



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

11 - 12 September 2001



From L-R: Sergeant Warren Williamson; Inspector Paul Carr; Superintendent Terry Paff; Mr Frank Raab; Mr Brian Riches; Mr John Rice; Mr Neil Ada; Sergeant Mark Platt; Ms Rowena Barrell; Inspector Garry Smith; Inspector Ross Dwyer; Inspector Graeme O'Neil; Senior Sergeant Rob Graham; Mr Steve Francis; Inspector Steve Williams; Senior Sergeant Wayne Harris; Inspector Paul Brennan; Superintendent Tom Rieniets; Mr Steve Langlands

DELEGATES

ORG:	NAME:	PHONE:	FAX:
AMSA	Ms Rowena Barrell	(02) 62795700	(02) 62795757
	Mr Neil Ada	(02) 62795730	(02) 62795757
	Mr Brian Riches	(02) 62795740	(02) 62795757
	Mr Steve Francis	(02) 62795736	(02) 62795757
	Mr John Rice	(02) 62795750	(02) 62795757
	Mr Steve Langlands (Secretary)	(02) 62795743	(02) 62795757
AFP	Supt Terry Paff	(02) 62567660	(02) 62567444
	Sgt Warren Williamson	(02) 62870234	(02) 62870452
NSW Police	Insp Graeme O'Neil	(02) 96925411	(02) 96925427
	Insp Garry Smith	(02) 96925409	(02) 96925407
NT Police	Snr Sgt Wayne Harris	(08) 89220819	(08) 89220810
QLD Police	Supt Ross Dwyer	(07) 33646124	(07) 33644634
	Snr Sgt Rob Graham	(07) 33644030	(07) 33644185
SA Police	Supt Tom Rieniets	(08) 82074120	(08) 84104620
TAS Police	Insp Steve Williams	(03) 62302184	(03) 62302598
VIC Police	Insp Paul Carr	(03) 95371006	(03) 95347663
WA Police	Supt Bob Coops	(08) 92221630	(08) 92221841

OBSERVERS

NZ Police	Insp Paul Brennan	+64 4 474 9484	+64 4 498 7406
WA Police	Sergeant Neil Warner	(08) 92221757	(08) 92221489
	Sergeant Mark Platt	(08) 94428601	(08) 94428615
	Snr Const Lou Hynd	(08) 94428601	(08) 94428615
	Const Frank Raab	(08) 92221750	(08) 92221489

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Official Opening

The Commissioner for Police for Western Australia, Mr Barry Matthews opened the 25th meeting of the National SAR Council by welcoming delegates to the meeting at the Wentworth Plaza Hotel, Perth. Mr Matthews emphasised the importance of the Council meetings as an occasion when delegates could get together to discuss national search and rescue issues as well as taking the opportunity to have some kind of debrief of the events of the past year and to talk about the future.

He discussed the outcomes from the National Police SAR Course that had just been conducted at HMAS STIRLING. He commented that the debriefing following the SAR course had highlighted a number of inadequacies that were to be raised later in the meeting. The Commissioner pointed out that if we cannot learn from our mistakes then we are bound to make them again. Mr Matthews continued by discussing the need for cooperation between jurisdictions and adaptation of new technologies in search and rescue.

The Commissioner referred to the case study of a search for a missing American citizen, Robert Bogucki in 1999, who was lost near Broome to demonstrate not only the geographic challenges that Australian SAR practitioners must face but also the challenges that agencies face in training and technological advances. He emphasised the need for agencies to work closely together to overcome these challenges.

Introduction by Chair

The chair of the Council, Ms Barrell noted that Australian jurisdictions work together very successfully in search and rescue and the National SAR Council meets annually to ensure this continues as efficiently as is possible. She noted that SAR in Australia has had many successes but there are areas where lessons can be learned.

Ms Barrell took the opportunity to observe that there had been much negative comment of herself and AusSAR in Parliament and the media. She rejected the criticisms and pointed out that AusSAR and Australian SAR authorities generally are respected worldwide for their achievements in SAR. She expressed her wish that the criticisms should not damage the conference.

Ms Barrell noted that it has been very difficult for AusSAR and Tasmania to respond to any criticisms because of the impending Coronial inquest.

Conference Administration

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

Agenda Item 1: Acceptance of the Agenda *WP25/1/1- Provisional Agenda*

Ms Barrell introduced the provisional agenda. Superintendent Rieniets (SA) raised the issue of changes to the SAR Plan and it was agreed the issues would be discussed at the divisions of responsibility meeting to be held later in the week. Inspector Smith (NSW) raised the issue of USAR and Snr Sgt Graham (QLD) highlighted that extra time may be needed to discuss Agenda Item 8 on training.

The Council accepted an amended agenda to accommodate these comments.

Agenda Item 2: Secretary's Report *WP25/2/1- Secretary's Report*

The Secretary summarised the action items from the previous meeting. Ms Barrell emphasised that feedback on the use of the transfer forms, raised in the actions of the previous meeting, is required so that a useable and secure system of handing over coordination of a SAR operation can be achieved. She asked for further feedback from members on the use of the forms.

The Council accepted the Secretary's report.

Agenda Item 3: SAR Operations

WP25/3/1 - Provision of Medical Assistance and Medical Evacuation to Vessels at Sea

Mr Riches (AusSAR) addressed the paper. He emphasised that an important amendment had been made to the SAR Convention that changed the definition of Search and Rescue services to include the provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance and medical evacuation. He noted that this has impact on jurisdictions' responsibilities.

Snr Sgt Harris (NT) queried the impact of this change.

The consequence of this change on cost recovery was noted particularly where insurance currently covers these costs. Snr Sgt Graham (QLD) insisted that careful delineation should be made between medical evacuations from ships at sea and medical transportation from outlying islands and reefs. Following further discussion, agreement was reached that this issue will be encompassed in discussions to be undertaken at the following divisions of responsibilities meeting later in the week.

WP25/3/2 - Coordination of SAR incidents that extend across state borders.

Snr Sgt Graham (QLD) addressed the paper by using a SAR operation as a case study that demonstrated the problems where an operation crosses state borders. He explained that he could accept coordination only for operations in his own jurisdiction and there is a need to consider where responsibility should rest when an incident crosses state/territory borders. He addressed the SAR manual for guidance quoting from section 217.

It was agreed that the important issue is that a single agency has coordination regardless of what borders are crossed. The question of state responsibilities in SAR and jurisdiction was raised and discussed. Ms Barrell (AMSA) pointed out that the concept of SAR management in Australia is that there is a single SAR coordinator. She noted that AusSAR took

coordination of the recent QLD/NSW incident because of the complexities of the incident.

Ms Barrell suggested that AusSAR should take carriage of such incidents where States did not have assets available. However, States and Territories should look at bilateral arrangements to cover cross border incidents. She used the Australia's SAR agreements with neighbouring countries as examples where there is a single coordinator but the authorities providing the assets take responsibility for their own costs.

Inspector O'Neill (NSW) raised the issue of jurisdictions of coroners in cross-border incidents. The Chair believed that this is not the forum for resolving that issue.

Inspector Carr (Vic) asked whether the State and Territory Authorities have agreed the SAR Manual. It was agreed that the SAR Plan is derived from the agreements between the States and Commonwealth of the late 1970's.

After further discussion, it was agreed to defer further consideration until the division of responsibilities meeting later in the week. Ms Barrell suggested, however, that States and Territories might examine the need for SAR arrangements with neighbouring jurisdictions.

Agenda Item 4: SAR Applications

WP25/4/1 - Net Water Movement System

Mr Steve Oliver, a director of GEMS, the company contracted to provide a net water movement-modelling program to AusSAR for drift planning, gave a presentation on the project.

As follow-on to the presentation the recommendations to paper 25/4/1 were tabled and discussed. AusSAR is using the system in parallel with manual drift planning. AusSAR stated that any opportunities will be taken to test the model against real situations or exercises carried out by States.

AusSAR is running the system beyond a PC based system in that real time feeds are taken from various organisations. Part of the contract with providers of information allows for AusSAR to provide drift modelling to other agencies.

AusSAR would like to offer this service to the States and Territories but agencies are free to approach GEMS with the view to gaining information on PC based systems. Mr Francis (AusSAR) explained that drift planning information will be passed freely using both manual and NWM systems. The meeting noted that the NWM as it remains under operational testing.

Phone requests for drift planning information will be provided but agencies must follow up with facsimile requests. Drift planning information is currently passed by email but will be provided over the Internet in the future.

Ms Barrell (AusSAR) agreed that a pre-formatted form would be developed for use by other agencies for requesting drift plans from AusSAR.

Action: AusSAR Operations to develop a pre-formatted request form and distribute to State and Territory SAR Coordinators.

Agenda Item 6: Distress and Safety Communications

WP25/6/1 - Coast Radio Update

Mr Riches (AusSAR) addressed this paper. This led into a presentation on the State/Territory project for distress and safety communications for small craft by the project manager, Mr Peter Irwin from Queensland Transport. Mr Irwin is under secondment to the Australian Maritime Group (AMG) to manage the communications project.

Snr Sgt Harris (NT) asked whether the proposed communications system would allow for distress alerting from a vessel to other vessels in the area. Mr Irwin replied that the use of VHF voice would allow this to happen. Mr Irwin explained that a level of radio equipment carriage has been agreed at the national level.

Snr Sgt Harris raised issues of training, suggesting that trained personnel would need to staff the Police radio rooms if they were to be part of the distress and safety communications network as suggested in Mr Irwin's presentation. Council delegates discussed this issue at some length.

The chair summarised by noting that all jurisdictions have a sense of urgency about this issue and need to have a resolution so that, at least, an interim infrastructure can be in place by July 2002. The chair recommended that delegates remain in touch with their corresponding State and Territory Transport organisations to ensure they are kept abreast of developments in their jurisdictions.

WP 25/6/2 - Closure of Coast Radio Stations and State Responsibilities

Senior Constable Lou Hynd (WA) addressed this paper. He explained that Western Australia is taking on the role of maintaining voice radio watch on MF/HF frequency bands state-wide and VHF marine radio bands in the metropolitan area. Snr Sgt Harris (NT) again raised the issue of manning and sought an explanation of how Western Australia approached the problem. Sen Con Hynd explained that the role has been handed to the Water Police and is being resourced appropriately.

Discussion then revolved around communications for command and control for search and rescue operations. Western and South Australia commented on their respective set-ups. Inspector Carr (Vic) explained that Victoria intends to have access to Point Lonsdale radio for MF/HF post July 2002.

WP 25/6/3 - Class Licensing of VHF and Inshore CB (27MHz) Marine Radios

Senior Constable Hynd (WA) addressed this paper that raised the implications of the class licensing by the Australian Communications Authority of VHF and 27MHz marine radios for search and rescue operations. The major implication is that radio call signs will no longer be assigned to boats.

Agenda Item 3: SAR Operations

WP 25/3/3 - State and Territory Emergency Management Plans

Mr Steve Francis (AusSAR) addressed this paper. He asked that delegates note that AusSAR would be prepared to work with State/Territory agencies to conduct exercises to test

the response and logistical arrangements necessary in the event of a major disaster.

Superintendent Paff (AFP) commented that EMA intends to run a workshop at Mt Macedon 12 -16 November 2001 to develop the Commonwealth aviation disaster plan. The Chair noted that this is an important event that should be supported by SAR Council delegates so that a national approach can be developed. In addition, she expressed the hope that a maritime disaster plan might evolve from the aviation plan. Frank Raab (WA) indicated that there is also a SACPAV meeting to discuss the same issue and that one of the meetings should take priority.

WP25/3/4 - Report of Incidents

Delegates were invited to provide reports of incidents from their jurisdictions. Steve Francis presented Commonwealth incidents with a breakdown by function. Each of the States and Territories then presented their statistics. The reports, passed to secretary, will be analysed for trends and lessons to be learnt.

Snr Sgt Harris (NT) reported that Northern Territory Police are taking delivery of a dedicated boat.

An issue that seems to be a common theme in all jurisdictions is the use of police as water borne NRMA/RACV/RACQ type organisations.

Action: Secretary to raise issue with ANZSBEG.

Agenda Item 5: Australian Search and Rescue Award

WP25/5/1- Future of the Award

The Secretary addressed a paper on the future of the National Search and Rescue Award. The Council agreed that the presentation of the award should continue and that it would be more actively promoted by the jurisdictions. The Council was reminded that in the past, progressive nominations were made throughout the year and an award was made at the Council meeting. The issue of having two categories of award was discussed and agreed. The national award for significant effort should only be made on a case-by-case effort and not necessarily

every year. The second award would be for a significant contribution over a period of time.

The chair asked that the constitution of the sub committee be reconsidered. She recommended that the incoming host delegate and AusSAR should be on the sub committee. It was agreed that the delegates from Queensland, Western Australia, AFP, AusSAR and the host state (NT for 2002) would make up the Award sub-committee for 2002.

Agenda Item 7: Council Administration WP 25/7/1 - SAR Council Web Site

The Secretary presented a mock-up of the proposed SAR Council website. It was suggested that a section be added about the National SAR Award.

Discussion then centred on the SAR Manual and Plan. Mr Francis noted that AusSAR had followed a process of reconciling the AusSAR Manual against IAMSAR and suggested that it should be the single document for maritime and aviation search and rescue. After discussion, it was agreed that the manual should be maintained in a restricted password protected area of the web site. A second security level restricted to Council members will be maintained for specific Council papers such as draft and agenda item papers and correspondence relating to specific Council matters.

Action: Secretary to undertake development of the SAR Council web site.

Agenda Item 8: Training WP25/8/1 - National Police SAR Course

Snr Sgt Mark Platt (WA) was the director of studies for the National Police SAR Course that was conducted at HMAS STIRLING in August 2001. He reported that the course was very well received by the students attending. He made mention of several of the presentations given as well as the briefs given by students on their pre course assignments.

Sgt Platt made special mention of Mr John Rice's (AusSAR) involvement in the course as a

lecturer. He noted that John was an instructor on the first National Police SAR Courses and provided valued experience.

Sgt Platt explained that students and presenters came from every jurisdiction as well as from the Army and Navy. He explained further that the course content was made up of three of the units from the Advanced SAR Diploma course. A mock coroner's court was a highlight of the course.

Sgt Platt raised the issue of an organisation to take on the role of organising and running the course. He explained that discussion by the directing staff concluded with the idea of AusSAR taking on the Registered Training Authority (RTA) role for future courses. He explained that the next course is scheduled to be run by NSW with a likely October timeframe.

Sgt Platt opened the discussion on the running of the course. Snr Sgt Graham (QLD) agreed with the concept of AusSAR coordinating the National Police SAR Course with courses to be run in the ACT. He stated that he found great benefit in taking his SAR personnel to AusSAR and the EMA national courses at the college at Mt Macedon.

He further explained that the national course has to be at a higher level than the State courses. He also noted that students must be at a high enough level of training to make participation on a national course worthwhile. He further explained that it is important that State practitioners have exposure to AusSAR, perhaps more so than to other State organisations giving the example that the majority of SAR operations that require a change of coordination are between the States and AusSAR rather than between neighbouring States.

With the requirement for the course to be at an advanced diploma level, the idea of a national RTA has merit rather than the task being transferred from State to State on a two yearly basis. A national RTA would result in better continuity between courses. Sgt Graham expressed the need for specific guidelines to be laid down for the RTA so that the course is maintained as a course to benefit the Police.

To reduce the financial burden on the States and Territories further afield from Canberra, Sgt Graham suggested that States and Territories pay into an administration fund to equalise the burden.

Mr Rice (AusSAR) was asked to comment on the ability of the SAR School to take on the national RTA role. He believed that the School can take on the role. He sees the Canberra based course improving liaison between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. He understands that the Police wish to maintain the course as a Police course, but he sees the course evolving into a truly national course that would involve the Commonwealth with students from both AusSAR and Defence participating.

Mr Rice envisaged AusSAR facilitating the course rather than taking over the course. He sees the head of the SAR School as being the head of the directing staff but the assistant head of directing staff would be a police SAR officer on a two-year rotational basis. Because of lack of classroom facilities within AusSAR the AFP might consider offering the facilities of the AFP academy in Canberra.

Mr Rice explained that some sort of pre-course assessment would be required to ensure that participants on the course have the underpinning skills required as prerequisites for the course. Mr Rice considered that the length of the course was perhaps too short and was supported in this opinion by both Sergeants Platt and Graham.

He suggested that a course development working group made up of the current directing staff be established to ensure that the course gets off to a good start in its rejuvenation.

Sgt Graham took the opportunity to congratulate Sgt Platt for the way in which he has acted as the head of directing staff at this year's course. Sgt Graham believes that a national course facilitated by AusSAR would present a unified face to the public. He also believes that AusSAR being the national RTA will better facilitate the administration of the advanced diploma for search and rescue. He fully supported the

establishment of a working group to coordinate and develop the curriculum for the national course.

Superintendent Coops (WA) supported the proposals made by Sgt Graham and Sgt Platt.

Ms Barrell noted that AusSAR has considered the proposal and is supportive. She asked that States and Territories each comment on the proposal. Sgt Platt believes that if AusSAR facilitated the course it would cement the Commonwealth/State/Territory relationship.

Sgt Warren Williamson (AFP) expressed the AFP's support for the idea. He believes there would be no problems with the course using the AFP's Academy.

Inspector Smith (NSW) asked what the course provides in the way of attaining the level of an advanced diploma. Mr Rice (AusSAR) explained that the course allows students to complete three units of the advanced diploma. Inspector Smith believes that formalisation of the course is needed but the process of police attaining the advanced diploma needs to be further progressed to ensure that SAR practitioners have advanced diplomas. Inspector Smith explained that NSW has a stepped approach to SAR officers gaining qualifications in line with their career advancement.

Mr Rice explained that if AusSAR takes over the role of national RTA then it would put in place a full process for officers to attain an advanced diploma. The National SAR School would, in conjunction with State and Territory SAR Coordinators, facilitate the administration of the process.

Superintendent Rieniets (SA) raised the issues of the SAR Council's legislative standing and the effect this has on the standing of the national SAR course. He nonetheless supported the concept of a national course being facilitated by the national RTA (AusSAR).

Ms Barrell (AusSAR) suggested that this is an opportunity to get more standing for SAR and the course by getting the proposal agreed to by

the Commissioners. Further, she suggested that State and Territory ministers would formally sign off the SAR Plan as part of the development process.

Snr Sgt Harris (NT) raised the issue of his Territory's need to have the course as the culmination of an officer's training as a SARMC. Sgt Platt suggested that this issue has been considered and it is possible that an officer could have the majority of the units completed and use the course to finish of the required units for an advanced diploma. Mr Rice further commented on the issue. He explained that unless participants have all the other units completed before they start the national course they cannot be presented with an advanced diploma.

Queensland and NSW both stated that SARMC's in their states must complete the National SAR Course.

Ms Barrell suggested that National SAR Council write to the police commissioners proposing that the SAR course be facilitated by AusSAR and be given the appropriate standing as a SARMC course. Inspector Carr (Vic) expressed his support for the concept. He felt that the concept of an equalisation fund between the states is not one that the Commissioners would agree to. Sgt Harris (NT) believed that the equalisation fund is worth pursuing because of the higher costs associated with accommodation and travel.

Inspector Williams (Tas) suggested that with a change of name of the course to a more generic course he would find it difficult to convince his commissioner to send either participants or an instructor. Substantial discussion ensued. Mr Rice made the comment that the course would not lose the identity as a police course.

Action: Mr Rice to document a proposal for AusSAR to administer and coordinate the National Police SAR Course.

WP25/8/2 - National Search and Rescue Competencies

This paper was covered in the discussion of the previous item.

WP25/8/3 - Safety Education Issues

The AusSAR paper was tabled. Superintendent Rieniets raised the issue of educating users of distress beacons on the implications of inadvertently activating their beacons. It was suggested that AusSAR increase their publicity to include all users of beacons. It was also suggested that pamphlets should be included in the packaging of new beacons.

Sgt Graham (QLD) raised the issue of the hiring of beacons by State Government departments to hikers, bushwalkers etc. It was agreed that AusSAR would distribute papers already passed to NSW and Victoria to the other States and Territories. Discussion continued about the use of 406MHz over 121.5MHz.

Inspector Carr (Vic) suggested that other technologies should also be considered such as satellite phones. He suggested that the cost is reasonably low compared to 406MHz beacons and the phones could be located by the company to GPS standard position accuracy. The phones would allow the rescue to be tailored because of the increased intelligence that can be gathered.

Delegates were asked to provide any information on the alternative technologies available.

Agenda Item 5: Presentation of the National SAR Award

Assistant Commissioner Mel Hay presented the National SAR Award to Chief Inspector Gordon Wellings. He explained that Gordon had not only made a significant contribution to the SAR Council, but had also been commended for his involvement in a SAR operation off Sydney in 1972. Gordon had many years of involvement in Police marine search and rescue. The Assistant Commissioner presented the award to a very worthy recipient.

Agenda Item 9: SAR Resources**WP25/9/1 - AusSAR funding and new search and rescue unit program**

Mr Ada (AusSAR) introduced this paper. He explained the aims of the Search and Rescue Unit (SRU) program and explained that the

objective is to restructure the program to ensure there is an effective pool of fixed-wing aircraft operators and observers trained to conduct electronic and visual searches; more effective, responsive and appropriately equipped search and drop-capable fixed-wing operators at strategic locations; and an increased focus on incorporating dedicated emergency rotary-wing operators into the system.

To accomplish this AusSAR has developed a tiered response as explained in the paper. He explained that the composition of the SRUs will be significantly different. The breakdown of the program is as explained in the paper.

Sgt Graham (QLD) raised the issue of payment for use of the dedicated air assets. Mr Ada explained that states would have to seek AusSAR agreement to using the dedicated aircraft and that the state would have to pay the hourly rate. The methods of chartering were discussed with Superintendent Rieniets (SA) pointing out that AusSAR now seeks the use of the SA EMS helicopters through the police and therefore is charged at the police contract rate.

Mr Ada emphasised that police notify the RCC of any usage of SAR equipment so that replenishment can be accomplished. This is particularly important now that SAR maintenance has been outsourced. Mr Ada made it very clear that unless costs can be associated with Commonwealth live SAR, then costs come from AusSAR's internal budget and this can no longer be sustained. Sgt Platt suggested that this issue be included in the SAR Manual.

Inspector Carr (Vic) raised the issue of using volunteers (SES) to find activated beacons using hand-held direction finding equipment. Sgt Graham (QLD) expressed his state's support for the air observer program but did not support SES being used to find activated beacons in case they involved actual SAR incidents. Superintendent Paff (AFP) expressed some grave reservations with the DF program where the activation may be a rescue situation where there is no police coordination. Mr Ada explained that the MOUs with the SES stated

that DF operations would be conducted in conjunction with police. It was agreed that where there is an activation of a beacon that cannot be located but is known not to be a distress situation, AusSAR would pass coordination to the State/Territory Police.

Agenda Item 10: SAR databases
WP25/10/1 - Review of SARbayes Database

Inspector Carr (Vic) introduced this issue and noted that delegates at last year’s meeting gave a commitment. Delegates again agreed to commit resources to this program. Representatives from each of the States and Territories were renominated. Tasmania nominated Paul Steyne and Western Australia Frank Raab. The other States and Territories renominated those listed from last year’s meeting.

Representatives from States and Territories nominated as contacts are:

Australian Capital Territory	Steve Sargent
New South Wales	Neville Greatorex
Northern Territory	Garry Casey
Queensland	Rob Graham
Tasmania	Paul Steyne
South Australia	Tom Rieniets
Victoria	Rob GATT
Western Australia	Frank Raab

Agenda Item 11: Other Business.

Rewrite of the SAR Manual. Superintendent Rieniets expressed a concern that the duties of the SARMC as stated in the manual do not represent their actual responsibilities and duties. Ms Barrell pointed out that, with the upcoming meeting and the move of the manual to the electronic medium, a rewrite of the manual will be required and these aspects will be picked up in that rewrite. The issue of the standing of the manual was raised but was held over to the proposed meeting on divisions of responsibilities later in the week.

Urban SAR (USAR). Inspector Smith (NSW) introduced a video on USAR and its management. He explained that a manual is under development. The national steering committee is made up of representatives from each State, Territory and New Zealand. USAR is a multi agency organisation that will work within the arrangements of the State or Territory. USAR has been introduced for collapsed building search and rescue.

Issues Raised at Council Meetings. Inspector Smith (NSW) believes that there should be more of a balance at the Council meetings between maritime and land SAR issues.

New Zealand. Inspector Brennan took this opportunity to provide some information on current activity in New Zealand. He noted that New Zealand is currently undergoing a maritime SAR review that will look at the total SAR system in New Zealand. Inspector Brennan also reported that in this year of the volunteer New Zealand has struck a special medallion for presentation to all police volunteers.

Next SAR Council meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Darwin in October 2002.

Meeting Close

In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked the participation of all delegates in the 25th meeting of the National SAR Council. In particular, she thanked Sergeants Platt and Hynd, and Western Australia for hosting the meeting. Sgt Platt reported that he would pass on the sentiment to Superintendent Coops. The meeting was closed at 1300.

NATSARCON 25/1/1
30 August 2001
Originator: Secretariat

AGENDA

Agenda Item 1 - Approval of Agenda

WP 25/1/1 (Secretariat)

Provisional Agenda. Call for additional items for discussion.

Agenda Item 2 - Secretary's Report

WP 25/2/1 (Secretariat)

Secretary's report including correspondence sent.

Agenda Item 3 - SAR Operations

WP 25/3/1 (AMSA) - Provision of Medical Assistance and Medical Evacuation to Vessels at Sea

The purpose of this paper is to inform National SAR Council members of the provisions of the Maritime SAR Convention relating to medical assistance and MEDEVAC.

WP 25/3/2 (QLD) - Coordination of SAR incidents that extend across multiple state jurisdictions

This paper raises the issue of coordination of operations that cross-jurisdictional borders.

WP 25/3/3 (AMSA) - State and Territory Emergency Management Plans

The purpose of this paper is to invite a national approach to the development of contingency plans for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.

WP 25/3/4 (Secretariat) - Report of Incidents

Delegates are to provide a brief summary of incidents from the preceding financial year to the Council against the categories listed in the SAR Plan (Annex 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 4 - SAR Applications

WP 25/4/1 (AMSA) - Net Water Movement System

Global Environmental Modelling Systems (GEMS), in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology is developing a net water movement system for AMSA to be used for drift planning both in SAR operations and pollution prevention. Stephen Oliver from GEMS will make a presentation on the system to give an understanding of what the system provides when AusSAR is requested for drift planning. This paper provides an overview of the Net Water Movement drift calculation system. It details the key components of the system and the methods of system output display.

Agenda Item 5 - Australian Search and Rescue Award

WP 25/5/1 (Secretariat) - Future of the Award

The Australian SAR Award has been poorly supported by nominations for several years. This paper seeks a decision on the future of the Award.

Agenda Item 6 - Distress and Safety Communications

WP 25/6/1 (AMSA) - Coast Radio Station Update

This paper discusses the developments underway with regard to State/Territory plan for distress and safety communications for small craft post July 2002. This paper is supported by a presentation by Mr Peter Irwin, QLD Transport who is the Project Manager for the Marine Safety Communications Project.

WP 25/6/2 (WA) - Closure of Coast Radio Stations and State Responsibilities.

TELSTRA is likely to close its coast radio stations from 1 July 2002. This paper seeks discussion on the impact this decision will have on maritime SAR.

WP 25/6/3 (WA) - Delicensing of VHF and Inshore CB (27 MHz) Marine Radios

ACA has announced that there is no longer a requirement to individually license VHF maritime radios. This paper seeks discussion on the impact of this decision on SAR operations.

Agenda Item 7 - Council Administration

WP 25/7/1 SAR Council Web Site (Secretariat)

This paper introduces a demonstration of the proposed SAR Council Web Site.

Agenda Item 8 - Training

WP 25/8/1 (WA) - National SAR Course

The National SAR Course is being held during the week prior to the Council meeting. WA Police, as the host, will present a short report on the outcomes of the course.

WP 25/8/2 (WA) - National Search and Rescue Competencies

To achieve consistency and credibility in Police SAR training a process must be agreed at the national level. This paper promotes discussion on this issue.

WP 25/8/3 (AMSA) - Safety Education Issues

This paper provides an update on some of the major educational issues AusSAR is involved in.

Agenda Item 9 - SAR Resources

WP 25/9/1 (AMSA) - AusSAR Funding and New Search And Rescue Unit Program

This paper provides a progress report on AusSAR funding and the improvement to AusSAR's Search and Rescue Unit (SRU) Program.

Agenda Item 10 - SAR Database

WP 25/10/1 (VIC) - Review of SARbayes Database

Victoria will report on a review of the SARbayes database proposed to gain information on targets of SAR.

Agenda Item 11 - Other Business

NATSARCON 25/2/1
30 August 2001
Originator: Secretariat

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Action items arising from the report of the 24th Conference:

- Secretary's Report** Action Item: The Chair asked that delegates provide feedback from their operators on the acceptance of the handover forms and advise AusSAR.
- There has been no correspondence received on this matter to date.*
- National SAR Award** Action Item: Secretariat to investigate methods of promoting both the National SAR Council and the Australian Search and Rescue Awards.
- Action Item: Secretary to investigate the development of a National SAR Council web site.
- Agenda items 5 and 7 cover the future of the SAR Award and the building of a Council Web site.*
- Lost Persons Database** Action Item: Delegates to pass comments on the proposed SARbayes form to Sergeant Gatt by 20 November 2000.
- Action Item: Delegates to complete forms for any historic incidents for which they have data and to complete forms for incidents occurring during 2001.
- Action Item: Victoria to raise the review of the SARbayes project as an agenda item at the 2001 meeting.
- Agenda Item 10 will cover the review of SARbayes.*
- Statistics** Action Item: 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.
- Covered in Agenda Item 3-4.*

Helibox Usage

Action Item: Mr Ada to provide the helibox manufacturer's name to the Queensland representative.
Name passed to Snr Sgt Graham.

Training

Action Item: Superintendent Coops to advise delegates of dates of National Police SAR course to be held in September 2000.
Dates advised.

Action Item: 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 PSITAB competencies.
Superintendent Coops to advise meeting of outcome.

Distress and Safety Communications

Action Item: AusSAR to distribute names and contact details of working group and the terms of reference of the working group.
Names distributed.

Action Item: AusSAR to keep Council members abreast of Working Group actions as they occur.
Agenda Item 6 refers.

Phasing out of satellite processing of 121.5MHz alerts

Action Item: Delegates to provide contact details of places where 121.5MHz beacons could be returned for disposal.
Letter received from Western Australia Police advising details. Awaiting advice from other delegates.

NATSARCON 25/3/1
 20 August 2001
 Originator: AMSA

**PROVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND MEDICAL EVACUATION
 TO VESSELS AT SEA**

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The purpose of this paper is to inform National SAR Council members of the provisions of the Maritime SAR Convention relating to medical assistance and MEDEVAC.

Action to be taken: For information

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. Australia has an obligation under the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979 to provide medical advice and assistance to Masters of ships or medical evacuations of patients from vessels in the seas surrounding Australia.

Commonwealth and States/Territories Responsible

2. When Australia acceded to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979 in November 1983 it did so on behalf of the State/Territory and Federal Governments.

MEDEVAC as part of Maritime SAR response

3. Australia has traditionally provided medical advice and assistance to mariners at sea around the Australian coast. The Federal Government through AusSAR provides a medical advice service and both Federal and State/Territory resources have provided MEDEVAC services.
4. The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979 entered into force in 1985. A revised draft text amending the Convention was prepared in 1997 and adopted by resolution of the International Maritime Organization’s Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-ninth session in May 1998. The revised Convention entered into force on 1 January 2000. The changes involved clarify the responsibilities of Governments and put greater emphasis on the regional approach and cooperation between maritime and aeronautical SAR operations.
5. With respect to medical assistance and MEDEVAC an important change was made to the definition of a search and rescue service.

Search and rescue service. The performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination and search and rescue functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance, or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources including cooperating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.

6. Whilst this might appear a somewhat innocuous change to the definition for SAR services, it is the first time that the definition has specifically included medical assistance and evacuation as part of the maritime SAR service.
7. For AusSAR there has been no change to the services provided to commercial SOLAS vessels as these services have been provided anyway over recent years.
8. For State and Territory governments there may be important consequences for the way medical assistance and MEDEVACs are regarded. This may also lead to decisions being made about resources and which organisation operates various assets.

Conclusion

9. In accordance with the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, as amended, medical assistance and MEDEVAC services to vessels off the Australian coast should be regarded as part of the search and rescue service.

NATSARCON 25/3/2
 22 August 2001
 Originator: WA

COORDINATION OF SAR INCIDENTS THAT EXTEND ACROSS MULTIPLE STATE JURISDICTIONS

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper raises the issue of coordination of operations that cross-jurisdictional borders for discussion.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 8.
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. A recent search for a missing recreational vessel extended from Mooloolaba, Queensland to Swansea, New South Wales. The target was clearly a Police responsibility in accordance with the National Search and Rescue (SAR) arrangements.
2. The issue of transfer of coordination of the incident from the State SAR authority to the National SAR Authority (in accordance with the arrangements), and the subsequent transfer back (at the conclusion of an unsuccessful search) raised issues about which part of the operation was being transferred.
3. The States have clear jurisdiction limits in this regard and can only accept coordination of incidents within these. Queensland could only accept coordination of the part of the operation that fell within the State. It could not assume coordination for any part of the operation within New South Wales.
4. SAR operations for residents and foreign nationals, which cross international borders of the Torres Strait, face similar complications.

Discussion

5. The effective management/coordination of any incident or operation requires the authority responsible to be clearly identified.
6. The States can only assume responsibility for that component of an operation that is within their jurisdiction.
7. During such operations that extend beyond an individual State jurisdiction boundary, it may be more effective for the Commonwealth SAR Authority to assume overall coordination of the incident.

Recommendations

8. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to:
 - a. Acknowledge the complexities of coordinating SAR operations that extend beyond individual State jurisdiction; and
 - b. Discuss coordination arrangements and responsibilities for SAR operations that extend beyond individual State jurisdictions including costs.

STATE AND TERRITORY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The purpose of this paper is to invite a national approach to the development of contingency plans for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.

Action to be taken: Establish working arrangements to facilitate a coordinated approach to development of contingency arrangements for response to major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors.

Related Documents: State Disaster Plans. AusSAR contingency plans

Introduction

1. During the Twenty Third Australian National Search and Rescue Council conference an agenda item relating to the State and Territory Emergency Plans was discussed.
2. Each State/Territory was asked to consider their State or Territory Emergency (Disaster) Plan and assess:
 - The capabilities and preparedness to accept responsibility for coordination of the recovery phase of a major aviation or maritime incident.
 - The capability and preparedness within the Medical Plan to handle the recovery of deceased and large numbers of survivors from a significant aviation or maritime incident.
3. AusSAR sees a need to review contingency measures to be adopted in the event of a major SAR event, for which AusSAR has the overall coordination responsibility, involving large numbers of casualties and survivors from either a vessel or an aircraft inside and outside State jurisdictions. However such a review needs to be conducted in context of both Federal and State responsibilities.

Background

4. A large scale aviation or maritime disaster, such as a crash of a passenger airline or loss of a passenger ship, is likely to exhibit three key features that will set it apart from the more frequent smaller scale search and rescue operations:
 - A requirement to coordinate closely with many authorities;
 - A requirement to rescue large numbers of people; and
 - Intense political and media interest.
5. AusSAR does not have access to dedicated rescue vessels or aircraft and does not have the capacity to coordinate disaster site rescue activities such as triage and public safety on site. In the event of any SAR incident, whether major or minor, AusSAR calls upon the resources best placed to provide assistance.

6. In the event of a major incident, those resources are likely to be those of the State/Territories. States control services such as police, fire, ambulance, emergency services and medical services, which are likely to be needed in the event of a major incident.
7. While AusSAR would likely be the party for search and rescue, on-site disaster management is outside AusSAR's experience and, given existing State and Commonwealth arrangements, the States and Territories are best placed to coordinate such a response. An expeditious transfer of on-site coordination to State authorities would most likely be appropriate.

Discussion

8. On 8 August 2001 the Queensland Government Counter Disaster and Rescue Service conducted a major hypothetical exercise - Exercise Deep Blue - to evaluate response, mass rescue, evacuation and reception procedures as a consequence of the sinking of a large passenger liner off the coast of Queensland. AusSAR was invited to participate.
9. The objectives of the exercise were to:
 - Identify the roles, common responsibilities and jurisdictions of Government (Commonwealth and State) and Non-Government agencies
 - Identify aspects of coordination of response and recovery procedures across agencies
 - Identify the effectiveness of the current State plans and procedures.
10. The exercise was conducted as a discussion exercise with no deployment of field personnel or resources. Key players were invited to participate in a series of sequential hypothetical discussions with other participants entering into deliberations of actions as required.
11. The discussion phases were:
 1. Notification/Activation.
 2. Response/Search and Rescue.
 3. Transit to Reception.
 4. Reception.
 5. Recovery Processes.
12. Particular lessons that may be learned from this exercise are:
 - a. that States/Territories and Commonwealth organisations should be aware of and understand each other's roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction during a major incident;
 - b. that the relevant State/Territory would be in the best position to accept responsibility for coordination of the recovery phase of a major disaster;
 - c. that the relevant State/Territory would be in the best position to accept responsibility for coordination of the medical plan during the recovery phase of a major disaster;
 - d. that State/Territories note that for a major incident or accident a disaster plan should be implemented;
 - e. that State/Territories recognise that assets and resources tasked by AusSAR and used at the initial stages of a major incident, will in fact be those Police and Medical resources belonging to that State;
 - f. that AusSAR and the State/Territory Police search and rescue section will need to work in close liaison with each other, especially at the initial stages of the incident;

- g. that a 'Major Incident Room' under Police command would need to be set up at the earliest opportunity, to commence coordination of the recovery and medical retrieval, leaving the search and rescue bodies to continue with their duties;
- h. that a high level State/Territory body would need to be set up at the earliest opportunity to deal with the political, public relations, welfare and administration content, thus leaving the operational SAR and recovery centres to continue their responsibilities; and
- i. that AusSAR would transport liaison officers from RCC Australia to the relevant State/Territory coordination centres as required to assist and support.

Objective

- 13. Based on the experience gained during Deep Blue, it is clear that there is a need for a holistic approach to this sort of event since not only are SAR agencies going to be involved but also Emergency Response and Disaster Management agencies.
- 14. AusSAR would like to cooperate with State Agencies in the development and evaluation of arrangements for dealing with major SAR events involving large numbers of casualties and survivors. This approach will enable contingency measures and organisational arrangements to meet State needs and requirements, but will also allow a highly coordinated approach to the early establishment of a national strategy.

Additional Commonwealth Initiative

- 15. The Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services is working with AMSA, EMA and other agencies to investigate how agencies should best coordinate a response to a major aviation disaster. AMSA is advised a conference involving Commonwealth and State agencies is to be held in the near future to progress this matter.

Conclusions

- 16. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked to note that AusSAR would be prepared to work with State/Territory agencies to conduct exercises to test the response and logistical arrangements necessary in the event of a major disaster.

NATSARCON 25/4/1
22 August 2001
Originator: AMSA

NET WATER MOVEMENT SYSTEM

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper provides an overview of the Net Water Movement drift calculation system. It details the key components of the system and the methods of system output display.

Action to be taken: This paper recommends that SAR Agencies note that RCC Australia is moving to this system and that graphical displays of drift area will be produced in the future.

Related Documents: Nil

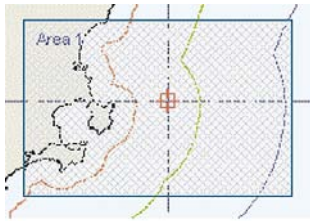
Introduction

1. The Net Water Movement (NWM) system has been under development at AusSAR for some time. It is now in Operational Test in the RCC, being used in conjunction with existing techniques for drift calculation. It is expected that the NWM system will represent a significant improvement in the planning of search areas.
2. The NWM system utilises near real time data to determine the surface ocean currents responsible for carrying floating objects. As inputs it has real time data for large-scale ocean circulation and associated fronts and eddies from satellite altimeter data, astronomical tidal data, the Bureau of Meteorology's numerical weather models for the wind conditions and bathometric data modelling of the continental shelf. The result is calculated vectors in a grid providing the direction and speed of the water movement in a given area. The SARTrack component module will then calculate for the effect of the wind on the object itself (leeway) to determine the expected drift. The system is also used to provide input for Oil Spill Trajectory Modelling in marine pollution incidents.
3. The objective of the presentation and this paper is make associated SAR agencies aware of the capabilities of this system, its introduction to AusSAR and the changes it will mean in the calculation and presentation of search areas.

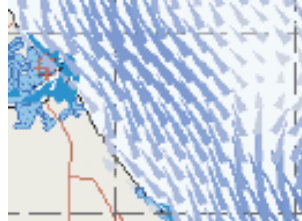
Core Components of the System

4. The following details the major aspects and modules of the system:
 - a. Data Sources:
 - Australian region and global wind predictions and bathometric pressure are downloaded from the Bureau of Meteorology twice daily
 - Geostrophic current data sourced from the Topex-Poseidon satellite is downloaded from CSIRO daily
 - Bathymetry compiled from a number of sources is stored at AMSA
 - Tidal influences compiled by the National Tidal Facility are stored at AMSA
 - Leeway characteristics sourced from the US Coastguard are stored at AMSA
 - b. Incident and Scenario Input screens in the AusSAR System provide key information about the location or route of the incident, the search target, the splash time and search time.

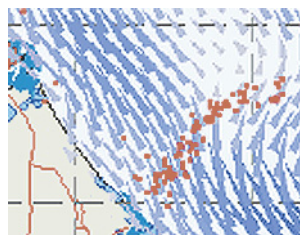
- c. The GCOM3D module calculates the surface water movement in the area during the incident using the wind, current, bathymetric and tidal data.
- d. SARTrack determines the probable movement of the search object(s) from the splash point given their leeway characteristics and the surface water movement.
- e. The Geographic Information System display is used as a “movie player” to show the currents and movement of the search objects.
- f. Examples:



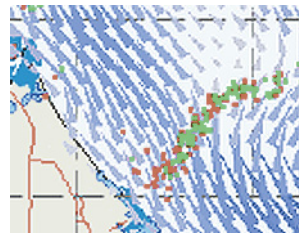
Area of Interest with a single Route Position (Splash Point)



NWM Current



NWM Current with one search target type



NWM Current with two search target types

Recommendations

- 5. Delegates to the National SAR Conference are asked:
 - a. To note that AusSAR has the NWM system in Operational Test and will use it in conjunction with existing intelligence sources. Once a number of real situations have proven the accuracy of the system it will be the designated method of drift calculation in the RCC.
 - b. To note that if AusSAR is requested to provide assistance with a drift plan the request will need to detail the splash point or route with timings, the search time, target object(s) and any estimate of errors in accuracy. Requests made to AusSAR by telephone should always be confirmed by e-mail or fax as a safeguard against transcription errors.
 - c. To recognise that the output from the system will not give typically circular or square search areas of equal probability. State/Territory agencies requesting a drift plan will be provided with a graphic attached to an e-mail and, in the longer term, by publishing to the AMSA Web site.
 - d. To note that the development has involved a number of organisations, including AusSAR IT support. The NWM functions are built into the integrated AusSAR system so are not easily transportable.

NATSARCON 25/5/1
 30 August 2001
 Originator: AMSA

FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL SAR AWARD

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The Australian SAR Award has been poorly supported by nominations for several years. This paper seeks a decision on the future of the Award.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 8

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. Only one nomination was received for the 2001 National SAR Award. That nomination was for Chief Inspector Gordon Wellings who is retiring from the NSW Police Service after many years in the water police and search and rescue.

Discussion

2. The National Search and Rescue Award has been poorly supported for a number of years. The prestige of the Award is likely to suffer as a result. This is not to say that the standard of nominees is anything but high, but there appears to be a lack of nominees.
3. The major problem appears to be a lack of awareness that the Award exists. Previous nominees have been from the major states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.
4. For the Award to survive it must be promoted throughout Australia through advertising, word of mouth within the SAR community and active promotion by the jurisdictions.
5. AusSAR placed advertisements in a national emergency services magazine in June 2000 as a trial but did not receive any queries as a result. AusSAR is prepared to continue publicising the Award in magazines through editorial and advertising during 2001/2002 in an attempt to engender more interest in the Award.
6. The State and Territory Police are in an excellent position to promote the Award through regional search and rescue committee meetings and other such forums.
7. The Award has been, and could continue to be an excellent way of promoting search and rescue to the community. The approach of presenting the Award to people who have contributed to search and rescue over a long period of time is considered to be the most appropriate approach and should be continued. If there is a nominee that has been involved in a search and rescue and acted above and beyond their duty then they could be recognised by a separate Award. This Award would not necessarily be presented every year but only when a nominee demonstrates outstanding action.

Recommendations

8. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to:
 - a. decide whether presentation of the National Search and Rescue Award should continue; and
 - b. if delegates wish to continue the award, agree to more actively promote it.

COAST RADIO STATION UPDATE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	The contract between Telstra and AMSA for the provision of radio services expires on 30 June 2002. This paper provides points for discussion on the issue.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 10
Related Documents:	25/6/2 and 25/6/3

Issue

1. Future provision of Coast Radio Services by Commonwealth and State/Territory governments.

Background

2. Under the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention and the AMSA Act, AMSA has responsibility for providing maritime distress and safety communications for the Australian search and rescue region (Coast Radio Services).
3. These services are currently provided under a contract between Telstra and AMSA that expires on 30 June 2002.
4. In 1990, the Australian Transport Advisory Council accepted the division of communications responsibilities between the Commonwealth and States and agreed that the Australian coast radio network, operated by AMSA, was established primarily for large commercial vessels operation under the SOLAS Convention.
5. If non-SOLAS vessels wish to use the network, they must fit equipment appropriate to their area of operation; and if State/Territory Governments are not satisfied with the services provided by the network, they are free to establish their own marine communications infrastructure.

Recent Developments

6. State/Territory administrations decided at the Marine and Ports Group (now Australian Marine Group) meeting in December 1999 not to provide distress and safety communications services through the Commonwealth's coast radio network from July 2002. That decision allowed AMSA to pursue the development of Coast Radio Services for SOLAS vessels from 2002 onwards.
7. AMSA signed a contract with TV New Zealand for the provision of terrestrial communications services on 9 August 2000.
8. The new network is scheduled to commence operation on 1 July 2002.
9. The TVNZ network has been progressing satisfactorily and it is expected that the schedule for full operation on 1 July 2002 will be met.

10. Most States/Territories have agreed that, for their purposes, an alternative marine communications infrastructure based on a combined High Frequency (HF) / Very High Frequency (VHF) network to provide suitable communications services for non-SOLAS vessels, be considered through a tender process. However, with a target date of 1 July 2002 rapidly approaching, State / Territory administrations have elected to set aside the tender process for the time being and focus on the development and implementation of contingency arrangements based on HF communications. Such contingency arrangements would be implemented by 1 July 2002. It is understood that VHF services would be provided as a future option some time after 1 July 2002, however the situation remains fluid. The contingency option is predicated on State / Territory administrations funding the solution.
11. Some States have in place extensive infrastructure but have consistently indicated that responsibility for funding distress and safety communications rests with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has made available \$3.025 million for transitional arrangements.
12. It is important that any distress and safety communications system developed for recreational vessels / fishing vessels takes account of the needs of the various State / Territory search and rescue response agencies. AusSAR will also need to examine the interface between the national distress and safety communications network and any State / Territory based system.

Recommendations

13. Delegates to the National SAR Council are invited to note the issues in relation to maritime distress and safety communications and maintain an ongoing liaison with State/Territory representatives dealing with this issue.

CLOSURE OF COASTAL RADIO STATIONS AND STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: TELSTRA is likely to close its coast radio stations from 1 July 2002. This paper seeks discussion on the impact this decision will have on maritime SAR.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 4

Related Documents: NATSARCON 25/6/1

Introduction

1. The Western Australia Police Service is considering taking on the role and responsibility of monitoring the distress frequencies on both marine MF/HF and Marine VHF for non-DSC communications within Western Australia waters. The Police Service would take on the responsibility when the Perth Coast Radio Station (VIP Perth Radio) closes on July 1, 2002.

Discussion

2. The Police Service in Western Australia currently operates a 24-hour, 365 day a year Marine Coordination Centre.
3. The closure of the Telstra run Coast Radio Stations will have a significant impact on safety and distress communications.

Recommendations

4. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to:
 - a. comment on what arrangements will be made in their jurisdictions post 1 July 2002;
 - b. discuss what impact the closures will have on:
 - i Marine SAR procedures contained in the National SAR Manual;
 - ii Small craft AUSREP reporting system; and
 - iii the broadcast of safety messages and navigation warnings.

NATSARCON 25/6/3
20 August 2001
Originator: WA

DE-LICENSING OF VHF AND 27 MHZ MARINE RADIOS

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper seeks discussion on the impact of ACA actions in de-licensing marine band VHF and 27MHz radios.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 3

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. The Australian Communications Authority (ACA) has decided to no longer license VHF and 27 MHz marine band radios. As a consequence, operators of these marine radios are no longer issued with call signs by the ACA.

Discussion

2. Call signs are a means of registering and identifying owners of vessels and are used extensively in search and rescue operations. Without the legislation requiring radio operators to have license there is every likelihood that fewer people will be easily identifiable from a radio call, particularly in a distress situation.

Recommendations

3. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to discuss the implications of the ACA's action.

SAR COUNCIL WEB SITE

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper introduces a demonstration of the proposed SAR Council Web Site.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 6
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. It was agreed by the Council in 2000 that the profile of the National Search and Rescue Council needs to be lifted both internally within the SAR community and externally in the broader Australian public. At last year's meeting the Secretariat was tasked by the Council to investigate the development of a National SAR Council web site.

Discussion

2. The National Search and Rescue Council lends itself to being promoted on the Internet. It has specific functions and objectives, is accountable to the public and is of interest to many people. There are a number of documents associated with the Council such as the National Search and Rescue manual and council meeting reports that would benefit from being placed on the Internet.
3. The Internet site, at its envisaged size, can be maintained as part of the AMSA Internet site. This provides an easy and cost effective way for the Council to gain access to the Internet.
4. Currently, the National SAR Manual is available to anyone through the Airservices publishing centre in Melbourne. There are costs associated with printing and amendment of the manual. Placing the manual on an Internet site, with appropriate caveats about its amendment status, would provide the manual to the general public at very little cost. There is some debate as to whether access to the operational manuals should be restricted. Certainly, the National SAR Plan, or first section of the Manual, should be available to the public as this will describe the divisions of responsibility for SAR operations between the Commonwealth, States and Territories.
5. The proposed site would include pages devoted to aspects of the Council's business such as the Council's mission and aims; contacts; lists of members with links; national SAR Plan; and Council reports and papers. There would be a password protected area that would allow the secretariat to distribute draft Council papers and other information that members deemed should be protected. The Internet site would be within AMSA's domain with the address of <http://www.amsa.gov.au/sarcouncil>. The site is not yet active but a demonstration is proposed for the meeting in Perth.

Recommendations

6. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to:
 - a. agree to the further development of an Internet Web site as described;
 - b. decide whether the whole of the SAR Manual should be on the unprotected part of the Site;
 - c. seek approval to link to the State and Territory Police websites and provide appropriate addresses for the Search and Rescue pages on those sites; and
 - d. provide the secretariat with any other ideas for inclusion in the Site.

NATSARCON 25/8/2
 20 August 2001
 Originator: WA

NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COMPETENCIES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper promotes discussion on the issues of achieving consistency and credibility in Police SAR training at a national level.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 5

Related Documents: Nil

Introduction

1. The Australian National Training Authority has accredited the Public Safety competencies proposed by the Police Services. This paper discusses the need for a process to achieve the national competencies.

Discussion

2. If there is to be consistency and credibility in Police Search and Rescue training on a national basis then all states and territories must agree on the process to achieve national competencies. The national competencies must be supported by the establishment of courses within each state and territory or by nominating participants to attend courses conducted in other states.
3. Western Australia currently conducts:
 - an introductory course in Marine SAR Co-ordination;
 - land SAR Co-ordination; and
 - a diploma in Search and Rescue.
4. Diploma qualified personnel can then nominate to participate in the National Advanced Diploma Search and Rescue course. The national SAR course needs to reflect higher competency levels than that of the Diploma Course and substantially contribute to the Core and Elective Units required to attain an Advanced Diploma in Search and Rescue.

Recommendations

5. Delegates to the National SAR Council are asked to:
 - a. discuss the actions being taken in their jurisdictions to attain the level of course and assessment required.

SAFETY EDUCATION ISSUES

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper provides an update on some of the major educational issues AusSAR is involved in.
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 5
Related Documents:	Nil

Introduction

1. AusSAR has been active in the development of a number of safety education issues since the last National Search and Rescue Council meeting. This paper provides an update on some of the major educational issues AusSAR is involved in.

Distress Beacon Campaign

2. The two principal types of distress beacons are designed for use by aviators (Emergency Location Transmitters) and mariners (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons). Such beacons are operated on two distinct frequencies, namely 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz. A majority of users opt for 121.5 MHz distress beacons as they are significantly cheaper compared to the more effective 406 MHz distress beacon. Many of the 121.5 MHz distress beacons are also utilized by land adventurers and generate high levels of false alerts.
3. Over the past few years the number of false alerts, generated both by the satellite receiving system through interference and inadvertent activations of beacons, has increased as the popularity of distress beacons has grown. In countries where the beacon populations are high, there is concern that the resources needed to track down false alerts may be diverted from real incidents thereby putting lives at risk.
4. The international Cospas-Sarsat Council decided that 121.5 MHz distress beacons would no longer be available as a form of distress alerting from 1 February 2009. The current cost of the alternative 406 MHz distress beacon puts those beacons beyond the reach of a majority of the boating and aviation populations. In addition, most State / Territory administrations have legislation in place requiring compulsory carriage of the 121.5 MHz distress beacon. The requirements under which carriage of such beacons is compulsory vary between administrations. Additionally, CASA continues to examine its future policy on carriage requirements of distress beacons in aircraft.
5. AusSAR is developing a national education campaign aimed at distress beacon users to inform them of the change in 2009. The campaign has been arranged into three distinct phases.
 - the first phase will highlight the benefits of the more accurate 406 MHz distress beacons over the 121.5 MHz distress beacons;
 - the second phase will inform the general public about alternatives to 121.5 MHz distress beacons, and possible legislative changes occurring in relation to the carriage and disposal of beacons; and
 - the third and final phase will focus on the transition from 121.5 MHz distress beacons to 406 MHz beacons.

6. AMSA is engaging an agency to assist with the development of the education campaign. States and Territories are being kept informed through the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG) and AMSA is working with CASA and the NMSC to address the aviation and legislative issues. AMSA is also working with a number of Australian beacon manufacturers with the aim of assisting such manufacturers in producing a cheaper 406 MHz distress beacon.
7. AMSA is continuing to develop a register of suitable disposal points throughout Australia. State / Territory representatives are encouraged to advise AusSAR of appropriate collection points

Safety Radio Campaign

8. Following the changes to coast radio from 1 July 2002, AMSA has developed an education campaign aimed at informing the general boating community and the shipping industry of proposed new distress alerting arrangements that will apply.
9. AusSAR has developed a series of A1 posters and banner stands, a series of A2 and A4 posters and is in the process of developing text for 10,000 brochures. It is expected that this material will be available at the upcoming Boat Shows and also in direct mail outs if necessary. The boat shows that AMSA has committed to attend or has already attended in the current round include Melbourne; Sydney, Townsville; Darwin and Perth (Mandurah). AMSA would like to discuss arrangements under which the safety radio campaign is promoted in all States/Territories.
10. In addition, space has been booked for magazine advertisements in the following issues for September 2001:
 - Work Boat World
 - Asia Pacific Shipping
 - Fishing Boat World and
 - Professional Fisherman.
11. An internet site has also been developed where more detailed information can be accessed by the general community. The site has been available since June 2001. Advertisements targeting the fishing and yachting communities have also been developed and will be published in magazines subject to approval from the Australian Marine Group.
12. State/Territory administrations are also working on developing a campaign to inform their yachting and fishing communities and it is expected that each campaign will complement the other. AMSA is involved in providing assistance to the States through ANZSBEG (Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group) and at its most recent meeting in Hobart (3-4 May 2001) discussed the timeframe and medium for communicating the message in relation to terrestrial distress alerting for non-SOLAS vessels.

Aviation Educational Matters

13. AusSAR had a major presence at the Avalon Airshow from 13 to 18 February 2001 that was very well received by the aviation community. Due to budgetary considerations, there are no plans to attend any airshows in the next six months except on an opportunity basis where staff are in the area and can represent the organization at minimal cost.
14. AusSAR continues to work with CASA and ATSB in relation to aviation education matters including reviewing the CASA sponsored Visual Flight Guide from a SAR and survival perspective. Unfortunately, AusSAR is not able to present at the 2001 series of the CASA sponsored Flight

Safety Forums due to programming pressures on CASA. It is expected that SAR will be a featured aspect of the 2002 program. Meanwhile, a number of magazine articles aimed at the general aviation community are contemplated which will focus on the need for pilots to leave their flight details with someone responsible.

Action

15. Members are invited to note the work being done by AusSAR in the safety education area. Contributions in any of those areas by representatives would be welcomed.

NATSARCON 25/9/1
 21 August 2001
 Originator - AMSA

AusSAR FUNDING AND NEW SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT PROGRAM

SUMMARY

Executive Summary:	This paper provides a progress report on AusSAR funding and the improvement to AusSAR's Search and Rescue Unit (SRU) Program.
Action to be taken:	For information and dissemination to relevant SAR personnel in each State/Territory
Related Documents:	None

Background

1. AusSAR has a Search and Rescue Unit Program (SRU) that provides specialised SAR equipment and training to selected aviation operators around the country, enabling them to undertake search and rescue operations when tasked by AusSAR. There are currently about 40 such fixed and rotary wing operators around the country, all opportunity based (that is, not dedicated to SAR).
2. Over the last two years, AusSAR has worked to develop, secure funding for and implement an improved SRU Program that is a more effective, capable and cost efficient system to respond to SAR incidents compared to the current arrangements. AusSAR's objective is to restructure the SRU Program to ensure, that around Australia, there is:
 - an effective pool of fixed-wing aircraft operators and observers trained to conduct electronic and visual searches;
 - more effective, responsive and appropriately equipped search and drop capable fixed-wing operators at strategic locations; and
 - an increased focus on incorporating dedicated emergency rotary-wing operators into the system.
3. To accomplish this, AusSAR developed a tiered response capability ranging from rescue, delivering emergency supplies to search only, using both dedicated and opportunity based assets. A Request for Tender was used to seek competitive bids from interested aviation operators to supply aerial SAR services across the range of tiers.
4. Using the tender responses, AusSAR submitted to Government a range of strategies to improve the current SRU Program and to fund an ongoing AusSAR shortfall in existing funding.
5. In the recent Budget, the Government announced an increase in operating funding of:

\$1.2 million	2001/02
\$1.1 million	2002/03
\$0.7 million	2003/04
\$0.7 million	2004/05
6. In addition, the Government supported a once-only capital funding of \$1.7 million for FLIR and distress beacon homing equipment for some of the aircraft.
7. Following the Government's decision, the AusSAR budget for 2001-02 has been finalised. Given general price rises in a number of areas and some unforeseen additional pressures, the budget will be extremely tight.

SRU Program

8. Given the Government's decision, AusSAR is currently working to implement the following strategy:
 - three dedicated fixed wing aircraft on the east coast capable of supply dropping and searching;
 - seven opportunity based fixed wing operators around the coast capable of supply dropping and searching;
 - three opportunity based fixed wing operators in inland Australia capable of helibox dropping and searching;
 - eighteen opportunity based fixed wing operators around Australia capable of searching; and
 - twenty two opportunity based rotary wing operators around Australia capable of supply dropping, searching and rescue.
9. The three dedicated aircraft will be on permanent standby for AusSAR tasking for SAR response. AusSAR understands that the States/Territories may wish to utilise these three aircraft at some stages for their own SAR response. Since the aircraft are contracted to AusSAR, State/Territory authorities will need to request these assets through the Rescue Coordination Centre. AusSAR will be flexible where possible to any requests and will recover any costs of the operation from the States/Territories.
10. A program to implement the revised SRU program has been developed with implementation to be phased over this financial year weighing up operational requirements, environmental considerations and prioritising the introduction of the dedicated aircraft.
11. As reported at the last SAR Council meeting, AusSAR has contracted 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 of AusSAR's normal requirement. Any variations to provide services not covered in the contract would be costly. Accordingly, AusSAR will be rationalising its SAR equipment holdings at SRU locations.
12. In the past, AusSAR has provided access for State/Territory SAR Authorities to AusSAR equipment free of charge. Given AusSAR's tight financial constraints and the outsourcing of the maintenance provider functions, AusSAR will be implementing a cost recovery regime where States/Territories use equipment for their own responses. State/Territory authorities must seek agreement from the Rescue Coordination Centre before Commonwealth SAR equipment is used, so that the appropriate resupply can take place.
13. It would be appreciated if this could be communicated to the appropriate personnel in each State/Territory authority.

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.
25. Perth, WA Police, 11-12 September 2001.