

OUR MISSION

What sets SAVEM apart and is a great strength of the South Australian EM system is that we are:

- Formally part of the State's EM arrangements (L-A-W, LAW!)
- Have a structured Plan
- Train to AIIMS
- Are 100% volunteer
- Are "Assured" by the State Government
- Aim for continual improvement and upskilling of volunteers to meet future demands and contribute to positive community and societal outcomes.

It is essential to understand that SAVEM is the first and to date the only Emergency Management trained Veterinary organization in Australia.

REVIEWING 2014-15

Several 'total fire bans' days were declared late in September 2014. Fire ban season was also moved forward due to the very dry spring, and increased potential for severe fire hazards.

SAVEM Fireground Safety training DVD, made with the assistance of the CFS, and with an SGIC Community Grant, will be released this year. Rapid & effective delivery of visual information to outline fire ground safety issues for new and existing volunteers will outline what to expect in the fireground after it is controlled, and SAVEM is permitted access. Thanks too to Cherry Gardens CFS member Brenton Ragless and Simon Malcolm of Simon Malcolm Productions.

PARTICIPATING AGENCY COLLABORATION

A meeting with officers from DCSI and Volunteering SA/NT began a discussion as to how SAVEM can be assisted by volunteers registered with that agency. Interrupted by the Sampson Flat fire, these plans are ongoing.

During peacetime 2014, what proved to be critical meetings were held with RSPCA and with Animal Welfare League officers. These two organisations are Participating Agencies, like SAVEM, in the SEMP, under Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Service, headed up by PIRSA.

From this has arisen the agreed policy to act collaboratively in an event; to pool resources and maintain close communication. We met together at PIRSA's Participating Agency forum in September – little did we know how our plans would be tested a few months later.

BEGINNING 2015

The Sampson Flat bushfire activation began on the second day of the fire (3 January) in our Control Centre. Initially staging from One Tree Hill, then Kersbrook, SAVEM teams were on site for 7 weeks. Collaboration between SAVEM and RSPCA, AWL, Adelaide University, Para Hills vets, ProVet SA, WICEN, Conservation & Wildlife Management SA Inc, ZoosSA, Fauna Rescue and Native Animal Network meant good outcomes were achieved as Response transitioned into Recovery. The Kersbrook community underpinned us, with facilities, support and friendship.

Sampson Flat put our processes to the test. These worked. Our good record-keeping permitted us a quantitative glimpse of what was done, the resources needed, & to track animals in care and release. We were glad to have the opportunity to help hundreds of animals and their people in & around the 12,500 ha fireground. A resounding THANKYOU from SAVEM IMT to all volunteers who contributed so much.



Outside Incident Control, One Tree Hill CFS
5 January, 2015



Kersbrook Triage
Centre



AAR, CFS Region 1
HQ, Mt Barker



SINCE THE SAMPSON FLAT FIRE, SAVEM has been part of the Community Reference Group (Service Providers) at the Local Recovery Centre at Gumeracha, at the invitation of Local Recovery Coordinator Karlene Maywald. We are available when members of the affected communities seek support in their gradual re-building of their lives, their facilities and their communities, and attend Community Meetings, Recovery Group gatherings, or respond to enquiries as required. The Logistics Manager, Emilis Prelgauskas, has, in his own professional capacity as an architect, been at the forefront of the rebuilding group, assisting (pro bono) residents who lost their homes.

Ten volunteers attended a "Thankyou" Reception at Government House in April, and the Premier's Reception and a BBQ at Gumeracha. Nurse Coordinator Carol Haley arranged a "Thankyou CFS" car run with the Corvette Club to Birdwood Motor Museum.

Dr Claire Moore has published a poster of the SF data base, presented at the Wildlife Diseases Association conference in July in Queensland, the Coordinator has presented papers on SAVEM at Sampson Flat at the Australia & NZ Disaster Management conference, Australasian Fire & Emergency Services Authorities Council conference, and next week at the Australasian Natural Hazards Management conference. An account of the SAVEM response was also published on the Australian Institute of Emergency Management Knowledge Hub blog. As a result of our work, the Coordinator accepted a nomination for the Pride of Australia Medal in the Environment category, and was placed in the final three. The winner of the Heroism category was Daryl Hutchins, Captain of Paracombe CFS, for leading the team who rescued surviving dogs from the Tea Tree Gully Boarding Kennels in the fire. SAVEM volunteers Carol Haley and Rob Butler were part of that team.

Other relevant news is that we have purchased our own Thermal Imaging camera, and have successfully applied for funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program for a 4WD tray top ute: a "workhorse" to supplement the Jeep.

AAR
We attended PIRSA's Participating Agency After Action Review, and held our own internally, generously facilitated by David Campbell from the CFS, assisted by Mark Thomason and Bob Kearney. David and Bob were joint presenters at our *Leaders Intent and Common Operating Picture* workshop in May. Many thanks again to Dr Nancy Bombardieri for use of the PIRSA "hut", and for PIRSA's ongoing support.

INTER-AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS productively expanded to groups such as Red Cross, the Salvation Army, ZoosSA, NRM and Conservation Volunteers. Red Cross offered their Psychological First Aid course to other Service Providers at no cost, and about 20 SAVEM volunteers eagerly took part. Some of us were fortunate to attend seminars given by Dr Rob Gordon, a clinical psychologist working in natural hazard emergencies since 1983. Rob explained how our body biochemistry impacts on our behaviour during and after an emergency event.

UNUSUAL
SAVEM deploys for emergency events, as distinct from one-off occurrences - which other agencies routinely attend. An exception occurred mid-March, when a neighbour's cow was down in mud at the bottom of a steep hill. EM trained Veterinary assistance was helpful to the farmer, SES and CFS crews who attended the eventually successful multi-hour retrieval, with deep slush & mud complicating placement of slings and harnesses. The reason for noting this here is that AIIMS protocols were invaluable in everyone having an effective role. This is a reminder that a "how hard can it be" approach doesn't work. Only trained personnel will be effective in emergency situations, no matter how much day-to-day rescue work they have done.

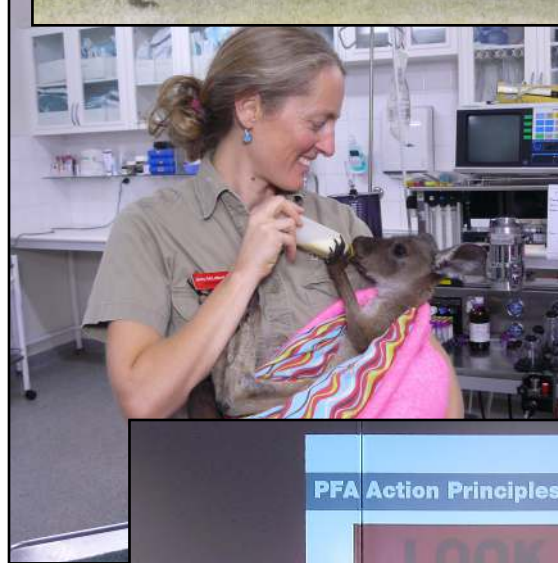
BE READY! SEE YOU AT THE EXERCISE!



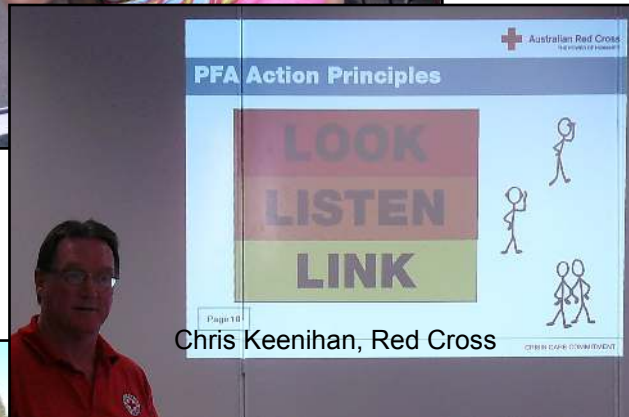
At Government House



The Kennel rescue
Photo: The Advertiser



Dr Jenny, ZoosSA & "No. 23"



Chris Keenihan, Red Cross



Saving Harry Potter, the cow. Mission Accomplished!