

Responses to SES Questionnaire received from the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
(copy attached)

Please describe the structure of the unit

SES Group Name	Group location	Number of members 10/11 FY as at (30/06/11)
Northern Group	19 Hutchins Street, Stafford	67 Active members and 40 reserve members
Southern Group	Lillian Ave, Salisbury	105 Active members and 36 reserve members
Eastern Group	9 Redfern Street, Morningside	65 Active members and 25 reserve members
Western Group	Perrin Park – Josling Street, Toowong	48 Active members and 31 reserve members
South Western Group	Ruddyard St, Richlands	39 Active members and 13 reserve members
Moggill Group	Stumers Road, Mt Crosby	21 Active members and 4 reserve members
Metro Group	66 Wilston Road, Newmarket	55 Active members and 22 reserve members
Operations Group	66 Wilston Road, Newmarket	16 Active members and 2 reserve members
North Eastern Group	270 Lancaster Road, Ascot	38 Active members and 2 reserve members
Moreton Island Group	Tangalooma Resort, Moreton Island	29 Active members and 20 reserve members
Total		483 Active members and 195 reserve members

The definition of an active member is a person who regularly attends training each week and participates in call outs. A reserve member is a person who does not attend training regularly and may be able to assist in large scale activations for the entire Unit.

Please indicate whether any members of your unit are paid

Council has recognized that the SES volunteers perform a very vital and necessary function in assisting the residents of the City and members of the public across the State. In undertaking these functions the volunteers often incur un-claimable expenses including fuel costs travelling to training and use of their own vehicles to attend activations. As a way of trying to recompense these volunteers Council introduced a service recognition payment scheme as a way of rewarding the volunteers. These payments are paid annually to each SES volunteer within the Brisbane City SES Unit after the completion of one years service.

**Guidelines to the Lord Mayor's Service Recognition Payments to the members of Brisbane
City State Emergency Service Unit**

The \$200 Payment (under 5 years of service)

- One off payment of \$200 to be paid from May of each financial year
- Must have completed at **least 12 months as an active member with a minimum qualification of Community member** of the Brisbane City SES Unit. The 1st May of each financial year will be the assigned cut-off to determine the length of time a person has been a member.
- An active member is a member with at least 75% attendance to training in any one year. The year being a financial year. (N.B. if the 75% attendance is not reached, training courses such as Floodboat, chainsaw etc. as well as any extra hours spent at SES will be taken into account. An application will need to be submitted by the member to the Local Controller, outlining the circumstances and proof of courses attended, for his approval.)
- The member must also participate in the nightly activities and be at training for the majority of the night.
- Continual payment for the coming financial years will be for members who continue being an active Community member as a minimum.
- Each member is to abide by the SES Code of Conduct. Should disciplinary action be taken against a member there is a possibility it could void their payment. It will be determined on a case by case basis and will depend on the severity of the breach. For those members who become ineligible for the payment due to disciplinary action, they will be notified at the time of sanction.
- Payment is for Brisbane City SES Members only. Should volunteers join from other SES units outside Brisbane their years of service already obtained will not be recognised for the purpose of this payment.
- Members on the reserve list will not receive payments.
- For payment purposes, the 1st May of each financial year will be the cut-off to determine the length of time a person has been an active Community member.
- For members to be paid, each group is required to keep the spreadsheet updated with the member's attendance. This should be done weekly. The spreadsheet is in 'Common' drive.
- It is the member's responsibility to ensure they attend 75% of the training nights to be eligible for the payment. This information will be provided back to the groups quarterly so members can check the accuracy etc.
- Individual circumstances will be taken into account when an application is submitted by the member to the Local Controller for his consideration.

The \$500 Payment (over 5 years of service)

- One off payment of \$500 to be paid from May of each financial year.
- Must have completed at least 5 consecutive years as an active member with a minimum qualification of Community member of the Brisbane City SES Unit. As an initial base line, it will be assumed that if a volunteer has been an active member with the base qualification of Community member since 2004, the volunteer will be eligible to receive the initial payment.

The 1st May of each financial year will be the assigned cut-off to determine the length of time a person has been a member.

- An active member is a member with at least 75% attendance at training in any one year. The year being a financial year. (N.B. if the 75% attendance is not reached, training courses such as floodboat, chainsaw etc. as well as any extra hours spent at SES will be taken into account. An application will need to be submitted by the member to the Local Controller, outlining the circumstances and proof of courses attended, for his approval.)
- The member must also participate in the nightly activities and be at training for the majority of the night.
- Continual payment for the coming financial years will be for members who continue being an active Community member as a minimum.
- Each member is to abide by the SES Code of Conduct. Should disciplinary action be taken against a member there is a possibility it could void their payment. It will be determined on a case by case basis and will depend on the severity of the breach. For those members who become ineligible for the payment due to disciplinary action, they will be notified at the time of sanction.
- Payment is for Brisbane City SES Members only. Should volunteers join from other SES units outside Brisbane; their years of service already obtained will not be recognised for the purpose of this payment.
- Members on the reserve list will not receive payments.
- For payment purposes, the 1st May of each financial year will be the cut-off to determine the length of time a person has been an active Community member.
- For members to be paid, each group is required to keep the spreadsheet updated with the member's attendance. This should be done weekly. The spreadsheet is in 'Common' drive.
- It is the member's responsibility to ensure they attend 75% of the training nights to be eligible for the payment. This information will be provided back to the groups quarterly so members can check the accuracy etc.
- Individual circumstances will be taken into account when an application is submitted by the member to the Local Controller for his consideration.

Council recognises that the members of the Brisbane City Unit Executive undertake additional hours in mentoring, leading, training and supporting members of their groups, often incurring out of pocket expenses. In an attempt to recompense these executive members, Council provides an annual honorarium of \$1000 to each executive member of the Unit.

Do you believe there is a need for SES members to be paid?

Brisbane City Council is committed to a full time paid employee undertaking the roll of Local Controller. This is considered appropriate given the size and population of the city of Brisbane. Brisbane City Council has implemented the payment structure as detailed in question 1.2 as an appropriate response to the efforts undertaken by the volunteers.

If there is more than one Local Controller in the local government area, what effect does this have on operations?

The Brisbane City Council local government area has one Local Controller.

Readiness for the 2010/2011 floods

Brisbane City Council Disaster Management Arrangements were activated, allowing for adequate preparation of the SES unit.

Did your unit have enough training to prepare it for the 2010/11 floods?

Brisbane City SES conducts training all year round for disaster response. One of our main functions is Storm Damage, which includes training on all the aspects of flooding.

Key Volunteers and Council staff are also trained in AIIMS (Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System), Working in a Emergency Operations Centre, and LDCC protocols to ensure our Incident management teams can respond to the LDMG as required.

Did your unit have enough volunteers to cope with demand?

There were adequate amounts of volunteers to provide several days of active response and ensure that Fatigue Management requirements were met. Fatigue management requirements are in accordance with the policy, procedures and doctrine of EMQ (Emergency Management Queensland).

Did your unit have enough equipment and resources

The Brisbane City Council were able to provide the Brisbane SES Unit with additional vehicles and equipment. Other resources for cleaning such as boots and detergents were supplied through the LDCC and Brisbane City Council operational staff were also made available to us as required.

Overall, do you think your unit was adequately prepared to respond to the 2010/2011 floods?

Yes, our training and resources were adequate for the 2010/11 Flood.

Operations during the 2010/2011 floods

As per below breakdown.

Please describe the activities undertaken by your unit during the 2010/2011 Flood

Activities undertaken by the Brisbane SES unit during the 2010/2011 flood are summarized in the following extract from the Unit's operating procedures:

Storm Damage Operations

The SES will:

- Undertake temporary repairs to damaged areas of essential infrastructure, domestic and commercial premises that are the result of a significant weather event, fire or damage caused by an incident out of the property owners' reasonable control

- Conduct chainsaw activities on fallen trees to provide access to essential infrastructure, domestic and commercial premises and render the site safe for persons in the area
- Engage in debris cleanup where there is a requirement for maintaining site safety or all other higher priority tasks have already been completed
- Perform sand bagging and water diversion in response to an emergency as the result of a significant weather event or an incident out of the property owners' reasonable control or prior warning to an event.

The SES does not:

- Undertake temporary repairs to domestic and commercial premises that are the result of inadequate maintenance or damage caused by actions of the property owner
- Undertake temporary repairs to damaged areas of domestic and commercial premises that are not impacting upon a living area of a home or affecting the conduct of an essential business
- Conduct chainsaw activities on trees that have not fallen to the ground or are hung up on part of the sites structures or other trees
- Fell trees
- Clear other trees or plants unnecessarily
- Perform sand bagging and water diversion in response to a forecast regular event such as large or king tides.

Flood Operations

The SES will:

- Undertake flood boat operations to evacuate and/or rescue isolated or trapped persons
- Undertake flood boat operations to resupply essential consumables and medication to isolated persons or communities where no better means of providing this task is available
- Provide assistance in transporting Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Swift Water Operators closer to areas where their assistance is necessary
- Transportation of other emergency service personnel or essential services authorities to conduct work, assessments or reposition in an isolated area as required
- Assist the community in sand bagging to protect property and infrastructure.

The SES does not:

- Transport members of the public for any purpose other than an emergency requirement.

Command and control

The Brisbane SES Unit follows the Command and Control guidelines in accordance with AIIMS procedures. The AIIMS provides a common management system that facilitates the effective and efficient coordination of all activities, by all parties involved, in the resolution of any incident. It is based upon Management by Objectives (MBO - Agreed common objectives to provide efficient and effective multi-agency response). AIIMS is based upon four core functions, that is; Control, Planning, Operations and Logistics and is the incident management system currently being utilised by organisations that include Queensland Fire and Rescue (QFRS), Queensland Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service (SES).

Generally Speaking please describe your responsibilities as local controller

To manage the SES Unit within the framework of the Disaster Management Act 2003, to follow policy, procedures and doctrine of EMQ and Local Government Guidance.

Ensuring the effective performance of the approved functions and activities of the SES Unit.

To perform duties as per role statement.

As Local Controller who do you report to during disaster response operations?

The Local controller position has dual reporting responsibilities.

For the management of Volunteers and activation response this role reports to the Area Director for Brisbane, Emergency Management Queensland.

For Brisbane City Council Disaster Management Arrangements and Council business this role reports to the Branch Manager of Asset Services, Field Services.

Where does your SES unit receive Requests for assistance from?

Requests for assistance are reported to the public through 132500 and end up in in ICCS (Integrated Customer Contact System), Jobs were also received via the LDCC during the flood. These jobs are then prioritized and issued to the individual groups.

What is the process of tasking SES members when requests for Assistance are received by your unit?

The Brisbane Duty Officer, or Operations Group in a large scale event, receives the request and issues it to the relevant Group Duty Officer.

The Group Duty officer tasks available teams of members to appropriate jobs dependant on skill sets and availability.

During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any competing requests for assistance? If so, how were these managed or prioritised?

The procedure in the Brisbane SES is to set priority on the following influencing factors:

Priority 1 (high)- aged and infirm (unable to assist themselves), aged care facilities, hospitals, crucial infrastructure and/or essential businesses (damage to these will affect the recovery process), facilities where children are at risk, lives are at risk if an immediate evacuation is not undertaken, any situation where persons are unable to self evacuate or provide an element of repair and lives can potentially be put at risk as a result, the potential for loss of life if an immediate response is not undertaken.

Priority 2 (medium)- members of the public who are unable to carry out their own repairs/preparations, evacuation is required but not immediately life threatening, the situation is not considered life threatening, businesses that are not essential but can be supportive of the recovery process.

Priority 3 (low)- members of the public who are able to carry out their own

repairs/preparations if materials are provided, some assistance may be provided for an evacuation but it is not urgent in nature, assistance to other agencies when there are no RFA's for SES response.

During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any Requests for Service that it was unable to respond to? If so how were these Requests Managed?

Yes, jobs were prioritized as above or referred back to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) for assistance or re-tasking

Were any members of your unit deployed to any other region during the 2010/2011 floods? If so how was this managed?

Teams of members were deployed to North Queensland to offer assistance as requested by EMQ Brisbane Region.

Deployments were managed by EMQ Brisbane Region, ensuring that sufficient resources were still available if required in Brisbane.

***What was your units contact with the following:
Local Disaster Coordinator***

Contact was made several times a day with the Incident Controller in the LDCC. The Brisbane SES unit also provided Situation Reports to the LDCC at the prescribed times during the day.

Local Disaster Coordination Centre

As above.

Local Disaster Management Group

The Brisbane Local Controller was a participant in the LDMG meetings.

District Disaster Coordinator, District Disaster Coordination Centre, District Disaster Management Group

Contact with this group was through the chain of command of the LDCC and Incident Controller.

EMQ Area and Regional Directors

Conversations were had on a continual basis with EMQ representatives. EMQ staff were acting as liaison officers with the LDCC.

Interaction with other emergency organizations

Brisbane SES worked with and along side Brisbane City Council staff, Defence Force units, contractors as well as traditional emergency services during the event.

Were expectations of local disaster managers ever in conflict with those of Emergency Management Queensland and if so how was this resolved?

A range of conflicts occur in these type of events. These conflicts are either resolved at the local level or referred through the chain of command to the LDCC for resolution.

What is the role of EMQ's Area and Regional Director during disasters?

The role of Area and Regional Directors are to support the disaster coordination centre's to limit the duplication of tasking and conflict of tasking during the event.

Communication

What type of communication devices were available and/or used during the flood?

Equipment Type	Description	Number of Units
Mobile telephones	Issued to executives in each group	40
Computers (email)	Desk top computers and lap top PCs	50
Digital 2 way radios	Motorola Digital 2 way radios – handheld portable, vehicle mounted and man-packs	120

Did any communication devices fail?

Congestion of the mobile network cause communication issues at times.

Generally speaking are any of these communication methods integrated or inter-operable with other emergency services?

Mobile telephones and email.

Funding

Where does your unit receive funding from?

Brisbane City Council budget allocation

Base Recurrent Operating Budget

Each financial year Council provides a base Recurrent Operating Budget of approximately \$1.6 Million which covers all the normal operating costs for the SES Unit.

Capital improvement budget

Each financial year capital budget are sort for improvements for the SES Unit. This financial year (2011-12) two projects have been approved totalling \$780,000. The first project is \$750,000 to commence the construction of a new SES depot in Brisbane. A further \$30,000 was approved for the upgrade of the Training room at Newmarket SES HQ. Each year additional capital projects are listed for approval in the budget process held in June of each year.

Capital additional vehicle budget

Each financial year Council provides a budget for the purchase of an additional SES vehicle for each of the Groups in the Unit. The value of these vehicles is approximately \$110,000 each.

The following funding is also provided to the Brisbane SES Unit.

Dollar for Dollar Fund Raising

Council has committed funding to assist the SES groups with their fund raising activities based on a

Dollar for Dollar subsidy. Each financial year Council makes a budget allocation of \$150,000 to fund this activity.

Dollar for Dollar Fund Raising Guidelines

- Fund raising will include community events, donations from the public and private companies.
- Fund raising will not include Government grants or similar type of grants.

- Fund raising will be based on individual groups. Dollar for dollar payments will be group based.

- For groups to be paid, each group is required to keep the spreadsheet updated with the amount raised and where it has come from. This should be done monthly. The spreadsheet is in 'Common' drive.

- There will be two payments a year, one in December for the first half of the year and the second in May for the second half of the year.

Has your unit applied for state funding and if so was the process easy/difficult

Do you have input into how the funding received by your unit is used?

Is funding adequate? If not please describe how your unit would benefit from additional funding?

Is the way funding is allocated adequate and how could this be improved?

Year on year funding grants is an inefficient method of distributing funds. A city the size of Brisbane should have an ongoing agreement that provides significant funds to the members in the city. By way of direct contribution the State makes very little contribution the running of the Brisbane SES. This cost is covered by Brisbane City Council.

Additional infrastructure funding could be used to help construct facilities for the units. A significant increase in state contributions over a long term agreement would allow strategic funding decisions to be made.

Does your unit undertake any additional fundraising activities?

Individual SES Social Groups conduct Fundraising to buy additional resources that they desire.

What type of fundraising activities?

Sausage Sizzles, Tin Rattles, Parking Marshalls and Fete Stalls.

What is this as a % of operating budget?

These funds are not included in the operational budget, and are managed and spent by the groups at their discretion.

Does fundraising present any difficulties?

Operational Costs are covered by Brisbane City Council. Fundraising is optional and not required unless members chose to do so.

Do you have suggestions as how the SES can attract and retain members?

As we are in the Metropolitan area, we receive many volunteering inquires. Current retention is acceptable, and those members leaving the organization are taking valuable skills with them to assist there local neighborhoods in times of disaster.

General Comment about SES operations during the Flood

Overall I feel that our Unit responded well to this event and we received the necessary support from BCC and EMQ to ensure that we responded effectively to this event.

Summary

The comments above are a compilation of previous information provided to the Flood Commission, comments from the Acting Local Controller, Ken Craven as Lowry Boyd is uncontactable on annual leave and a summary of ongoing discussions between Shane MacLeod, Manager Asset Services Branch and Lowry Boyd, Brisbane Local Controller.



Manager Asset Services Branch
Field Services Group

Questionnaire for SES Local Controllers

The following questionnaire is split into six sections. Each section contains a number of questions asking you to describe the nature of your SES unit/groups, and also the nature of response operations conducted by your SES unit/groups during the 2010/2011 floods. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the Commission by Friday, 14 October 2011.

1. Structure of SES units

1.1 Please describe the structure of your unit, including the number and location of any constituent groups and the number of members in each group.

1.2 Please indicate whether any members of your unit are employed on a paid, full-time basis. If so, how many are employed on this basis and what positions do they fill?

Structure of SES units

1.3 Do you believe there is a need for SES members (including Local Controllers) to be employed on a paid, full-time basis? Please explain why or why not, including whether there are other ways in which SES members could be rewarded for their time.

1.4 If there is more than one Local Controller in your local government area, what effect does this have on operations?

2. Readiness for the 2010/2011 floods

We would like to know whether you feel that your unit was adequately prepared to cope with the demands of the 2010/2011 floods. Please provide a brief explanation in response to the following questions.

2.1 Did your unit have enough training to prepare it for the 2010/2011 floods?

2.2 Did your unit have enough volunteers to cope with demand?

2.3 Did your unit have enough equipment and resources?

2.4 Overall, do you think your unit was adequately prepared to respond to the 2010/2011 floods?

3. Operations during the 2010/2011 floods

3.1 Please describe the activities undertaken by your unit and/or its groups during the 2010/2011 floods (e.g. Requests for Assistance, rescues, evacuations).

4. Command and control

4.1 Generally speaking, please describe your responsibilities as Local Controller during disaster response operations.

4.2 As a Local Controller, who do you report to during disaster response operations?

4.3 Where does your SES unit receive Requests for Assistance from?

4.4 What is the process of tasking SES members when Requests for Assistance are received by your unit?

4.5 During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any competing Requests for Assistance? If so, how were these managed or prioritised?

Command and control

4.6 During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any Requests for Assistance that it was unable to respond to? If so, how were these requests managed?

4.7 Were any members of your unit deployed to any other region during the 2010/2011 floods? If so, how was this managed?

4.8 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your unit's contact and coordination (if any) with the following:

a) Local Disaster Coordinator

b) Local Disaster Coordination Centre

c) Local Disaster Management Group

Command and control

4.9 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your unit's contact and coordination (if any) with the following:

a) District Disaster Coordinator

b) District Disaster Coordination Centre

c) District Disaster Management Group

4.10 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your contact (if any) with Emergency Management Queensland's Area Directors and/or Regional Directors?

4.11 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your interactions (if any) with other emergency service organisations?

Command and control

4.12 During the 2010/2011 floods, were the requirements or expectations of local disaster managers ever in conflict with those of Emergency Management Queensland? If so, how were these various demands resolved (if at all)?

4.13 In your view, what is the role of Emergency Management Queensland's Area and Regional Directors during disasters?

5. Communications

5.1 What type/s of communication devices were available and/or used during the 2010/2011 floods?

5.2 Did any of the communication devices your unit used fail during the 2010/2011 floods? If so, please provide details.

5.3 Generally speaking, are any of the communication methods your unit uses integrated or inter-operable with other emergency service organisations?

6. Funding

6.1 Where does your unit receive funding from?

6.2 Has your unit applied for additional funding from the State Government in the 2009/2010 or 2010/2011 financial years? If so, what was the funding program and did you find the application process easy/difficult?

6.3 Do you have input into how the funding received by your unit is used?

6.4 In your view, is the total amount of funding currently received by your unit adequate? If not, please describe how your unit would benefit from additional funding.

Funding

6.5 Do you think that the way in which funding is allocated and distributed to your unit is adequate? If not, how could this be improved?

6.6 Does your unit undertake any additional fundraising activities? If so:

a) what types of fundraising activities does your unit undertake?

b) approximately what percentage of your operating budget does this account for?

c) does fundraising present any difficulties?

7. Other

7.1 Do you have any suggestions as to how the SES can attract and retain members, either for your particular unit or at a state-wide level?

7.2 Please make any other comments you wish about SES operations generally and/or during the 2010/2011 floods.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire