

36th National SAR Council Meeting

Melbourne, Victoria

16th - 18th October 2012

Venue: Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, Williamstown, Melbourne

Introduction

The 36th meeting of the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Council was conducted in Williamstown, Victoria. Four sessions were programmed from 16 to 18 October 2012.

The National SAR Council brings together SAR Authority representatives from State and Territory police with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in order to share experiences, report achievements, and review lessons learned during the year. These meetings are vital in ensuring consistency and interoperability in systems, and act to enhance the effectiveness of policies and procedures across all jurisdictions.

This year's meeting theme was 'Technology in SAR,' and observers were invited to attend from the *New Zealand (NZ) SAR Council*, the *National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee (NVMSARC)*, and select industries in order to ensure a wide range of expertise and experience. The meeting included both senior officers and senior specialists, with guest speakers providing additional depth at the strategic and tactical level. Due to operational and financial constraints, the Northern Territory and Tasmania were not represented at the meeting.

The Council greatly appreciates the role of the Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad in hosting the 36th National SAR Council Meeting; in particular: **Superintendent John Todor**, **Inspector Stephen Guilmartin**, **Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson APM** and **Senior Sergeant Steve Towers**. Their efforts around venue co-ordination and familiarisation visits, as well as providing sterling service in liaising with the Council secretariat and members throughout the course of the meeting contributed significantly to the success of meeting.

Opening Remarks

The 36th meeting was opened by Victoria Police **Deputy Commissioner Tim Cartwright APM**. He welcomed the assembly to both the meeting and to Melbourne. During his speech he spoke of the contributions technology has made to policing over the years.

He mentioned that during the 1970's, the technological tools available to police were very limited. As these technologies improved in the 1980's, they were gradually introduced into



the police workforce. Information technology finally became widely available in the 1990's, and began to make a significant impact in policing work. In today's law enforcement environment; these technologies are responsible for guiding and directing policy in a variety of ways. Police are now able to complete their assignments more effectively and efficiently by utilising the range of technologies at their disposal. These technologies also encourage police to interact with the community in new ways, and support them in identifying potential problems and developing solutions.

In closing, **DC Cartwright** emphasised the importance of inter-agency cooperation between neighbouring states and the value in fostering consistent SAR arrangements as essential in ensuring positive SAR outcomes. He thanked the Council for their time travelling to Melbourne to be part of the 36th meeting of the National SAR Council.

Discussion

The 36th meeting was structured into four sessions, with similar subjects grouped together for discussion. A technology workshop was programmed for Tuesday morning following guest presentations on the subject matter. Forty-five papers were submitted for discussion, covering annual reports of activities and ongoing matters for consideration. The papers were posted to the National SAR Council website's Members' Area for pre-session reading. All Working Papers are also contained within this report.

The theme for this year's meeting, 'Technology in SAR,' saw the Council welcome presentations from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) regarding the provision of weather services tailored for SAR operations and insight from New Zealand's SAR Council (NZSARC) representative on the lessons learned from the use of social media in SAR. A senior executive from Telstra's Radio Network Operations Department also provided an overview of specialist technology tools currently in development, and shared Telstra's vision of future technologies. Of key interest was the presentation provided by Victoria Police's Detective Inspector Ged Griffin on the application of mobile devices and technology in SAR. His commentary offered fresh insight into potential opportunities to engage with the Australian public during emergencies. All of these presentations were recorded, and are available through the National SAR Council website:

http://natsar.amsa.gov.au/Council_Reports/index.asp .

Combined with the collegiate environment of the Council, the agenda for the 36th Meeting of the Australian National Search and Rescue Council fostered robust discussion on a number of important topics, including the increased financial pressures on resourcing and operations, coupled with recent changes to strategic and tactical issues. Topics that drew particular interest at the meeting, and highlighted new opportunities for the Council to follow included:

- presentation of the recently signed *Intergovernmental Agreement on National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements 2012 (IGA 2012)* and amendments to the National SAR Manuals to reflect the updated arrangements;

- establishment of a definition of 'swift water' for the purposes of engaging with other emergency services during critical events such as severe flooding;
- use of Telstra services for location of mobile phones when determining search areas;
- non-Cospas-Sarsat devices being utilised for tracking and alerting purposes by both SAR units and the general public;
- management of community expectations regarding engagement with the SAR system through non-traditional means, including through social media;
- compilation of statistics to generate a comprehensive national picture of SAR operations and demands on services; and
- delivery of cross-jurisdictional training programmes tailored to meet identified gaps.

Day One - Tuesday 16 October

Commencing at 1:00pm, and following the opening address by **DC Cartwright, Inspector Stephen Guilmartin** welcomed the Council members to Day One at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, in Williamstown.

Alan Lloyd conveyed **John Young's** apologies for his unavailability to attend Day One due to conflicting demands on his schedule. In John's absence, Alan Lloyd assumed the duties of Chairman for the first day's discussion.

Opening the business side of the Council meeting, **Amanda MacKinnell** reviewed the actions arising from the 35th meeting as per Working Paper 36-2-1. Action items still open were noted as being:

Number	Title and Elements	Assigned to	Due Date
35/1	Develop Authoritative comment on emerging issues. Uniform statements concerning beacons and SAR devices should be prepared in advance for media use during incidents.	Working Groups	Ongoing in response to matters as they come to hand
35/2	National SAR and Land Search Operations Manuals – Composition of sections on WH&S and implementation of new legislation. The Council agreed that a 'broad brush' approach was required to provide guidance on WH&S to SAR Practitioners, and further work in developing material for inclusion was required.	Jim Whitehead Amanda MacKinnell	Ongoing
35/3	National SAR Manual – Development of guidance regarding Night Search Operations. Noting the increased frequency of night search operations, especially those involving search aircraft.	Al Lloyd	Ongoing

35/4	Persons At Risk Working Group – Ongoing	Statistics WG Team Leader	Ongoing
	<p>4.1 Initiate correspondence with other organisations working in the same sphere e.g. Dementia Australia, Department of Health and Aging to synchronise efforts.</p> <p>4.2 Compose a letter to ANZPAA including this issue and a proposed work plan by the SAR Council.</p>		
35/5	Statistical Analysis Working Group – Ongoing	Statistics WG Team Leader	Ongoing
	<p>5.1 Review of the Statistics collection process, including fields, timing of collection, and material.</p> <p>5.2 Identification of Analyst to conduct review of data collected, and identify emerging trends for attention by the Council.</p>		
35/8	Resources on Devices	Secretariat	Ongoing
	<p>Members requested material for spokespersons to use in interviews and articles regarding distress beacons and other devices.</p>		
35/9	Changes to the National SAR and Land Search Operations Manual	Secretariat	1 st Teleconference in 2013
	<p>Insertion of the agreed changes proposed in WP 35-6-2 and WP 35-6-3</p>		
35/10	Promulgation of the GOVDEX Discussion Board	Secretariat	Ongoing
	<p>Creation of logins for use on the NATSAR Council Community Discussion Board.</p>		

Following the review of action items from the 35th meeting, the first two action items for the 36th meeting were noted as:

Action Item 36/1

Teleconferences to be scheduled for 2013 with initial dates identified in April and September 2013

ACTION: Secretariat

Action Item 36/2

Coordination of a side meeting as part of the National Search and Rescue Managers' Course to discuss amendments to the SAR manuals and progress other Council business.

ACTION: Secretariat

Vote of Thanks – Colin Barr

Amanda MacKinnell advised the Council of the retirement of its long standing member, **Colin Barr**. Amanda has assumed the role of Acting Manager, Planning and Business Support, continuing as a member of the National SAR Council. Amanda welcomed **Natalie Chapman** to the Council meeting, noting that she has stepped into the role of Acting Senior Adviser, SAR Systems Development, and for the purpose of the 36th meeting, Natalie would be assisting in the role of Council Executive Officer. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman raised a vote of thanks to Colin Barr for his ongoing efforts to the National SAR Council. The Council was unanimous in expressing their gratitude to Colin for his long standing and dedicated service to the National SAR Council through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and to the Australian SAR System.

Upon completion of opening formalities, the jurisdictional reports of the SAR authorities were presented for review by the Council. The jurisdictional reports follow a standardised template to assist in gathering statistics and to provide opportunities to compare and contrast the operations and equipment in use around the country and identify opportunities for future engagement by the state SAR Authorities.

Search and Rescue Authority Reports



QUEENSLAND

Working Paper 36-3-1.1 – State SAR Activity Report

Queensland's State SAR Activity Report was presented by **Inspector Chris Emzin**, State Water Police Coordinator, and **Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead**, Search and Rescue Coordinator and Training Officer.

The Queensland representatives noted that the tight financial environment of the past year has had a big impact on SAR resourcing, particularly in the marine sector. During the past reporting periods, a clear reduction in boating activities had been observed, with a corresponding drop of over 50% in the frequency of marine SAR incidents. Maritime incidents have increased by approximately 30% this year, but are still significantly lower than statistics from previous years. There has also been more than a 100% increase in land SAR incidents over the last two years, which indicates that Queenslanders are venturing into their own backyards, rather than engaging in marine activities or going on overseas holidays.

Sergeant Whitehead highlighted the encouraging results of the Torres Strait Marine Safety Programme, and praised the positive influence this programme is having on maritime safety in the region.



AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Working Paper 36-3-1.2 – ADF involvement in SAR incidents

Andrew Fisher presented a summary of ADF SAR activities for the past year. He reported on the challenges facing the ADF, noting the increase in irregular

entry vessels, with increasingly larger numbers of persons embarked and requiring a greater response to resolve the situation. These SAR incidents have required the ADF to balance their own operational priorities with those of the irregular entry vessels, which often require ADF air and surface assets to be re-routed.

The increase of irregular entry vessel activity has placed a higher demand on ADF resources, both aeronautical and maritime. The Royal Australian Air Force has conducted a review into the delivery of fixed-wing SAR response to address these additional operational requirements. The ADF continues to support regional SAR efforts, and have recently provided air and surface assets during the sinking of *MV Rabaul Queen* in Papua New Guinea and the loss of *MV Solfish* 001 in the Solomon Islands, along with numerous other incidents involving small vessel in the region.

Mr Fisher expects that the ADF will be under pressure in terms of funding for training activities, which may result in delays in providing SAR training to officers over the next 12 months.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Working Paper 36-3-1.3 – State SAR Activity Report

Sergeant Michael Wear, Water Police Search and Rescue Coordinator and **Senior Constable Steve Hall** of the Emergency Management Coordination Unit presented the jurisdictional reports on behalf of Western Australia (WA).

Sergeant Wear noted the continued heightened activity and increase in contact with irregular entry vessels entering the waters to the northwest of WA. These incidents are made more complex due to their remote locations and numbers of potential victims involved, with each incident necessitating a commitment from personnel for several days. Sergeant Wear commended both the efforts of WA Police and AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) in providing responses to these incidents.

A critical factor noted as affecting maritime safety for beachgoers in WA was the increasing frequency of shark attacks on the metropolitan beaches, with eight reported in the previous ten months.

Sergeant Wear highlighted future development projects for the WA Police; including the procurement of an 18metre Police Vessel fitted with contemporary SAR functions, which is set to replace the current PV *Falcon* in April 2013. He also discussed the planned refurbishment of the Water Police Rescue Coordination Centre.

Mr Wear also updated the members on the purchase of the tracking system, *Tracplus*, highlighting the system's value and offering assistance to other jurisdictions looking to acquire the tool for monitoring the location and movement of vessels conducting SAR operations.

Senior Constable Steve Hall reported that the past twelve months have seen significant searches around the state. There has been a greater emphasis on training across all districts, implementation of the Western Australia Emergency Management Legislation, and implementation of the *Persons at Risk Project* policy.

In concluding his presentation, **Constable Hall** provided a brief overview of the activities of the State Search and Rescue Advisory Group. The Advisory Group recently reviewed the listed EPIRB exempt zone near the Perth metropolitan area, and has successfully lobbied for the removal of this zone.

A significant challenge the advisory group faces is in working towards the amalgamation of all volunteer marine rescue groups in WA under one authority. These issues are similar to those faced by NSW during their recent restructure. A significant step in this process has been the implementation of a web-based database which tracks all taskings and analyses the statistics arising from volunteer rescue operations. This database will definitively identify responses to incidents, enabling appropriate allocation of resources.



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Working Paper 36-3-1.4 – State SAR Activity Report

In opening, **Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke** provided information regarding the newly formed Australian Federal Police (AFP) Specialist Response Group (SRG). On 1 July 2012, the AFP SRG commenced operations, amalgamating a number of specialist functions that already existed within the AFP into one group. SAR Coordination falls under the authority of Targeted Operations and includes SAR responsibility for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), external territories including Norfolk Island, Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and Cocos Keeling Islands, as well as specific identified off-shore missions. The Officer in Charge within Targeted Operations has been identified as the AFP's SAR Coordinator.

Working Paper 36-3-1.4b – AFP Search and Rescue Arrangements

Following his introduction, **Sergeant Cooke** presented a summary of AFP SAR activities for the past year. He noted that the majority of their SAR incidents involved searches for children or those affected by mental illness in the bushland and urban areas.

Sergeant Cooke also outlined the increased demand on AFP officers deployed on Christmas Island or Cocos Keeling Islands to provide a SAR response for irregular entry vessels. These incidents are increasing in frequency and complexity, often exceeding the capabilities of the units in the region. The AFP is continuing to develop procedures in order to handle overall coordination of these incidents.

The SRG Marine Team assumed responsibility for all AFP maritime coordination responsibilities (including ACT waterways). However, the development of this capability is a

work in progress, scheduled over the next 12 months. Sergeant Cooke is leading this project and will report the progress at the 37th Council meeting.



NORTHERN TERRITORY

Working Paper 36-3-1.5 – State SAR Activity Report

Due to budgetary constraints, the Northern Territory was unable to provide a representative to attend the 36th meeting. As a result, the jurisdictional report was provided separately.



NEW SOUTH WALES

Working Paper 36-3-1.6 – Marine Area Command State SAR Activity Report

Representing New South Wales (NSW), **Senior Sergeant Joe McNulty** from NSW Water Police and **Sergeant Michael Smith** of the NSW Bomb Squad presented the papers from their respective commands.

Senior Sergeant McNulty highlighted the recent joint efforts between the Marine Area Command and the volunteer agency Marine Rescue NSW. He noted that the close relationship between the two agencies has assisted in providing new avenues for education, is resulting in the effective delivery of safety messages.

Sergeant McNulty expressed thanks on behalf of the NSW Water Police to the Australian Defence Force, particularly the Naval Air units based at HMAS ALBATROSS, for their provision of air assets and support to the community. He praised the outstanding involvement of the Westpac Care Flight units and the NSW Ambulance service, and the roles these organisations play in ensuring the safety of the wider NSW community.

Senior McNulty also discussed the recent rewrite of all NSW policies and operating procedures by the NSW team, which has resulted in an appreciable improvement in the systematic reporting of incidents from across the state.

Sergeant McNulty expressed thanks on behalf of the NSW Water Police to the Australian Defence Force, particularly the Naval Air units based at HMAS ALBATROSS, for their provision of air assets and support to the community. He praised the outstanding involvement of the Westpac Care Flight units and the NSW Ambulance service, and the roles these organisations play in ensuring the safety of the wider NSW community.

Senior McNulty noted that the Marine Area Commander has taken on a leadership role in addressing the high number of deaths involving rock fishers. Although there has been a reduction in the number of general incidents over the past year, there has been an increase in the number of people swept away while rock fishing.

In summarising the jurisdictional report, **Sergeant McNulty** reported on the observed growth of fatal incidents at sea, which increased by eight from the previous year. Analysis of these statistics indicated that in the majority of these incidents, fatalities may have been

prevented had life jackets been worn. These results have led to a review of the legislation and promotion of a community awareness campaign using social media.

Working Paper 36-3-1.6b – State Land SAR Activity Report

Sergeant Michael Smith presented the State Land SAR activity report for NSW. In reflecting on the previous year, he noted that the majority of significant incidents occurred in the Blue Mountains area. However, this region was also responsible for the largest reduction in operations, with searches dropping from 22 in 2010/2011 to 12 in 2011/2012.

Sergeant Ian Colless from NSW Local Area Command, Blue Mountains, provided further insight into operations in the Blue Mountains region. Recognising the benefits of targeted use of social media, the command team has created a Facebook page to assist in communicating with the public. He commented that this approach to providing information has been very positive, allowing them to gather material more efficiently, particularly in terms of gaining critical details regarding a missing person. Social media is able to provide an avenue for updating the public on weather and safety messages, particularly during adverse conditions in SAR incidents. Other initiatives by the Blue Mountains team, such as the [Think Before You Trek website](#) (TREK), continue to prove their value to the community. Twenty incidents involving hired Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) from the TREK scheme have been reported in the past three years.



TASMANIA

Working Paper 36-3-1.7 – State SAR Activity Report

Tasmania was unable to send a representative to attend the 36th meeting, instead forwarding on a jurisdictional report. As Chairman, **Alan Lloyd** was able to speak to the paper supplied, reiterating the concerns raised by other states regarding funding pressures and limitations imposed on state agencies. This situation has had an impact across the Tasmania Police, including Marine and Rescue Services, with staffing in the Hobart Marine and Rescue office reduced and expenditure cut.

Rotorlift Aviation was announced as the preferred tenderer for the Tasmania Police Rescue Helicopter Contract, with plans for the company to provide helicopter rescue services in Tasmania for the next five years. Negotiations are still underway to finalise this contract, but the service continues to maintain its high standard of safety and capability. A feature of the new contract will be that Tasmania Police will now hold the semi-dedicated AMSA contract. The AMSA E7500 FLIR has also become unserviceable, and the decision has been made not to undertake repairs.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Working Paper 36-3-1.8 – State SAR Activity Report

Inspector Craig Wall of the Special Tasks and Rescue Group presented South Australia's State Activity report. He noted that whilst statistics illustrate searches for senior persons are on the decrease; these incidents continue to

constitute a high percentage of land based searches. Inspector Wall pointed to a slight growth in the number of incidents involving the number of walker/outdoor adventurers requiring assistance. This increase was seen to be consistent with the current trend of holidaying within Australia, including in remote locations. The use of social media to inform such groups has met with some success and mobile phone location services have proved effective in locating missing persons. In closing, Inspector Wall advised that budgetary constraints are a major area of concern for operations and training in South Australia. He also emphasised the excellent working relationship that the STAR group enjoys with the volunteer groups in South Australia.

VICTORIA

Working Paper 36-3-1.9 – Water Police State SAR Activity Report



Inspector Steve Guilmartin, Officer in Charge, Victoria Water Police Search and Rescue Squads, presented the State SAR Activity Report for Victoria Police. He raised concerns regarding the increase in fatalities amongst those using kayaks, and the increase in dementia-related incidents. He also discussed the increase in swift water rescues taking place in conjunction with other emergency services agencies in large scale operations.

Inspector Guilmartin highlighted the completion of the newly refurbished Victoria Police Rescue Coordination Centre (pictured below), coupled with the installation of new systems and the acquisition of new watercraft. Funding constraints for the 2012/2013 year were noted, triggering some apprehension regarding the attendance at future external training.



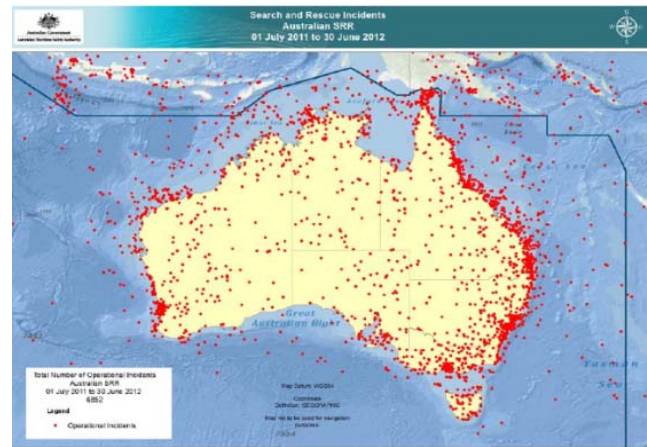
Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AMSA Report of Operations

Working Paper 36-3-2 – AMSA SAR Activities for 2011/2012

Alan Lloyd led the Council through AMSA's SAR activities for 2011/2012, drawing the members' attention to the rate of effort throughout the Australian SRR and the benefits brought by new technologies entering the field.

Mr Lloyd highlighted some of the key incidents, again noting the increase in the arrival of irregular entry vessels from June 2011 to July 2012 and the impact these vessels have had upon the SAR system.



The incidents prompted discussion regarding concerns in relation to budgetary constraints and the impact this may have on the SAR system and available resources.

Mr Lloyd also touched on the range of assistance AMSA has provided outside the Australian SAR region, noting that while AMSA is willing to provide support to regional nations, these activities draw heavily on passing vessels to provide assistance. He also explored some of the notable incidents where AMSA had been involved, including:

- the search for survivors following the loss of the cargo vessel *MV Solfish 001* in the Solomon Islands;
- the response efforts after the sinking of *MV Rabaul Queen* near Finschhafen, in Papua New Guinea, in early 2012; and
- the tasking of an Air Canada Boeing 777 en route to Sydney to locate a yachtsman in distress in the Tasman Sea.

Mr Lloyd noted that the incident in the Tasman Sea had only occurred earlier that morning, yet demonstrated the effectiveness of 406 MHz distress beacons in being able to rapidly provide critical information to the RCC so they could form an effective response.

As part of AMSA's ongoing commitment to developing SAR resources in our region, AMSA staff have been heavily engaged in facilitating in-country post incident debriefs, audits and supporting training programmes. AMSA has invested a significant amount of effort to improve SAR coordination arrangements across the South Pacific through cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and other regional partners.

Search and Rescue Resources and Assets

Working Paper 36-3-3 – Provision for Aviation Search Capability Contract

Amanda MacKinnell provided an overview of the wide range of aircraft and equipment afforded to the Rescue Coordination Centre under the SAR Resources program. A summary of equipment dropped for SAR activity was also provided. Ms MacKinnell noted that the AeroRescue contracts will expire between February 2015 and February 2017, and

consequently AMSA will be undertaking a procurement contract process in order to sustain its search and rescue capability.

Sergeant Michael Wear raised questions regarding the provision of Air Observer training to Police and other Emergency Services Personnel. The members expressed a general interest in opportunities for their teams to participate in Observer training to ensure a pool of suitably qualified personnel for extended operations.

Action Item 36/3

Information regarding scheduling of Air Observer training to be forwarded to interested members.

ACTION: Secretariat

The **Chairman** thanked all members for their contribution, and for providing insight into their activities, achievements, and lessons learned throughout the year. Reviewing the discussion during day one, Mr Lloyd drew together the issues common to multiple jurisdictions:

- increases in SAR incidents for persons with mental illness;
- increases in SAR incidents for an aging demographic, with associated increases in lost person behaviour, e.g. wanderers or those who are intellectually impaired;
- improvements in liaison between State and Territory SAR Authorities;
- capitalisation on social networking opportunities in order to raise community awareness;
- tightening of economic conditions and increased costs of doing business, significantly impacting training and development opportunities for SAR operators;
- inability to provide students and directing staff for National Police SAR Managers Course due to funding pressures;
- challenges regarding response procedures for joint SAR operations involving other emergency service agencies; and
- evolving technological environment and the opportunities for SAR practitioners.

The first day's session was closed at 1700.

Day Two - Wednesday 17 October

Commencing at 0900, **John Young** welcomed all members and guest presenters to the second day of discussion. Mr Young apologised for his inability to attend the first day and thanked **Alan Lloyd** for undertaking the role of Chairman in his absence.

Following the Chairman's remarks, the Council's focus turned to this year's meeting theme, *Technology in SAR*. Recognising the increase in emerging technologies interacting with the

SAR system, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by social media in conjunction with the SAR environment, the Council welcomed presentations from the *Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)*, *New Zealand Search and Rescue Council (NZSARC)*, *Victoria Police* and one of Australia's principal telecommunications agencies, *Telstra*.

SAR Applications and Infrastructure



WEATHER OR NOT

Presentation by Neal Moodie, National Manager,
Marine Weather Services, Bureau of Meteorology

Neal Moodie led the presentations for the day and provided an informative brief to the members, outlining the services the BOM provides the Australian and international maritime communities under the *Safety of Life at Sea Convention*.

Mr Moodie drew the members' attention to weather forecasts, warnings and observations for coastal waters areas and high seas around Australia. Specific areas of interest for the Council to note included:

- *Coastal Waters forecasts and warnings* for areas out to 60 nautical miles from the coast. These alerts are issued twice daily, and areas are continuously monitored for changes;
- *High seas forecasts and warnings* for areas beyond the coastal waters surrounding Australia, issued twice daily; and
- *Broadcast services for mariners at seas*. VHF radio is accessible from in-shore waters, HR radio for much greater distances off shore, and the satellite *Inmarsat C SafetyNET* which provides global access.

In closing his presentation, **Mr Moodie** highlighted some of the projects his team are currently working on to improve their weather services, which include the *Next Generation Forecast and Warning System*, upgrading the Australian computer model for weather forecasting, developing geographic information system compatible data formats, and identifying new ways to broadcast Meteorological Safety Information to ships at sea. Mr Moodie also noted that he was willing to forward information regarding the BOM's products to any members interested.

Action Item 36/4

Distribute information regarding the BOM, products and formats to Council members.

ACTION: BOM Secretariat

APPLICATION OF MOBILE DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES IN SAR

Presentation by Detective Inspector Ged Griffin, Victoria Police



Detective Inspector Ged Griffin of Victoria Police provided a presentation in relation to the benefits of mobility and social media for SAR. Inspector Griffin is currently studying for a doctorate at University of Melbourne, and his presentation was based on private research he had undertaken as part of his studies. The Council noted the presentation was not to be taken as the official

position of Victoria Police.

The content of his presentation was based on open-source information, and no reference was made to closed-source information. Inspector Griffin's vision for his studies is that his research leads to better outcomes in the future for the emergency management and search and rescue communities.

Ged's presentation prompted a wide-ranging discussion for the Council members, offering insight into potential uses of social media across many aspects of policing, not just SAR. A full recording of his presentation can be found on the National SAR Council's website.

Working Paper 36-3-4-3 – Use of Social Media in the NZ SAR Environment

Presentation by Carl van der Meulen, Senior Advisor, New Zealand SAR Secretariat

Carl van der Meulen advised there has been a large increase in the use of social media networks over the last few years, causing a level of concern for the NZ SAR System. He reported that a number of news teams use social network sites as a source of information during active search and rescue operations. Two recent examples were provided where operational information had been posted on social networks, with this information then being reported in the media. The examples showed that the content of these stories in the media conflicted with the official information being provided during the SAR operations. As a result, this type of unapproved information publishing was particularly harmful to families of victims.



In closing, and on behalf of the NZSAR Secretariat, **Mr Meulen** provided a reminder to the Council that media organisations monitor the use of social media sites. He emphasised that it is vital families and friends of victims involved in SAR incidents do not find out about their loved ones via a social networking site before they have been spoken to by appropriate

channels. Mr Meulen invited the Council to peruse the *Order of St John's Social Media Policy*, as members may find the policy to be suitable for their own organisations.

The policy is underpinned by the following set of principles:

Scrutiny

Will your comment withstand scrutiny by your colleagues, managers, media and members of the community?

Ethical

Is your comment ethical and consistent with St John policies, procedures and processes?
Does your post align with our Core Values?

Lawful

Is your comment lawful in regard to relevant legislation and St John policies and procedures?

Fairness

Is your comment fair on St John, your colleagues and the wider community?



MOBILE LOCATING SERVICE

Presentation by Stephen Howell

General Manager Radio Network Development, Telstra

Stephen Howell's presentation highlighted the specialist tools that Telstra are developing which can be used to determine a location during a mobile trace process. He also shared Telstra's vision for possible future technologies and presented a case study where the use of this technology was used effectively in a recent search for a missing aircraft in Queensland.

Council members were impressed with Mr Howell's presentation, noting how the new technology could profoundly enhance the accurate location of lost persons.

Following the presentations, discussion was led by **Ged Griffin** and **Amanda MacKinnell** on the development of technology in SAR and the possible avenues for exploration. Council members agreed to the formation of a Tech Working Group (Tech WG) to progress further.

Action Item 36/5

Investigate possible mobile applications that could be produced for SAR operators. Additionally, identify opportunities for public education and information through use of social media.

ACTION: Tech WG

Carl van der Meulen (NZ)

Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke (AFP)

Inspector Craig Wall (SA)

Senior Constable Steve Hall (WA)

Sergeant Michael Wear (WA)
Sergeant Paul Farquharson (NSW)

Action Item 36/6

Tech WG to consider other technologies that could be applied to the SAR environment.

ACTION: Tech WG



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MARINE SAR COMMITTEE REPORT

Working Paper 36-5-4 – Summary of the NVMSARC Activities for 2012

Due to time constraints, this report was unable to be presented during the course of the meeting. **Paul Kimber**, Chairman of the NVMSARC, referred the members to his paper and advised he was happy to take questions out of session regarding the activities of the national committee.

The morning session drew to a close at 1200 with the members invited to tour the newly refurbished Victoria Water Police Rescue Coordination Centre to view fitted systems and equipment, support vehicles and watercraft. The tour also included displays by rescue vessels and use of tracking systems to monitor the movement of response craft.

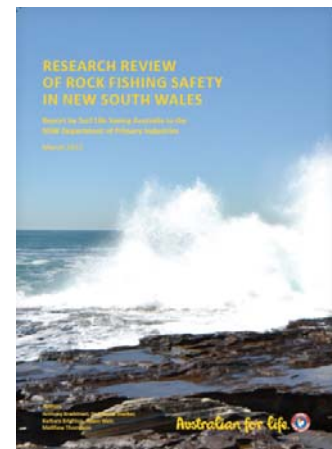
ROCK FISHERMAN SAFETY

Working Paper 36-7-3.2

To commence the afternoon session, **Superintendent Mark Hutchings** of NSW introduced a summary of the report, *Research Review of Rock Fishing Safety in New South Wales*¹.

Mark reflected on the increased number of rock fisherman being swept away and highlighted that this is an area of specific concern for NSW.

He noted that while rock fishing can be done safely, this activity has resulted in an average of eight drowning deaths per annum in NSW alone. This trend has not significantly deviated over the past 20 years. Over this period of time, stakeholders have delivered a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing the use of personal flotation devices while fishing, as well as promoting other safe fishing behaviours and precautions. The results of these initiatives, both quantitative and qualitative, have been mixed, and they have had minimal effect on the average number of annual drowning's. As a result, Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) was contracted by the NSW Department of Primary Industries to conduct a research review of rock fishing safety in NSW.



¹ Sherker et al., 2012, *Research Review of Rock Fishing Safety in New South Wales*. Surf Life Saving Australia, Sydney

A series of three recommendations have been made in the final report by SLSA, accompanied by evidence both supporting and detracting from the recommendation. Judgements have been made on the available evidence as instructed by the project scope. A full copy of the SLSA report has been made available with the working papers.

SAR ISSUES FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ALZHEIMER'S AND OTHER MENTAL ILLNESS

Working Paper 36-5-1.1 – Lost Persons Behaviour

Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead addressed his paper, advising of the development of an experimental Lost Person Behaviour (LPB) Database computer data base through Google which has identified that it is now possible to collect LPB data more efficiently and effectively than it has in the past. Sergeant Whitehead emphasised that there is potential for a vast amount of research data to be made available in order to determine better application of SAR practices and technologies in resolving these SAR incidents. **John Young** thanked Sergeant Whitehead for his efforts and invited members to consider providing data for the purpose of trialling the Lost Person Behaviour database and report back to the 37th Council meeting.

Action Item 36/7

Chairman to write to each State and Territory Authority inviting operators to use the Lost Person Behaviour Database in order to generate a picture of Australian lost person behaviour.

ACTION: Secretariat

NATIONAL SAR STATISTICS WORKING GROUP

Working Paper 36-5-2 – Review of the National SAR Council Collection Process

Jim Whitehead reported on the review of the NATSAR Council statistics collection process. Consensus was sought from Council members to develop a strategic approach to collecting statistics. In highlighting the benefits of standardising statistical reporting, Jim introduced the SAR Authority Statistics Collection Form.

He advised that the form had been developed to assist in identifying trends, risk assessment, and creating a common picture of SAR at a national level. Some debate arose regarding the compilation of information in particular fields on the form.

Action Item 36/8

Statistics Working Group (STATS WG) to develop a document which clearly outlines the purpose of standardising the statistics collection and reporting process, and further refine the fields to collect against.

ACTION: STATS WG
 Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead (QLD)
 Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson APM (VIC)
 Inspector Craig Wall (SA)
 Peter Trivett (WA)

Distress and Safety Communications

Working Paper 36-7-1 – Distress Beacons Update

Amanda MacKinnell led the remainder of the presentations for the afternoon, providing an update on distress beacon usage in Australia and an overview of emerging technologies. Amanda noted that strong registration continues, with the 406 MHz database team at AMSA busy and responding to a vast number of enquiries. Calls are predominantly dominated by people wanting to update registration details or order replacement registration stickers. Use of personal locator beacons is relatively widespread in Australia, with the general public recognising the benefits of GPS enabled distress beacons.



Ms MacKinnell raised two areas of concern of note:

- non-registration of beacons, particularly in relation to change of ownership. New beacon owners are not always registering their beacons with AMSA. This lapse places the beacon's owner at risk of not being located in an emergency; and
- the marketing used by beacon manufacturers is causing confusion amongst prospective buyers who are not realising that their beacon will still require a battery replacement after five or six years. Additionally, the public are misinterpreting battery expiry date and the registration sticker expiry date, and vice versa.

Ms MacKinnell called upon members to assist with enforcing beacon registration, reviewing battery expiry dates, and registration expiry dates during ramp checks. Ms MacKinnell reflected on the lessons learned during the 121.5 MHz 'switch to 406' changeover, and predicted that the impending changes will present a number of challenges to the Australian SAR system. AMSA is considering the development of an APP to assist in the registration and management of distress beacons across a range of devices.

Ms MacKinnell invited members to consider what strategies could be employed to assist in registering new and replacement beacons. To this end, the following action items were agreed:

Action Item 36/9

The Tech WG to discuss education messages and strategic opportunities for the Council in promoting the registration, use and correct disposal of 406 MHz distress beacons throughout the wider community.

ACTION: Tech WG
Carl van der Meulen (NZ)
Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke (AFP)

Inspector Craig Wall (SA)
 Senior Constable Steve Hall (WA)
 Sergeant Michael Wear (WA)
 Sergeant Paul Farquharson (NSW)

Action Item 36/10

Members to consult relevant State and Territory legislation to determine enforcement powers regarding distress beacon issues including registration, battery expiry dates, and encouraging the update of GPS models.

ACTION: Council

Action Item 36/11

Chairman to forward a brief to the State and Territory Ministers/Commissioners seeking their engagement in promoting the registration, use and correct disposal of distress beacons.

ACTION: Secretariat

Emerging Technologies

Working Paper 36-7-2 – Non Cospas-Sarsat Devices used in the SAR Environment

Amanda MacKinnell and **Leading Senior Constable Ian Veitch** of Victoria Police reported on those devices being utilised for tracking and distress alerting in the Australian search and rescue region. Amanda emphasised the need for the SAR community to focus attention on the increasing emergence of technologies, and the contribution they can make to the SAR system. **Alan Lloyd** indicated the importance of ensuring that any alerts raised by one of these devices enter the SAR system at an appropriate level, where a response can be generated in a timely and effective manner.

Pointing to the actions assigned to the Council in the 2013/2014 Business Plan, **Ms MacKinnell** invited members to explore ways in which the Council can influence the general public's understanding of specific characteristics of notification and tracking devices, and adopting the most appropriate means of notifying authorities in an emergency. Amanda also suggested members consider the value that Australians place on social networking and their willingness to adopt new technology and identify opportunities for the national SAR system.



On completion of the discussion, the Chairman thanked all presenters for their contributions. He emphasised the value of the presentations in providing further material to shape discussion regarding opportunities for the SAR Council and the Australian SAR system in maintaining parity with technology.

Before closing the meeting for the day, **John Young** invited the members and their guests to join together for the National SAR Council's Annual Dinner, hosted by Victoria Police in conjunction with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

A central part of the Annual Dinner is the presentation of the *Australian Search and Rescue Award*. Since 1996, presentation of the *Australian Search and Rescue Award* has been aimed at providing recognition to those involved in search and rescue in Australia and also to raise community awareness of their efforts.



The crew of a Melbourne yacht who risked their lives to rescue sailors from a sunken competitor in treacherous seas during an open water race were the recipients of the 2012 award. The *Trybooking.com* crew battled huge swells and wind gusts of up to 70 knots in the middle of the night to rescue six survivors from the yacht *Inception*, which sank during the Melbourne to Port Fairy race at Easter this year. The crew then struggled for more than nine hours in the dangerous conditions to transfer the sailors to shore and safety.

Trybooking.com's Grant Dunoon, Peter Ffecht, Ross Fisher, Kim Walker and their respective partners, were invited by the National SAR Council members to attend the dinner for the presentation of their award. Special guests included the Emergency Services Commissioner for Victoria, Mr Michael Hallowes, Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Chris O'Neill APM, and AMSA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Graham Peachey.

Day Three - Thursday 18 October

John Young welcomed all members to the third day of discussion, thanking everyone for their participation in the Council's Annual Dinner and 2012 Australian SAR Award presentation. He introduced AMSA's CEO, **Graham Peachey**, and called upon him to present **Sergeant Scott Dower** with his *Advanced Diploma of Emergency Management*. Graham congratulated Scott on his achievements, particularly noting the efforts in undertaking the challenging course in conjunction with his core professional duties.



Following the presentation to Sergeant Dower, **Mr Peachey** addressed the members, emphasising the public good delivered through the SAR system. He highlighted the contribution that SAR operators play in ensuring the safety of the Australian community, the importance of SAR, and the enormous role it plays in the overall work that AMSA undertakes.

Mr Peachey stressed the importance of the working relationships across all jurisdictions, and expressed interest in working with the Council in the future.

Mr Peachey's perspective, drawing on long involvement in regulatory affairs, was particularly welcomed during the strategic planning session, with some amendments proposed to the evolving Strategic Outlook and Business Plans.

Day three saw the final session of presentations and discussion covering:

- international SAR liaison and operations;
- amendments to the National and Land SAR Operations Manuals;
- discussions over the definition of the term 'swift water' for use in multi-agency operations;
- introduction of the Council's newly drafted strategic documents; and
- search and rescue training programmes.

International SAR Operations and Liaison



Working Paper 36-3-4 – New Zealand SAR Sector Report

The first session for the morning provided the opportunity for a report by *New Zealand Search and Rescue Council* representative **Carl van der Meulen**. Mr Meulen delivered an operational summary of SAR in New Zealand for 2011/2012, and touched on the achievements and challenges of NZSAR over the year. Mr Meulen emphasised the funding pressures faced by NZSAR, remarking that they are comparable to pressures highlighted by the Australian members.

Mr Meulen commented on the observed trends in incidents and similarities with other jurisdictions in relation to the rate and nature involving wanderers or those who are intellectually impaired. The frequency of these incident types are increasing and proving a challenge for NZSAR operators.

Mr Meulen also reported that New Zealand continues to support the wider Pacific Region with cooperative plans and improved coordination services. Development of a comprehensive Pacific Islands Search and Rescue Response Plan is nearing completion. As a final note, Mr Meulen advised that RCC NZ continues to support development activities by managing and delivering training to other search and rescue partners, including Air Observers and On Scene Coordinators courses, and liaison visits to different areas of New Zealand.

National and Land Search Operations Manual

Working Paper 36-6-2.1 – Land SAR Operations Manual Amendments

To maintain the currency of the *National and Land Search Operations Manuals*, a process of annual review is conducted by personnel from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Australian Defence Force as well as state and territory police.

Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead presented the proposed amendments to the *National Land Search Operations Manual* and noted the rationale behind certain changes, including the revision of land search calculations and the enhancement of Lost Person Behaviour content.

Working Paper 36-6-2.2 – Standardisation of a definition of ‘Swift Water’

Senior Sergeant Steve Towers and **Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead** introduced proposed changes on a definition of ‘swift water’. Sergeant Whitehead led the early parts of discussion in relation to identifying the technical requirements and implementation of the term ‘swift water’. In reflecting on his own experiences, Sergeant Whitehead raised concern that there is currently no standard definition for swift water, which creates confusion between SAR authorities and other Emergency Services when authorities are undertaking a joint response where flood waters are involved. Research has identified a variety of definitions for the term in use around the world with a narrow consensus regarding the speed of the body of water and whether this was deemed to be an extraordinary circumstance. Sergeant Whitehead stressed the importance of standardising the definition within the SAR manual for the purpose of a clearer understanding of the term as well as being recognisable by all members in the field.

John Young invited further input from the group in finalising the definition for ‘swift water.’

During the discussion, the key points identified for constructing the definition included:

- the definition should cover all available situations and should be clearly different from that of flood waters;
- the definition should be easily measurable and based on risk assessment; and
- the definition should be consistent with most Australian Fire Services and Police Diving Units

Definition from the Australian Fire Services and Police Diving Units:

Swift water is defined as water moving down a gradient and flowing at a speed in excess of two kilometres per hour.

After some discussion regarding the need for a measurable rate of flow, all Council members adopted a preliminary position on the definition in that:

Swift water is defined as water moving down a gradient and flowing at a speed of walking pace or above.

On conclusion of the discussion, **Inspector Steve Guilmartin** suggested that further exchange was required before any amendments could be made. **John Young** concurred, also stating it was important that other Emergency Service agencies are given a chance to participate in the discussion regarding establishing a working vocabulary for use during multi agency/jurisdictional incidents.

Action Item 36/12

Swift Water Working Group (SWWG) to further progress the position on 'swift water' definition. A report is to be provided at the second NATSAR Council teleconference scheduled for September 2013.

ACTION: SWWG

Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead (QLD)

Senior Sergeant Steve Towers (VIC)

Inspector Brenton Charlton ((NSW)

Superintendent Mark Hutchings (NSW)

Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke (AFP)

[Working Paper 36-6-2.3 – National SAR Operations Manual Amendments](#)

Ms MacKinnell presented the *National SAR Operations Manual* amendments, outlining the changes proposed to Chapter 1, Appendix B and Appendix M due to the review of the *Intergovernmental Agreement regarding National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements* (IGA) signed by the responsible Ministers in June 2012.

Ms MacKinnell advised the Council of upcoming improvements to the *National SAR Manual*. AMSA has contracted the services of Squiz Web Content Management Specialists to provide an html-based web delivery service to increase accessibility and improve management of the *National SAR Manual* and other complex Emergency Response Division documents. The html version allows for improved search functions, accessibility from iPads, and other mobile devices and RSS feed subscription to notify subscribers of any changes.

Approved changes to the *National SAR Manual* for 2012 included the updated IGA replacing Appendix C as well as related updates to Chapter 1 and Appendix B.

Reflecting on common themes which emerged in discussion over the two days, **Ms MacKinnell** suggested that definitions and guidance could be developed around social media, night searches, lost person behaviour, and work health safety for inclusion in the SAR manuals.

Action Item 36/13

Completion of amendments to both the *Land SAR Manual* and *National SAR Manual* by the first NATSAR Council teleconference in April 2013.

ACTION: Secretariat

Action Item 36/14

Develop guidance for inclusion in the SAR manuals regarding the use of social media in generating intelligence as per the 16th session of the Sub Committee (COMSAR 16) on radio communications and search and rescue.

ACTION: Secretariat

Training and Education**Working Paper 36-8-1****23rd National Police Search and Rescue Managers' Course**

Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead reported to the group on the 23rd *National Police Search and Rescue Managers' Course* (NPSARMC) conducted at the Australian Federal Police College from 6th to 17th August 2012. Sergeant Whitehead commented that even though the Victorian students had to withdraw from the course at the last minute, the costs were able to be redistributed across the rest of the participating students. To ensure the smooth conduct of the course into the future, Sergeant Whitehead requested that jurisdictions provide early notice of students attending. This request caused some deliberation and segued into a more in depth discussion regarding financial restrictions impacting on the ability of jurisdictions to nominate students during the early stages of the year.

Lessons learned from planning the 23rd Course highlighted the need for students to be nominated early in 2013 to allow for cheaper rates when booking travel. Critical dates for the 24th course are:

Call for nominations	Friday 1 February 2013
Nominations received (students and trainers)	Friday 3 May 2013
Travel bookings arranged	June – July 2013
24 th NPSARMC	5 – 16 August 2013

In drawing the discussion to a close, Sergeant Whitehead informed the Council that a reduction in students participating in the course would result in increased cost pressures, which could significantly risk the ongoing viability of the course. Strategies to overcome the budget constraints and the effects on the NPSAR Managers' Course were raised and an action item was agreed.

Action Item 36/15

Council secretariat to engage in further discussions with the Head of the AMSA SAR School regarding course costs (specifically accommodation and meals) and budget requirements for the delivery of the 24th National Police SAR Managers' Course.

Budget forecast to be provided at the first teleconference in April 2013.

ACTION: Course Director
Secretariat

A final point highlighted in Working Paper 36-8-1 was the future planning of the position of the course director. **Sergeant Whitehead** advised that in keeping with standard practice, Tasmania has agreed to provide **Inspector Brian Edmonds** in the role of Course Director for 2013. **Sergeant Michael Wear** volunteered to undertake the role of Assistant Course Director for 2013, with plans to take over as Course Director for the 2014 and 2015 courses. This proposition was put to the Council for consideration and was unanimously supported.

John Young thanked Sergeant Whitehead for his ongoing efforts in conducting the National Police SAR Managers' Course and for seeking continual improvements in the syllabus, noting that Sergeant Whitehead's efforts have resulted in benefits across the Australian SAR System.

[Working Paper 36-8-2 – SAR Training for AFP International Deployment Group](#)

Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead highlighted the role of Queensland Police in designing and delivering a suitable SAR training package for AFP International Deployment Group (IDG). Emphasising the value of inter-agency cooperation between Queensland Police and the AFP, Sergeant Whitehead commented on the excellent results being produced by the collaborative approach.

Sergeant Whitehead also reported on the training conducted during the year with members deployed in the external territories and the ACT. Thirty officers were trained from Christmas Island, Cocos Island, Norfolk Island, Solomon Islands and the ACT in both marine and land SAR. Additionally, sixteen members of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and four members from the Solomon Islands MRCC have also received training in SAR. This program is intended to continue for the next two years.

[Working Paper 36-8-3 – AFP Assistant SAR Managers' Course](#)

Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke outlined the ongoing requirement for the AFP to deliver *Assistant SAR Managers' Course* training to its members. Sergeant Cooke noted that the AFP has been fortunate this far to have the support of Queensland, however noted that the AFP cannot continue to rely on counterparts to provide this training.

As a strategy to ensure future training, the AFP Learning and Development team have been engaged to facilitate the development and accreditation of the course to Diploma level standards. To support this aim, **Sergeant Cooke** drew the members' attention to related Working Paper 36-8-3b, *Annexure B – Queensland Police Service (QPS) Endorsed Diploma Curriculum*. He advised that the QPS curriculum will be altered to ensure the uniformity of the program, and that the course is consistent with recognised training standards.

The Council supported the recommendations of the paper, noting the AFP College will be an independent Registered Training Organisation, with the delivery and course content being the responsibility of the AFP.

Presentation of Working Paper 36-8-3 generated debate around the question of whether the Council needed specific funding to support national training programs and variety of

options were discussed, including grants from related agencies, scholarships and a commercial sponsorship.

Superintendent Mark Hutchings offered the Council material he had previously developed for funding grants and sponsorship. In concluding the discussion, **John Young** challenged the members to examine how the Council could advance its core business if funding were to become available. He also asked members to consider how resources might be distributed across programs to ensure the confidence of organisations and the general public.

Action Item 36/16

Secretariat to explore options for grants, scholarships and other funding schemes available to the SAR Council to enable special projects and particular elements of the SAR Council Business Plan.

ACTION: Secretariat

The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Search and Rescue Response Arrangements 2012

[Working Paper 36-6-1 – Intergovernmental Agreement \(IGA\) 2012](#)

John Young opened the discussion by reflecting on the process of presenting the revised IGA to the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management for signature by the Ministers responsible for police and emergency services. The assistance of Victoria Police, in particular, **Commissioner Ken Lay** in assuring the safe passage of the Agreement through the signing process was gratefully acknowledged by the Chairman.

Mr Young highlighted the updated arrangements of the IGA, reinforcing the responsibility of all jurisdictions:

- that parties will continue to plan and resource for responses to distress incidents at sea for vessels within their jurisdictions. Incident responses should be cooperative, drawing on the units available, along with the coordination arrangements set out in the National SAR Manual; and
- the first SAR authority to become aware of a SAR incident is obliged to respond until overall coordination can be transferred to the SAR authority best placed to coordinate. The SAR authority with overall coordination may in turn call upon other SAR authorities for resources to effect a response, at no cost.

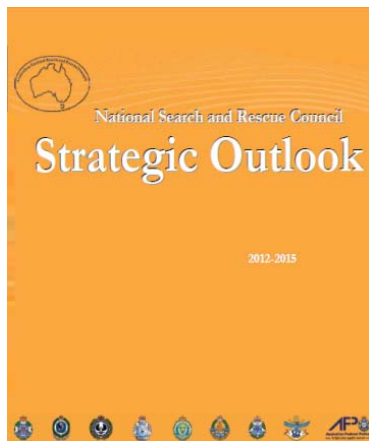
The Council supported the recommendations in the paper, specifically that the revised IGA (now known as IGA 2012) and the proposed amendments to Chapter 1 and Appendix B to the National SAR Manual were endorsed.

National SAR Council – A Strategic Perspective

Working Paper 36-5-3a – NATSAR Council *Strategic Outlook 2013-2016*

Working Paper 36-5-b – NATSAR Council *Business Plan 2013/2014*

As part of the ongoing strategic development of the National SAR Council, **John Young** presented the newly created NATSAR Council *Strategic Outlook 2013-2016* and the *2013/2014 Business Plan*.



Mr Young commenced the session by thanking the Strategic Working Group for their efforts in producing the documents, and highlighted that the development of a Business Plan is a first for the NATSAR Council. A Business Plan will allow the Council to reflect on, and track activities collectively in order to review how the Council aims are progressing.

Recognising his significant experience with strategic and regulatory policy making, **Graham Peachey** was invited to provide comment. Mr Peachey identified two additional areas for the Council to consider in their strategic

documents:

- promotion of public confidence in the Australian SAR System; and
- maximising the potential of SAR operators by promoting and supporting their work.

The Council recognised the value of these additions and embraced Mr Peachey's input. In continuing the discussion, **John Young** highlighted the Council's accomplishments to date:

- establishment of a common standard for geographical information systems, e.g. the acquisition of SARMAP;
- enhancements to the national training program, demonstrated by the improved completion rate for the Advanced Diploma;
- fostering of the inter-agency expert working groups to deal with Council matters;
- maintenance and annual review of national and land search operations manuals;
- engagement with volunteer agencies; and
- promotion of commonality in operational resources, policies and procedures.

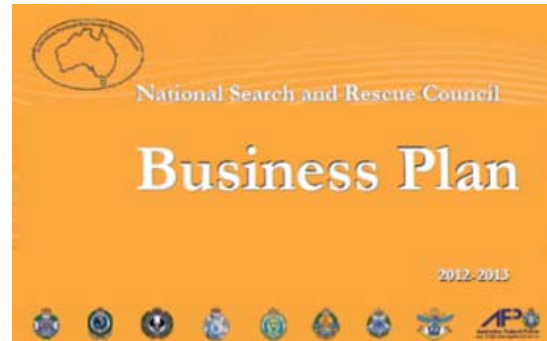
Mr Young further touched on the goals and objectives outlined in the business plan for future action by the Council, emphasising the financial and social environment the Council is now operating under.

The three main areas of focus for the Council into the next year are:

- opportunities for engagement with stakeholders and related groups;
- exploring areas within SAR that hold improvement opportunities; and
- researching and developing new technologies to strengthen the SAR system.

Superintendent Mark Hutchings agreed that these papers had significant value in supporting resourcing proposals, and could be distributed to Police Commissioners, key agencies, and select stakeholders to gain support for the proposed actions and Council initiatives.

Closing the discussion on these papers, **Mr Young** invited members to adopt the *Strategic Outlook 2013-2016* and *Business Plan 2013/2014* in its current form, noting the additions suggested by Graham Peachey. It was also recognised that the business plan would continue to evolve in response to new opportunities as they arise.



All members supported the adoption of the strategic documents and agreed that future Council discussion will include references to the business plan to ensure the Council aims are being achieved.

Action Item 36/17

Two initiatives highlighted by Graham Peachey to be added to the *Strategic Outlook 2013-2016* and the Secretariat to forward the documents to relevant stakeholders.

ACTION: Secretariat

Regional Safety Program

Working Paper 36-7-3.1 – Torres Strait Marine Safety Programme

Amanda MacKinnell provided an update to the group regarding the ongoing activities and achievements in the Torres Strait and Northern Cape York areas. Ms MacKinnell pointed to statistics provided by AMSA and Queensland Police indicating the success of the marine safety program. The efforts of AMSA Community Liaison Officer, **Adrian Davidson**, now in his second year in the role, have played a major part in the success of the program to date.



Ms MacKinnell announced the engagement of an Indigenous Boating Safety Officer in the Torres Strait, **Uel 'Phillip' Bani**, from the Wagadagam people, the major tribe from Mabuyag. Uel is being mentored by, and will report directly to Adrian Davidson. Uel will be responsible for maintaining a strong liaison role within the Indigenous communities, and early indications show that his presence within the community is proving positive.

Ms MacKinnell recounted other initiatives in the region, including the *Traditional Vessel Identification Project*, aimed at reducing rescue times in SAR incidents involving PNG vessels.

Of particular note, statistics illustrate that EPIRB's are being utilised and used more accurately in the region than in other areas around Australia.

On completion of Ms MacKinnell's presentation, **John Young** suggested that identifying opportunities for similar programmes would make a suitable item for the 37th National Search and Rescue Council meeting and invited members to report on their safety program and community awareness campaigns.

Action Item 36/18

Amendment of the State report templates to include Safety Program and Community Awareness Campaigns, especially in regional areas.

ACTION: Secretariat

Summation

The annual meeting of the National Search and Rescue Council represents an invaluable opportunity for the SAR Authorities to discuss and progress SAR practices, compare and consider emerging technologies, and share their experiences.

In providing context to the theme for this year's meeting: 'Technology in SAR,' the Council reflected on changes in the technology available for SAR, and on those environmental factors beyond the control of the SAR system which must be accommodated. The workshop on the development of technology in SAR identified issues for the SAR Council to address community education and training for SAR operators. Agreement to update the SAR manuals in line with developments in technology, regulation, and contemporary operational practices in our highly cooperative Australian SAR environment is timely.

Financial pressures on resourcing and operations coupled with strategic and tactical issues fostered a high level of discussion. The drivers of SAR incidents in Australia could also be seen in the statistics presented for consideration, particularly the additional demands placed on Police SAR by 'wanderers' affected by mental illness.

The members were particularly encouraged by the introduction of the first ever strategic documents to allow the Council to track progress of activities undertaken.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all those who participate in and assist the SAR system in Australia, whether operationally or in support of the system. The chairman made special note of the programmed subjects over the three days, highlighting the strong exchange of ideas which provided a number of possible avenues for the Council to explore. In closing, he acknowledged the time spent in preparing and travelling for the meeting and noted the value of the two way communication that these opportunities present.

The meeting was declared closed at 1300 on Thursday 18th October 2012. The Chairman confirmed the 37th Council Meeting will be hosted by Tasmania in October 2013 with further information to be disseminated as it becomes available.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2013	
Nominations open for 24th National Police Search and Rescue Managers' Course (NPSARMC)	Friday 1 st February 2013
NATSAR Council Teleconference 1/2013	April 2013
Nominations close for 24th NPSARMC (students and trainers)	Friday 3 rd May 2013
Bookings for NPSARMC	June to July 2013
2013 Australian SAR Award nominations close	Friday 26 th July 2013
Call for agenda papers for 37th NATSAR Council	5 th August 2013
24th National Police Search and Rescue Managers' Course	5 th – 16 th August 2013
NATSAR Council Teleconference 2/2013	September 2013
Closing date for agenda papers for 37th NATSAR Council	October 2013
Meeting of the 37th NATSAR Council - Tasmania	October 2013
Presentation of the 2013 Australian SAR Award	October 2013

Summary of Actions Arising

The following Action Items were agreed and were assigned as follows:

36/1	Teleconferences to be scheduled for 2013. Dates: April and September 2013	Secretariat	February 2013
36/2	Coordination of a side meeting as part of the National Search and Rescue Managers' Course to discuss amendments to the SAR manuals and other Council business.	Secretariat	June 2013
36/3	Forward information regarding training of Air Observers to interested members.	Secretariat	As appropriate
36/4	Distribute information regarding the Bureau of Meteorology products and formats to Council members.	Bureau of Meteorology Secretariat	As appropriate
36/5	Investigate possible mobile applications that could be produced for SAR operators. Additionally, identify opportunities for public education and information through use of social media.	Tech Working Group: Carl van der Meulen (NZ) Steve Cooke (AFP) Craig Wall (SA) Steve Hall (WA) Michael Wear (WA) Paul Farquharson (NSW)	June 2013
36/6	Tech Working Group to also consider other technologies that could be applied to the SAR environment.	Tech Working Group: Carl van der Meulen (NZ) Steve Cooke (AFP) Craig Wall (SA) Steve Hall (WA) Michael Wear (WA) Paul Farquharson (NSW)	June 2013



36/7	Chairman to write to each State and Territory Authority inviting operators to use the Lost Person Behaviour Database in order to generate a picture of Australian lost person behaviour.	Secretariat	June 2013
36/8	Statistics Working Group to develop a document which clearly outlines the purpose of standardising the statistics collection and reporting process, and further refine the fields to collect against.	Statistics Working Group: Jim Whitehead (QLD) Barry Gibson APM (VIC) Inspector Craig Wall (SA) Peter Trivett (WA)	August 2013
36/9	Tech Working Group to discuss education messages and strategic opportunities for the Council in promoting the registration, use and correct disposal of 406 MHz distress beacons throughout the wider community.	Tech Working Group: Carl van der Meulen (NZ) Steve Cooke (AFP) Craig Wall (SA) Steve Hall (WA) Michael Wear (WA) Paul Farquharson (NSW)	June 2013
36/10	Members to consult relevant State and Territory legislation to determine enforcement powers regarding distress beacon issues including registration, battery expiry dates and encouraging the update of GPS models.	Council	Ongoing
36/11	Chairman to forward a brief to the State and Territory Ministers/Commissioners seeking their engagement in promoting the registration, use and correct disposal of distress beacons.	Secretariat	June 2013
36/12	Swift Water Working Group to further progress the position on 'swift water' definition. SWWG to provide report at the second NATSAR Council teleconference in September 2013.	Swift Water Working Group: Jim Whitehead Steve Towers (VIC) Brenton Charlton ((NSW) Mark Hutchings (NSW) Steve Cooke (AFP)	September 2013

36/13	Completion of amendments to both the Land SAR Manual and National SAR Manual by the first NATSAR Council teleconference in April 2013.	Secretariat	April 2013
36/14	Develop guidance for inclusion in the SAR manuals regarding the use of social media in generating intelligence as per the 16th session of the Sub Committee (COMSAR 16) on radio communications and search and rescue.	Secretariat	September 2013
36/15	Council secretariat to engage further discussion with Head of SAR School at AMSA regarding course costs (specifically accommodation and meals) and budget requirements for the delivery of the 24th National Police SAR Managers' Course. Budget forecast to be provided at the first teleconference in April 2013	Course Director Secretariat	April 2013
36/16	Secretariat to explore options for grants, scholarships and other funding schemes available to the SAR Council to enable special projects and particular elements of the SAR Council Business Plan.	Secretariat Strategic Working Group	April 2013
36/17	Two initiatives highlighted by Graham Peachey to be added to the Strategic Outlook 2013-2016 and the Secretariat to forward the Strategic Outlook and Business Plan to the relevant stakeholders.	Secretariat Strategic Working Group	December 2013
36/18	Amendment of the State report templates to include Safety Program and Community Awareness Campaigns, especially in regional areas.	Council	September 2013
36/19	Coordination of NATSAR 37 – to be hosted by Tasmania Police	Tasmania Police	October 2013

Australian Search and Rescue Award 2012

Heroism is not only in the man, but in the occasion.

Calvin Coolidge



Nominations for the Australian Search and Rescue Award are considered annually by the National Search and Rescue Council. The award is made to recognise 'Outstanding contributions to search and rescue' within the Australian region. The council, which is comprised of representatives of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Australian Defence Force, and all of the State and Territory Police Services and Australian Federal Police, select the recipient from nominations made from around Australia.

Past recipients of this prestigious award include aero-medical helicopter crews, and members of the State Police forces who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment in their field. Acts of courage by individuals and rescues of fellow sailors in distress have also been recognised by this Award.

The proposed nominees have all made a significant contribution to Australia's search and rescue ability or to the saving of a human life. The Council does not present the award every year, since there are not always nominations considered worthy of such recognition. Among the nominees for 2012 were:

- **A four-member yacht crew from Trybooking.com** - for their rescue of six survivors from the yacht *Inception*, which sank in treacherous sea conditions during the 2012 Queenscliff to Port Fairy Race on 6 - 7 April 2012.
- **The master and crew of the vessel *Go Canopus*** - for their efforts in the search and rescue operation for the survivors of the yacht *Shady Lady*, which sank 290nm north of Darwin in August 2011.
- **Surf Lifesaving Illawarra** - for their efforts on 6 April 2012 in saving the lives of four fishermen at the Verge, north of Wollongong, NSW.
- **The master and crew of the fishing vessel *Advance*** - for their rescue of the crew and passengers of a Pel-Air aircraft that ditched near Norfolk Island in 2009.
- **The master and crew of the fishing vessel *Gran Lady*** - for assisting in the rescue of the crew and passengers of the Pel-Air aircraft.

Presentation of the Award

Presentation of the Australian Search and Rescue Award is traditionally made as part of the Annual SAR Council meeting. The recipients of the Award were invited to Williamstown in Victoria to attend the Council dinner on Thursday, 17th October. The National Search and Rescue Council chairman, John Young, commended the field of nominees, garnered from a wide range of endeavours, on their efforts and achievements. During the Award speech, he noted in particular the dedication to service, achievements in providing and improving rescue services and the key roles that these individuals and organisations play in ensuring the safety of life in Australia.

Victorian Emergency Services Commissioner Michael Hallowes was called upon to present the Australian SAR Award for 2012 to Grant Dunoon, Peter Ffecht, Ross Fisher and Kim Walker.



The four men from Melbourne, racing for Trybooking.com, battled huge swells and wind gusts of up to 70 knots in the middle of the night to rescue the six survivors from the yacht *Inception*, which sank during the Melbourne to Port Fairy race at Easter in 2012. The crew then struggled for more than nine hours in the treacherous seas to transfer the sailors to shore and safety.

In presenting the award, Victorian Emergency Services Commissioner Michael Hallowes praised the men for their selfless actions in rescuing fellow sailors.

"These men epitomise the great Australian sense of mateship, coming to the aid of others in the time of dire need. The consummate seamanship displayed not only in finding these men, but recovering them to a place of safety in treacherous conditions demonstrates the greatest care and concern for others."

Mr Dunoon, Chief Executive Officer of event booking company Trybooking.com, also accepted a small brass plaque marking the role his yacht played in the rescue. He said he felt incredibly honoured to be given such a prestigious award. "It was very humbling to share our story on the night with the men and women of the rescue authorities from around Australia.

"On the night of the rescue, there was a team of people from Canberra to Melbourne providing backing and support with timely information that enabled us to locate the Inception crew. Without it, we never would have found them.

On completion of his speech, Mr Dunoon thanked everyone involved that night, in particular, Craig Longmuir from AMSA, Peter Clancy of the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria and Sergeant Lachlan Holding from the Victorian Water Police, noting without their efforts, the rescue and a safe return to port would not have been possible.

A Certificate of Commendation will be presented to the four other nominees on a suitable occasion.

36th National SAR Council Meeting

Melbourne, Victoria

16th - 18th October 2012

Attendees



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

John Young, General Manager, Emergency Response Division (Chairman)
Alan Lloyd, Operations Manager
Scott Milne, Response Manager, Emergency Management Response Coordination
Amanda MacKinnell, A/g Manager, Planning & Business Support
Natalie Chapman, A/g Senior Adviser, SAR Systems Development (Secretary)



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE

Sergeant Michael Wear, Fremantle Water Police
Senior Constable Steve Hall, Emergency Management Coordination Unit



NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE

Superintendent Mark Hutchings, NSW Water Police
Inspector Brenton Charlton, NSW Bomb Squad
Senior Sergeant Joe McNulty, NSW Water Police
Sergeant Michael Smith, NSW Bomb Squad
Sergeant Ian Colless, NSW Police Local Area Command, Blue Mountains



VICTORIA

Superintendent John Toder, OIC Specialist Response Division
Inspector Steve Guilmartin, OIC Water Police & Search and Rescue Squads
Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson APM, OIC - Search and Rescue Squad
Senior Sergeant Steve Towers, Team Leader Water Police
Sergeant Scott Dower, Search and Rescue Squad



QUEENSLAND POLICE

Inspector Chris Emzin, State Water Police Coordinator
Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead, QLD Water Police



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke, Officer in Charge, Targeted Operations
Federal Agent Paul Cartwright, Targeted Operations, Specialist Response Group



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Inspector Craig Wall, Specialist Tasks and Rescue Group



TASMANIA

No representative from Tasmania was able to attend



NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE

No representative from the Northern Territory was able to attend



AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Andrew Fisher, Flight Lieutenant, Headquarters Joint Operations Command



NEW ZEALAND

Carl Van Der Meulen, Senior Advisor NZ Search and Rescue Secretariat



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MARINE SAR COMMITTEE

Paul Kimber, Western Australia Fire and Emergency Services

36th National SAR Council Meeting

Williamstown, VIC
16th – 18th October 2012

Technology in SAR

Agenda Papers

Section 1 Administration

Item 1 Welcome and Order of Business

WP 36-1-1 (Secretariat) Provisional Agenda.

Call for any additional items for discussion.

WP 36-1-2 (Secretariat) Programme of the 36th Meeting of the National SAR Council

WP 36-1-3 (Secretariat) SAR Council Attendees

Section 2 Matters Arising Out of Session

Item 2 Matters arising out of Session

WP 36-2-1 (Secretariat) Actions Arising from Previous Meetings – For Discussion

Section 3 SAR Operations

Item 3.1 SAR Authority Reports

WP 36-3-1 (All) – Annual State Report of Activity – For Information and Discussion

Delegates are to provide a brief summary of incidents and activities from the preceding financial year to the Council. 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. Jurisdictions can take this opportunity to report briefly on other operational issues, update the status of SAR units and assets and present issues from State SAR Councils.

Item 3.2 AMSA Report of Operations

Working Paper 36-3-2 – AMSA SAR Activities for 2011/2012

Providing an update on AMSA's activities in the SAR environment.

Item 3.3 Search and Rescue Resources and Assets

WP 36-3-3 (AMSA) SAR Resources and Training – Assets Update

Updates on the status and location of SAR assets around Australia.

Item 3.4 International SAR Operations and Liaison

WP 36-3-4 (New Zealand) New Zealand SAR Sector Report



An update on the activities and challenges faced by the NZ SAR System.

Section 4 SAR Applications and Infrastructure

Item 4.1 Weather or Not? - Bureau of Meteorology

WP 36-4-1 (BOM) Forecasts for SAR Practitioners

A presentation by Mr Neal Moodie of the Bureau of Meteorology on the data available and product structure for use by SAR Officers.

Item 4.2 Mobile Technology in the SAR Environment

WP 36-4-2 (VIC) The Application of mobile devices and technology in SAR

A special presentation by Detective Inspector Ged Griffin, currently studying at University of Melbourne.

Item 4.3 Social Media and SAR

WP 36-4-3.1 (NSW) *Friend us!* – The Role of Facebook in engaging with the public

WP 36-4-3.2 (NZ) Use of Social Media in the NZ SAR Environment

The use and lessons learnt regarding social media in New Zealand

Section 5 National SAR Council Initiatives

Item 5.1 SAR issues for those affected by Alzheimer’s and other Mental Illness

WP 36-5-1 (HEALTH WG) Lost Persons Behaviour

Consistent themes have been identified across the present sample of jurisdictions in relation to missing person behaviour where mental illness (particularly Alzheimer’s and similar conditions) feature.

Item 5.2 National SAR Statistics Working Group

WP 36-5-2 (STATS WG) Ongoing review of the National Search and Rescue Council statistics collection process

Standardisation of national SAR statistics collected and reported on to the National Search and Rescue Council.

Item 5.3 Strategic Perspective Workshop – Follow Up

WP 36-5-3.1 (AMSA) NATSAR Council – What’s Next

WP 36-5-3.2 (AMSA) NATSAR Council – Strategic Vision

Continuing to shape the goals and strategic outlook for the National SAR Council.

Item 5.4 National Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue Committee

WP 36-5-4.1 (NVSARMC) Report of the National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee

Section 6 Council Administration and Development

Item 6.1 The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Search and Rescue Response Arrangements 2012

WP 36-6-1 (AMSA) IGA 2012

Attachment A: IGA on SAR Arrangements dated 2012

Item 6.2 SAR Manual Amendments

WP 36-6-2.1 (Secretariat) – Land SAR Operations Manual amendments

WP 36-6-2.2 (Secretariat) – Standardisation of Swift Water definition

WP 36-6-2.3 (Secretariat) – National SAR Manual amendments

Procedural and editorial changes submitted for approval of Council following the signing of the IGA.

Section 7 Distress and Safety Communications**Item 7.1 Distress Beacons in Australia**

WP 36-7-1 (AMSA) –Distress Beacon Issues – Update – For Information

A look at distress beacon usage, registration and uptake trends in Australia.

Item 7.2 Non- Cospas-Sarsat Devices used in the SAR environment

WP 36-7-2 (AMSA) Emerging Technologies - SEND and Tracking Devices

Item 7.3 Regional Safety Programmes

WP 36-7-3.1 (AMSA) Torres Strait Marine Safety Program

WP 36-7-3.2 (NSW) Education Programmes

Section 8 Training and Education**Item 8.1 Search and Rescue Managers' Course**

WP 36-8-1 (TAS) – 23rd National Police SAR Managers' Course Report

This report discusses the most recent course with discussion points and learning outcomes arising.

Item 8.2 SAR Training for AFP IDG

WP 36-8-2 (QLD) – SAR Training For AFP IDG

This report highlights the cooperation between Queensland and the AFP's International Deployment Group.

Item 8.3 Proposed ASARMC Diploma Course

WP 36-8-3 (QLD) – Australian Federal Police – Proposed ASARMC Diploma Course

Seeking endorsement from the NATSAR Council for the development and delivery of a Diploma course for the AFP.