



# REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FORTH AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE



14 - 16 November 2000

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Front Row: Inspector Paul Carr, Mr Brian Riches, Ms Rowena Barrell, Senior Sergeant Rob Graham, Sergeant Steve Sargent.

Second Row: Superintendent Gordon Wellings, Mr John Young, Sergeant Neville Greatorex, Sergeant Rob Gatt.

Back Row: Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson, Senior Sergeant Wayne Harris, Squadron Leader Bud Oke, Mr Steve Langlands, Mr Neil Ada, Superintendent Tom Rieniets, Mr Alan Lloyd, Mr Dick Jameson, Senior Sergeant Glenn Finniss.

Not in photo: Superintendent Bob Coops, Senior Sergeant Gerard Prins.

## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

**14 November 2000**

### **Official Opening**

The Chief Police Officer for the ACT, Mr John Murray welcomed delegates to the 24th meeting of the National Search and Rescue Council. He expressed his pleasure that the Australian Federal Police are hosting this year's meeting and felt that the environment of the AFP College would be conducive to meeting the overall tasks that the Council has set itself.

Mr Murray noted that, with few exceptions, the type of work done in search and rescue is generally taken for granted by the public. He recognised the Council's responsibility for selecting recipients of the National SAR Award and noted that the Governor-General will be making the presentation of the Award to this year's recipients at Government House later in the day. He made the point that in recognising the extraordinary feats of bravery of the crews of HELIMED 1, an aero medical rescue helicopter stationed in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, it is also important to point out that each year there has been many search and rescue acts of extreme commitment, dedication, endurance and bravery which are simply regarded by the public as part of the job.

Mr Murray acknowledged that search and rescue relies on cooperation and coordination between the various authorities represented on the Council. He made the point that it is critical that States and Territories continue to support the Council so as to allow it to provide ongoing development in all aspects of search and rescue. He stated that in his experience cooperation and coordination are the foundations of a successful search and rescue process. He continued that while there will always be willing and genuine support from relevant agencies there is a need for sophisticated planning and organisation for this to take effect. He wished the Council every success with developing a national search and rescue plan.

Mr Murray encouraged the Council representatives to strive for standardisation of training in search and rescue across Australia to gain the benefit of establishing a national level of competencies; facilitation of teaching curricula to match the competencies; providing uniformity of standards; and having mobility of skills across the country.

In conclusion, Mr Murray related his appreciation to the National Search and Rescue School at AusSAR that conducted an assistant search coordinators program for the AFP search and rescue team.

### **Introduction by the Chairperson**

As the Chairperson, Ms Rowena Barrell thanked Mr Murray for opening the meeting and thanked the AFP, in particular Sergeant Steve Sargent, for taking on the host's role for this year's meeting. Ms Barrell invited the delegates to visit RCC Australia whilst they were in Canberra.

Ms Barrell stated that there were a number of important issues that the Council had to cover during the 24th meeting, but none more so that the development of the National SAR Plan. She commented that the Plan should bring search and rescue cooperation in Australia into the new millennium.

She observed that there has always been good cooperation and coordination between the various State, Territory and Commonwealth authorities but the National SAR Plan should give that cooperation a structure and certain robustness in the face of criticism. It was for this reason that Ms Barrell believed that if the Council develops a workable plan then the meeting would have had a satisfactory outcome.

### **Conference Administration**

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

### **Agenda Item 1: Approval of Agenda WP24/1/1 - Provisional Agenda**

Ms Barrell introduced the agenda. Senior Sergeant Prins (NZ) asked that the issue of how the success or otherwise of a search and rescue operation is determined be discussed in other business. Senior Sergeant Harris (NT) asked that the cessation of the sea phone network be discussed and it was agreed that the issue should be raised in discussion of the AMSA paper on maritime safety and distress communications.

The Agenda was approved.

### **Agenda Item 2: Secretary's Report WP24/2/1 - Secretary's Report**

The Council secretary presented the report of the 23rd meeting of the Council. Mr Young (AusSAR) sought comments from delegates on the acceptance of the transfer form being used during transfer of coordination. Several issues relating to cost and whether transfer could be refused were raised. Mr Young replied that the costing issue should be covered in the Agenda item on the SAR Plan and that transfer of coordination is by mutual agreement. He stated that there is considerable liaison over the phone before the form is exchanged.

**ACTION:** The Chair asked that delegates seek any feedback from their operators and pass that onto AusSAR.

### **Agenda Item 3: National SAR Award WP24/3/1 - Australian Search and Rescue Award**

Mr Riches (AusSAR) reported that the sub-committee conducted a teleconference and unanimously selected the crews of Helimed 1, an aero medical helicopter operating from the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, as the recipients of the 2000 award.

Mr Riches highlighted the fact, that although the recipients are very worthy of the award, there were very few nominations and he seriously questioned the value of the award. He sought the Council members assistance with obtaining nominations for the 2001 award.

Ms Barrell asked the Council if it was still considered worthwhile continuing with the award and if so what strategies should be adopted. Sergeant Gibson (Vic) reflected that there are many worthy recipients that go unreported and that perhaps incidents should be flagged as they are noted.

Superintendent Rieniets (SA) believed the award should be continued even if it meant missing a year if the nominations were too few or not considered worthy. Senior Sergeant Finnis (NSW) broadened the discussion by introducing the notion that the National SAR Council needs promoting to, not only the public, but to the Police hierarchy. There was agreement from the Council.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to investigate methods of promoting both the National SAR Council and the Australian Search and Rescue Awards.

A press release relating to the 2000 Australian Search and Rescue Award is at Appendix 2.

### **Agenda Item 4: Lost Persons Database WP24/4/2 - SARbayes - Lost Persons Database**

Sergeant Rob Gatt (Vic) introduced the Victorian paper that proposed that each authority nominate a liaison officer to work with Robb Gatt; each State provide data; and each State employ a method of collection of data for the year 2001.

He circulated a draft data collection form and asked for comment explaining that the data on the form is all that is needed for the SARbayes program. Several comments were made about the form and the need to add several additional fields.

### **WP24/4/1 - Lost Persons Database**

Sergeant Steve Sargent (AFP) carried on with his paper. He believed that it was very important to agree on one questionnaire to make entering data easy. He called for discussion on the use of a central database or collaborative State based databases.

Sergeant Rob Gatt asked for a commitment to the SARbayes project from all authorities

explaining that he was on a tight schedule to meet project objectives.

Superintendent Rieniets (SA) questioned the availability of the software once the study was complete. Sergeant Gatt assured delegates that the software would be made available to the search and rescue community as a whole.

Dick Jameson (AusSAR) asked whether traumatised persons from air accidents were considered. It was explained that they were not because categories had been established based on persons becoming lost under their own steam.

Senior Sergeant Prins (NZ) was asked for experiences with lost persons database gained across the Tasman. Sergeant Prins explained that New Zealand was in the process of changing their system and that lost persons behaviour has become a big part of search planning in New Zealand.

The SARbayes project is looking for historical data and any data gathered through 2001 to be used to develop the software. Members of the Council agreed that the project's progress should be reviewed at the 2001 Council meeting.

Ms Barrell summed up by stating that there seemed to be support for the project. She called for comments on the form from authorities by 20 November and for nominated representatives to liaise with Sergeant Gatt. Delegates proffered the following nominations:

AFP - Steve Sargent  
 NT- Garry Casey  
 WA- Mark Platt and Neil Warner  
 NSW - Neville Greatorex  
 QLD - Rob Graham  
 SA - Tom Rieniets  
 Vic - Rob Gatt

Comments on the form and data can be submitted by facsimile to Sergeant Gatt on (03) 9534 7663

**ACTION:** Delegates to pass comments on the proposed SARbayes form to Sergeant Gatt by 20 November 2000.

**ACTION:** Delegates to complete forms for any historic incidents for which they have data and to

complete forms for incidents occurring during 2001.

**ACTION:** Victoria to raise the review of the SARbayes project as an agenda item at the 2001 meeting.

## **Agenda Item 5: Statistics**

### ***WP24/5/1 - Standardising SAR Statistical Outputs***

Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) addressed the paper.

Ms Barrell reported that previous meetings had agreed that this proposal would be very beneficial but historically the problem has been that everyone has been collecting varying statistics for various reasons and that definitions have been very hard to agree on.

Senior Sergeant Graham suggested that collection should be kept simple initially by basing categories on the National SAR Manual Appendix 1.1. He believed that delegates should provide the statistics to the Council each year so that they can be collated to provide information on search and rescue in Australia.

Mr Young (AusSAR) suggested that a standing agenda item should be to discuss operations that occurred during the year.

The meeting discussed the various ways in which incidents should be recorded. It was suggested that Commanders wanted to know how many incidents their sections coordinated. This might lead to a particular incident being counted twice where both AusSAR and a State authority had coordination at varying times during the incident.

The Council agreed with Mr Young (AusSAR) who suggested that an incident be counted once but each authority that had coordination during the incident would count it in their statistics. Double counting would be avoided by noting that coordination had been shared during the incident.

The Council agreed that a search was where an asset was activated to look for the target. Alerts that are resolved through communications checks also need to be counted.

Senior Sergeant Harris (NT) suggested that next year delegates bring a simple set of data along the lines of number of land, sea and aviation searches.

**ACTION:** Delegates to present a brief summary of incidents from the preceding financial year to the National SAR Council each year with at least the number of actions under the categories listed in the National SAR Manual Appendix 1.1. Briefs should include a note that could be included with the minutes of the meeting and should also include a description of the definitions that have been used.

## **Agenda Item 6 - Volunteers**

### ***WP 24/6/1 (QLD) - Compensation***

Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) introduced this paper.

He explained that the issue came up during his time in Thursday Island where there were a number of unaccredited SAR volunteers. He found that the relevant State Act gave no cover to unaccredited volunteers and that compensation could only be made through ex gratia payments. It came back to the fact that there is no legislative coverage for SAR operations in QLD. He sought information from other authorities about what is in place elsewhere.

Ms Barrell suggested that if search and rescue responsibilities and cover for unaccredited volunteers is not already in a State Act, then it should be investigated. The Commonwealth has acceded to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention and it was noted that there was a division of responsibilities between the Commonwealth and States/Territories and that the States and Territories have certain roles to meet Australia's obligations under the Convention.

Ms Barrell explained that the AMSA Act is the enabling legislation for AusSAR to carry out search and rescue in the marine and aviation environments.

Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) raised the proposal of enacting legislation covering search and rescue. Ms Barrell explained that it was considered earlier to regulate the SAR Plan by

each of the authorities. Legal counsel dissuaded this course of action. Advice from the legal counsel will again be sought and reported to the Council. Hence it was decided to obtain cover by having the SAR Plan signed by the relevant Ministers.

**ACTION:** Ms Barrell to seek further advice from legal counsel.

**OUTCOME:** Ms Barrell advised that she had taken advice from AMSA's Legal Counsel on the desire to legislate the National SAR Plan. The draft SAR Plan would be submitted for strategic legal advice as to whether it would be in the relevant jurisdiction's interest to legislate the content of the Plan. If the advice is to legislate, the Council will seek Ministerial approval of the Plan pending legislation by the Commonwealth and each State or Territory.

Mr Ada (AusSAR) explained that several years ago the Federal Minister for Workplace Relations and Small Business made a declaration under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act whereby any person involved in search and rescue for AMSA, either under training or in an operation, would be covered under this Act.

Ms Barrell suggested that this was a timely reminder for delegates to review State and Territory Acts and compensation requirements within their own jurisdictions to ensure that they are adequately protected.

## **Agenda Item 6 - Medical Advice**

### ***WP 24/7/1 - Medical advice to ships at sea***

Mr Young addressed this Information paper to explain what AusSAR has done to set up a telemedical advice service for ships at sea. He explained that the service was required under international obligations.

Navy has provided medical advice for many years but are no longer in a position to do so. Consequently the Royal Flying Doctor Service is now providing the service from Cairns.

By going through the contract process, AusSAR has been forced to document procedures resulting in better practice.



Senior Sergeant Greatorex (NSW) asked if they could use the service through AusSAR if they had no other avenue. Ms Barrell explained that AusSAR had expected States and Territories to have their own arrangements. If not, she suggested that they could enter into a similar agreement with the RFDS or other provider but the current contract is exclusively for AusSAR.

## **Agenda Item 9 - SAR Resources**

### ***WP 24/9/1 - Helibox use***

Mr Ada (AusSAR) addressed the paper on the use of heliboxes by State and Territory SAR authorities.

He explained that the arrangements for maintenance of SAR equipment are changing within AMSA and the task is being market tested for outsourcing. He reported that AusSAR will continue to provide access to small numbers of heliboxes but cannot guarantee access to larger numbers of heliboxes without cost.

**ACTION:** Mr Ada to provide the helibox manufacturer's name to the Queensland representative.

SQN LDR Oke (RAAF) advised that the Air Force has maxi-boxes and the capability to drop large amounts of stores. He suggested that these capabilities could be utilised by approaching the relevant State Emergency Management organisation.

## **Agenda Item 10 - Training**

### ***WP 24/10/1 - Search And Rescue Management Training***

Superintendent Coops (WA) advised that a workshop on the National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course was held in Perth in November 1999. After a week of discussions the NATSAR course was reduced from three weeks to one and a revamped course was held at HMAS STIRLING. Superintendent Coops reported that the Naval base was a very good venue.

Reports of the course are at the annexes to the paper.

Mr Coops explained that the recommendation to extend the course from 5 to 7 days was to give relief to the assessors.

The Council agreed that there is a need to retain the three core competencies taught on the course. It was agreed that pre-course assessment or distance training of one of the core competencies could manage this.

Sergeant Harris NT expressed concern about the lack of a formal qualification being issued at the end of the course stating, that from a NT perspective, it would be difficult to justify expenditure on participants going away to obtain only 3 units towards a qualification. He asked that during the development of the advanced diploma consideration be given to making this course the final requirement before obtaining the certificate. Participants would therefore, as a prerequisite, have completed a required number of units before being eligible to attend.

The principle that courses should be developed on a national basis was strongly supported to provide standardised training across Australia. This would give mobility to the holders of Diplomas in search and rescue.

Mr Coops agreed to lead in the development of online learning for one competency to be completed pre-course. This would leave two competencies to be assessed during a seven-day course.

**ACTION:** Mr Coops to advise delegates of dates of course to be held in September 2000.

**ACTION:** Western Australia to lead Queensland, Victoria and the Directing Staff in seeking a solution to delivering the course and report out of session. AMSA will keep the group informed of their progress toward developing courses based on the PSTAB competencies.

It was suggested that the Council needs to promote the need for training for SAR personnel regardless of the time required. Otherwise there is a risk of SAR being downgraded and personnel being less than satisfactorily trained.

**15 November 2000**

**Morning Session**

A designated working group comprising Mr Riches (AusSAR), Mr Young (AusSAR), Mr Ada (AusSAR), Superintendent Wellings (NSW), Superintendent Coops (WA) and Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson (Vic) met to begin the process of developing the National SAR Plan.

The remainder of the Council members visited RCC Australia and AusSAR.

**Agenda Item 8 - Distress and Safety Communications**

***WP 24/8/1 - Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Update***

Mr Riches addressed the paper explaining that AMSA has signed a contract with TV New Zealand to commence provision of distress and safety communications for SOLAS vessels from July 2002.

A contract is about to be negotiated for the provision of satellite services under GMDSS with the preferred tenderer. There is unlikely to be any significant change to the current satellite services provided.

States and Territories are deciding what distress and safety communications are to be introduced or maintained within each state or territory. The requirement is that vessels should carry communications equipment that allows for the receipt of weather and ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications.

Senior Sergeant Harris (NT) expressed his Territory's concern about the lack of infrastructure in the Territory and the lack of Commonwealth funding. The Territory's particular concerns relate to the lack of shore infrastructure, long coast, sparse population and no volunteer organisations. Sergeant Harris suggested that the cost of GMDSS systems would rule them out for people engaged in recreational boating activities and, this being the case, an affordable and effective alternative safety communications system will need to be identified. Superintendent

Coops (WA) and Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) expressed similar concerns. The members of the National SAR Council were interested in the activities of the Australian Marine Group (AMG) Working Group and that the Council members agreed to engage in those deliberations.

However, members expressed concern that the AMG Working Group are developing solutions without consultation with the Police Services.

**ACTION:** AusSAR to distribute names and contact details of working group and the terms of reference of the working group.

**ACTION:** AusSAR to keep Council members abreast of Working Group actions as they occur.

***WP 24/8/2 - Phasing out of satellite processing of 121.5MHz alerts***

Mr Riches (AusSAR) addressed this paper by explaining that the Cospas-Sarsat Council had approved the recommendation to cease satellite processing of 121.5MHz alerts from 1 February 2009.

Mr Riches raised the issue of the disposal of unwanted beacons. He asked Council delegates to provide relevant details in their State or Territory where 121.5MHz distress beacons can be returned for disposal. The possibility of manufacturers and suppliers offering a refund for beacons surrendered was discussed.

**ACTION:** Delegates to provide contact details of places where 121.5MHz beacons could be returned for disposal.

Mr Riches explained the plan to publicise the changeover from 121.5 to 406MHz beacons. He explained that a phased approach is being taken. The first phase is to demonstrate the advantages of 406MHz over the 121.5MHz beacons. The second phase will involve publicising the cessation date and the final phase will promote changing over to 406MHz beacons.

The question of GST on beacons was raised. It was explained that beacons would be subject to GST.

### **Agenda Item 3 (continued) - Australian Search and Rescue Award**

Discussion on the criteria for nominations to the Australian Search and Rescue Award was resumed. The criteria are broad reaching to ensure that people who have continuous and outstanding service to search and rescue in the Australian region are all considered.

The meeting sought nominations for membership on the selection committee. It was agreed that the membership of the selection committee should be NT, Victoria, AFP and the host state (ie the State/Territory scheduled to host the upcoming National SAR Council meeting). However, given that the NT delegate's absence in 2001, the NSW delegate agreed to stand in for him during that year.

It was suggested that a prominent personality could present the Award. Instead the State Governor was suggested. It was agreed that the host delegate should arrange for an appropriate person to present the Award.

The Council agreed that the criteria for the Award were satisfactory.

The issue of promoting the Award was raised. The idea of a web site for the National SAR Council was raised and agreed.

**ACTION:** Secretary to investigate the development of a National SAR Council web site.

### **Other Business**

#### ***Reporting of the Meeting Proceedings***

The Chairperson raised the issue of the National Search and Rescue Council's lines of reporting. The terms of reference were raised in the report of the 23rd meeting and resulted in the Secretary of the Commissioners' forum informing the Council secretariat since the terms of reference submitted stated that the Council would report to the Senior Officers' Group, then his secretariat was the wrong one to report through.

It is important that the Council has terms of reference recognised by Police Commissioners, Chief of Defence Force and Chief Executive of

AMSA. In addition, there are a number of issues under consideration such as the National SAR Plan and SAR Manual that require clearance.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to research the beginnings of the SAR Conference and what the reporting actions should be.

#### ***Next Meeting***

It was agreed that the Western Australia Police Service would host the next meeting.

Superintendent Coops raised the proposal that the national field exercise, council meeting and National Police Search and Rescue Course could be conducted at around the same time.

**ACTION:** Superintendent Coops to provide dates for the next council meeting.

#### ***Cost Recovery***

Mr Ada (AusSAR) sought the experience of the delegates in relation to cost recovery for search and rescue. The delegates from SA, NSW, WA and Defence stated that their jurisdictions could not recover costs for direct SAR operations. Superintendent Rieniets explained that South Australia would not recover costs because of the Emergency Services Levy imposed by the state government. Inspector Carr (Vic) reported that although he would like to see cost recovery for incidents involving negligence there is no practicable way of doing so.

Ms Barrell asked if the idea of a levy had been raised within State and Territory authorities. Some states provide monies from boat licensing to volunteer organisations. Sergeant Finnis (NSW) suggested that in some instances insurance held by boat owners could be used to recover costs of a particular search and rescue incident.

What is meant by best practice and how is success of a search and rescue operation measured?

Senior Sergeant Prins (NZ) spoke to this item. He was seeking advice on what other delegates saw as best practice. The discussion then turned to the latter part of the question. Mr Young (AusSAR) stated that the IAMSAR

manual defines a successful search and rescue as one where the victim is alive. Ms Barrell commented that locally, AusSAR considers the finding of a body, dead or alive, is deemed as a successful search.

Sergeant Prins asked what pro-active preventative strategies are taken to limit potential SAR actions. SA, QLD and WA reported that they have preventative programs.

The NMSC are obtaining coronial reports to survey what the contributing factors were that lead to fatalities on the water. ANZSBEG has conducted campaigns on alcohol and safety equipment.

Senior Sergeant Gibson reported that Victoria considers a successful search and rescue one where the operation has been conducted to the best possible means. There was considerable discussion on this issue and the variation in definitions by different jurisdictions.

Ms Barrell suggested that this topic could be resumed, if desired, next year following the tabling of State and Territory statistics.

## 16 November 2000

### **Agenda item 11 - Division of Responsibilities WP 24/11/1 - National SAR Plan**

Ms Barrell invited the Working Group to address the Council on the National SAR Plan.

Mr Riches responded on behalf of the Working Group. He explained that three key principles formed the basis of the National SAR Plan and that the Working Party had determined these to be:

**Key Principle 1:** The responsibility of the Commonwealth and the States / Territories for search and rescue of persons in distress is identified by the nature of the platform in distress.

Thus, for search and rescue purposes, the Commonwealth has responsibility for:

- All vessels covered by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention (except for such

vessels in port) in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

- All civilian aircraft registered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or the Australian Ultralight Federation in the Australian Search and Rescue Region; and
- Space vehicles in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

For search and rescue purposes, State / Territory administrations have responsibility for:

- All vessels (including fishing vessels and pleasure craft) other than those covered by the SOLAS Convention (except for such vessels in port) in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;
- All land vehicles and persons, including hikers, four wheel drive vehicles and adventure tour operators in the Australian Search and Rescue Region; and
- All unregistered civilian aircraft in the Australian Search and Rescue Region.

For search and rescue purposes, the Australian Defence Force has responsibility for all military ships, aircraft and personnel.

**Key Principle 2:** Coordination, for search and rescue purposes, will rest with the administration first detecting or receiving the distress alert. Once responsibility for the incident has been determined, coordination will be transferred to the administration in whose area of responsibility the incident falls.

It should be noted that for search and rescue purposes, coordination may, by mutual consent, be transferred between the Commonwealth and State / Territory search and rescue administrations. Such a transfer should be timely and appropriate, and could be based on one or more of the following:

- Inability of the search and rescue coordinator to action the search and rescue incident.
- Local resources unavailable for use.
- Responsible search and rescue administration has exhausted all avenues for search and

rescue response and requires external assistance.

- The incident is beyond the search and rescue capacity of the responsible administration to respond.

Coordination of all distress beacons will rest with the Commonwealth administration until the likely nature of the platform in distress is identified. Coordination may then be passed to the responsible search and rescue administration.

**Key Principle 3:** Unless otherwise agreed between administrations, in relation to distress beacons, the responsible administration shall bear the costs of the search and rescue irrespective of which administration has coordination.

Where incidents have been transferred by mutual consent, costs for the incident will be borne by the administration with coordination of the incident.

- The Commonwealth search and rescue administration undertaking an aviation search for a State / Territory based incident would remain responsible for the costs of the aviation search.
- Attempts to transfer coordination should not be made on the basis of cost.

Ms Barrell suggested that the last sentence of Key Principle 2 should be amended to read: "Coordination will then be passed automatically to the responsible search and rescue administration."

The Council discussed the issues of costs in some depth. Several jurisdictions had a problem with the proposal to assign costs of a search platform where they had no control over the assigning of that asset. Sergeant Greatorex suggested that there should be more consultation before assets are deployed.

Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) raised strong reservations over the proposal with regard to the Torres Strait area. Senior Sergeant Harris (NT) and Sergeant Sargent (AFP) both expressed their concerns with regards to the implications the proposal had on their budgets.

Ms Barrell commented that the Commonwealth Government is concerned with the number of operations that AusSAR is conducting that are the responsibility of the States and Territories.

Senior Sergeant Graham (QLD) asked what the timeframe was for implementing the National SAR Plan. Ms Barrell replied that it depends on the path that the National SAR plan takes to be approved.

Superintendent Wellings (NSW) explained that the police officers on the working group had thought through all these issues but there are several moral obligations that the States and Territories have. He stated that it was about time that the States and Territories recognised that they have certain responsibilities regardless of how the alert is raised. Senior Sergeant Harris (NT) made the comment that although the Northern Territory had relied on the Commonwealth his jurisdiction would have great difficulty responding otherwise because of the lack of affordable capability.

Ms Barrell suggested that costs could be transferred to the appropriate authority from the time the platform in distress is identified. There would be no opportunity for the State or Territory to hand back coordination immediately as there would be an asset on site. An option discussed was that AusSAR could respond with a small fixed wing aircraft to track the beacon. This has an inherent risk that if there is a person in imminent danger of losing their life there is time lost in getting a rescue platform on scene. There was general disagreement with this proposal because of the implication that it may not be the most effective or appropriate rescue platform.

It was noted that in situations where a beacon is detected in areas, such as the Snowy Mountains, where it is a high probability that the target is a Police responsibility then the beacon response will be handed over to the Police. It was agreed that there is a requirement for the Commonwealth to liaise more closely with State and Territory authorities during beacon incidents regardless of the situation.

Ms Barrell commented that although she did not expect agreement on the Plan at this meeting, she would like to have agreement on the outline of the Plan. It is important to enshrine in this Plan that the State and Territory Police Services/Force are the appropriate SAR authorities.

Delegates suggested that the SAR Plan could be underpinned by service level agreements between the Commonwealth and each of the States and Territories.

Inspector Carr (Vic) suggested that there is a third option for Key Principle 1 whereby the Commonwealth pick up all costs for all search and rescue events initiated by a beacon alert. He explained that adopting any other option would be unacceptable to Victoria and may lead to the deployment of a search asset with a reduced capability.

Ms Barrell suggested that the Victorian option would put the proposal in jeopardy and, as a consequence, AMSA would have to submit a proposal through its portfolio Department to the Federal Minister for resolution.

The National SAR Council agreed with the proposal to adopt the Key Principles submitted by the Working Group with reservations expressed by Victoria.

The Council reaffirmed the principle on beacon response that was established at the 1998 National Search and Rescue Conference and articulated in a letter addressed to the Commissioners of Police by the then Chairman of the Conference. The principle advocated that the Commonwealth would carry costs up to the point of determining the nature of the distress and hand over of coordination. Victoria again declared their reservation about bearing the cost of an asset already tasked by another authority. It was later revealed that NSW had responded formally acknowledging the letter and reporting that they would hold comment until they had analysed the issue more fully.

This agenda item was suspended as an open item to be further considered out of session.

## **WP24/11/2 - Promulgation of National Search and Rescue Manual**

Mr Langlands (Secretary) introduced the paper by explaining that currently the search and rescue manual is published by AMSA but printed and distributed by Airservices Australia. The paper proposes that the manual be promulgated electronically. Copies would be distributed to the Police services and Defence on compact discs so that the manual could be uploaded to the Police and Defence Intranets. A master copy would be uploaded to the Internet and password protected. This would mean that the manual would be instantly available to all police and Defence personnel dealing with search and rescue.

The rationale behind uploading a password-protected manual to the Internet is to allow authorities to give associated agencies and volunteer organisations easy access.

Once a National Search and Rescue Plan is developed and signed by Ministers it would be uploaded to the Internet as a full public document.

The Council agreed with this approach.

**ACTION:** Secretary to include the promulgation of the National SAR Manual on the Internet as part of his investigation into developing a National Search and Rescue Council web site.

## **Meeting Close**

In closing the meeting, Ms Barrell thanked the participation of all delegates in the 24th meeting of the National Search and Rescue Council. In particular, she thanked Sergeant Steve Sargent and the AFP for hosting the meeting. She commented that there were some difficult issues tackled by the Council during this meeting and that some issues still required resolution.

Ms Barrell expressed her concern that Tasmania was not represented at the meeting and sincerely hoped that the Commissioner of Police in Tasmania would reconsider their position with regard to future meetings. Council was advised that the Tasmanian delegate was unable to attend through budgetary constraints.

NATSARCON 24/1/1.Version 3  
12 November 2000  
Originator - Secretariat

## AGENDA

### Agenda Item 1 - Approval of Agenda

WP 24/1/1 (Secretariat)

*Provisional Agenda. Call for additional items for discussion.*

### Agenda Item 2 - Secretary's Report

WP 24/2/1 (Secretariat)

*Secretary's report including correspondence sent.*

### Agenda Item 3 - Australian Search and Rescue Award

WP 24/3/1 (Secretariat) - Report of the Selection Committee

*This paper reports the proceedings of the Australian SAR Award Selection Committee's 2000 meeting.*

### Agenda Item 4 - Lost Persons Database

WP 24/4/1 (AFP) - Lost Persons Database

*Overseas, data gathered from search and rescue missions has proven invaluable in determining high probability search areas. This paper invites discussion on the creation of an Australian lost person questionnaire.*

WP 24/4/2 (VIC) - SARbayes - Lost Persons Database

*The Victorian Police Search and Rescue Squad is involved in research being conducted by Monash University to develop a new lost persons database.*

### Agenda Item 5 - Statistics

WP 24/5/1 (QLD) - Standardising SAR Statistical Outputs

*This paper discusses the use of web-based SAR databases.*

### Agenda Item 6 - Volunteers

WP 24/6/1 (QLD) - Compensation

*This paper discusses compensation for non-accredited SAR volunteers.*

### Agenda Item 7 - Medical Advice

WP 24/7/1 (AMSA) - Medical advice to ships at sea

*Arrangements for providing medical advice to ships at sea have changed since the last Council meeting. This paper provides information on the new arrangements and their applicability to non-SOLAS vessels.*

### **Agenda Item 8 - Distress and Safety Communications**

WP 24/8/1 (AMSA) - Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Update  
*Update on recent developments in relation to future maritime safety communications.*

WP 24/8/2 (AMSA) - Phasing out of 121.5 MHz  
*Cospas-Sarsat Council has agreed recommendations to phase out satellite processing on 121.5/243 MHz in February 2009. Several matters need consideration for transition to 406 MHz beacons and recommendations have been made concerning these.*

### **Agenda Item 9 - SAR Resources**

WP 24/9/1 (AMSA) - Helibox use  
*This paper discusses the use of heliboxes by State and Territory authorities during natural disasters and proposes more practical alternatives for use during medium scale relief operations.*

### **Agenda Item 10 - Training**

WP 24/10/1 (WA) - Search And Rescue Management Training  
*The police search and rescue course was run under the new accepted format in Western Australia in May/ June 2000. This paper provides a report of the course.*

### **Agenda Item 11 - Division of Responsibilities**

WP 24/11/1 (AMSA) - National SAR Plan  
*This paper introduces and discusses the draft of the proposed agreement between the SAR authorities that lays down the division of responsibilities.*

WP 24/11/2 (AMSA) - Promulgation of National SAR Manual  
*Although the National Search and Rescue Manual is published by AMSA on behalf of the National Search and Rescue Council, the publication is still printed and distributed by Airservices Australia. This paper discusses the alternative of using electronic distribution of the manual through Compact Disc for Police services to up-load to their local area computer networks and Intranets and through the use of the Internet.*

### **Agenda Item 12 - Other Business**

WP 24/12/1 (AMSA) - Cost Recovery



NATSARCON 24/2/1  
12 Novemebr 2000  
Originator: Secretariat

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Action items arising from the report of the 23rd Conference:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>National SAR Plan</b>  | Agenda Item 11 covers this issue.   |
| <b>Strategic Directions</b>   | <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>Secretariat to distribute copies of the current international Arrangements to delegates and involve the relevant States and Territories in the drafting and review of International SAR Arrangements.</i></p> <p>Copies of Arrangements were distributed under cover of AusSAR letter 021770 of 11 November 1999.</p> <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>Authorities must let each other know about events and operations that may affect the effectiveness of their SAR operations.</i></p> <p>This is an ongoing action.</p> |
| <b>Emergency Management Plans for a Major Maritime or Aviation Incident</b> | <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>AusSAR to discuss with individual States and Territories and discover what they have in the way of liaison and communication plans.</i></p> <p>This action item is under continual consideration within AusSAR.</p>   |
| <b>Introduction of a SAR Transfer Form</b>                                  | <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>AusSAR to further develop the layout of the form after seeking advice from legal counsel.</i></p> <p>The use of the SAR transfer form during transfer of coordination is now in practice.</p>   |
| <b>Sailboarders and Windsurfers</b>   | <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>Secretariat to approach the NMSC secretariat to have the topic included in NMSC business.</i></p> <p>The NMSC has been approached.</p>  |
| <b>Accreditation for AusSAR Competencies</b>                                | <p><b>Action Item:</b> <i>State and Territory delegates to approach their respective APESC representatives to discuss the removal of 'police' from the title of the Diploma.</i></p> <p>The Public Safety Training Package has been approved and AusSAR will be submitting three levels of courses for accreditation.</p>   |
| <b>Search and Rescue Management Training</b>                                | <p>Several action items were raised on this subject. Consequently, a National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course Workshop was held in Western Australia in November 1999. As a result the NATSAR Course was reduced from three weeks to one. The revamped course was held at HMAS STIRLING, Western Australia from 29 May to 2 June 2000. A full report of the course is the subject of a later agenda item.</p>   |

NATSARCON 24/3/1  
26 October 2000  
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 2000 meeting.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 5.

**Related Documents:** Nil

### Introduction

1. The Australian Search and Rescue Award Selection Committee of the National SAR Council conducted a teleconference on 10 October 2000 to select this year's recipients.
2. The committee was unanimous in selecting the crews of HELIMED 1 for their longstanding service to search and rescue in the New South Wales/ Victorian/Tasmanian area of Australia and the waters thereof. The committee agreed that the commitment the crews of HELIMED 1 have displayed over the past eleven years is worthy of the Award.
3. The Governor General is presenting the Award to the selected HELIMED 1 crew. Mr Richard Winning, the skipper of the yacht Winston Churchill, will be attending the ceremony. The HELIMED 1 crew receiving the award rescued the survivors of the Winston Churchill.
4. Media representatives and television crews are expected to attend.

### Recommendation

5. The National SAR conference should note the recipients of the Awards.

NATSARCON 24/4/1  
25 September 2000  
Originator: AFP

## AUSTRALIAN LOST PERSONS DATABASE

### SUMMARY

**Executive Summary:** Overseas, data gathered from search and rescue missions has proven invaluable in determining high probability search areas. This paper invites discussion on the creation of an Australian lost person questionnaire.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 6.

**Related Documents:** N/A

### Introduction

1. Studies in the USA have found that data gathered from search and rescue missions has proven invaluable for search coordinators in formulating the highest probability search areas. This paper has been raised to invite discussion on the creation of a lost person questionnaire for use in Australia to gather statistical data on lost person behaviour.

### Discussion

2. At present the only statistical information available on lost person behaviour is from the National American Search and Rescue Data Collection and Analysis Authority. This information was compiled from 501 actual cases from 1980 to 1982.
3. Whilst this information does not replace investigation, good search management and experience, it has proven a very valuable reference when used in search planning.
4. The creation of an Australian lost person questionnaire would provide an invaluable source of information based on actual local cases and conditions.
5. The format of the questionnaire would be comprehensive and detailed, with every movement of the lost person recorded and logged into a database. Initially this could be done on a state-by-state basis. This information, may, at a later stage, be used to compile a national study on lost person behaviour.

### Recommendations

6. Delegates are asked to:
  - Consider the merit of formulating a lost person questionnaire.
  - Provide input as to the content and structure of the questionnaire.
  - Advise of any known lost person questionnaires in existence.

NATSARCON 24/4/2  
 10 November 2000  
 Originator: VIC

## SARbayes - LOST PERSON DATABASE

### SUMMARY

**Executive Summary:** This paper discusses the development of Search and Rescue (SAR) software to assist search coordinators predict the behaviour of missing persons.

**Action to be taken:** Relative Paragraph.

**Related Documents:** 24/4/1

### Introduction

1. The Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad has recently become involved in a collaborative project between the VicWalk's Bushwalker Search and Rescue Group and the Monash University, Reasoning Under Uncertainty Group (RUUG). The aim of the project, named "SARbayes", is to develop a Bayesian model using historic lost person behaviour data and skilled interpretation to develop software that may assist in predicting lost person behaviour.

### People Involved

2. Charles Twardy holds a Ph.D. from Indiana University (1999) in History & Philosophy of Science and Cognitive Science, where his dissertation research concentrated on the philosophy and perception of causation. He was a basic callout member and dispatcher for the Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group in Virginia from 1989 - 1992 and resumed involvement in SAR after moving to Indiana, where he helped to organize Monroe County Search & Rescue, Inc. He is currently a National Association for Search And Rescue instructor for "Fundamentals of Search and Rescue" and holds a NASAR SARTech II rating. Over the last year his interest in Bayesian reasoning and scientific inference has led him to investigate probabilistic search theory.
3. The Research Under Uncertainty Group at Monash is the foremost Bayesian network research centre in Australia, and has pioneered methods for inferring appropriate causal models from statistical data. Many members of RUUG are part of the Monash Data Mining Centre and have used Bayesian and other methods in contracted work with outside clients.
4. Rik Head from the Bushwalkers Search and Rescue Group had constructed his own system model of subject mobility and survivability in a non-Bayesian framework, and implemented it in a computer program. That program is currently used by Victoria Police SAR to assist in calculating missing person behaviour and survivability. Rik also brings to the team practical experience in SAR both as an operative and a Search Field Officer.
5. Rob Gatt is a Sergeant at the Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad and is currently the Training Manager at the squad. Rob has completed both the Victorian and New Zealand Police Search Coordinators Courses and is currently the Victorian representative instructor for the

NATSAR Course. Having been involved in Police Search and Rescue since 1989, Rob brings that experience and a Police Coordinators perspective to the team.

### **Project Outline**

6. The main focus of the SARbayes project is to develop a model that will take basic information such as that on the Lost-Person-Questionnaire and produce probability distributions for distance, direction, terrain, and condition etc. The goal is to greatly extend the applicability of previous efforts in this direction.
7. Ultimately, this model would be interfaced with a system similar to that employed in the search programme CASIE III. CASIE's basic rules for updating probabilities for different areas are already Bayesian. A key to making that kind of Bayesian updating more useful is starting out with more accurate prior probabilities based on subject profiles and likely scenarios.
8. By using Bayes nets and the associated inference techniques used by researchers in RUUG, it is hoped to increase the reliability of initial Probability of Area estimates based on probabilistic subject profiles. The advantage of Bayes nets is that they are constructed to represent the actual causal links thought to underlie the data at hand. They can be built using expert knowledge, as has been done with some notable success in medical expert systems, and they can be inferred from the data.
9. To achieve this goal, a sound database is needed for testing the predictions of the resulting model. Studies in this area in the past have used data collected in North America. With this project taking place in Victoria it provides Australian Searchers with the perfect opportunity to collect data and have it used in the development of this project. Using Australian data will also give us the opportunity to test and add to the American datasets that are currently employed to predict missing person behaviour against results measured in Australian conditions.
10. As with any project based on statistical data, the more data obtained, the more valid the resultant conclusions will be. To achieve this goal the SARbayes team has decided to adopt a National approach to the collection of data. A recommended format for data collection has been attached (Appendix A) with a view to standardise the type of data collected. By all states collecting data in a similar format this will again validate data and provide it in a usable format.

### **Recommendations**

11. The National SAR Council should:
  - nominate a representative to liaise with Sergeant Rob Gatt from the Victoria Police in relation to the SARbayes project;
  - provide data as per Appendix 1 for as many past operations as is practicable;
  - employ a method of collection of the information contained in Appendix 1 for the year 2001, with a view to continuing collection of data on a national basis for future information of SAR authorities; and
  - continue to develop and scrutinise the new software.

Further information can be obtained from the SARbayes Project website at;  
<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~ctwardy/SAR/sar.html>

## STANDARDISING SAR STATISTICAL OUTPUTS

### SUMMARY

- Executive Summary:** This paper discusses the use of web-based SAR databases.
- Action to be taken:** Paragraph 4.
- Related Documents:** Nil

### Introduction

1. The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is currently investigating the benefits of creating a single web based SAR Statistical program. The program will collate information and generate reports on the State Authorities involvement in all types of SAR incidents.

### Discussion

2. The QPS has several computer-based databases to gather specific search and rescue (SAR) statistics from reported incidents. They are the MARSAR and LANSAR databases that use separate operating systems to download the required data in report formats.
3. With the introduction of Managing For Outcomes (MFO), all Queensland government agencies, including SAR authorities are accountable for maintaining a balance between expenditure and outputs.

### Recommendations

4. Delegates are asked to:
  - be prepared to discuss the attributes of their relevant organisation's SAR Statistical databases;
  - discuss any proposed SAR Statistical database developments by their relevant organisations; and
  - discuss a national approach to standardising SAR Statistical databases and/or the format of reports generated.

NATSARCON 24/6/1  
11 October 2000  
Originator: QLD

## COMPENSATION FOR NON ACCREDITED SAR PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT

### SUMMARY

<b><i>Executive Summary:</i></b>	This paper invites discussion on compensation issues with regard to non-accredited search and Rescue volunteers.
<b><i>Action to be taken:</i></b>	Paragraph 4.
<b><i>Related Documents:</i></b>	Nil

### Introduction

1. The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is currently investigating compensation issues for the use of non-accredited Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel and equipment in remote area SAR operations. Current Queensland legislation does not specifically cover the use of these persons and/or equipment during such operations.

### Discussion

2. Queensland is well serviced by volunteer SAR organisations in both the land and marine environment. There are some remote areas of Cape York, Gulf of Carpentaria and Torres Strait that do not have volunteer services and where it would not be financially viable to provide such services.
3. The QPS has in the past used non-accredited persons and their equipment, i.e. vessels, to provide resources to successfully conclude SAR operations in these remote areas. Investigations into the process for compensation for possible injury or damage while utilising these resources have highlighted some deficiencies in legislation. At present the only avenue to compensate for injury or damage available under current State legislation is an ex-gratia payment.

### Recommendations

4. Delegates are asked to be prepared to discuss the current policies and/or legislation pertaining to compensation to non accredited resources used during SAR operations coordinated by their organisations.

## PROVISION OF MEDICAL ADVICE TO SHIPS AT SEA

### SUMMARY

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	The purpose of this paper is to inform National SAR Council members of new arrangements established by AusSAR for the provision of medical advice to ships at sea.
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	For information.
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Nil

### Introduction

Australia has an obligation under the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue 1979 to provide medical advice or assistance to Masters of ships or medical evacuations of patients from ships in the seas surrounding Australia. This obligation is met by AMSA on behalf of Australia for SOLAS shipping operating in the Australian Search and Rescue Region.

IMO recommends the establishment of a TeleMedical Advice Centre (TMAC) to provide a single point of contact for these medical services. The Royal Australian Navy Hospital at HMAS Penguin (Sydney) has assisted AMSA by providing a TMAC service for seven years. Penguin dealt with approximately 160 cases per year, including 20 medical evacuations. These services were provided free of charge.

The Navy has requested to be relieved of this duty for a number of internal organisational reasons.

### AMSA Arrangements for SOLAS Shipping

AMSA recently completed a competitive tendering process and contract for TMAC services. The new service provider is the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) based in Cairns. Services commenced on 6 November 2000.

The TMAC will also provide medical advice to RCC Australia with respect to search and rescue on issues such as survivability.

The scope of the services provided by the TMAC includes requirements to:

- a. be available continuously to receive requests from vessels at sea and/or RCC Australia for the provision of medical advice or assistance;
- b. make prompt medical assessments of remote patients and provide advice to ships' Masters in relation to medical treatment to be administered to those patients, including treatment by non-medical personnel;
- c. provide prompt medical specialist advice when required;
- d. where it is essential for the safety of the patient, taking into account all circumstances, make recommendations to ships' Masters and to RCC Australia for evacuation of patients to shore-based facilities or to another vessel;



- e. advise RCC Australia of any special medical requirements or constraints that may affect the type and equipment fit of the proposed recovery platform for evacuation of patients to shore-based facilities or to another vessel;
- f. provide briefing to the paramedic or doctor who may accompany the MEDEVAC vehicle to provide continuity of medical attention and also consult on evacuation procedures and constraints;
- g. when a patient is to be evacuated to a shore-based medical facility or the Master of a ship has decided to divert to a port, consult with RCC Australia and the evacuating craft and recommend a medical facility to which the patient should be evacuated;
- h. make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the receiving hospital is briefed about the patient's condition and treatment;
- i. as necessary for the purpose of communicating with a ship's master or crew, arrange access to interpreter services (where possible accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, Australia [NAATI]); and
- j. providing medical advice to RCC Australia with respect to the prospects for survival/injury of persons subject to search and rescue in both land and sea environments.

### **Availability for State Purposes**

State Agencies already make their own arrangements for access to sources of medical expertise within the State's own emergency services. In particular, RFDS Cairns has existing arrangements with the Queensland Government. The TMAC arranged by AMSA is not intended to replace or supplement existing State arrangements.

## GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) UPDATE

### SUMMARY

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This paper provides an update on the issue of HF distress and safety communications.
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	Paragraph 6
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Nil

### Introduction

1. In August 2000, AMSA signed a contract with Television New Zealand (TVNZ) for the provision of terrestrial maritime distress and safety communications services. The contract runs for a five year period and will commence on 1 July 2002, following the expiration of the current contract with Telstra.
2. The terrestrial services will provide distress and safety communications for vessels covered by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS Convention), however other vessels, fishing or pleasure craft, may elect to utilise these services free of charge, provided they fit the appropriate communications equipment.
3. The network will comprise two stations, located in the vicinity of Willuna, Western Australia and Charleville, Queensland. The network will provide High Frequency Digital Selective Calling (HF DSC) services on the 4, 6, 8, 12 and 16 MHz distress frequencies. The network control centre will be located in Canberra, adjacent to the Rescue Coordination Centre.
4. Satellite services will also be provided through Inmarsat-C, however a separate contract has yet to be negotiated with the successful tenderer. It is anticipated that there will be little change to the provision of satellite services from those currently being provided by Telstra.

### The New System

5. The significance of the new arrangements from 1 July 2002 are as follows:
  - (a) The new network will not maintain an aural monitoring watch on the distress frequencies, as digital selective calling techniques overcome the need for such monitoring;
  - (b) The new network will broadcast maritime safety information via Inmarsat satellite services only. (Note: It is understood that the Bureau of Meteorology is currently negotiating a contract with TVNZ for the broadcasting of weather information from Willuna and Charleville. Whilst this may occur, AMSA will only broadcast SAR information and Navigational Warnings via Inmarsat);

- (c) Distress and safety communications services for vessels which do not fall under the scope of the SOLAS Convention (i.e. generally those vessels less than 300 GRT) will be provided by State / Territory administrations. A working group comprising State / Territory representatives is currently examining a number of options and is expected to identify a VHF network as one which is most appropriate from a State / Territory perspective. AMSA understands that there is the possibility that the States and Territories may be able to access the Telstra Seaphone network and also utilise elements of Telstra's infrastructure once the existing contract with AMSA has expired.
- (d) States / Northern Territory will launch an education campaign to advise the community of the changes to the current distress and safety communications arrangements from 1 July 2002, and the alternatives for small craft and fishing vessels. AMSA will assist in the education process and it is possible that the campaign may include participants from the Bureau of Meteorology and Telstra.

### **Recommendation**

6. Members are invited to note the update in relation to distress and safety communications.

## BEACON UPDATE

### SUMMARY

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This paper provides an update on the issue of cessation of processing of 121.5MHz alerts by the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system.
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	Paragraph 7
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Nil

### Introduction

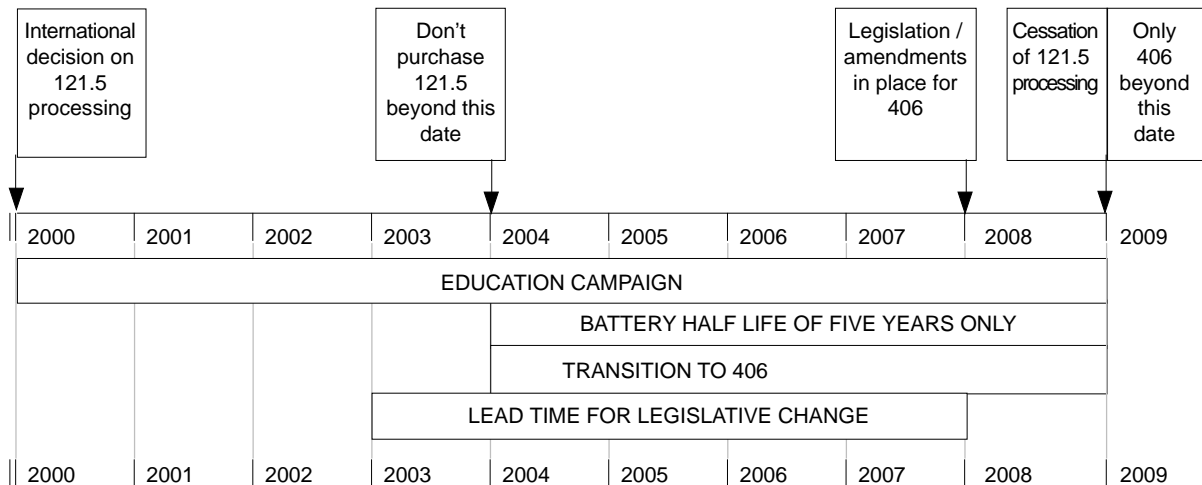
1. The decision to cease satellite processing of 121.5 MHz distress beacons on 1 February 2009 was agreed at the international meeting of the Cospas-Sarsat Council in October 2000.

### Discussion

2. The implications for SAR administrations in Australia are significant. Current estimates indicate that the 121.5 MHz distress beacon population is in the order of 150,000 - 200,000. The numbers of 121.5 MHz distress beacons are expected to increase due to their relatively cheap cost in comparison with alternative forms of distress alerting and the requirements under some State / Territory legislation for the compulsory carriage of 121.5 MHz distress beacons.
3. AMSA has been working with State / Territory administrations and the National SAR Council to address a number of issues associated with the phasing out of 121.5 MHz distress beacons.
4. AMSA has examined the various State / Territory legislation and is working through the National Marine Safety Committee to provide administrations with guidance on how best to overcome the linkage between 121.5 MHz distress beacons and compulsory carriage requirements contained in legislation. State / Territory administrations have asked AMSA to provide them with options for amending their legislation to accommodate the changes in relation to 121.5 MHz distress beacons. In addition, AMSA has raised the matter with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, as the aviation regulator, and is also in dialogue with the national SAR administration in New Zealand.
5. AMSA continues to actively promote the carriage of 406 MHz distress beacons in lieu of 121.5 MHz beacons, however recognises that the large cost differential between 406 and 121.5 MHz distress beacons is a significant disincentive for those considering the purchase of such a device. With that in mind, AMSA has been working closely with an Australian manufacturer in the development of a cheaper 406 MHz distress beacon. Whilst that work continues, and may require amendments to national and international standards, the potential exists for a 406 MHz distress beacon to be sold in Australia for under A\$500.

6. Noting these developments, AMSA has commenced work on the development of an education strategy to look at the most appropriate means of communicating to the community the impending changes in relation to distress beacons. The strategy will encompass potential changes to Commonwealth / State / Territory legislation or regulations, the benefits of 406 versus 121.5 MHz distress beacons, the alternative to 121.5 MHz distress beacons, user / owner requirements in terms of registration, the identification of a transitional period prior to the 2009 cut off, and finally disposal. The Australian Marine Group and the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group have been consulted and are actively committed to this issue.
7. In relation to beacon disposal, AMSA will continue to work with manufacturers and distributors with a view to encouraging a “refund / discount” for the return of 121.5 MHz distress beacons when purchasing a 406 MHz distress beacon. In addition, AMSA will publish as a part of any education campaign, details of collection outlets for the return of 121.5 MHz distress beacons. SAR Council members are encouraged to provide to AMSA the relevant details of outlets in their State or Territory where 121.5 MHz distress beacons can be returned for disposal.
8. An indicative timeline is provided below.

### INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR DECISIONS



## HELIBOX USAGE BY STATE/TERRITORY AUTHORITIES

### SUMMARY

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This paper discusses the use of heliboxes by State/Territory authorities during natural disasters and discusses more practical alternatives to using heliboxes during medium scale relief operations.
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	For information
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Nil

### Background

1. Heliboxes are cardboard boxes used for the aerial delivery of small amounts of emergency supplies (up to 7kg) for SAR purposes. AusSAR maintains a supply of approximately 20 of these boxes at each of its Search and Rescue Units throughout Australia. State and Territory authorities have historically had access to, and used these items during times of emergency relief operations.

### Discussion

2. The helibox concept evolved as a method of small-scale aerial supply of items during search and rescue operations. The heliboxes were never envisaged as being used for medium scale relief operations as was the case during this years flood season in several States and Territories.
3. AusSAR does not maintain an adequate supply of these items if they are to be used during medium scale relief operations. The cost of transporting and supplying boxes to locations at short notice is considerable, especially in the case of flood relief when normal road transport access is cut off and airfreight must be used.
4. AusSAR is about to contract out its SAR maintenance operation to private enterprise. The contract, whilst taking into account AusSAR's potential requirements for rapid deployment of items during SAR actions, has not taken into account other scenarios which are outside AusSAR's normal requirements. Any variations to provide services not covered in the contract would therefore be costly.
5. AusSAR is of the view that the helibox is an inappropriate item for use in medium level flood relief. A delivery device is not in service which fills the gap between the helibox and large scale devices as used by the military during Defence Aid to the Civil Community. AusSAR does not have a requirement for such a device for its normal response requirement.
6. A reasonably inexpensive device could be developed for use during medium level supply operations by civil aircraft. AusSAR has the technical expertise on staff to develop such a device and would be willing to cooperate with the State and Territories if they desire to develop such a response capability.
7. AusSAR will continue to provide access to small quantities of heliboxes for State/Territory operations but cannot guarantee access to larger quantities without cost.

NATSARCON 24/10/1  
26 October 2000  
Originator - WA

## SEARCH AND RESCUE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

### SUMMARY

**Executive Summary:** Search and rescue management training was raised as an issue at the last meeting. This paper covers two reports of the Police Search and Rescue course held in Western Australia in September 2000.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 5

**Related Documents:** Debrief Report For NATSAR 2000 Course; and Report on the 2000 National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators course.

### Introduction

1. The National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course was conducted at HMAS STIRLING from 29 May to 2 June 2000.

### Recommendation

2. The National Search and Rescue Council are asked to note the attached reports of the subject course.

ANNEX A TO NATSARCON 24/10/1  
26 October 2000  
Originator - WA



## **BRIEFING NOTE**

**TO: Superintendent  
TOPS**

**From: Assistant Director of Studies  
National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators Course**

**Subject: Debrief Report For NATSAR 2000 Course**

### **The Redevelopment of the Course.**

The course has been previously been three weeks in duration, but several states developed their own accredited Diploma in Search and Rescue Courses. Consequently the National Search and Rescue Council directed that a workshop be convened to re-develop the Nation course:

Consequently in November 1999 a National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators' Course (NATSAR) workshop was convened in Perth. WAPS played host to police officers from around Australia attending to be involved in this workshop. As a result the NATSAR course was reduced from three weeks to one week and designed around the Public Safety Training package developed by the Australian National Training Authority in conjunction with Australasian Police Education Standards Council (APESC). The three units selected for the new National Police SAR course formed part of the Advance Diploma in Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue Management).

### **Aim**

Police agencies across Australia are the Hazard Management Agency (Lead Combat Authority) for Search and Rescue (SAR). The aims of this course are to equip candidates with upper management skills to enhance their capacity to control, co-ordinate and manage large-scale complex SAR situations. It will also update participants in the latest SAR management and technological advances.

### **Situation**

The WAPS hosted the 11th National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators Course that was held at the Royal Australian Naval Base HMAS Stirling, Garden Island May 29 to June 2, 2000.



### The New Course Structure

The course comprised of 3 units from the Proposed Advanced Diploma in Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue Management) training packages:

*Manage Search and Rescue Operations - Unit Code PUAAMS010A*

*Control Multi-Agency Emergency Situations - Unit Code PUAOPE010A*

*Coordinate Resources within a Multi Agency Emergency Response - Unit Code PUAOPE012A*

### Invitations sent to all Police Agencies

Invites were sent to all Police Agencies and Defence Force departments involved in SAR within Australasia inviting participants to attend. Participants were required to possess the following pre-requisites to be eligible to attend the redeveloped NATSAR course.

- successfully completed the accredited WAPS or QLD Diploma SAR Co-ordination or course equivalent;
- demonstrate a proven ability of skills and knowledge in marine and land SAR planning which can be supported by documentation;
- be sworn police officer.

It was desirable that applicants have or had involvement with search and rescue activities in an operational environment.

### Students on this year's course

Det Sgt Danny	<b>RUSSELL</b>	TAS Police
Flt Lt Wayne	<b>KIRKHAM</b>	RAAF
Const Rod	<b>ANDERSON</b>	Aust Fed Police
Sen Const Allen	<b>GANNON</b>	NSW Police
Const Randall	<b>GAWNE</b>	QLD Police
Sen Const Shaun	<b>SKERRITT</b>	QLD Police
Sgt Robert	<b>BADENOCH</b>	SA Police
Sgt Mark	<b>SYRUS</b>	SA Police
Sgt Andy	<b>GREATWOOD</b>	WA Police
Sgt Neil	<b>IVEY</b>	WA Police
Sgt Gary	<b>TATTERSALL</b>	WA Police
Sgt Geoff	<b>STEWART</b>	WA Police
Sen Const Gerry	<b>FOUNTAIN</b>	WA Police
Sen Const Steve	<b>LIGHTFOOT</b>	WA Police
Sen Const Jon	<b>PRIDHAM</b>	WA Police
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	

## Directing Staff

Inspector Alistair Dawson from the Queensland Police Service accepted a request from the WAPS to attend the course to be Director Of Studies. Inspector Dawson long time involvement in the national SAR arena made him an obvious choice to lead up the newly formatted NATSAR course. As with previous courses this course required experienced directing staff from other Police agencies to assist in the presentation of the course and as a result the following officers attended as part of the Directing Staff.

Queensland	Inspector Alistair <b>Dawson</b> (Director of Studies)
Western Australia	Senior Constable Mark <b>Platt</b> (Ass of Director of Studies)
New South Wales	Senior Sergeant Mike <b>Lynch</b>
Tasmania	Sergeant Damian <b>Bidgood</b>
Western Australia	Senior Constable Neill <b>Warner</b>
Western Australia	Constable Frank <b>Raab</b>
Western Australia	Sergeant Brian <b>Davis</b>
South Australia	Sergeant Dave <b>Kennedy</b>
Victoria	Sergeant Rob <b>Gatt</b>

## Assessment

Assessment was carried out in the following ways:

- pre-course assessments
- Major incident table top SAR exercises

The students received 5 days of intense assessment. In where they had to met all the performance criteria of the 3 units which could display during major incident SAR table top simulations.

### Results

All but 2 students met the criteria of the 3 units and now have obtained Statements of Obtainments for those units that will we able them to proceed to obtain the Advanced Diploma in Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue Management).

Unfortunately 2 students failed to met all the criteria of the units and they are now subject to further tuition within their own Police agencies if they desire to met competency within this area.

The inclusion of the 3 units comprised of a huge effort from the Directing Staff. They were engaged in 10 to 14 hour days during the course so as to assess all students to satisfactory level. This is something that needs to be address and will be covered in the in the recommendations and future directions part of this report.

The need for the course.

With the ever increasing recreational use of inshore, offshore, inland waters, and inland wilderness areas there is an ever increasing need for the swift and economic resolution of incidents that will inevitably occur where these people will be placed at risk or peril.

This course pools years of diverse experience (from both instructors and students) in both land and marine Search and Rescue in one place for one week.

There will be a flow of information not only from the staff to the students but also between the students, and in many cases from the students to the staff

The information gained from sharing this pool of experience will then be taken out into the Australian community and will provide citizens who find themselves in danger the best possible chance of being found and/or rescued in the shortest possible time.

### Recommendations on Future Directions of NATSAR Course

One day was set-aside at the completion of the course for all of the Directing Staff to fully debrief the course and the following recommendations were agreed upon.

- The Director of Studies attends the SAR council prior to the course so as to fully discuss the agenda and future directions of the course.
- Keep the course in line with the (NATA) National Accreditation Training Authority, Public Safety Package - Advance Diploma in Public Safety (Police SAR Management)
- Amend the course from 3 assessable units to 1 unit so as to decrease the work load of the Directing Staff but include sessions on
  1. Managing Communications
  2. Team leadership and communications skills with a coordination team
  3. Establish a network within the SAR arena
  4. Risk Management

These sessions would be assessed in the way of a written assessment instead by way of simulation exercises.

- The course to be increased from 5 working days to 7 working days which includes 2 days before and one day after for directing staff.
- Ownership of the course be retained by Police and then to keep cycling through each state so each state has the advantage of training more personnel from the respective services, 2 courses for each state as per previous arrangements
- Also as per previous arrangements the next host State is to supply an officer to act in the role of Assistant Director of Studies. Then the current Director of Studies would then attend the next NATSAR course in that state as the Assistant Director of Studies so as to achieve continuity within the course. (i.e WA host state they supply Director of Studies, NSW next state to host course supply Assistant Director of Studies and when course moves to NSW for 2 years, the first year WA to supply Assistant Director of Studies and NSW supply Director of Studies and so on)
- Formulate a NATSAR course package (modules, chart, maps, handouts)
- Agencies of participants pay costs of transport/accommodation meals and to pay administration cost
- Agencies of the Directing Staff to pay own cost of transport/accommodation and any relevant travel allowance claims.
- **The next Course to be Hosted by the WAPS and to be held September 2001**

Forwarded for your information and redirection.

M.T. PLATT

Senior Constable 7569 WAPS

Assistant Director of Studies

National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators Course 2000

25th October 2000

ANNEX B TO NATSARCON 24/10/1  
26 October 2000  
Originator - WA

Our Ref: OSCR00/

Your Ref:

27 October 2000

Superintendent Bob Coops  
Western Australia Police  
TOPS Building  
24 Wellington Street  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

Dear Bob

**COURSE REPORT ON THE 2000 NATIONAL POLICE  
SEARCH AND RESCUE COORDINATORS COURSE**

The National Police Search and Rescue Course was conducted at HMAS Stirling 29 May to 2 June 2000, and was hosted by the Western Australia Police (WAPOL).

This course report reflects the results of the debrief conducted at the conclusion of the National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators Course May 2000. The recommendations contained herein do not necessarily reflect an individuals view or necessarily my own. The report reflects the results of discussions of which the majority were in favour.

The course instructors were as follows:

Inspector A Dawson QPOL (Director of Studies)  
Senior Constable M Platt WAPOL (Deputy Director of Studies)  
Senior Constable N Warner WAPOL  
Sergeant B Davis WAPOL  
Constable F Rabb WAPOL  
Senior Sergeant M Lynch NSWPOL  
Sergeant D Kennedy SAPOL  
Sergeant R Gatt VICPOL  
Acting Sergeant D Bidgood TASPOL

The course participants were as follows:

Constable R Anderson AFP  
Detective Sergeant D Russell TASPOL  
Senior Constable S Skerritt QPOL  
Constable R Gawne QPOL  
Sergeant A Greatwood WAPOL  
Senior Constable S Lightfoot WAPOL  
Senior Constable G Fountain WAPOL

Sergeant G Stewart WAPOL  
 Sergeant G Tattersall WAPOL  
 Sergeant N Ivey WAPOL  
 Senior Constable J Pridham WAPOL  
 Sergeant M Syrus SAPOL  
 Sergeant R Badenoch SAPOL  
 Flight Lieutenant W Kirkham RAAF  
 Senior Constable A Gannon NSWPOL

This was the first time that this course structure had been implemented to reflect the revised National Police Search and Rescue Coordinators Course. All participants except two demonstrated the required standard of competency across the areas being assessed on the course. The two participants that were unable to demonstrate an acceptable level of competency had their respective organisations advised, so that further opportunities could be made available to them to demonstrate the required competency.

At the conclusion of the course a comprehensive debrief of instructors was conducted. Arising from the debrief are the following recommendations:

1. HMAS Stirling
  - 1.1 The facilities of HMAS Stirling are considered to be of the highest standard. Further use of the facility for the next course is supported.
2. Pre-course assignments and information:
  - 2.2 Nominations should be distributed a minimum 4 months prior to the course.
  - 2.3 Pre-course assignment. Retain the same format, but include a more detailed explanation of requirements and the topic to be addressed.
  - 2.4 Assessment criteria to be mailed out to participants in its entirety, with an explanation that the course is competency based as opposed to a teaching type course.
  - 2.5 There was an identified need to ensure that participants have currency of underpinning skills upon arrival on the course and that participants have an intimate knowledge of their State/Territories Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs).
  - 2.6 A list of recommended readings be provided to the participants, which includes:
    - The Land Search Operations Manual from Emergency Management Australia.
    - National Search and Rescue Manual, in particular Chapters 1 and 2.
    - Respective organisational risk management documentation.
    - Personal management readings.
    - Course assessment criteria.
  - 2.7 Participants should be encouraged to liaise with their respective course representative's prior to attending the course, to seek clarification and guidance on issues that relate to the course.
  - 2.8 Participants should bring with them their State/Territory SAR forms and SOPs.
  - 2.9 Participants should provide a short presentation (20 minutes) on the SAR structure from their respective State/Territory. Where more than 1 participant from the same State/Territory is present, then the presentation should be a joint effort.

3. AusSAR

- 3.1 The material presented relating to the role and functions of AusSAR, where possible, should be delivered by an AusSAR representative. It was considered that if this was not possible then the presentation should remain due to the significant interaction with AusSAR.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 The session presented by Commander Di Petrio was considered to be relevant and valuable. The same presentation should be included in the next course.

5. Case Study - Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

- 5.1 Senior Constable Upston, Water Police Sydney, gave an informative insight into this significant maritime search and rescue incident. The instructors agreed that the format of providing information on significant case studies should be retained.

6. Medical factors in SAR

- 6.1 Both participants and instructors found this session very informative. It was agreed that the session should be retained and presented by Dr Luckin or someone with his operational and medical background.

7. Administrative issues

- 7.1 A number of course administrative changes were recommended, to streamline the administrative process. Senior Constable Platt WAPOL has these listed and will implement them on the next course.

8. Additional material

- 8.1 It was recommended by both participants and Directing staff that instruction be included in the course on the following topics:

- Managing communications.
- Communication skills (including SAR specific barriers to communications).
- Establishing networks.

Such material may be able to be sourced from other courses etc.

9. General Recommendations

- 9.1 That the Director of Studies attends the National SAR Council meeting that is immediately prior to the course, if they are not already a delegate. This is to ensure that the Director of Studies is familiar with all current national issues and their history prior to the course commencing.

- 9.2 Amend the course from assessing three core units to assessing only one core unit, that of "Manage SAR Operations". The 5 working days available made it too arduous on Directing staff to assess all three units. To maintain the assessment of 3 units, the course length should be increased appropriately. To assess one unit the course duration should ideally be 7 working days.

Directing staff should attend 2 days prior to the course and remain 1 day after the course to attend to course preparation and debriefing.

- 9.3 That the course be kept in line with the Advance Diploma in Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue Management) Training Packages.
- 9.4 The administration session be delivered in the evening prior to day one of the course.
- 9.5 SAREXs and material for presentation be available to Directing staff, well in advance of the course commencing.
- 9.6 Ownership of the course be rotated on a 2 year basis, so that each State and Territory has the advantage of training additional personnel.
- 9.7 Develop a National Police Search and Rescue Package, containing modules, charts, maps and handouts which can be passed between the host Police Services.
- 9.8 Review SAREXs and other material out of course. Due to the tight time frames, this review cannot be conducted in course.
- 9.9 The issue of costs remain the same. That is each State/Territory pays for the transport, accommodation, meals and an administrative cost per participant.

That each State/Territory pays for the transport, accommodation, meals and any other travelling allowance incurred by their Directing Staff member.

Yours sincerely

ALISTAIR DAWSON  
INSPECTOR

## NATIONAL SAR PLAN

### SUMMARY

**Executive Summary:** This paper introduces and discusses the draft of the proposed agreement between the Australian SAR Authorities that lays down the divisions of responsibilities.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 6

**Related Documents:** Draft National SAR Plan (2000).

### Introduction

1. Work has been proceeding on the development of the National SAR Plan, following on from agreement at previous National SAR Conference meetings to the framework of the plan. In working through the National SAR Plan issues, it is clear that a number of key principles underpinning the Plan are needed, to satisfy the Commonwealth and State / Territory administrations.
2. The key principles of the National SAR Plan should be to establish clearly and unambiguously the division of responsibility between SAR administrations in Australia, the relationship between responsibility and coordination, and the issue of attribution of costs. Current practice suggests that these principles are not always followed strictly, for a variety of operational or financial reasons. The National SAR Plan should attempt to address these issues.
3. Individual arrangements are currently in place between the Commonwealth and State / Territory governments in relation to the provision of search and rescue services, however such arrangements are dated. This was effectively noted at the 23rd National SAR Conference in Sydney when changes were made to the National SAR Manual in relation to responsibility for certain types of aircraft and policy in relation to distress beacons.
4. As a result, it was considered appropriate to develop a single agreement between the Commonwealth and States / Territory governments, signed by all appropriate Ministers. However, it is important that the development of such an agreement reflects clearly those key principles outlined in paragraph 2.

### Discussion

5. The following Key Principles have been developed for discussion and agreement / amendment by the National SAR Council.

Key Principle 1 (Option A): The responsibility of the Commonwealth and the States / Territories for search and rescue of persons in distress is clearly identified by a geographic division between Commonwealth and State / Territory Search and rescue administrations.



If such an option were to be considered, thought needs to be given as to how State borders are defined and the relationship between State and Commonwealth areas of jurisdiction, for search and rescue purposes

Thus, for search and rescue purposes, the Commonwealth might take responsibility for:

- All civilian vessels beyond an agreed distance off the coast of mainland Australia in the Australian Search and Rescue Region and all vessels covered by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention in the Australian Search and Rescue Region
- All civilian aircraft registered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or the Australian Ultralight Federation in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;
- Space vehicles in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

For search and rescue purposes, State / Territory administrations have responsibility for:

- All civilian vessels within an agreed distance off the coast of mainland Australia in the Australian Search and Rescue Region, other than those vessels covered by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention
- All civilian vessels in port or harbour limits in the Australian Search and Rescue Region
- All land vehicles and persons, including hikers, four wheel drive vehicles and adventure tour operators in the Australian Search and Rescue Region
- All unregistered civilian aircraft in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

Key Principle 1 (Option B): The responsibility of the Commonwealth and the States / Territories for search and rescue of persons in distress is identified by the nature of the platform in distress.

Thus, for search and rescue purposes, the Commonwealth has responsibility for:

- All vessels covered by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention (except for such vessels in port) in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;
- All civilian aircraft registered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or the Australian Ultralight Federation in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;
- Space vehicles in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

For search and rescue purposes, State / Territory administrations have responsibility for:

- All vessels (including fishing vessels and pleasure craft) other than those covered by the SOLAS Convention (except for such vessels in port) in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;
- All land vehicles and persons, including hikers, four wheel drive vehicles and adventure tour operators in the Australian Search and Rescue Region
- All unregistered civilian aircraft in the Australian Search and Rescue Region;

For search and rescue purposes, the Australian Defence Force has responsibility for:

- All Australian military vessels
- All Australian military aircraft
- All Australian military personnel

Key Principle 2 (Option A): Coordination, for search and rescue purposes, will rest with the administration first detecting or receiving the distress alert. Once responsibility for the incident has been determined, coordination will be transferred to the administration in whose area of responsibility the incident falls.

It should be noted that for search and rescue purposes, coordination may, by mutual consent, be transferred between the Commonwealth and State / Territory search and rescue administrations. Such a transfer should be timely and appropriate, and could be based on one or more of the following:

- inability of the search and rescue coordinator to action the search and rescue incident
- local resources unavailable for use
- responsible search and rescue administration has exhausted all avenues for search and rescue response and requires external assistance
- the incident is beyond the search and rescue capacity of the responsible administration to respond

Coordination of all distress beacons will rest with the Commonwealth administration until the likely nature of the platform in distress is identified. Coordination may then be passed to the responsible search and rescue administration.

Key Principle 2 (Option B): As with Option A but with the following amendment:

Coordination of all 406 MHz distress beacons will rest with the Commonwealth administration until the likely nature of the platform in distress is identified. Coordination may then be passed to the responsible search and rescue administration.

Coordination of all 121.5 MHz distress beacons will rest with the relevant State / Territory administration until the likely nature of the platform in distress is identified. Coordination may then be passed to the responsible search and rescue administration.

Key Principle 3: The responsible administration shall bear the costs of the search and rescue, from the point at which the responsibility was determined, irrespective of which administration has coordination. This key principle will not apply to incidents in which coordination has been transferred by mutual consent.

Where incidents have been transferred by mutual consent, costs for the incident will be borne by the administration with coordination of the incident.

- The Commonwealth search and rescue administration undertaking an aviation search for a State / Territory based incident would remain responsible for the costs of the aviation search
  - Attempts to transfer coordination should not be made on the basis of cost
6. Agreement to the Key Principles will enable the National SAR Plan to be developed and finalised. It is acknowledged that a number of other issues will be addressed in the National SAR Plan, including ongoing responsibility for the maintenance of and amendment to the National SAR Manual, and the relationship between the National SAR Plan, the National SAR Manual and Procedural documents. The Key Principles however, will shape the National SAR Plan and establish the core elements of the document.
  7. An outline of the National SAR Plan is provided at the Attachment.
  8. Delegates are requested to consider the Key Principles and endorse a proposed set of Key Principles for agreement by the respective State / Territory / Commonwealth administrations.

ANNEX A TO NATSARCON 24/11/1  
13 November 2000  
Originator - AMSA

## **AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN 2000**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Should introduce the concept of the SAR Plan as:
  - formalising the procedures that allow the conduct of search and rescue in Australia with a spirit of cooperation between the relevant authorities
  - being consistent with obligations under international conventions and arrangements; and
  - superseding arrangements previously made.

### **POLICY**

2. To provide a national plan for coordination of search and rescue services in Australia.

### **PURPOSE**

3. This Plan provides:
  - a. direction for the effective use of all available facilities in all types of search and rescue operations; and
  - b. the organisational basis for cooperation between the different SAR Authorities in Australia.

### **DEFINITIONS**

As required to ensure all terms used in the Plan are understood.

### **OBJECTIVE**

4. To give direction, coordination and control of SAR operations within the Australian SRR and provide the organisational basis for cooperation between the various Commonwealth, State and Territory SAR authorities.

### **SCOPE**

5. This Plan is intended to provide guidance to all Commonwealth, State and Territory SAR authorities.

### **SIGNATORIES TO THIS AGREEMENT**

6. List signatories

### **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**

7. List participants of plan with brief description of their involvement

## **OTHER INTERESTED AGENCIES**

8. Include here international, national and State and Territory agencies and bodies that have an involvement I SAR.

## **THE PLAN**

### **National Search and Rescue Council**

9. Constitution of Council and its roles.

### **Search and Rescue Responsibilities**

#### **Key Principles**

#### **Civil SAR in the Maritime Environment**

#### **Civil SAR in the Aviation Environment**

#### **Civil SAR in the Land Environment**

#### **Electronic Distress Beacons**

#### **Military SAR**

#### **Transferring Overall Coordination Responsibility**

#### **Search and Rescue Resources**

#### **Request for Defence Resources**

## **SUBORDINATE SAR PLANS**

## **SUBORDINATE DOCUMENTATION**

10. The National SAR Plan is supported by three volumes as follows:
  - a. Volume 2 - Aviation Search and Rescue
  - b. Volume 3 - Maritime Search and Rescue
  - c. Volume 4 - Land Search and Rescue

Signature blocks of responsible Ministers

NATSARCON 24/11/2  
 26 October 2000  
 Originator - AMSA

## PROMULGATION OF NATIONAL SAR MANUAL

### SUMMARY

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This paper discusses the preferred option for distributing the National SAR Manual.
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	Paragraph 5
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Draft National SAR Plan (2000)

### Introduction

1. The National Search and Rescue Manual is currently published by AMSA on behalf of the National Search and Rescue Council. The manual is printed and distributed by Airservices Australia.
2. AMSA would prefer to distribute the Manual electronically. The National SAR Plan would be promulgated on the Internet for public viewing whilst the Manual would be up-loaded to the Internet with password access. Copies of the National SAR Manual would be distributed to Police Services on compact disc so that it could be uploaded to the Police Intranets or Local Area Networks (LAN).

### Discussion

3. The National SAR Manual, which would incorporate the SAR Plan, should be a controlled document. This can be achieved by using electronic distribution over the Internet and by limited distribution on compact disc for up loading to police computer networks.
4. The proposed National SAR Plan would reflect the SAR arrangements agreed between the Commonwealth, State and Territory SAR Authorities. It is proposed to have the National SAR Plan signed off by the Federal Ministers for Transport & Regional Services and Defence, and the State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for the Police portfolios. As such, the Plan will be a public document that should be available in the public domain. This can be achieved by up loading the Plan to the Internet.
5. The remaining sections of the Manual would be up loaded to the Internet but be password protected so that access can be widespread but controlled. This way Police services can allow volunteer organisations that might have a need, access to the full manual.
6. Discussions are underway with Emergency Australia about publishing the Land Search and Rescue manual on the Internet as part of the National SAR Manual. Editing and amendment of the Land manual would remain the responsibility of EMA.
7. The National SAR Manual will be annotated with a version number and the Internet copy will be considered to be the master document. This will allow SAR authorities to check the validity of the manual running on their internal computer networks.

8. If printed copies of the manual are required, either limited print runs could be made or a copy could be down loaded from the Internet and copied. There would be a disclaimer in the forward to the Manual on the Internet that ensures readers are aware that the manual is a controlled document and it is the readers responsibility to ensure any copies used that have been printed from the Internet are the correct version number at the time of use.

### **Recommendations**

9. Delegates are asked to agree to the electronic distribution of the National SAR Manual and the up loading of the National SAR Plan to the Internet when it has been signed.

NATSARCON 24/12/1  
13 November 2000  
Originator - Secretariat

## COST RECOVERY FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

### SUMMARY

**Executive Summary:** This paper seeks to promote discussion on cost recovery for search and rescue.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4

**Related Documents:** Nil

### Introduction

1. Cost recovery for search and rescue is continually raised through a number of avenues at a governmental and community level. Such calls often follow a high profile search and rescue incident.
2. The views of the State / Territory SAR authorities are sought in relation to cost recovery. Have State / Territory search and rescue administrations considered cost recovery mechanisms for SAR?
3. What arrangements are presently in place in States / Territories to facilitate the recovery of costs associated with a SAR incident?

### Recommendation

4. The National SAR conference should note the discussion associated with the issue of cost recovery for search and rescue.

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Governor General to honour helicopter heroes**

The Governor General, Sir William Deane, on November 14 will present Australia's highest search and rescue award to the crews and paramedics of a Victorian-based helicopter that has rescued scores of people over the past 11 years.

The helicopter, Helimed 1, is operated on behalf of Air Ambulance Victoria by CHC Helicopters out of the Latrobe Valley airfield in Victoria.

The Helimed 1 crews especially distinguished themselves by winching sailors to safety from three stricken vessels in the most difficult conditions during the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race. Six sailors died during the race.

Most recently, on 24 October this year, it assisted in the rescue of four fishermen who abandoned their burning boat south-east of Lakes Entrance, off Victoria. It was also involved in the Spencer Gulf search for the Whyalla Airlines aircraft in June.

The Australian Search and Rescue Award is an initiative of the National Search and Rescue Council, a national body with representatives from federal, state and territory search and rescue authorities. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's national search and rescue organisation, AusSAR, and the Department of Defence represent the Commonwealth.

Sir William will present the award to the crews at Government House in Canberra.

The award recognises an outstanding contribution to search and rescue within Australia's international area of SAR responsibility, which covers about one tenth of the earth's surface.

Previous recipients of the award include:

- in 1996, members of the Victoria Police Wing for a rescue of three crew from a sinking trawler in Bass Strait;
- in 1997, Pete Goss for his single-handed rescue of fellow around the world sailor Raphael Dinelli in the Southern Ocean;
- in 1998, NSW police officers Chief Superintendent Johnston, Superintendent Sanderson and Inspector Smith for their coordination of the rescue operations at the Thredbo landslide;
- in 1999, Ronald O'Connor for his longstanding service and commitment to search and rescue through his involvement with the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard.

Richard Winning, the skipper of Winston Churchill and one of the sailors rescued by Helimed 1 during the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race will be present at Government House to witness the award presentation.

Media inquiries:

Beverley Atkins 0418 164 901

*9 November 2000*

*Copyright: AMSA*



## 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.
24. Canberra, AFP, 14-16 November 2000.