident located at: _____

do hereby handover coordination to _____
_____ (Name and Organisation)

to be effective from _____, _____.
(Date) (Time)

Signed: _____
(Coordinator relinquishing coordination)

I, _____
(Name and Organisation)

do hereby accept responsibility for coordination.

Signed: _____
(Coordinator accepting responsibility)

NATSARCON 23/3/5
6 September 1999
Originator: TAS

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper updates the submission to the 1998 National SAR Conference outlining the strategic direction that the Conference should take.

Action to be taken: Paragraphs 3

Related Documents: WP 22/3/1 (1998 Conference)

VISION STATEMENT

To have the best National Search and Rescue system in the World.

Introduction

1. The aim of the National Search and Rescue Conference is to provide a forum to have senior search and rescue representatives from each State, Territory and National search and rescue coordinating jurisdictions formulate, discuss and ratify National search and rescue policies.

Objectives

2. The objectives of the National Search and Rescue Conference are:
 - To develop, review and if necessary amend the National Search and Rescue Manual to provide policy for the prosecution of search and rescue incidents that may be responded to by Commonwealth or other resources outside a State's jurisdiction;
 - To report on ongoing improvements and developments in matters relating to search and rescue both Nationally and Internationally;
 - To ensure an efficient and effective search and rescue response capability is possible throughout Australia and its area of responsibility.
 - To ensure compatibility of procedures for joint search and rescue operations involving State and Commonwealth authorities.
 - To review the need and content of the National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course.
 - To report to the annual National Police Commissioners' Conference.
 - To develop search and rescue strategies as directed by the Police Commissioners' Conference.
 - To maintain a network for key search and rescue response agencies to ensure a seamless coordination of search and rescue incidents.
 - To provide direction for review and development of National search and rescue strategies.
 - To examine and where appropriate, endorse suggested National policies for the continuous improvement of issues relating to search and rescue as raised at the National Search and Rescue Conference
 - To take appropriate action in relation to other matters resolved at Conference.

Recommendation

3. Delegates are asked to decide on the mission statement and objectives.

NATSARCON 23/4/1
1 September 1999
Originator: AMSA

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) UPDATE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	Update on recent developments in relation to future maritime safety communications.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 6
Related Documents:	WP 22/2/3 (1998 Conference)

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to further update the National Search and Rescue Conference on recent developments in relation to future maritime safety communications.

Tender Evaluation and Outcome

2. Tenders for the provision of the new GMDSS contract were called last year. The tender process closed in December 1998 and AMSA has evaluated the submissions.
3. The evaluation process was completed on 23 December 1998. A total of four tenders were received with each providing a number of different options to satisfying the criteria. It was considered that all tenders were of good quality. Successful tenderers were identified by the Tender Evaluation Committee for the provision of satellite and terrestrial services. The AMSA Board endorsed the evaluation outcomes at its meeting in Brisbane in March 1999.
4. AMSA has successfully negotiated a contract extension with Telstra that extends the existing services for a period of up to two years to 30 June 2002. AMSA has decided to have separate contracts for the provision of the terrestrial and satellite components of the new GMDSS network. AMSA anticipates that contract negotiations may be completed by the end of 1999, subject to agreement by State and Territory administrations on a suitable communications option for recreational and fishing (non-SOLAS) vessels. The Telstra extension will allow for any necessary overlap with any new system to ensure proper operations.
5. The Marine and Ports Group will report to the next Australian Transport Council meeting in October 1999 on the proposed funding arrangements for the GMDSS network.

Recommendation

6. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. to note the progress made to date in relation to the provision of future maritime safety communications for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System.

NATSARCON 23/4/2
 1 September 1999
 Originator: AMSA

TOPICAL ISSUES FROM COMSAR 4

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper provides information on some issues discussed at COMSAR 4 held in London 12-16 July 1999.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 15

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. The fourth session of the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR 4) was held 12 to 16 July 1999 at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Headquarters in London. Colin Barr and Chris Payne of AusSAR Policy and Matt O'Neill of Telstra represented Australia.

Topical Issues from COMSAR 4

Introductory Remarks by IMO Secretariat

2. In his introductory remarks Admiral Mitropoulos representing the Secretary-General, remarked upon two significant milestones in IMO's achievements that had taken place since the Sub-Committee's last meeting. He referred to the completion of the provisional global maritime SAR plan and the full implementation of the GMDSS on 1 February 1999.

Cellular Phones

3. In response to a submission by France the SAR Working Group discussed the use of cellular phones and SAR. Governments have been invited to submit further comments on the use of cellular phones for SAR services to COMSAR 5.
4. This topic goes beyond the direct use of cellular phones for SAR and also encompasses the status and intended use of cellular phones including global telecommunications services as a means of maritime safety communication. This is an issue Australia must address and it is interesting to see other nations are also grappling with the status of mobile phones.

Cospas-Sarsat Services

5. The Cospas-Sarsat delegate briefed the Sub-Committee on developments with the system. Cospas-Sarsat advised that they were considering further actions to improve beacon coding and registration but emphasised that it was a national responsibility to enforce such procedures.
6. Cospas-Sarsat reported the state of the system including the plans to phase out 121.5/243 MHz processing subject to Cospas-Sarsat Council approval. Interestingly, there was no discussion of this issue at COMSAR 4.

Ocean Yacht Races and Mutual Responsibility in SAR

7. This issue was raised by Australia and received very strong support. Eleven countries and organisations spoke in support of the proposal and the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) observer was invited to convey the concerns to their members and to consider imposing restrictions upon the routes of ocean races. International organisations and members were invited to submit comment and proposals to COMSAR 5.
8. This topic generated a lot of support and discussion. Notably, the countries in the Southern Ocean spoke strongly on the issue.

Operational Performance of MF/HF DSC System

9. The Sub-Committee considered a paper by Australia that drew attention to the disproportionate effort involved in responding to DSC false alerts. This paper was well received in the Operational Working Group and discussed in the context of finalising the DSC flow charts for use in ships. One very positive result of COMSAR 4 is the release of the COMSAR Circular issuing these flow charts.
10. The Sub-Committee also agreed with the USA proposal that administrations should conduct tests upon DSC equipment and submit results to COMSAR 5.

General Communications in Sea Areas A1 and A2

11. There were wide-ranging discussions on this issue at COMSAR 4. The issue centres upon the definition of general communications and the methods of general communications, particularly in GMDSS Sea Areas A1 and A2 where services for general communications may no longer be provided. The Sub-Committee agreed to invite the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) to include 'Development of criteria for general communications' in the provisional agenda for COMSAR 5. Members are also invited to submit their comments and proposals to COMSAR 5.
12. This matter is relevant to Australia given the on-going examination by the National Maritime Safety Committee (NMSC) of maritime safety communications for non-SOLAS vessels. Whilst Australia does not formally declare Sea Area A1 (VHF), it can be anticipated that some form of VHF communication could be included as part of a solution for safety communications for non-SOLAS vessels. A general communications capability for small craft may be a consideration in this context.

Implementation of the IMO SAR Plan

13. The USA proposed a 'tacit approval process' to finalise the Provisional Maritime SAR Plan. The process is similar to that employed by ICAO to gain rapid approval to various initiatives. In response to the discussion on this item the Sub-Committee agreed to invite the Committee, subject to its agreement, to implement the above tacit acceptance procedure, to request the Secretary-General to circulate the Provisional SAR Plan to offer States the opportunity for tacit acceptance of the relevant provisional arrangements into the IMO SAR Plan. The Sub-Committee has also invited the Committee to reiterate its invitation for Parties to the SAR Convention to complete SAR agreements in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
14. Australia would have no problem with the tacit procedure and it would certainly speed up the process of finalising our SAR boundaries, particularly with nations in the Indian Ocean. Regardless of whether the tacit procedure proceeds or not, Australia would still probably prefer to complete SAR Arrangements with all parties which share a SAR boundary with Australia.

Recommendation

15. Delegates are invited to note these issues and provide input as appropriate.

NATSARCON 23/4/3
 1 September 1999
 Originator: AMSA

PHASING OUT 121.5/243 MHz SATELLITE SERVICES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	Cospas-Sarsat is expected to phase out satellite processing on 121.5/243 MHz in February 2008. This paper discusses issues relating to the phase out of 121.5 MHz alerts beacons and transition to 406 MHz beacons.
Action to be taken:	Paragraphs 12, 13, 14
Related Documents:	Nil

Background

1. A number of overseas administrations have called for the cessation of satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress alerts because of the high number of false alerts. Cospas-Sarsat is expected to recommend a phase-out date of January 2008 to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Impact

2. The phasing out of satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress alerts will have a significant impact on the community, State / Territory and Commonwealth administrations.
3. There are approximately 150,000 121.5 MHz distress beacons in use at present and it is expected that the number will continue to increase over the next decade. The average battery life of a 121.5 MHz beacon is approximately five years. States / Territories and the Commonwealth would need to ensure that owners of such beacons are adequately prepared for cessation of satellite processing in 2008 (if that cessation is approved).
4. State legislation is in place in all States / Territories regarding the carriage of 121.5 MHz distress beacons for pleasure craft and commercial vessels (Annex A refers). Such legislation may require amendment in light of proposed moves to cease satellite processing of 121.5 MHz beacons. The carriage of 406 MHz distress beacons would prove a suitable alternative and could be incorporated into legislation in place of the 121.5 MHz beacon carriage requirements for pleasure craft and commercial vessels.
5. Any planned changes to the 121.5 MHz distress beacon would need to be publicised in a controlled and consistent manner by the Commonwealth and State / Territory administrations. Any education campaign would need to clearly identify the issues of lifespan of the 121.5 MHz distress beacon, carriage requirements or potential changes to such requirements and the date beyond which the purchase of 121.5 MHz distress beacons will become less cost effective. In addition, the advantages of 406 MHz distress beacons should be highlighted noting that it is presently the only suitable replacement for the 121.5 MHz distress beacon system.
6. The take up rate of 406 MHz distress beacons is, at present, slower than that of 121.5 MHz beacons because of the significant cost differential, however, one could expect that prices for the 406 MHz version will fall as sales volumes increase.

Key Points

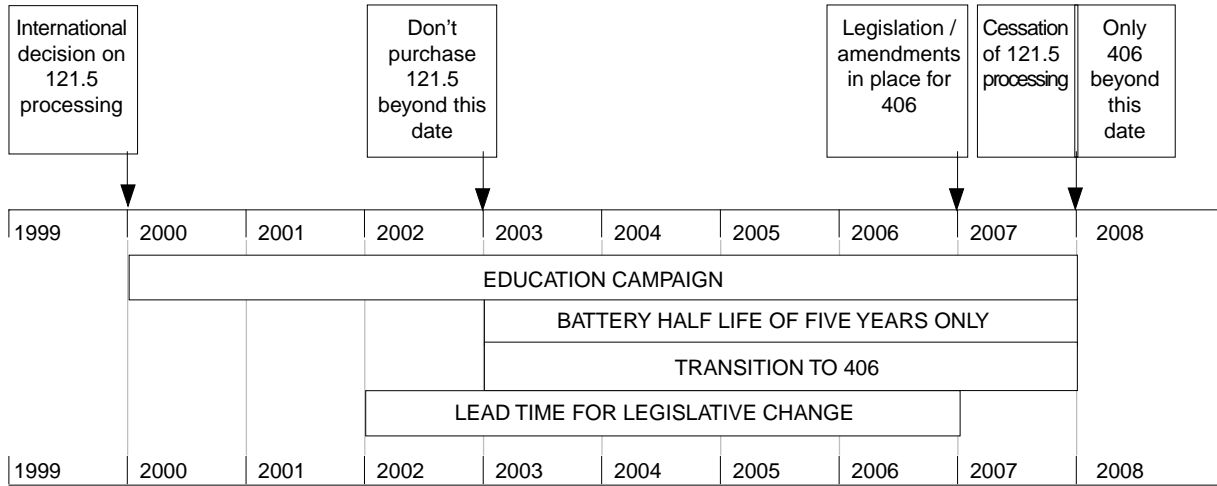
7. States / Territories and the Commonwealth need to develop a coordinated education campaign to alert users of the potential changes that are likely to occur in relation to the effectiveness of 121.5 MHz distress beacons. The timing of any campaign would need to be considered carefully, noting that the decision on 121.5 MHz satellite processing is expected to be endorsed at the international level in late 1999 or early 2000.
8. Noting the likely outcome would be agreement to the cessation of satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress beacons from 2008, States / Territories and the Commonwealth need to examine the relevant legislation in relation to the carriage of such beacons. The legislation for the compulsory carriage of 406 MHz distress beacons also needs to be considered. The resultant cessation of 121.5 MHz satellite processing may lead to an increase in the numbers of discarded beacons with a potential to adversely impact on SAR organisations.
9. The shelf life of existing 121.5 MHz distress beacons is approximately 10 years. Batteries should be replaced every five years. However, it is more cost effective to purchase a new 121.5 MHz distress beacon rather than replace batteries. Based on beacon turnover at a five yearly interval, owners may be disadvantaged should they purchase a 121.5 MHz distress beacon beyond 2003 and any education campaign would need to be under way by that time.
10. An indicative timeline for decisions is provided at Annex B.

Recommendation

11. Delegates are asked to note the issues which may impact upon the State/Territory and Commonwealth administrations as a result of the cessation of satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress alerts from 2008.
12. Delegates are asked to consider the implications to SAR organisations of an increase in the numbers of discarded 121.5/243 MHz beacons.
13. Delegates are asked to consider the decisions that may need to be taken by the Commonwealth and State / Territory administrations with respect to legislation of carriage requirements, timeframes for decision and the education of the general public on the ramifications of cessation of the satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress alerts.

ANNEX B

INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR DECISIONS



NATSARCON 23/4/4
6 September 1999
Originator: TAS

DISPOSAL OF EPIRBs

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper proposes several approaches to providing a solution to un-wanted beacons.

Action to be taken: Paragraphs 4 and 5

Related Documents: WP 22/8/1 (1998 Conference)

Introduction

1. The disposal of unwanted EPIRBs can be a problem for search and rescue authorities, especially when they are discarded without having been de-activated. A recent case in Tasmania resulted in a search at a city refuse disposal area wasting time, money and other resources.

Discussion

2. There do not seem to be any strategies in place for the controlled disposal of unwanted EPIRBs. With the gradual replacement of 121.5 EPIRBs with 406 type, the problem encountered in Tasmania could surface more frequently anywhere in Australia.
3. Suggestions for minimising false alarms from discarded EPIRBs have included:
 - the introduction of authorised hand-in stations such as retailers and volunteer rescue organisations;
 - manufacturers/distributors offering a trade-in or discount on a new EPIRB if unwanted beacons are handed in; or
 - manufacturers/distributors funding a bounty on unwanted EPIRBs.

Recommendations

4. Delegates are asked to **consider** the merit in any, or a combination, of the above suggestions.
5. Delegates are asked to **consider** the writing of a letter to beacon manufacturers/distributors outlining the potential problems and requesting their assistance.

Note: The same solutions could work for unwanted flares.

NATSARCON 23/5/1
 1 October 1999
 Originator: AusSAR

1998 SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	CYCA's Recommendations relating to the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 8
Related Documents:	Report of the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Race

Introduction

1. The 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race will be remembered for the ferocity of the weather that devastated the 115 yacht fleet. Six lives were lost, fifty-five participants were rescued and five yachts sank. The race will also be remembered for the unselfish dedication to duty of aircraft pilots and their crews, ambulance and police officers and volunteer groups.

Discussion

2. AMSA acknowledges the efforts of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) in producing a frank and detailed report. The report found overall that: "No one cause can be identified as being responsible for the 1998 Sydney to Hobart race fleet becoming involved in multiple incidents on 27 and 28 December 1998."
3. The report also found no single change could be identified for the future running of the Race that could preclude the repeat of such incidents. However a series of incremental changes would have a lasting impact on the organisation, running and safety of the event. There were lessons to be learnt from this race and CYC, in association with the Australian Yachting Federation (AYF), has already commenced implementing new procedures and safety requirements for off-shore races conducted under their control. In particular, AusSAR has noted the following significant recommendations from the report:
 - (a) An improved weather reporting arrangement,
 - (b) Revised crew minimum age and experience requirements,
 - (c) New training requirements for crews,
 - (d) New rules for safety harness care,
 - (e) Carriage of 406 MHz EPRIBs by each yacht plus one 121.5 MHz for each liferaft covered,
 - (f) Personal strobes and dye markers for each crew,
 - (g) Improved communications for race control,
 - (h) Carriage of a waterproof portable marine VHF radio for emergency use.
4. AusSAR resources during the period 27th and 28th of December 1998 were tested to the limit with staff working to almost maximum capacity. The two field officers deployed in both Hobart and Merimbula, greatly assisted with information flow between Race Headquarters and the Police on-scene-commander in Southern NSW. Coordination and infrastructure lessons can be learnt from this incident and are now being examined by AusSAR.

5. AusSAR's major concern during the incident was the difficulty of identifying and communicating with the vessels in distress. The carriage of an emergency waterproof radio will help alleviate the communications problems but a means of visual identification remains unresolved. It is understood that the CYCA has investigated a visual means of identification, such as adhesive temporary numbering but has not yet had any success in producing an adhesive that can guarantee positive identification in all conditions.
6. Another concern arising from the race from some of the survivors was the difference in helicopter winching techniques. AusSAR, together with the Helicopter Association of Australia (HAA) and the Department of Defence, are exploring the feasibility of standardisation of helicopter winching operations.
7. AusSAR will continue to maintain a close liaison with ocean race organisations and the State organisations that govern those bodies and will maintain support for safety training and education.

Recommendations

8. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. To **note** the findings and recommendations of the report of the 1998 Sydney Hobart Race Review Committee May 1999.

NATSARCON 23/6/1
 16 August 1999
 Originator: AMSA

NATIONAL AIR SEARCH OBSERVER PROGRAM

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper provides an overview of the development of a national air search observer resource and search support capability.
Action to be taken:	For information.
Related Documents:	Review of Civil Search and Rescue Unit Program paper

Background

1. At the last conference, AusSAR summarised the status of the current observer program and indicated that the program was under review. While some air observer training was continuing and training competencies were being developed, the review had been put on hold while other priorities in AusSAR were addressed.

Proposed Strategy

2. That review has now been completed and AusSAR is now in a position to commit sufficient resources to revitalise and enhance the program. The objectives of the new program are to develop and maintain an effective and efficient national civil air search capability that meets current and anticipated future needs through:
 - an holistic approach to the development of air search resources, incorporating training in visual and electronic search techniques for pilots and observers and the supply of appropriate equipment;
 - an Australia wide, organised, reliable and competent air search qualified human resource available to all SAR authorities;
 - training consistent with national competency standards;
 - simple, standard and reliable activation systems with a single point of contact for initial activation in actual search and rescue incidents; and
 - support systems incorporating welfare and logistics support for search aircrew and SAR coordination personnel operating from forward locations.
3. AusSAR has two main requirements in sourcing observers. Each of AusSAR's Civil Search and Rescue Units (CSU) requires a few observers for the CSU aircraft as a quick response to a search. Under the CSU program, AusSAR will continue to train the dropmasters as air search crews. However, when a search expands, then there is a need for a greater pool of observers.
4. AusSAR considers that a two-tiered structure for the supply of the wider pool of personnel as air search observers would be the best approach to provide a flexible and effective resource. The first tier of personnel would be provided by the State/Territories Emergency Services (SES) given their involvement in land/water search operations and various support services to police services and other agencies. Under the program, the SES would provide suitable volunteers for participation in the program and undertake the training of those members. AusSAR would provide appropriate instructor training, services, equipment, materials and auditing to facilitate that training.

5. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the SES would be in a position to always provide the quantities of observer personnel wherever and whenever required, particularly in large-scale incidents. A second-tier of personnel would be an identified reserve of untrained people who could be briefed in advance or on the day of the search and would work under the supervision of an experienced observer or pilot.
6. AusSAR has also had a number of concerns in relation to on-site support for personnel engaged in search operations and the growing incidence of land-based distress beacon alerts. Accordingly, AusSAR has sought to expand the observer program from the single task of air search observation to include the provision of on-site support services during air search operations and to conduct electronic surface search operations. AusSAR proposes to provide portable homing equipment and training to the SES to assist in the development of an electronic search capability.
7. AusSAR has held successful discussions with the SES on establishing a cooperative relationship to develop the above National Air Search Program. We expect that training of the instructors should commence towards the end of this year and that training of observers will re-commence early next calendar year. As part of that program, the SES will maintain records of personnel trained in air search techniques. We will undertake to provide the police with an updated list every year.

Recommendation

8. Delegates are asked to **note** this paper for information.

NATSARCON 23/6/2
16 August 1999
Originator: AMSA

REVIEW OF THE CIVIL SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT PROGRAM

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper provides a progress report on the review of AusSAR's Civil Search and Rescue Unit (CSU) Program.
Action to be taken:	For information
Related Documents:	Defence Review Paper and Observer Program Paper

Background

1. AusSAR has undertaken a review of the current Civil Search and Rescue Unit (CSU) program. The AMSA Board agreed in May to a proposed strategy to enhance the program.
2. AusSAR now has 2 years experience with the CSU program that was inherited from Airservices Australia. While the system has worked, there are a number of concerns associated with current arrangements. These include a reliance on non-dedicated 'aircraft of opportunity', an emphasis in training on dropping emergency supplies at the expense of training in search techniques and the increasing use of professional emergency helicopters by AusSAR which are not officially part of the CSU program.

Proposed strategy

3. There is scope to provide a more effective, capable and cost efficient system to respond to SAR incidents compared to the current arrangements. AusSAR's objective is to restructure the CSU program to ensure, that around Australia, there is:
 - an effective pool of fixed-wing aircraft operators and observers trained to conduct electronic and visual searches;
 - more effective, responsive and appropriately equipped search and drop capable fixed-wing operators at strategic locations; and
 - an increased focus on training and using dedicated emergency rotary-wing operators.
4. AusSAR considers that a more effective and responsive fixed wing network could be accomplished by utilising some fixed-wing operators with assigned aircraft and crews. The evaluation of the Expressions of Interest in SAR last year indicated that there may be a number of larger fixed-wing operators around Australia who would be able to assign an existing aircraft and crew for SAR purposes during daylight hours for minimal costs.
5. The use of assigned fixed-wing aircraft and crew would allow AusSAR to reduce the number of CSUs around Australia. While transit distances to an incident may be longer with fewer of these CSUs, their capability to rapidly deploy is likely to have them at the scene of an incident earlier than under the existing system. The aircraft could also be fitted with all the required SAR equipment and frequency of training may be able to be improved.

6. The objective of enhancing the CSU program will be accomplished by creating a tiered response capability ranging from rescue, delivering emergency supplies to search only. The main response to an incident will be through a limited number of emergency rotary wing aircraft or fixed wing operators with assigned aircraft at strategic locations around Australia. These units will be equipped and capable of effective search and either rescue or drop capable.
7. This tier will be supported by a network of rescue or drop capable coastal and inland CSUs at secondary locations utilising aircraft of opportunity. In conjunction with the State/Territory Emergency Services, AusSAR will also establish and train a pool of observers and aircraft operators at tertiary locations around Australia that can be tasked to undertake searches. Increased use of Defence and Coastwatch resources will also be sought.
8. Operators will be selected through a tender process and contracted to AMSA. Such a tender will determine whether the assigned aircraft network is a financial possibility, and if not, the tender will be used to select operators at those locations with aircraft of opportunity.
9. The AMSA/Defence review is being progressed so that a decision can be made on any increased availability of Defence assets for SAR. AusSAR expects that a Request for Tender (RFT) will be released shortly.

Recommendation

10. Delegates are asked to **note** this paper for information.

NATSARCON 23/6/3
16 August 1999
Originator: AMSA

JOINT AMSA/DEFENCE REVIEW

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper provides a progress report on the joint AMSA and Defence review of national civil and military SAR arrangements

Action to be taken: For information

Related Documents: Review of CSU Program paper

1. The background to this review was outlined at last year's meeting.
2. The review examines the scope for a more integrated approach to aspects of civil and military search and rescue arrangements. The review team is exploring options for the future management and organisation of Commonwealth SAR, the increased availability of military assets for SAR operations, opportunities to rationalise the acquisition and maintenance of equipment and improvements in cooperation and liaison.
3. A discussion paper was distributed in January to the relevant portfolio Departments, Defence and Coastwatch. The review team has held a number of discussions with interested parties and is waiting on consolidated comments from Defence.
4. The outcome of this review will be incorporated into the strategy for the proposed enhancements to the Civil SAR Unit program.

NATSARCON 23/7/1
1 September 1999
Originator: AMSA

ACCREDITATION FOR AusSAR COMPETENCIES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper summarises AusSAR's progress in gaining accreditation of competencies for SAR specialists employed in the Rescue Coordination Centre, Canberra.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 5.
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. In early 1998, AusSAR aligned with the Public Safety Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) for accreditation of competency standards for SAR specialists through the industry Training Package. This paper summarises the progress of the process.

Discussion

2. The Public Safety ITAB is responsible for developing competency standards, a qualifications framework and assessment guidelines (Training Package) for the industry, which includes Police, Fire Services and State and Territory Emergency Services. In March 1998, AusSAR approached the ITAB to register an interest in being involved in the consultation process regarding development of Search and Rescue competencies. Consultation on the Training Package progressed well throughout 1998, culminating in a Search and Rescue Workshop from 19 to 20 November in Melbourne. Delegates from all sectors of the industry, including Defence and AusSAR, were in attendance. The aim of the seminar was to finalise the draft Training Package for submission to the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in April 1999.
3. The following six months saw three changes of Executive Officer and the date of submission to ANTA slipped, pending further industry consultation. In March, the "Draft Public Safety Training Package" was issued. Consultation has continued following the release of the draft Training Package and finalisation through ANTA is now scheduled for the last quarter of 1999.
4. AusSAR has pursued national accreditation and recognition of qualifications in line with the National Training Framework. Once the Training Package is endorsed by ANTA, AusSAR, as a Registered Training Organisation, will be able to issue nationally endorsed qualifications at Advanced Diploma, Diploma and Certificate II level to staff. In addition, AusSAR has developed units of competency for Observers, Observer Leaders and Dropmasters. These units have been included in the qualifications framework at Certificate III level for Territory and State Emergency Services within the Public Safety ITAB Training Package.

Recommendations

5. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. to note the progress of the process.

NATSARCON 23/7/2
 28 July 1999
 Originator: QLD

SEARCH AND RESCUE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper raises the issue of SAR management training with the aim of reaching agreement about what is required.
Action to be taken:	Para 6
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. The Australasian Police Education Standards Council (APESC) is coordinating the development of the policing component of the Public Safety training package. The SAR management component of the package appears to require substantial work. This paper seeks agreement on the SAR management component of the training package required.

Discussion

2. The training package being developed by APESC contains competencies and qualifications related to search and rescue. The final package will be forwarded to the Public Safety Industry Training Advisory Board (PSITAB) for lodging with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).
3. The draft SAR qualifications that have been distributed for comment have been predominantly focused on operational duties. The SAR management responsibilities have not been adequately identified or addressed by the competencies being developed.
4. In the latest material received from APESC, operational and management functions had been separated. However, there still appears to be significant development of the SAR management component required. It is of some concern that, despite the attendance of police officers with SAR management experience at the PSITAB workshops held in Melbourne in November 1998, there still appears to be a need to undertake more development of these competencies.
5. The opportunity should be taken for delegates to the 23rd National Search and Rescue Conference to discuss what they consider to be the ideal competencies and packaging. Delegates should have the required authority from their superiors so that this issue can be carried forward with the weight of the Conference as a whole.

Recommendations

6. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. to **bring** to the conference table the positions of the relevant organisations, and
 - b. to **reach** agreement on the SAR management competencies package for forwarding to each Service's representative to the APESC.

AusSAR FIELD EXERCISES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: An information paper describing the AusSAR Field Exercises held in 1998/99 and noting the benefits gained from the exercises.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 18

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. AusSAR, through the National SAR School, coordinates two SAR Field Exercises each year. The general aim of all the exercises is to apply the National SAR Plan by demonstration of SAR planning procedures and techniques in a field environment. This paper describes the exercises and invites delegates to note the benefits gained from the exercises.

Jindabyne Field Exercise

2. AusSAR detached to the Jindabyne area between 11-13 September 1998. The specific exercise aims were:
 - a. conduct of an exercise in a mountainous environment,
 - b. demonstration of cold weather survival and rescue techniques,
 - c. application of accident site control procedures from the coroner and police perspective, and
 - d. demonstration of command, control and communications techniques.
3. The exercise participants included AusSAR Training, Resources and Operations personnel, Jindabyne Police and State Emergency Service personnel, Queensland Police, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force.
4. Day one consisted of a Flare demonstration on the shores of Lake Jindabyne. This was followed by a tabletop SAR exercise in which the participants were divided into teams and given the task of defining a Search Area based on a scenario. Interspersed with the facilitation were short presentations by Subject Matter Experts on topics from mountain flying to communications and survival medicine. The exercise was further assisted by the presence of the Deputy NSW Coroner who gave a presentation on the coronial aspects of Search and Rescue.
5. Day two started with a safety and operations brief delivered by National SAR school staff. AusSAR SAR Resources section then gave a demonstration on Helibox preparation. This was followed by demonstrations from military aircrew on their individual aircraft roles and equipment and culminated with participants flying in Caribou and Kiowa aircraft to experience the difficulties of both flying and searching in mountainous areas. After reassembly at the base camp a practice beacon began transmitting, introducing a discussion on beacons and homing techniques using basic transistor radios and dedicated homer equipment.

6. In the afternoon exercise intelligence was received that an aircraft may have crashed in the Jindabyne area. A land search was organised by the Police and State Emergency Service and a line search was conducted through thick bush in heavy rain. This located a simulated aircraft crash scene, at which the Police gave a presentation on the procedures and hazards involved in entry, exit and site control.
7. The exercise was completed in the evening with a discussion period where the lessons learned were discussed and reinforced.

Port Macquarie Field Exercise

8. AusSAR held a field exercise at Port Macquarie on 26-27 March 1999. For this exercise specific aims were as follows:
 - a. Conduct of an exercise in a sea environment, including air drop of rescue equipment,
 - b. Demonstration of air search techniques (over land and over water),
 - c. Demonstration of land search techniques,
 - d. Application of accident site control procedures from the coroner and police perspective, and
 - e. Demonstration of command, control and communications techniques

The exercise was coordinated by the staff of the National SAR School, with the assistance of staff from NSW Police, SES and Port Macquarie Sea Rescue.

Scale of the Exercise

9. The Port Macquarie exercise was the largest held so far by AusSAR. With the AusSAR staff, over 150 personnel participated from the NSW Police, State Emergency Service, the Port Macquarie Sea Rescue Group, NSW Waterways, NSW Ambulance Service, Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force. The NSW Coroners Office, Queensland Police, Eastern Airlines and the Hastings Shire Council were also represented.
10. Five surface vessels and five aircraft were involved. The Royal Australian Navy contributed HMAS Warnambool (Fremantle class Patrol Boat), a Seahawk helicopter and a Squirrel helicopter while the Royal Australian Air Force provided a Caribou transport aircraft. A Civil SAR Unit Cessna Titan (from VeeH Aviation, Canberra) and the Hunter Region Rescue Helicopter also took part. The surface vessels included a NSW Water Police launch from Coffs Harbour, the Port Macquarie Sea Rescue launch and two NSW Waterways vessels.

Conduct of the Exercise

11. AusSAR staff deployed to Port Macquarie on the Friday afternoon. The exercise opened that evening, after the participants had formed into seven teams for the tabletop exercise. A number of presentations were given: AusSAR, a SAR incident coordinated by Port Macquarie Sea Rescue, Crash Site Hazards and the NSW Coroner. This was followed by a flares demonstration at Port Macquarie airfield and a beacon homing demonstration. The evening finished with a tabletop exercise, which demonstrated AusSAR planning procedures.
12. On the Saturday morning, a number of heliboxes were prepared by the teams under the guidance of SAR Resources. This was followed by the Air/Sea exercise, involving all aircraft and vessels. The participants divided into two groups, with the first group on the flying program and the second group on the sea program.

13. Because of the number of participants, the flying had to be conducted over a number of sorties during the Air/Sea exercise and extra sorties were required during the Land phase. Sorties were therefore shorter than desired but all exercise participants who wished to fly achieved one sortie.
14. The sea group had to be trans-shipped to HMAS Warnambool, since it could not cross the bar to enter Port Macquarie. The sea group was mostly accommodated on board HMAS Warnambool, with some AusSAR staff and others on the smaller vessels.
15. The Air/Sea exercise demonstrated inshore sea search techniques, dropping of smoke markers and an Air-Sea Rescue Kit and helicopter winching from the sea. The Caribou also conducted a short search over the coast for a land target, provided by the SES.
16. The Land exercise was held on Saturday afternoon. Coordinated by the NSW Police and the SES, this involved land search techniques, a simulated crash site, helibox dropping, survivor extraction and helicopter winching over land.

Assessment of the Exercises

17. The field exercises were both successful, in that each demonstrated the techniques used in the various environments and the contribution of all elements of SAR to the National SAR Plan. Overall, the exercises provide a unique opportunity for SAR practitioners - AusSAR, Police, State Emergency Service, Volunteer Rescue Groups and the Australian Defence Force - to come together in a learning rather than operational environment. They thereby provide a holistic view of SAR operations for all participating personnel and agencies, many of whom normally operate in specialist areas.

Recommendation

18. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked to note the benefits of the exercises to all parties concerned with SAR in Australia.

NATSARCON 23/8/1
 7 October 1999
 Originator: Secretariat

REPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN SAR AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper reports the proceedings of the Australian SAR Award Selection Committee's 1999 meeting.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 6

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. The Australian Search and Rescue Award Selection Committee of the National SAR Conference conducted a teleconference on 3 September 1999 to select this year's recipient of the National SAR Award.
2. The committee was unanimous in selecting Mr Ronald O'Connor for his longstanding service to the Solander Division of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association. The committee agreed that the commitment Mr O'Connor has displayed over the past twenty-two years in both boat work and out of hours radio watchkeeping is worthy of the Award.
3. The committee also agreed that Senior Constables Bryant and Long from the New South Wales Police Service should be awarded Letters of Commendation for their rescue of the seven members from the Port Macquarie Sea Rescue Group. The volunteers were thrown into the water following the capsizing of both their boats on the bar at the entrance to the Hastings River, Port Macquarie .
4. The Committee has continues to enjoy sponsorship from the Parkroyal/Centra hotel chain in the way of accommodation and breakfast for the Award recipients. Channel Seven has withdrawn their sponsorship for financial reasons.
5. The Committee agreed that the Award needs to be better publicised so that both the number and worthiness of nominations could improve.
6. The National SAR conference should note:
 - a. the recipients of the Awards; and
 - b. the need to better publicise the Awards.

Attachment:

1. Letter from the AVCG supporting the nomination of Mr O'Connor

NATSARCON 23/9/1
6 October 1999
Originator: AusSAR

AusSAR SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper advises SAR Authorities of computer system development being undertaken by AusSAR.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 9

Related Documents: Nil

Objective

1. To advise SAR organisations of computer system developments being undertaken by AusSAR and provide information which can be considered in strategic planning decisions regarding their SAR systems development.

Overview of Systems Development

2. AusSAR is currently redeveloping its search and rescue computer systems infrastructure. The system being developed is based on the following key features:
 - a. A Geographic Information System (GIS) will graphically represent the positional data.
 - b. A Common User Interface (CUI) will form the hub of all work processes within the system allowing the operator to display information as required, access the specialist sub-systems and receive and send all messages from a single location.
 - c. Improved data will be obtained from AMSA's corporate data model, online links to the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and other sources to provide further GIS layers and better support the operator decision.
 - d. An open infrastructure will use Unix based computers, Oracle as the database, X.400 as the messaging backbone and Windows NT for the desktop.
 - e. A framework of security, audit, incident tracking and information capture to assist in real time incident monitoring, coronial enquiry and formal post incident (next day) analysis will be built into the system.
 - f. Use of an Internet interface for dissemination of information to other SAR organisations catering for view only and registered user for interactive information dissemination.
3. The redevelopment project is expected to be completed by December 2000 and will provide AusSAR with a "total" system designed to meet both operational and administrative needs.

Points for External Authorities to Consider

4. The development of an Incident management and reporting system at AusSAR to give each incident a unique number, track progress and provide a reporting data base.
5. Use of a Geographical Information System (GIS) to visualise the Incident and integrate extensive amounts of data both spatially and temporally.

6. The integration of the messaging, incident management, support data bases and GIS system components.
7. As part of its system development AusSAR intends to disseminate information via the Internet. Information provided by this method will be provided in several areas
 - a. updates for the general public and press,
 - b. registered user access for use by SAR authorities, and
 - c. search briefings for SAR assets.
8. It is not envisaged that Internet access to the AusSAR system will be available before December 2000.

Recommendation

9. To facilitate coordination SAR Authorities are **requested** to advise AusSAR on the status and planned development of existing SAR support, messaging and incident management systems with which AusSAR may communicate electronically.

NATSARCON 23/10/1
1 October 1999
Originator: AusSAR

AusSAR YEAR 2000 CONTINGENCY MEASURES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	AusSAR has developed Year 2000 contingency measures. This paper identifies those measures that may temporarily affect existing arrangements between AusSAR, Air Services Australia, Defence and State Police
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 21.
Related Documents:	Letters to Police and Defence delegates regarding the AusSAR Year 2000 contingency measures

Introduction

1. AusSAR has developed a Year 2000 Contingency Plan that details AusSAR's contingency arrangements, in the event of significant degradation of equipment, systems and services, that will facilitate the:
 - Continuation of aviation and maritime search and rescue services; and
 - Maritime safety services.
2. The purpose of this paper is to draw the attention to a number of issues that will affect Air Services Australia, Defence and State Police in the event that the AusSAR Year 2000 contingency measures are activated.
3. Letters have been sent to to a number of external agencies including Defence, Air Services Australia and State Police informing of the AusSAR Contingency measures and requesting advice and input on both contingency communications and coordination procedures.

Year 2000 compliance evaluation and contingency planning

4. AusSAR has conducted a Business Impact Analysis on hardware and software used in the provision of aviation and maritime search and rescue services. The analysis indicated two major areas of potential risk. These were:
 - Hardware and software used by AusSAR for the provision of services; and
 - 3rd party communications systems.
5. Compliance testing of AusSAR systems has been conducted and tests indicate that there is a very low probability of the systems being affected by the Year 2000 roll over. This low risk notwithstanding, AusSAR has developed contingency measures to overcome any failures that may occur.
6. Loss of 3rd party communications has high impact on all services provided by AusSAR. Accordingly, AusSAR is making alternative communications arrangements between AusSAR and several external agencies, in order to ensure search and rescue operations can be effectively coordinated in the event of a disruption to existing communications services.

Contingency Measures

7. Where possible, alternative communications have been or are being established with principal agencies that participate or cooperate in the provision of aviation and / or maritime search and rescue. The communications plan is provided at Annex A.
8. Where potential loss of communications may affect safety and alternative communications availability cannot be guaranteed, suitable alternative operational procedures have been developed.
9. If the level or quality of service cannot be guaranteed, AusSAR will notify other agencies and customers:
 - in advance through AIP Supplement, Notams, Notice to Mariners, NAVAREA X and Auscoast warnings
 - of the most up to date safety information available, prior to the Year 2000 rollover or up to any time of failure.
10. Contingency measures and arrangements for the continuity of SAR have already been included in the National ATS Y2K Contingency Plan (produced by ASA) and are also included in an AIP Supplement due to be promulgated on 7 October 1999.

Contingency scenarios

11. The following scenarios may require amendments to existing procedures and practices during the period 31 December 1999 to 1 March 2000.

Loss of Cospas-Sarsat (distress beacon detection system)

12. In the event of failure of the Cospas-Sarsat satellite beacon detection system, capability for satellite detection of beacon alerts may be reduced. Therefore, it may be desirable to have in place contingency arrangements for the reporting of distress beacons. A failure of the Cospas-Sarsat system may result in:
 - the loss of all satellite detection capability; or
 - a reduction in detection coverage or frequency of satellite passes.
13. Such circumstances may lead to additional reliance on aircraft monitoring for distress beacons. It may, therefore, be necessary for pilots in command to report distress beacon transmissions as soon as possible by;
 - normal air - ground communications channels;
 - extended air - ground communication channels;
 - High Frequency communication;
 - Inmarsat satellite telephone voice to Air Traffic Services units or Rescue Coordination Centre (Australia);
 - ACARS; or
 - all stations broadcast passing information by aircraft to aircraft relay to the nearest available Air Traffic Control unit.

Loss or Reduction in Air - Ground Communications or Third Party Communications

14. AusSAR has developed a communications contingency strategy and is in the process of coordinating this strategy with external agencies. The communications plan is provided at Annex A.
15. Despite these communications arrangements, it may still not be possible to sustain the normal levels of service for search and rescue alerting and response.
16. This could result in pilots in command being unable to provide arrival reports, cancel SARTIMES or cancel search and rescue. It could also prohibit effective communications through Air Traffic Services with aircraft involved in search and rescue action and render impossible, the ability to determine whether an aircraft has completed its flight. Therefore, pilots in command:
 - strongly encouraged to submit flight plans or flight notes for all travel flights;
 - will be informed that AusSAR will respond to third party non-arrival reports only;
 - will be informed that AusSAR will not pursue uncanceled SARTIMES, missed arrival reports or non cancellation of search and rescue unless non arrival is corroborated by a third party;
 - will be informed that large area searches will only commence when collaborative information has been received by the Rescue Coordination Centre (Australia) indicating a heightened concern for personal safety.

Communication with State Police and Police or Emergency Service air operators

AusSAR wishes to establish contingency communications arrangements with State Police and Emergency Services. This may be achieved by:

- **SATphone.** AusSAR will have SATphone communications with a number of other agencies. AusSAR would communicate with the relevant Police Communications Centre who would then use Police Radio and other networks to exchange, specific SAR event essential safety related information with other agencies.
- **HF radio.** This implies direct access to Police HF network by AusSAR. This would provide access to specified Police Communications Centres only. Onwards communication with other State Police agencies would then be through these Police Communications Centres only.

State Police may be requested by AusSAR to act as single point of contact for all State Emergency Services to assist with SAR response to an aviation or maritime search and rescue action. Clearly this would mean that the State Police has the (contingency) communications capability to react in a timely manner.

Transfer of coordination

17. Whilst it is AusSAR's intention to attempt to establish alternate communications with other agencies, thereby allowing limited communications access for maritime and aviation purposes, alternate communications arrangements for wider public access may not be available.
18. In the event of loss, or degradation, of aviation Air-Ground communications and 3rd party communications it may not be possible to sustain the normal level of service for SAR alerting and response. Should the extent of failure warrant, AusSAR may not be able to accept Coordination for search and rescue actions that might normally be accepted in support of State authorities.

Coordination with adjacent Rescue Coordination Centres

19. There may be a need by AusSAR to utilise third party communications in order to coordinate search and rescue actions in the event of a major communications failure. Such communications could be used (directly or through the relevant Air Traffic Services centre) for the exchange of essential search and rescue details or coordination arrangements, in the event that a major search and rescue incident occurs on, or near the boundary of the Australian search and rescue region. They could also be utilised for the forwarding of distress beacon information obtained from the Cospas-Sarsat system.

Availability of aviation SAR assets

20. AusSAR is considering the feasibility of establishing arrangements, during the Year 2000 roll over period, with specified Police, Emergency Service agencies and Civil SAR Units to be the primary point of contact for the provision of aircraft in the event of a SAR event.

Recommendations

21. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
- a. To **note** the Year 2000 measures proposed by AusSAR.
 - b. To **provide** input on the contingency communications arrangements their organisation will have in place that may provide additional scope in support of SAR operations.
 - c. To **comment** on the constraints and limitations that may be imposed on normal SAR arrangements during the Year 2000 roll over period.

AUSSAR YEAR 2000 COMMUNICATIONS CONTINGENCY

1. SERVICE	COMMS REQ
COSPAS/SARSAT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Auspac X.25 over HF 3. Mobile connection to Modem 4. Mini M connection to Modem
CRS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisbane • Melbourne • Perth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Auspac X.25 over landline 3. Phone/fax 4. Hot phone (<i>provided by Telstra</i>) 5. HF (<i>using GMDSS emerg freqs</i>)
PERTH LES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Telex (via CRS Perth) 3. Phone/fax 4. SatcomC to Perth LES 5. SatcomC to altn LES 6. Mini M and Modem 7. HF (<i>using GMDSS emerg freqs</i>)
ATC/FS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne • Brisbane • Perth • Other ATC Units 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Phone/fax 3. Mini M via Inmarsat and Iridium 4. AFTN via airport 5. AFTN via Alan Woods and V-SAT
DEFENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCAST • AHQ and MHQ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Phone/fax 3. DMCN Terminal 4. HF ???
POLICE COMMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adelaide • Brisbane • Canberra • Darwin • Hobart • Melbourne • Perth • Sydney 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Phone/fax 3. HF Selcal 4. Mini M
POLICE & EMERG SERVICE AIR ASSET: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Police/Ambulance • NSW Police Air Wing • NT Police Air Wing • SA Police Air Wing, • Vic Police/Ambulance • WA Police Air Wing • QES and TAS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. HF Selcal 3. Mini M

1. SERVICE	COMMS REQ
<p>CSUs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VeeH Aviation, Canberra • Cape York Air Service, Cairns • Surveillance Australia, Horn Island • Reef Helicopters, Horn Island • Great Western Aviation, Brisbane • Tasair, Hobart • General Flying Services, Moorabbin • Karratha Flying Services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Mini M
<p>REEFCENTRE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Mini M
<p>COASTWATCH</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Mini M 3. Direct communications
<p>ADJACENT RCCs/MRCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand RCC • New Zealand MDO • PACRCC PHNL • RCC Moresby • MRCC Moresby • MRCC Noumea • BADAN SAR NASIONAL • MRCC Indonesia • RCC South Africa • RCC Male • RCC Sri Lanka • RCC Fiji • RCC Honiara 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Auspac X.25 3. Phone/fax 4. SatcomC 5. Sit 915 plain text 6. AFTN 7. HF via ASA
<p>MCCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USMCC • INMCC • JAMCC • SIMCC • IDMCC • FMMCC • HKMCC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal communications 2. Auspac X.25 3. Phone/fax 4. SatcomC 5. Sit 915 plain text 6. AFTN

NATSARCON 23/11/1
23 September 1999
Originator: QLD

SAR-REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS

Cost Recovery in Search and Rescue Under Certain Circumstances

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper discusses the merits of cost recovery for search and rescue under certain circumstances

Action to be taken: Paragraph 7

Introduction

1. Australian search and rescue (SAR) authorities do not actively seek reimbursement from rescued persons for costs incurred during search and rescue operations. This paper explores the possibility of seeking such reimbursement under certain circumstances.

Background

2. Over the past few years there have been several large-scale SAR operations successfully conducted by Australian SAR Authorities, eg. Rockin Robin, Bullimore, Dinelli and the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some persons rescued in high profile cases have been made financial offers for their story. Product endorsement, cash amounts for exclusive stories, writing books, gifts etc., are examples of financial remuneration readily available to survivors from high profile rescues.
3. A recent example of such a case is the search and eventual rescue of the Alaskan fire fighter in Western Australia. This incident was reported to have cost West Australian Police approximately \$65,000 (information from Sgt Wulf Broome). Anecdotal evidence in newspapers suggests that the rescued fire fighter has been offered \$200,000 for the story upon returning to Alaska.
4. It is possible that some individuals may deliberately create sensational search and rescue situations in an attempt to gain financial benefit.
5. The Queensland State Search and Rescue Committee has requested that this issue be raised at the National Search and Rescue Conference for discussion on the pertinent issues.
6. Discussion is sought to identify the issues surrounding full or partial cost recovery, in cases where financial remuneration is offered for the rights to the story.

Recommendations

7. Delegates are asked to **discuss** the issues arising from this discussion paper.

NATSARCON 23/12/1
 23 September 1999
 Originator: QLD

VOLUNTEERS AND CANINES IN SEARCH AND RESCUE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper seeks support in the development of competencies for handlers and dogs working in search and rescue.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 6
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. The Australian Institute of Emergency Management (AIEM), Melbourne hosted a working party to address the role of volunteers and canines in search and rescue, between 25 and 27 August 1999. The working party examined the role(s) that could be undertaken by volunteers and their dogs in search and rescue, including urban search and rescue (collapsed buildings), area searching for missing people, etc.

Body/Argument

2. The working party identified that the level of competence of both the handler and dog was equally important.
3. The working party agreed that a nucleus of members would draft a more detailed paper on the competencies required and the role and use of volunteers and their dogs. The draft paper would then be disseminated to the working party members for comment, before being finalised.
4. Issues for further examination by working party include:
 - a. the methods of deployment;
 - b. affiliations by handlers with other organisations involved with search and rescue dogs, including whether the handlers should be part of either the State or Territory Emergency Services;
 - c. the desired levels of competence for both the dog and the handler; and
 - d. the interface with existing resources in search and rescue.
5. The Queensland Search and Rescue Committee discussed this matter at its September meeting. At the meeting it was moved that, *"the State Search and Rescue Committee supported properly trained civilians and dogs in search and rescue to a recognised standard and to come under the direction of the State Emergency Service"*.

Recommendations

6. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. to **support** the development of competencies for volunteers and dogs in search and rescue, through their State/Territory.

NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

VISION STATEMENT

To have the best National Search and Rescue system in the World.

MISSION STATEMENT

To develop and maintain an effective, efficient and integrated national search and rescue system that meets international obligations and domestic requirements.

Preamble

1. The coordination of search and rescue (SAR) in Australia is the responsibility of AusSAR, Australian Defence Force and the State and Territory Police. These responsibilities are shared between the coordinating authorities in accordance with the National Search and Rescue Plan.
2. The Australian SAR Authorities formed a National Conference in 1976 to ensure consistency and uniformity in SAR procedures within Australia's area of responsibility. In 1999 the group was renamed the National Search and Rescue Council.
3. The role of the National Search and Rescue Council is to formulate, discuss and ratify National search and rescue policies. The Council is chaired by AusSAR and has a permanent membership of senior members of the Australian SAR Authorities. The Australian Communications Authority and New Zealand Police have permanent observer status. Other agencies and SAR operatives may be granted observer status on a needs basis.

Terms of Reference

4. The National Search and Rescue Council shall meet annually and consult out of session when necessary in order to:
 - develop, review and if necessary amend the National Search and Rescue Manual to provide policy for the prosecution of search and rescue incidents;
 - report on ongoing improvements and developments in matters relating to search and rescue both nationally and internationally;
 - ensure an efficient and effective search and rescue response capability is possible throughout Australia and its area of responsibility;
 - maintain a network for key search and rescue response agencies to ensure a seamless coordination of search and rescue incidents;
 - ensure compatibility of procedures for joint search and rescue operations involving State and Commonwealth authorities;

- monitor and review the National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' course;
- report to the annual Senior Officers Group of the Australasian Police ministers Council;
- investigate, develop and review search and rescue strategies;
- examine, and where appropriate, endorse suggested national policies for the continuous improvement of issues relating to search and rescue as raised at the National Search and Rescue Council; and
- take appropriate action in relation to other matters resolved at Council.

PREVIOUS NATIONAL SAR CONFERENCES

1. Melbourne, DOT (ATG), December 1976.
2. Canberra, DOT (STG), 6-7 December 1977.
3. Adelaide, SA Police, 5-6 December 1978.
4. Hobart, TAS Police, 27-28 November 1979.
5. Brisbane, QLD Police, 25-27 November 1980.
6. Sydney, NSW Police, 25-26 November 1981.
7. Melbourne, VIC Police, 8-10 February 1983.
8. Canberra, Defence, 18-20 September 1984.
9. Perth, WA Police, 3-5 September 1985.
10. Darwin, NT Police, 19-21 August 1986.
11. Adelaide, SA Police, 29 September -1 October 1987.
12. Hobart, TAS Police, 20-22 September 1988.
13. Brisbane, QLD Police, 31 October -2 November 1989.
14. Sydney, NSW Police, 23-25 October 1990.
15. Melbourne, VIC Police, 22-24 October 1991.
16. Canberra, AFP, 27-29 October 1992.
17. Perth, WA Police, 27-29 October 1993.
18. Darwin, NT Police, 17-19 August 1994.
19. Adelaide, SA Police, 27-29 September 1995.
20. Hobart, TAS Police, 19-21 November 1996.
21. Brisbane, QLD Police, 18-20 November 1997.
22. Sydney, NSW Police, 10-12 November 1998.
23. Melbourne, VIC Police, 12-14 October 1999.