

SAVEM

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Inc.



NEWSLETTER

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The “Rockleigh” Fire, 18 December 2013

This last newsletter for 2013 was in draft form on the morning of Wednesday 18 December. I managed 10 minutes work on it before receiving an SMS from SAVEM & Rockleigh CFS volunteer Dianne Pearson. From the fire truck, Dianne had spotted about 20 kangaroos, and a dozen possums & rabbits on the ground, many of them injured. SAVEM's Activation protocol was initiated, and calls were immediately made to PIRSA's State Controller, and Manager, Emergency Management. Permission to proceed was granted, and the Coordinator began contacting a First Response Team. Next on the contact list was the Conservation & Wildlife Management branch of the Sporting Shooters Association, and CFS Region 3. Verbal Sitreps were obtained from volunteers on the fireground with dual CFS/SAVEM affiliations, and this information was very helpful.

I spoke with Region 3 Commander later in the evening when the fire was declared contained. The plan then was for SAVEM to attend the Staging area at 0700 the next morning, and if safe, tour the fireground & assess the need for further resources. By now, the intelligence was that animals had either escaped, or headed into the rocky gullies and perished. The shooters were very generous, offering a team of up to 4 volunteers at short notice over the next few days. All the groundwork building a good working relationship with the CFS was paying off, with Region 3 understanding SAVEM's role and capability. They were very concerned about worsening conditions the next day.

The Logistics Manager, Emilis Prelgauskas, and I arrived at the Staging area at Callington Oval at 0700 the next morning, where we were met by the Incident Controller, having phoned ahead with our ETA. The IC provided us with maps and points of contact on the fireground

A sector commander escorted us to the access tracks bisecting the fire ground, & we drove around all accessible areas. Dynamic Risk Assessment meant we did not enter wooded areas where stumps were still burning or smouldering, and we could hear large trees crashing down. The SAVEM Jeep in 4WD coped very well with the deep sand of the firebreaks put in place the previous day.

We saw 2 well and one dead kangaroo. We spoke to local farmers, and letter-box dropped SAVEM brochures. It is possible that animals will appear in coming days/weeks as in the Cherryville fire. Locals and CFS have our contact details if this happens. The situation fortunately did not worsen, and with no reports of injured animals, we stood down the FRT and the Shooters.

Emilis was instructing at Murray Bridge Gliding Club the following Saturday morning, and flew over the fireground. He saw no animals in the affected area, and was able to scan the steep rocky gullies and woodland we could not access.

Sincere thanks to those of you who were able to respond to the request for volunteers, and to those who replied even though you were not available. Towards the end of SAVEM's first year, 2009, we received a request to assist with an incident near Oak Valley on the West Coast—on Boxing Day. In the end local authorities managed, but Emergencies have no respect for time of year!



That's not all smoke! Foreshortened by the zoom lens, about 80 m east of the dead kangaroo, a large tree crashes to the ground, quickly followed by another. We had already made the safety decision not to enter the woodland. Ash and dust reached the height of the canopy.

It's not called “Rockleigh” for nothing! Animals fleeing into the gullies are unlikely to have survived.



This group of raptors, **right**, were unharmed on the edge of the fireground. There were about 15 birds in this dead tree, complete with nest. The presence of a lone magpie on the right looks tenuous. **Below**, not so lucky.



It's been a productive year for SAVEM, and we look forward to consolidating on this year's progress in 2014.

Our year has included:

Three Level One training workshops, CFS Fireground training day, Exercise Winter Fire, responses to incidents at Port Lincoln, Cherryville and Rockleigh, approximately 20 public speaking engagements, conference presentations, several publications in journals and industry publications, five newsletters, six SOP meetings, Jeep purchase and fitout, SAVEM clothing purchased, donations received and grant monies successfully sought, and 5000 SAVEM brochures distributed.

Supporting our supporters

We greatly value the support provided to us by our sponsors, and endeavour to acknowledge their participation with SAVEM when the opportunity arises during SAVEM's outreach activities. These include publications featuring our activities, and by display on our vehicle and brochures.

Recent publications

The work by our volunteers has appeared in a number of publications in recent months:

- The *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* July 2013 issue included a 5 page article. This has been published in hard copy, as well as the web link provided last newsletter, and on the website.
- *The Veterinarian* magazine August 2013 published a 2 page outline of the Cherryville response.
- Adrian Brien Jeep included a 2 page spread on SAVEM in their October 2013 on-line blog.
- The Logistics Manager, Emilis Prelgauskas, has included a page in his monthly "evolvment" newsletter to architects in Adelaide on SAVEM and its activities.
- The *Murray Valley Standard* included material on our December workshop in the December 3 newspaper edition, and an article about the Coordinator on December 10. ABC Local Radio 891 interviewed the Coordinator on 8 November. This MP3 file can be found on the website.

Volunteers continue our awareness tasks

The commitment of SAVEM volunteers continues to extend public awareness.

The first 5000 brochures which were printed early in 2013 have now been fully distributed by mail and by our volunteers at community meetings and functions.

The next 5000 print run includes the new SAVEM phone number 0477 055 233, new additional sponsors and photos. SAVEM's Nurse Coordinator, Carol Haley, has given SAVEM presentations to the CFS, SES, ScoutsSA, HorseSA and schools, and distributed hundreds of brochures. After Cherryville, Team Leader Tamarand Cresswell letter-boxed SAVEM brochures to many local residents over the course of a week.

Through Kathy Newman we were invited to participate in "Paws for CFS" in September at Stirling - a dog walk fundraiser for the CFS. The day included discussions with other stall holders, some being Lost Dogs of Adelaide, Adelaide Hills Council Ranger, and Superdogs agility team. The Jeep stood by and brochures were circulated, and the Coordinator gave a short public address.

SAVEM was invited to the 'Know Your Risk Day' at Paradise on Sunday 27 October, organised by the CFS and Tea Tree Gully and Adelaide Hills Councils. The Jeep spent the day in front of the open air pavilion at Thornden Park where display stands, talk sessions and 'Yellow Brick Road' for children gave emergency services the avenue to talk both to the public and amongst one another.

The Jeep was present at the **Australian International Three Day Event** in Victoria Park on 15 & 16 November, where the Coordinator takes the role of "Vet Controller" on the radio in the Control Room on Cross Country Day. SAVEM brochure distribution is mandatory at such an event.

ProVet SA have been a supporter of SAVEM from the beginning. For their **2013 Expo** at the end of November we were offered a front gate position, with our information brochures in each show bag.

On-line

Having made the efforts to meet their somewhat trying entry requirements, SAVEM now has a PayPal direct payment account. Details on the web site.

This has raised the separate issue of tax deductibility status for donations. It turns out that although we are a registered Charity, the ATO has declared us not to be a "fire and emergency" agency (because we do not fight the fire), neither are we an "animal welfare agency" (because we work in the context of Emergency Management). We are now in the process of applying to the Deputy Treasurer in Canberra for an "in name only" Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Skype

In our continuous evolution, we continue to look for opportunities to broaden our ability to interact with our volunteers.

One of these moves has been to add Skype to the SAVEM computer. Our contact name there is SAVEMINC

The goal is to easily include volunteers from further afield in meetings such as SOP development, thereby saving them travelling, time and cost, but enabling them to have real time inputs to these developments.

As a participating volunteer, please send us an email with your Skype contact details if you would like to contribute in this way.

Skype is free to download, and if you need help to set up, email us at info@savem.org.au and we arrange for the webmaster to assist you.



PAWS FOR CFS FUNDRAISER, STIRLING

It's a Jeep

The dedicated vehicle bought earlier in 2013 has now been fitted out by **Handy Systems** at Beverley with rear load area shelves, drawers, safe and collapsible cage; and external alert roof lights.

The vehicle has been used during winter at public awareness events, and was invaluable attending at the Rockleigh fire, not just to get through the deep sand firebreaks graded the day before, but for immediate recognition by Police and CFS as to our identity.

Communications

SAVEM is delighted to announce that we have been offered assistance with our radio communications by the committee of WICEN (Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network). At an initial meeting with the President and Secretary of WICEN in November, we discussed obtaining their help with our Communications SOP and sourcing, fitting and training for in-vehicle and control centre radios. WICEN will activate after Emergency events to generate a network, providing temporary transmission towers and personnel, which contributes to the ability to communicate alongside the Government Radio Network (GRN), mobile and other comms which may have been adversely affected by the event. WICEN have also donated some of their Message Books, which are very user friendly.

WICEN were the first group to successfully transmit outgoing communications from Darwin after Cyclone Tracey on Christmas Eve in 1974. They are named in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). Please visit the WICEN website: www.wicen.org.au

Volunteers interacting

During the next few months, as well as continuing our "core business", SAVEM needs to build on ways to better involve our volunteers more routinely than has been possible so far. Core demands are taking up all our capacity, and with the Coordinator hoping to commence a PhD in the New Year in the Emergency Management sector, "many hands (will be needed to) make light work!"

We are also mindful of the fact that social events are good ways to connect, learn and brainstorm, even if that is as simple as a coffee, or stronger!, after a meeting.

Donations and Grants

Carol Haley has spearheaded a campaign to provide SAVEM with a supply of donated pet cages. The campaign was just a little too successful, and Carol found herself with a shed full of cages and room for little else. Thanks to the willing assistance of **PIRSA vet, Jeremy Rogers**, a trailer load of cages is now cleaned, disinfected and stored at a PIRSA shed in Murray Bridge.

Dr Judy Whigham, Principal of Chandlers Hill Veterinary Hospital, has donated 17 very healthy "pre-loved" scrub tops, to add to those donated previously by Virbac Animal Health. Thankyou, Judy! I love it when Practices change their uniforms!

One of SAVEM's Admin volunteers, **Melissa Kelly**, has volunteered to manage our volunteer registration data base. Thankyou Melissa!

Dave Taylor of Handy Systems hands over the SAVEM Jeep to Logistics Manager, Emilis Prelgauskas



In early December SAVEM received a letter from the **Office for Volunteers**, advising us that we have been successful with a grant application to provide PPE for our First Response Team. Thanks again to Carol Haley for putting us in touch with ScoutsSA purchasing officer Jamie Fry, who clearly has that job for a good reason. **Cindy Cinel** has also been active sourcing PPE at discounted prices for those on the other side of town. Contact me and I can put you in touch with Cindy.

Recent animal publications of interest

Through the architect's network, Emilis has been alerted to publications which SAVEM will hold for on-going information:

- 2013 *Designing to Heal* by Jenny Donovan, CSIRO publishing. This text describes research into responses to disasters, and the human factors in rebuilding communities. This is summarised in Australian Institute of Architects Environment Design Guide papers EDG 78 JD1 and JD2
- 2011 *Four legs four walls* by Harlock Jackson, Petcare Information & Advisory Service, 404 Burke Rd Camberwell Victoria. This text outlines habitat design guidelines for domestic pets.



"The purpose of life is a life of purpose".

Stuart Ellis, AM, Director, Australasian Fire & Emergency Service Authorities Council

Last training for 2013

The Level 1 day on 8 December was organised for Murray Bridge, originally at the PIRSA facility. Many thanks to Dr Jeremy Rogers for arranging use of this venue. But as the day was fully subscribed early, and as the numbers reached into the mid 40s, it was clear we would need a larger venue, and relocated to the Council operated Monarto War Memorial Hall. This has involved a raft of booking compliance paperwork and instigated an increase to the SAVEM Public Indemnity Insurance limit.

The Level 1 training is always a full day. Logistics Manager Emilis sourced excellent food from the "German Cake Shop" in Murray Bridge. Thanks must of course also go to SAVEM's Principal Training Officer, **Dr Nancy Bombardieri**, for her willing and enthusiastic work, and to **Jan Mahoney**, our webmaster, for extracting segments of Snr Sgt Russell Dippy's presentation on DVD from our Legislation workshop in February 2012. Congratulations to Nancy for her recent appointment as Manager, Emergency Management, Biosecurity SA.

The attendance list was the classic SAVEM spectrum - a mix of vets, vet students, vet nurses, wildlife carers and others with interest and skills to offer.

Several volunteers indicated they would like to take an active role in SAVEM, which was great news. And a very sincere **THANKYOU** to everyone for helping to pack up and clean up at the end of the day.

About Level One....

Just a word on the Level One workshop: I am very aware that for some attendees the program is not quite what is expected. The best analogy I can offer is that it is like learning the alphabet so that you can read. It can be challenging with a diverse group, where some have done similar training with the CFS or SES, and others are hearing the information for the first time. Remember that Emergency Management training is 100% directly translatable to everyday life, and work, but it is no walk in the park.

SAVEM's Level One is a condensed version of the PIRSA two day Foundation Program, and is very intense in places. It is absolutely crucial to understand the basics of how the SAVEM Plan works, it's basis in the legal structure, and it's place in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). The jargon can seem overwhelming, but is there to help, not to hinder. As I mention at the beginning of the day, don't worry too much about remembering the detail, that will be absorbed with time, just like anything else. It is also important to note at the outset that this is a very serious business. There is no room for warm and fuzzy, and no place for freelancers. An American President once said, **"we do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard!"**

So if AIIMS, and Functional Management, and Span of Control, and Management by Objective seem baffling as to how it applies to YOU, please, trust me! and all will be revealed in the fullness of time as you participate with SAVEM.

For example, if you're a wildlife carer with special skills in caring for macropods, you're an Operations person – not necessarily First Response, but later, in for the long haul.

If you're good at getting stuff, including the lunch, you're a Logistics person – remember *Obtain, Maintain, Sustain*.

And if you can gather information and put it together in a concise form for the Ops people to be able to do their job effectively, you're a Planner.

AIIMS3 is very easy to read. Cost is \$16.20 plus postage (\$3 in Adelaide area). I encourage anyone with a serious interest in SAVEM to purchase a copy.



On behalf of the Board of SAVEM Inc, I would like to wish you a safe and happy Christmas, and flourishing New Year. Best wishes especially to the new graduate Vets, starting work soon.

Lastly, if you are available to respond to an incident over Summer, but are away from your usual point of contact, please send an email as to how best to find you. We will only do so if we really need to.

Watch the SAVEM website for news and details of the next training program, and look out for some on-line training modules in 2014.