



# NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL

Fortieth meeting of the Australian  
National Search and Rescue Council

19-21 October 2016  
Fremantle, WA



**AFP**  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

## Executive summary

The 40<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the National Search and Rescue Council (NATSAR) was held in Fremantle, 19-21 October 2016, hosted by the Western Australia Police Service. Thirty-two representatives were in attendance from the ten Search and Rescue (SAR) Authorities that make up Australia's national SAR system, including the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), the Australian Defence Force and the eight State, Territory and Federal Police Services. Observers from the New Zealand SAR Council, New Zealand Police and the National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee also attended the meeting. Western Australian Deputy Police Commissioner, Gary Dreibergs formally opened the annual meeting.

Each SAR Authority provided a review of SAR operations within their respective jurisdictions from the previous financial year, July 2015 – June 2016, reporting on notable SAR incidents, capabilities, training, SAR technologies, and future developments. These reports provide the Council an important opportunity to learn from shared experiences and identify common national SAR trends, which facilitate the continued development of consistent SAR operations and procedures across jurisdictions. The Council also progressed the trial of reporting against a common set of incident statistics in order to develop a national view of SAR activity. This remains an area for development during 2017.

The Council reviewed its achievements from the previous 12 months as documented in the NATSAR Council Performance Report, which highlights the value of our collaborative approach and the professional contribution from all jurisdictions. The Council's strategic objectives for the next two years were confirmed as the ongoing strategic framework for progressing the 2016-2018 Business Plan initiatives, which were agreed in session.

In addition to annual Council business, the Council hosted several guest speakers to present on recent initiatives affecting the Australian SAR system, representing the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and the Western Australia Coroner's Court. The presenters discussed the developments in weather applications relevant to SAR; and the coronial process from a post-SAR incident perspective, particularly focussing on the types of considerations that are useful for SAR Authorities to be aware of when an incident involves loss of life.

Topics of strategic significance included the national approach to SAR training and how Australia intends to maintain consistency across all SAR jurisdictions. The Council also noted that Police Commissioners had endorsed the revised version of the Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) to progress for Commonwealth and State/Territory Ministerial signature. Additionally, the Council endorsed the outcomes of the Land SAR Coordination Working Group that successfully implemented the National Operational Procedure for Transfer of Coordination for Land SAR Incidents on 1 July 2016. A full 'Statement of Meeting Outcomes' was circulated to Council members following the meeting and is presented in Attachment 1.

The 2016 Australian Search and Rescue Award was presented during the annual meeting program. AMSA CEO, Mick Kinley, presented the award to Mount Barney Lodge Country Retreat owner-operators, John Larkin and son Innes, for their outstanding efforts in search and rescue within the Mount Barney National Park, QLD. The Council also hosted Ms Amanda Bott, Executive General Manager from the Australian Royal Flying Doctor Service, as guest speaker to address the attendees to the 2016 Australian Search and Rescue Award dinner.

The 41<sup>st</sup> meeting will be jointly hosted by the Australian Federal Police and Australian Defence Force in October 2017.

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*Attendees of the 2016 NATSAR annual meeting in Fremantle, WA.*

## List of attendees

### Representatives of NATSAR Council Member Organisations

<b>Attendee name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Toby Stone	NATSAR Council Chair General Manager, AMSA, Marine Environment and SAR	AMSA
Alan Lloyd	SAR Operations Manager	AMSA
Christine Macmillan	SAR System Engagement & Policy Manager	AMSA
Julian Mitchell	SAR Resources & Training Manager	AMSA
Louise Proctor	NATSAR Council Secretariat	AMSA
Lou Fava	NATSAR Council Secretariat	AMSA
Darren Wood	Inspector	NSW Police
Michael Smith	Senior Sergeant	NSW Police
John Todor	Superintendent	VIC Police
Mark Arneil	Inspector	VIC Police
Alistair Nisbet	Senior Sergeant	VIC Police
David O'Donovan	Superintendent	SA Police
Paul Kolesnikowicz	Senior Sergeant	SA Police
Dean Maloney	Commander	NT Police
Meacham King	Sergeant	NT Police
Brendon Zilko	Captain	Australian Defence Force
James Frost	Flight Lieutenant	Australian Defence Force (RAAF)
Lee Renshaw	Inspector	TAS Police
Jim Whitehead	Senior Sergeant	QLD Water Police
Mick Wear	Sergeant	WA Police
Shane Sadler	Inspector	WA Police
Nick Riney	A/Senior Sergeant	WA Police

David Bachi	Commander	Australian Federal Police
Steve Cooke	Superintendent	Australian Federal Police
David Bell	Sergeant	Australian Federal Police

### Observers

Duncan Ferner	Secretariat	NZ Search and Rescue Council
Jo Holden	Sergeant	NZ Police
Jeff Howe	WA Representative	National Volunteer Marine SAR Council
Noel Minnock	Senior Sergeant	WA Police
Tracie Farrington	Observer	WA Police
Nikki Young	Sergeant	WA Police
Justin Coutts	Sergeant	WA Police

Presenter/Attendee	Position, Organisation	Presentation topic
Gary Dreibergs	Deputy Commissioner, Western Australia Police	Official Opening
Evelyn Vicker	Deputy Coroner, WA Coroners	SAR Coronial inquests
Neal Moodie	National Manager for Marine Weather Services, Bureau of Meteorology	Weather and SAR

## Formal opening

Deputy Commissioner Gary Dreibergs of Western Australia Police Service formally declared the 40<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the National Search and Rescue (NATSAR) Council open and expressed Western Australia's pleasure in hosting the 2016 meeting. He also welcomed AMSA executives and all jurisdictional representatives present. The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of search and rescue (SAR) as a community service, noting the challenges that come from individuals travelling remotely and the tyranny of distance, particular for WA which has the largest policing region in the world. He also spoke of the ongoing Police commitment to search and rescue in Australia and the importance of a collaborative approach to achieve an effective and efficient national system. Deputy Commissioner Dreibergs also provided the opening address for the Australian SAR Awards Dinner.



*Deputy Commissioner Dreibergs opening the 2016 SAR Awards Dinner*

## Session 1: Administration

### Name of Session

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Welcome and Apologies

### Working paper(s)

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WP 1-1-1 Attendees List

WP 1-1-2 Australian SAR Awards Dinner, Order of Proceedings

### Objective

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To discuss and confirm the administrative aspects of the Council meeting, including introductions and apologies; venue administration; and official announcement of the recipients of the 2016 Australian SAR Award.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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The Chair of the National Search and Rescue Council, Toby Stone, welcomed everyone to the 40<sup>th</sup> convening of the NATSAR Council meeting, noting it was his first meeting since succeeding John Young in the role as General Manager Response, Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). A record of attendees is available, including other new members (page 4).

The Chair reflected that the level of representation from both marine and land SAR practitioners and program managers provides an impressive breadth of knowledge and experience. The Chair emphasised the importance of this opportunity to share knowledge and lessons learnt to facilitate the ongoing delivery of an efficient and effective SAR service to the wider Australian community.

The contribution of John Young (AMSA) and Senior Sergeant Barry Gibson (Victoria Police) was recognised. Both were long standing members on the Council and made a significant contribution to SAR in Australia over the years. The Chair also noted this as the last meeting for Superintendent Dean Moloney (NT Police) and Inspector Lee Renshaw (Tasmania Police) who will both retire prior to the next NATSAR Council meeting. Their contribution is greatly appreciated and was formally recognised at the awards dinner.

The winners of the Australian Search and Rescue Award 2016 were announced. Members of the NATSAR Council selected the recipients from a strong pool of nominations, recognising Queensland father and son, John and Innes Larkin, for their outstanding contribution to SAR, assisting in over 400 response operations resulting in the successful rescue of some 700 lost and overdue bushwalkers in the Mount Barney National Park, Queensland.

This year the Commendation Award was presented to the Tasmania Police Helicopter Crew, *Polair 72*, for an extremely difficult rescue in adverse weather conditions and difficult terrain on Federation Peak, Tasmania.

The Chair again expressed his appreciation to the Western Australia Police Service for hosting the 40<sup>th</sup> annual NATSAR Council meeting and closed the first session.

## Session 2: NATSAR Council Meeting Agenda

Name of session

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Order of business and any other items

Working paper

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WP 2-1      NATSAR Council Annual Meeting Agenda 2016

Objective

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To confirm the agenda for this year's annual meeting and include any additional items proposed by Council members.

Discussion points and outcomes

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The Chair gave a brief overview of the agenda, noting that it is again structured over three days as per previous years.

There were no additional items added to the agenda.

Actions

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Nil



## Session 3: SAR Operations Reports

### Name of session

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SAR Activity Reports  
National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee  
AMSA SAR Operations  
International SAR Operations and Liaison  
WA Coroner presentation  
National System Update

### Working paper(s)

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WP 3-1-1 to WP 3-1-9	State SAR Activity Reports
WP 3-2-1	National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee Report
WP 3-3-1	AMSA SAR Operations Report

### Objectives

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For each SAR Authority and observer organisation to provide the NATSAR Council with a review of key highlights from the previous financial year July 2015 – June 2016, in order to share knowledge, recognise national SAR trends, identify where lessons learnt can be applied across jurisdictions, and note any issues that require further discussion.

To further discuss the collection of consistent statistical information to enable the development of a comprehensive representation of SAR in Australia.

### Discussion points

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Each SAR authority provided a brief summary of their respective SAR operations report. Full reports can be read for further information on the Members area of the NATSAR Council website ([natsar.amsa.gov.au](http://natsar.amsa.gov.au)). Below is a summary of key discussion points during this session.

### 3.1 SAR Operations Reports: Emerging Trends

The following noteworthy topics or common trends were identified across jurisdiction reports:

Trends	Comments	Applicable States
Causative factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural disasters (floods, fire, etc)</li> <li>• Dementia/mental health and other risk groups. Increase in despondency / suicide related incidents</li> <li>• Incapable vessel capability / Mechanical failure / Overdue vessels / Vessels in distress / Collisions and Lack of fuel</li> <li>• Increase in adventure based activities into the remote outdoors attributed partly to ready access to better technology(e.g. gps, smartphones)</li> <li>• Not using or incorrect use of PFD's</li> <li>• Human factors - lack of preparedness and failure to properly study and understand weather patterns and tides including low level of knowledge in relation to navigation</li> <li>• Alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	ALL
Enhancing operational SAR capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement/commissioning of vessels and equipment including UAV's / RPA's</li> <li>• Unified command structures</li> <li>• Completion of VHF radio network</li> </ul>	QLD NT TAS WA NSW
Operational Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue management – flight and duty periods (SAR related helicopter services within Australia)</li> </ul>	ALL
Safety Programs and Community Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Think B4 you Trek” (joint venture between NSW Police Force and National Parks and Wildlife Services)</li> <li>• Westpac Air Rescue participated in the Air Rescue TV program (TAS)</li> <li>• ‘Surviving Outback Travel’ survival kit and aide memoire provided to indigenous communities (WA)</li> <li>• “Snow Safe” Program (VIC Police)</li> <li>• “Splashfest” during water safety week (NT Police)</li> <li>• Targeted media presentations for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Importance of PLB's when venturing into remote areas (AFP)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introduction of trial period of compulsory PFD's for rock fishermen in high risk areas (NSW)</li> <li>• Lecturers/presentations at industry groups, government bodies and volunteer organisations</li> <li>• Delivery of training to volunteers across multiple disciplines</li> <li>• Melbourne Boat Show</li> </ul>	ALL
Structural changes to the organisation of Search and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified linkages between search and rescue and broader state emergency service arrangements, including the reorganisation of volunteer organisations</li> </ul>	NSW TAS SA VIC

Rescue within jurisdictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasmanian emergency services now integrated into the new Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM). SES and all volunteer fire brigades now managed by the Tasmanian Fire service (TFS)</li> </ul>	
Emergency Services		
Volunteer agency participation		
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NATSAR Police Managers course</li> <li>Land and Marine SAR training for state and volunteer emergency services</li> <li>Alpine skills and deep dive training</li> </ul>	ALL
Use of Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook and/or Twitter to locate missing persons</li> <li>Tool for communicating safety initiatives</li> </ul>	ALL
Utilising technology for SAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced electronic mapping tools in land SAR for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilising Google Earth EC to capture enhanced satellite imagery</li> <li>PolSAR</li> <li>MapInfo</li> <li>ARCMAP</li> <li>MapSAR</li> </ul> </li> <li>Electronic SAR mapping incident systems</li> <li>Applications for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Log-on / log off applications – voyage plans / vessels can be monitored in real time</li> </ul> </li> <li>Increased use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)</li> </ul>	ALL

### 3.1.1 Reporting Statistics

Following the first attempt last year, each jurisdiction again reported on a common set of criteria to further assist in developing a national set of statistics representing the Australian SAR system.

Discussions ensued that some of the required statistics were difficult to capture or not recorded by Police incident databases. Additionally, jurisdictions noted that they have different classification methods to determine what constitutes a 'SAR incident', which was contributing to the inconsistency in statistics. Some jurisdictions advised that most incidents are looked at in terms of risk assessment - if there appears to be a risk of any imminent loss of life, the SAR system is activated. However, the classification of an incident could be dependent on the means by which the SAR incident is received by the Police.

The importance of continuing to collect data was agreed, noting however that some of the current fields of data were not essential nor easily extracted from some jurisdiction's databases.

It was agreed for the Secretariat to revise the statistics collection approach in the annual SAR Operations report template and circulate to Council members for feedback at the first teleconference in 2017 **(Action 1)**.

### 3.1.2 Number of SAR Incidents

In total, just over 16,000 incidents across Australia were recorded by AMSA, the State/Territory SAR Authorities and the National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee (NVMSARC). This includes incidents that involved both search and rescue operations (i.e. tasking of assets) and also those that required assistance (i.e. towing a vessel that had mechanical failure).

Overall, the statistics for each jurisdiction were relatively consistent with the previous year's, with some notable variations, including:

- Tasmania reported a significant increase in both land and marine incidents predominantly due to extreme weather events including bushfires and flooding.
- NSW recorded an increased number of marine incidents, mainly due to incidents relating to rock fishermen and yachtsmen.
- Victoria experienced an increase in SAR incidents, which was attributed to a general increase in outdoor adventure based activities as well as ongoing familiarisation of the Missing Person reporting system.

NZ noted that although the number of SAR incidents in their jurisdiction had increased from the previous year, the duration of managing incidents had actually decreased. The majority of incidents (95%) were resolved in under 24 hours.

Similar to last year, SAR authorities reported an increasing trend of incidents involving persons with mental health issues such as Dementia, Alzheimer's, Autism and persons with depression and suicidal tendencies. SA noted that incidents involving mental health represented over one third of land searches, which was also the case in the previous year. Social media continues to be a useful tool in assisting to locate missing persons in SA.

### 3.1.3 Causative Factors

Other causative factors identified by the states included human factors such as lack of trip preparedness (failure to carry the correct safety equipment) and poor knowledge of the weather conditions and surrounding marine or land environment.

At a national level, it was noted that individuals have much better access to remote regions due to improvements in infrastructure and technology, however they are not necessarily prepared for the environment and conditions they encounter. Similarly, individuals were paying little attention to weather warnings when hiking, boating and fishing (e.g. warning signs on rock platforms). As a result, poorly prepared and equipped individuals were becoming more reliant on the Australian SAR system.

### 3.1.4 Medical Transfer Procedure

WA raised the topic of coordination and role/responsibility issues regarding medical evacuation / transfer arrangements. It was agreed to establish a Working Group with representatives from all jurisdictions to develop a national policy on medical evacuation arrangements, in consideration of state arrangements for SAR and medical transfers. This will include clarity of the Commonwealth and State roles **(Action 2)**.

### 3.1.5 Other capability initiatives

AMSA also confirmed its recently appointed Senior Officers for AMSA Asset Capability at the same locations as the Challenger aircraft. This includes:

- Essendon – Lyndon Leverington
- Perth – Paul Seghezzi
- Cairns – Gary Stevens

It was agreed for Lyndon Leverington (Senior Officer Standards, AMSA Asset Capability) to visit Victoria Police following this meeting regarding response asset capability **(Action 3)**.

During the Australian Defence Force (ADF) activity update, it was agreed that ADF will provide AMSA with research updates on laser flares and work together on the use of similar technology associated with ScanEagle and the Challenger **(Action 4)**.

### 3.1.6 Safety Programs and Community Awareness

All jurisdictions reported successful Safety Programs and Community Awareness initiatives, many of these ongoing and a continuation on previous years. Programs varied in their messages, for example Victoria's 'Snow Safe' and NSW's 'Think Before You Trek' are targeted at the general public. Other programs are targeted at SAR practitioners during SAR workshops and training sessions with local Police, SES and volunteer groups in Victoria.

AMSA reported that the successful Torres Strait Marine Safety Program (TSMSP) and the Torres Strait Maritime Pathways Project (TSMPP) continues to deliver safety workshops, education kits and lifejackets to schools and communities in the Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula area. AMSA is also working with its partners in NT and WA to identify opportunities for extending the success of this program to more communities across Northern Australia.

### **3.2 WA Coroner presentation**

At NATSAR 39, members discussed the impact of coronial findings on the design and delivery of Australia's SAR service. As such, it was agreed there would be value in inviting the state Coroner to the 2016 meeting to present on the coronial process from a post-SAR incident perspective, particularly focussing on the types of considerations that are useful for SAR Authorities to be aware of when an incident involves loss of life.

Ms Evelyn Vicker, the WA Deputy Coroner, attended the meeting to address the Council members. Advice from the Deputy Coroner included:

- Jurisdictions should clearly articulate the SAR training and qualifications of the SAR practitioners involved in the incident when providing coronial evidence, in order to enhance credibility and demonstrate a high level of competence from a national perspective.
- Noting that Coroners are not experts in the field, SAR practitioners should ensure they provide as much detail as possible so that all relevant information is available for the Coroner to make appropriate recommendations.
- Noting that each jurisdiction has its own legislation, Ms Vicker still encouraged Council members to liaise with their respective Coroners on matters such as coronial recommendations, as required.

After listening to each of the State and Territory SAR Operations Reports, Ms Vicker observed that incidents involving rock fishing was a common trend across multiple jurisdictions. Ms Vicker advised that this is also an ongoing issue in WA and that the Coroner's Office would be conducting an inquest into deaths caused by Rock Fishing in 2017, with a particular focus on the language barriers that appear to be a factor in individuals ignoring signage that warns of the dangers of rock fishing.

The Secretariat thanked Ms Vicker for attending the meeting, in particular for sharing her expertise about Coronial inquests that is relevant to SAR Authorities following a SAR incident involving loss of life. It was of great value and the Council agreed to continue inviting the Coroners office to future meetings.

The outcome resulting from this presentation was to note the onus on SAR Authorities to provide sufficient evidence to coronial inquiries to ensure the Coroner has all the information and appropriate references required to make an informed decision, particularly any nuances that might be unique to the individual SAR incident.

### **3.3 National System Update**

Chris Battel updated the Council on the progress of transitioning the regulatory responsibility for National Commercial Vessels to AMSA, scheduled for 1 July 2017. Chris advised the current focus is on:

- Data handover from the 7 jurisdictions to populate one National System database
- Delivery of SMS workshops around the National Standard for Commercial Vessels - Part E - Operations (over 100 workshops delivered)
- Development of Codes of Practice for Industry
- Levy consultation - AMSA received over 550 submissions from industry – these have been consolidated and a report on this will be presented to Government

Chris was available for further discussion out of session and took additional questions on notice.

## Actions

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1. Agreed for the Secretariat to revise the statistics collection approach in the annual SAR Operations report template and circulate to Council members for feedback at the first teleconference in 2017.
2. Agreed to establish a Working Group with representatives from all jurisdictions to develop a national policy on medical evacuation arrangements, in consideration of state arrangements for SAR and medical transfers. This will include clarity of the Commonwealth and State roles.
3. Lyndon Leverington (Senior Officer Standards, AMSA Asset Capability) to visit the Victoria Police following this meeting regarding response asset capability.
4. ADF to provide a research updates on Laser Flares to AMSA and to work together on the Scan Eagle technology.

## Session 4: National SAR System Arrangements

### Name of session

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NATSAR Council Strategic Outlook and Business Plan review in conjunction with Council Performance Report

Land SAR Coordination Working Group

IGA Review

National Aviation Capability Arrangements

### Working paper(s)

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WP 4-1-2 Business Plan

WP 4-1-3 NATSAR Council Performance Report

WP 4-2 Revision of the IGA

WP 4-4-1 Land SAR Working Group Outcomes

WP 4-4-2 Land SAR Incidents Three Quarter Year Report

WP 4-4-3 NATSAR Manual Restructure

WP 4-5 NATSARMC Course director report

### Objective

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To review and discuss the national SAR system arrangements, including documents and Working Group outcomes that contribute to the role and strategic position of the NATSAR Council.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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#### **4.1 Business Plan and Strategic Outlook review in conjunction with Council Performance Report**

The session commenced with a review of the Strategic Outlook and Business Plan objectives and goals as a reminder for existing Council members and for the benefit of new members. It was agreed that these are an accurate reflection of the Council's priorities and would remain as the strategic framework for the NATSAR Council.

The Secretariat then led a review of the NATSAR Council Performance Report to highlight the Council's achievements against the strategic objectives from the previous 12 months.

Following an outcome from the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Secretariat prepared and circulated the report for members to include input from a jurisdiction perspective, providing a more comprehensive and balanced report of national achievements. This will be repeated in 2017. It was agreed that the Performance Report remains a valuable tool as it gives measurable representation of achievements made throughout the year, which in turn reaffirms the role and position of the Council within the national SAR arrangement.



In terms of the Council's strategic documents (Performance Report, Strategic Outlook and Business Plan) the following outcomes were discussed and agreed:

- Noted the value of the annual NATSAR Council Performance Report for communicating with senior executives, and agreed to continue preparing this against the priorities outlined in the Business Plan and the Strategic Outlook. It was noted that the Performance Report will continue to be outcome focused in order to effectively communicate the positive impact of the Council's achievements.
- Agreed to incorporate results of targeted media campaigns to demonstrate the positive impact on the Council objectives from effective search and rescue and safety messaging. This may include input from marine safety agencies on national campaigns for which the Secretariat contributes.
- Confirmed the Strategic Outlook and Business Plan objectives and goals as the ongoing strategic framework for the NATSAR Council.
- Agreed the initiatives for the Council to deliver in the 2016-2018 period and circulated the Business Plan to confirm these in session, which the Secretariat will distribute to members with the final statement of meeting outcomes.

In regards Business Plan initiatives, it was agreed the Secretariat will investigate possible sponsorship and/or grant opportunities available to the Council, noting that jurisdictions' may have their own policy and procedures around corporate sponsorship that need to be considered.

#### **4.2 Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) Status**

The Secretariat provided an update to Council members on the amended Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) on National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements, which was restructured during 2016 to bring greater clarity to the purpose and content of the document. It also includes six amendments that arose from the outcomes of the Land SAR Coordination Working Group.

Police Commissioners of each State and Territory endorsed the revised version of the IGA in July 2016 and it was subsequently submitted to the Secretariat for the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council (LCCSC) to table at their next meeting for Ministerial signature. However, the LCCSC Secretariat subsequently provided advice that although the signatories fall with the membership of the LCCSC, the IGA falls outside the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Justice and suggested an alternative process to better facilitate the final sign off.

The alternative approach suggested by the LCCSC, which the Secretariat is now undertaking, is to have the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport write to the respective Minister of each jurisdiction seeking their agreement to the IGA and their signature. This change in approach to achieve ministerial sign off of the revised IGA will have no implications for Council members.

The final outcome was agreement to progress the revised Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) through the confirmed process to obtain Ministerial signature from the Commonwealth and each State/Territory. Given that the amendments to the IGA are predominantly administrative in nature, it is anticipated that Ministerial sign off will be achieved during 2017

**(Action 5).**

The Secretariat will notify NATSAR Council members and update the website accordingly when this signatory process is complete and a 2 year review process of the IGA will be initiated. The Secretariat expressed appreciation to members for facilitating the review and endorsement process with Commissioners.

#### 4.3 NATSAR Council Charter and Risk Register

An outcome from NATSAR 39 was to develop a NATSAR Council Charter to describe in detail how the Council operates, including key business processes such as membership, amendments to the National SAR Manual, the Australian SAR Award etc.

The Council discussed and agreed to include the following processes and arrangements into a proposed NATSAR Council Charter and disseminate for endorsement during 2017 (**Action 6**):

- IGA 2 year review process
- Working Group approach to address issues agreed at annual Council meetings
- Annual meeting cycle and interim teleconferences
  - a. The Council confirmed that the current arrangement of the rotational annual meeting with responsibilities shared between the States and Territories. The Secretariat will post the order of annual meeting rotation on the members' area of the website for ongoing visibility.
  - b. Typically the hosting State covers the cost of venue hire and associated meeting costs, including catering.
  - c. The Secretariat is responsible for all the administrative aspects of the meeting
  - d. The Secretariat is responsible for hosting the National SAR Award dinner, which is held on the second evening of the meeting schedule. This includes arranging the awards and associated travel and accommodation for the SAR Award recipient(s).
- Secretariat arrangements
  - a. Agreed to keep the current arrangement in place with AMSA providing Secretariat duties.
- Manual amendment process
  - a. Agreed to the current process of documenting manual amendments for tabling at the annual Council meeting and then confirming these at the subsequent teleconference.
- Australian SAR Award Process
  - a. Agreed for the Secretariat to consider different categories of Awards given the increase in nominations this year and the distinction that has become apparent between nominations for trained SAR professionals versus the general public making a different kind of contribution to the community.
  - b. NZ advised they also have two main categories of awards and each of these categories has sub categories. NZ agreed to send a copy of the Terms of Reference to the Secretariat.

In regards the Council Risk Register, the Secretariat confirmed that a template has been developed and is available for recording risks as they arise during the course of Council business, both in and out of session.

#### **4.4 Review Progress of Working Groups**

The Secretariat commented on the effectiveness of utilising Working Groups to address Council initiatives out of session, which will be a model that is continued in the future where applicable. An update on the Land SAR and Manual Restructure Working Groups is presented below.

##### **4.4.1 Land SAR Coordination Working Group**

It was noted that the outcomes delivered by the Land SAR Coordination Working Group (paper 4-4-1) has been a significant achievement for the Council, which is a culmination of a lot of work effort by Council members and jurisdiction representatives.

The Working Group was established to develop and implement a procedure for transferring coordination of land SAR incidents that are initially alerted to AMSA Search and Rescue to the State and Territory SAR Authorities. It was agreed to develop this procedure at the 38<sup>th</sup> NATSAR Council meeting in October 2014 based on respective legislation that assigns responsibility for land SAR coordination to the states and territories, including the Inter-governmental Agreement on National SAR Response Arrangements (IGA) and the National SAR Manual.

At the 39<sup>th</sup> NATSAR Council annual meeting, October 2015, each jurisdiction provided in-principle support for the outcomes that the Land SAR Coordination Working Group and recommended adoption of the outcomes. Since then, the Working Group has successfully implemented the outcomes as below:

- The operational procedure was implemented to ensure a timely and effective methodology to transfer to Police coordination. AMSA's incident system was amended to use the 'transfer of coordination' email as part of the agreed '*Operational coordination procedure for land SAR incidents*' and jurisdictions provided their respective contact details to enable effective transfer.
- A monthly review process was established to ensure that AMSA and the Police are working in line with the procedure, providing the opportunity to make any adjustments as necessary.
- The NATSAR Council agreed to the NATSAR Manual amendments to give effect to the new procedure, which were circulated out of session during May-June 2016. These were published in the latest edition of the NATSAR Manual in July 2016, which is available on the NATSAR Council website.
- The NATSAR Council agreed to the IGA amendments to give effect to the new procedure, noting that these amendments provide clarity for Australia's land SAR coordination arrangements and ensure that the IGA reflects current operational practice.

Analysis of incident data (refer WP 4-4-2) indicates a good level of interaction between AMSA and the jurisdictions with 93% of incidents occurring in line with the intent of the procedure. It was noted that incidents coordinated by AMSA are mainly due to remote operations requiring assets beyond state capability and incidents that are resolved during the intelligence gathering phase.

It was noted that there are currently 480,000 beacons registered in the National Database with approximately 126,000 of these being PLBs. Therefore, with respect to the Land SAR statistics, the 83% of 'real distress' activations suggests that individuals are generally using beacons correctly (not hoaxes or mishandling). It was also noted that it was an even split between Hikers/Outdoor pursuits and 4WD/Motor vehicles that were activating beacons.

Since implementation of the Procedure, work practices and standard operating procedures have been adjusted, including in the JRCC, to ensure effective information flow (i.e. a timely phone call and an email with incident details) from AMSA to the Police in order to:

- 1) Effectively transfer coordination, and
- 2) Clearly delineate between the intelligence gathering phase and commencing a SAR response.

The Council noted the Land SAR Coordination Working Group Outcomes paper and agreed to the next steps documented in the paper, including:

- Correspondence to the NSW Coroner outlining outcomes and progress to date with regard to land SAR incident coordination **(Action 7)**.
- Advice to the Police Commissioners regarding the completion and successful implementation of the Working Group outcomes in the post 40th NATSAR Council annual meeting letter **(Action 8)**.
- Continuation of the Land SAR incident review process until June 2017 to ensure all SAR Authorities are working in line with the new procedure **(Action 9)**.

Other long term actions that will continue to facilitate effective implementation of the procedure will include:

- Progressing the capability to facilitate direct communications between aviation assets and Police, which will occur as part of the Challenger implementation program;
- Ongoing awareness of AMSA's contracted aviation capability during the Challenger implementation program; and
- Use of SAREX's to practice the procedure between AMSA and jurisdictions

The Chair thanked members for their efforts in making the Working Group approach a success and the subsequent contribution of the Land SAR Operational Procedure to the ongoing improvement of Australia's national SAR response system.

#### **4.4.2 National SAR Manual Restructure**

The Secretariat, in conjunction with Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead, presented the paper on the NATSAR Manual Restructure (WP 4.4.3).

At NATSAR 39, the Council agreed to examine the scope for rationalising the National SAR Manual and the Land SAR Operations Manual, with the possibility of merging the two manuals in order to remove duplication and inconsistencies.

Subsequently, AMSA engaged an external consultant to undertake a review and determine the feasibility of merging the two manuals. A proposed structure was agreed by the Council at teleconference 1, March 2016, noting duplication of content that could significantly reduce the size of one manual.

The revised structure follows the format of the International Aviation and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual, with 2 volumes that separate guidance on 'SAR Administration' and 'SAR Operations' with separate appendices that are specific to Maritime/Aviation and Land. This will ensure the Manual retains usefulness for its different users. It is anticipated that the consolidated manual will reduce work in maintaining two separate manuals and importantly, ensure a consistent approach to the ongoing design and amendment process.

The merger of the manuals has occurred and Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead, QLD Police, conducted an initial review of the content in July 2016. Further review by AMSA and other nominated representatives will occur in the coming months. It was agreed to continue the merger of the National SAR Manual and Land SAR Operations Manual with the intention to distribute to members in mid-2017 and subsequent publication late-2017 **(Action 10)**.

The Council thanked Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead for the work to date in progressing this important initiative.

#### **4.5 National SAR Training**

##### **4.5.1 National SAR Managers Course update**

NATSARMC Course Director, Sergeant Meacham King (NT Police), presented the SAR Manager's Course Report (WP 4.5). It was noted that the National Police SAR Manager's Course that is delivered in Canberra every year under AMSA's RTO has been replaced with a new qualification *Advanced Diploma of Police Search and Rescue Management* (POL68115). AMSA is in the process of reviewing its organisational approach to training, including SAR, and as a result has yet to bring this new qualification 'on scope'. Therefore, the 2016 course was administered as per normal by AMSA but the assessment and qualification will be processed and issued by the QLD Police RTO.

From a longer term perspective, although AMSA is undergoing an organisation wide review, which includes training delivered across the organisation in areas of SAR and marine environment response, AMSA remains committed to the importance of a national training approach for SAR.

As a result, it was agreed to establish a SAR Training Working Group to address a holistic approach to National SAR training for the future, incorporating the outcome from AMSA's organisational review about retaining RTO status. There will be a representative from each jurisdiction **(Action 11)**.

Sergeant King also advised that the 2016 course had been slightly modified in its methods of delivery in response to feedback from students. Key initiatives from the 2016 course included:

- Students undertook online training before the course ensuring they were up to speed prior to course commencement (online 'Moodle')
- Case studies were a key mechanism used to teach students
- Introductory lessons on SARMAP and Google earth pro sessions were undertaken
- Reintroduced the individual review exercise
- Individual feedback sessions provided to each student upon course completion
- Students reminded to turn have a good understanding of map and chart work prior to commencing the course.

The Council noted the Course Report and agreed to each of the recommendations in the actions list, including the following:

- a) Agreed that the Queensland Registered Training Organisation (RTO) will run the 2017 National SAR Managers Training Course in Canberra on behalf of the National SAR Council with administrative support from AMSA **(Action 12)**.
- b) Agreed for AFP to request their Senior Executive waive the venue fee for future courses with a follow up letter from the NATSAR Council Chair if required **(Action 13)**.
- c) Agreed to review the proposed 'student feedback form' and provide feedback through the Secretariat **(Action 14)**.
- d) Supported the intention to have a NZ instructor at next years' Course on the provision that the course costs per student remain the same or similar to previous years.
- e) Agreed that Directing Staff will continue to schedule their arrival in to Canberra to allow attendance at the NATSAR Council annual Working Group meetings for SAR Technology and SARMAP.

AMSA also reminded the Council of the efficiency and effectiveness of the online e-learning package to prepare students for the AMSA air search observer course. It was agreed that jurisdictions should request access to the package if interested in the online course **(Action 15)**.

The Council thanked Sergeant Meacham King for his commitment to the role of Course Director for the 2016 National SAR Managers Course.

#### **4.5.2 New Zealand SAR training update**

Duncan Ferner, Secretariat for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council, gave an update on the New Zealand SAR training program and drew parallels to the Australian SAR System. The NZ Secretariat have created an integrated framework for their approach to SAR training.

Given the SAR sector comprises a number of organisations, with many of these unpaid volunteers, the training for these individuals varies accordingly (with common SAR principles based on SAR operational needs).

Reference was made to the diagram in the presentation (available in the member's area of the website) depicting how training commences at a foundation level, working towards the higher level management training, similar to that of the NATSARMC in Australia.

With reference to NATSARMC, Duncan advised that New Zealand would be interested to provide an Instructor for the course in 2017.

## Actions

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5. Progress the revised Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) through the confirmed process to obtain Ministerial signature from the Commonwealth and each State/Territory.
6. Incorporate agreed key processes in the National SAR Council Charter, including procedures around the National SAR award, Council membership, and the rotational hosting arrangement for the annual Council meeting. The Secretariat will incorporate these processes into a proposed Charter and disseminate for endorsement during 2017.
7. Secretariat to write to the NSW Coroner outlining outcomes and progress to date with regard to land SAR incident coordination.
8. Secretariat to provide advice to the Police Commissioners regarding the completion and successful implementation of the Land SAR Coordination Working Group outcomes in the post 40th NATSAR Council annual meeting letter.
9. Continuation of the Land SAR incident review process (by the Secretariat) until June 2017 to ensure all SAR Authorities are working in line with the new procedure.
10. Agreed to continue the merger of the National SAR Manual and Land SAR Operations Manual with the intention to distribute to members in mid-2017 and subsequent publication late-2017.
11. Agreed to establish a SAR Training Working Group to address a holistic approach to National SAR training for the future, incorporating the outcome from AMSA's organisational review about retaining RTO status.
12. Agreed that the Queensland Registered Training Organisation (RTO) will run the 2017 National SAR Managers Training Course in Canberra on behalf of the National SAR Council with administrative support from AMSA
13. AFP to request their Senior Executive waive the venue fee for future courses with a follow up letter from the NATSAR Council Chair if required.
14. Agreed to review the proposed 'student feedback form' and provide feedback through the Secretariat.
15. Jurisdictions reminded to request access to the online e-learning package to prepare students for the AMSA air search observer course should they be interested.

## Session 5: National Volunteer Marine Arrangements

### Name of Session

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State Volunteer Framework Developments

### Working paper(s)

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No working papers for this session

### Objective

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To receive an update from Victoria Police about developments in their State Volunteer arrangements and invite other jurisdictions to share similar developments.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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Superintendent John Todor from Victoria Police provided an update on the developments to the Victorian State Volunteer Framework, which was driven by the Parliamentary Inquiry into Marine Rescue Services in Victoria, to which he and Inspector Mark Arneil presented evidence.

In response to the inquiry, key themes were addressed and subsequently consulted upon across the marine search and rescue sector in Victoria. These included: Governance; Standards, Accreditation and Audit; Training; Funding; and Communications.

In terms of Governance it was determined that Victoria Police remain as the marine search and rescue control agency and that government, through Emergency Management Victoria will establish an office, the Marine Search and Rescue Office, which will be responsible for coordinating policies and programs as well as fostering and building marine search and rescue capabilities and supporting volunteers.

The inquiry also recommended establishing a common set of standards for marine search and rescue in Victoria; a baseline capability assessment of vessels, crew, equipment and training; and introducing a common framework for ongoing capability assessments.

Jurisdictions compared and discussed the different volunteer models, particularly, as in the case of Victoria, the focus on fund raising and grant seeking. The inquiry identified that funding needed to be more adequate and predictable to meet capital and operational expenses. TAS described their current situation where government funding is directed to the Tasmanian Surf Lifesaving association in the first instance, which then directs funding to areas of need.

VIC advised initial indications were that the new model was working well. The Council noted they will watch with interest as the arrangements develop, particularly in regards to risk assessment and suitable vessel procurement. VIC noted that one of the key factors in the success of the new model was the relationships and strong rapport between the various SAR organisations and volunteer groups.



## Session 6: National SAR Capability - Technology

### Name of session

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AMSA's operational Risk Framework  
Weather and Search and Rescue  
SAR Technology Working Group  
CASA 102 Working Group on UAVs

### Working paper(s)

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WP 6-1	Operational Risk Framework
WP 6-2	Bureau of Meteorology
WP 6-3	Vehicle Crash Alerting Devices
WP 6-4	UAV Working Group

### Objective

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To discuss arrangements and outcomes of initiatives that aim to enhance the national SAR capability of Australia.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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#### 6.1 Operational Risk Framework

Julian Mitchell, Manager Asset Capability (AMSA), presented paper 6.1 on AMSA's recent work to develop an Operational Risk Framework.

A SAR incident requires a number of important coordination activities that include the effective and timely allocation of available assets to ensure the best outcome for a person in distress. Considering the vastness of our SAR region, there is a challenge in balancing the risk taken in co-ordinating a SAR using assets that may not be dedicated or trained in SAR, against the risk to a person in distress through delay in locating a suitably trained resource. This is particularly relevant in remote areas where resources are limited.

This risk may be mitigated by the adoption of formal assessment process, management and governance procedures, noting however there is no 'risk free' way for AMSA and the JRCC personnel to task search and rescue resources.

The relevant elements that are being considered in the development of the framework include:

- The current civil aviation regulatory reform program, primarily CASR Part 138 which will regulate all aerial work operations including SAR;
- Developments in technology that may be of benefit or have impacts on SAR such as Remotely Piloted Aircraft, Vessels;

- Changes in domestic legislation such as Work Health and Safety or Civil Liability that may have a direct impact on the duty of care that may be owed to those effected by a SAR operation or the level of individual liability that may flow to persons tasking SAR assets;
- Australia's current and ongoing obligations under Annex 12 of the Chicago Convention which are audited by ICAO;
- Any future audit obligations that may arise for the provision of the SAR service consistent with Australia's obligations under Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue; and finally
- To demonstrate objectivity, transparency and impartiality in the oversight of AMSA's SAR service.

It was agreed that AMSA will provide an update on the Operational Risk Framework at the next National SAR Council annual meeting in 2017.

## **6.2 Weather and Search and Rescue**

Neal Moodie from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) provided an update on the weather related aspects of search and rescue.

### Marine Weather Knowledge Centre

BOM has developed a Marine Weather Knowledge Centre, which provides a one-stop shop for information about marine weather hazards, how to utilise marine services and reference education material. The Marine Weather Knowledge Centre is available from the Marine website <http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/knowledge-centre/index.shtml>.

The webpage has been developed to assist safety education organisations to connect to a single portal, and to utilise the webpages/material for social media. New features include:

- "how to use MetEye for boating" guide
- Collation of all the relevant marine videos and blogs that the Bureau has developed

### MarineLite

Offshore sailors have commented that they don't check the weather online due to the high cost of satellite downloads. The Bureau has developed a "MarineLite" webpage for Australia's marine forecasts and warnings. MarineLite has all the Australian coastal waters and ocean forecasts and warnings available in text-only format. For instance, a marine forecast from the Bureau's regular webpage would be around 120 kilobytes. The same forecast on MarineLite would only be around 4 kilobytes.

The Bureau has recorded an increased usage of MarineLite in Bass Strait during the winter fishing season, and also in North Queensland for the prime winter sailing season.

### Perceptions of weather information by boaters

During Summer 2015/16, BOM conducted its annual telephone survey of the public about their perceptions on weather information. A small subset of these respondents were identified as boaters. Below is a summary of these results that was provided to the National Search and Rescue Council for consideration:

- 64% of boaters check the weather every time (61% in 2014). 10% of boaters sometimes or never check the weather (14% in 2014).
- Of the boaters that check the weather, 40% of boaters use a boating or coastal waters forecast (59% in 2014). 21% never use a boating or coastal waters forecast (22% in 2014).
- Channels available to receive weather updates whilst on the water.

For boaters and sailors:

- Internet by phone or laptop 64%, SA highest
- VHF 58%, Vic highest
- AM/FM 42%, SA highest
- HF 23%, SA highest

52% of Qld respondents said they don't have access to any of these channels.

- Source of information
  - Most trusted
    - 51% of boaters trust the Bureau's information the most (49% in 2014, 55% in 2013).
    - 30% of boaters place the most trust in another website or app (22% in 2014, 18% in 2013).
  - Most used
    - Boaters source most of their info from Other Apps or websites (45%).
    - Previously it was the BoM website (36% in 2016, 38% in 2014, 34% in 2013).

It was discussed that further educational material is needed to emphasise the importance of checking the weather before heading out on the water, and on how to understand and interpret the weather information provided by the Bureau and other information providers.

BOM agreed to continue to investigate how to raise the public's awareness of specific local marine weather information to assist individuals in making safe decisions, and to develop an information package to update SAR Authorities on the best products for decision support tools and operational systems **(Action 16)**.

## 6.3 SAR Technology

### 6.3.1 Report from SAR Technology Working Group

Sergeant Meacham King gave an update on the first convening of the SAR Technology Working Group, July 2016, involving the Directing Staff of the National Police SAR Manager's Course and agreed the following outcomes:

- Agreed that Directing Staff will continue to schedule their arrival in to Canberra to allow attendance at the SAR Technology Working Group meeting.
- Agreed for the Secretariat and Working Group Chair, Sergeant Meacham King (NT Police), to develop a process for capturing and evaluating current and new technologies; and utilise the NATSAR Police Course to investigate whether technologies have possible benefits that might be applicable on a national level.

- Agreed for Council members and Directing Staff to identify technologies that have possible national benefits to be presented at NATSAR 41.
- Agreed for the SAR Technology Working Group to research SAR related mobile apps currently on the market with the intention to create an endorsed list of recommended functions for SAR apps. This list would then act as a benchmark and offer minimum standards or requirements for developers of future apps.
- Agreed to invite GIS/Google Earth mapping specialist to the next SAR Technology Working Group meeting in 2017 to discuss and review current mapping technologies relevant to national SAR capability.

The Council also noted a presentation by AMSA on the functionality of SARWEB and its relevance to search and rescue capability. Agreed AMSA will email a list of current authorised users for SARWEB along with access details for those who would like to utilise it **(Action 17)**.

### 6.3.2 Vehicle Crash Alerting Device

The Secretariat presented WP 6.3 regarding the new 406MHz and 121.5MHz 'vehicle crash alerting' technology being proposed for introduction into Australia, noting the potentially significant implications for the Australian search and rescue (SAR) service.

The following outcomes included:

- The Secretariat, on behalf of the Council, to prepare a paper outlining Australia's position on the technology for the upcoming Cospas-Sarsat Council meeting, December 2016 **(Action 18)**.
- AMSA to correspond with the Head of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and National Emergency Communications Working Group (NECWG) regarding the proposed technology and report back to the Council as necessary **(Action 19)**.
- Council members will liaise with their jurisdictional representatives on the National Emergency Communications Working Group to confirm each State/Territory's position on this proposed device **(Action 20)**.

### 6.4 CASA 102 Working Group on UAVs

AMSA presented WP 6.4 on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) (or Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)) to provide an update on the activities related to UAVs and the benefits and impacts they have on search and rescue activities (SAR).

Australia was the first country in the world to regulate Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) when it published CASR Part 101 in 2002. Like many new emerging technologies RPA technology has rapidly outpaced current regulations bringing both benefits and challenges which have implications for the national SAR system.

RPAs have characteristics, such as extended endurance and the lack of on-board crew, that make them ideal platforms to take on many tasks including those considered higher risk, such as searching in remote or inhospitable environments. While such benefits will make RPAs an important and valuable SAR asset, the ever increasing number of media reports that relate to airspace issues as a consequence of unknown RPAs in high risk locations including emergency response airspace, are evidence of the requirement to develop a policy strategy

and subsequent regulatory framework. This will require effective compliance and enforcement measures including to support and manage operational risk of RPAs in SAR operational areas.

To address this, CASA established an Unmanned Aircraft Standards sub-committee (UASSC) of which AMSA is a member. The UASSC is responsible for considering specific UAS (or RPAs) regulatory issues and proposals. The UASSC provides the forum in which UAS industry members can provide their comments and recommendations to CASA on specific technical issues and proposals for the development of regulations, standards and associated advisory material.

CASA has identified the increasing use of remotely piloted aircraft as a key challenge and proposes to introduce a modernised regulation and to continue to refine policy to effectively manage safety. A revised CASR Part 101 was made in September 2016 and CASA will continue to redevelop the regulations, taking into account the current and emerging hazards associated with unmanned aircraft. The redevelopment of the regulations requires effective consultation and communication with key stakeholders to consider the advances in technology; new RPA types/capabilities and roles, as well as current operations.

It was agreed that AMSA will continue its representation on the National CASA Working Group for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and provide considerations on behalf of the Council for input as required.

## Actions

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16. Agreed that Neal Moodie from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) will continue to investigate how to raise the public's awareness of specific local marine weather information to help make safe decisions, and to develop an information package to update SAR Authorities on the best products for decision support tools and operational systems.
17. AMSA to email Council members a list of current authorised users for SARWEB along with access details for those who would like to utilise it.
18. The Secretariat, on behalf of Council, prepare a paper outlining Australia's position on the technology for the Cospas-Sarsat Council meeting, December 2016.
19. AMSA to correspond with the Head of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and National Emergency Communications Working Group (NECWG) regarding the proposed technology and report back to the Council as necessary.
20. Council members will liaise with their jurisdictional representatives on the National Emergency Communications Working Group to confirm each State/Territory's position on this proposed device.

## Session 7: Research and Developments in Land SAR techniques

### Name of session

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Lost Persons Behaviour  
Deceased Victims of Violent Crimes

### Working paper(s)

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WP 7-1      Lost Person Behaviour  
WP 7-2      Deceased Victims of Violent Crimes

### Objective

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To receive an update on research and developments in land SAR techniques.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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#### 7.1      **Lost Person Behaviour**

Jim Whitehead (QLD Police) gave an update on the progress made to the successful development of the Australian Lost Person Database (LPD) noting that there has been an increase in data entry over the past 12 months, which was likely a result of the letter that the Secretariat had sent to Police Commissioners following NATSAR 39.

The Council noted the following points:

- The database increased by over 300 entries in the last financial year with the quality of entries being high with very few rejected because of flawed data.
- Analysis of the data has not resulted in any significant changes to the current guidance on LPB as contained in the NATSAR Manual.
- The statistical distances contained in the NATSAR Manual have been amended slightly to include 25% and 75% to meet the needs of the NSW Police SAR program.

Findings related to dementia include:

- The characteristics of Alzheimer/Dementia sufferers are the only category that has shown any significant changes.
- The predominant change is the significant divergence of walker and non-walker types.
- The original dementia characteristics represented those elderly type persons with limited mobility and poor physical condition.
- There is now another dementia type, those who have the physical capability to walk much longer distances, but who are still suffering the effects of brain degeneration. Due to the earlier onset of both Alzheimer's disease and Dementia, younger persons

are suffering from the effects of short term memory loss and overall brain degeneration. Although these people have a reduced or impaired ability to make rational decisions they have the capability to walk for extended periods and distances (up to 14km from LKP).

- The greater danger of this for SAR is the associated reduction in ability to care for themselves, often resulting in missing persons who have walked considerable distances without food, water or adequate clothing. The life endangering effects are therefore increased to the extent that there is a confirmed 25% fatality rate if they are not located and provided with aid within the first 24 hours of going missing.
- The actual characteristics of these people differ little from the elderly to younger apart from physical capability.

The Council agreed to note the benefits of the research relating to 'Lost Person Behaviour' and agreed to investigate whether the information can be made available through a mobile app or something similar **(Action 21)**.

## 7.2 Deceased Victims of Violent Crimes

Jim Whitehead (QLD Police) provided a precis of his current research and associated database titled '*Exploring the Location of Undiscovered Victims of Violent Crime*' (refer WP7.2).

The project has just entered its second year and the aim of the project is to develop a database similar to the current Lost Person Behaviour statistics used within Australia. While not technically SAR (not searching for a living target), evidentiary searches are becoming more common as the expectation from both the Courts/Coronial systems and investigation teams is that field evidence is recovered in a systematic manner.

Due to the skill sets of land search coordinators they are increasingly being requested to coordinate the search for evidence discarded by offenders.

In 2015 a request was made to each state police jurisdiction under the hand of the Chair of the National SAR Council for the provision of homicide data in the form of an electronic questionnaire. To date only two jurisdictions have responded, Queensland and the ACT, with a total of 644 incidents.

The Council agreed for separate correspondence to Commissioners seeking support of Police to provide data for the research on 'Unlocated Victims of Violent Crimes', noting that requests for advice from this research have already resulted in the location of three historic victims **(Action 22)**.

## Actions

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21. Council agreed to note the benefits of the research relating to 'Lost Person Behaviour' and agreed to investigate whether the information can be made available through a mobile app or something similar.
22. Secretariat to correspond with Commissioners seeking support of Police to provide data for the research on 'Unlocated Victims of Violent Crimes'.

## Session 8: National Safety Messaging

### Name of session

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Australia and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group  
Australian SAR Consultative Forum

### Objective

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To discuss engagement approach with these two national forums and discuss options for engagement with land stakeholders.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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#### 8.1 Australian and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group

The Secretariat advised that AMSA are represented on the Australian and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG), along with the marine safety agencies of each jurisdictions and other organisations responsible for marine safety.

AMSA is transitioning its representation on this group from SAR to a different area in AMSA, but will continue to provide beacon registration and SAR incident statistics to contribute to their safety campaigns. This raised discussion about other mechanisms around the world, such as mobile apps, which are used to communicate safety messages. The Secretariat will feed this into the next ANZSBEG meeting.

NZ gave an example of a text messaging function that reminds individuals in boats (as the boat passes a certain distance from shore, a 'geofence') to take relevant safety measures.

#### 8.2 Australian SAR Consultative Forum

The Australian SAR Consultative forum was established many years ago by AMSA to engage with regular users of the SAR system from the maritime, land and aviation sectors. As part of AMSA's recent restructure, our approach to stakeholder engagement has been reviewed and as a result, this Forum has been transitioned into a new model.

It was identified that police have an ongoing engagement with their land based stakeholders such as 4WD, bushwalking groups, Scouts etc. in regards to safety messaging and it was agreed this engagement was best placed at the jurisdictional level.

The Secretariat agreed to look at what relevant data it could provide to jurisdictions on land SAR incidents, particularly relating to beacons, to support engagement and safety messaging with land based stakeholders **(Action 23)**.

### Actions

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23. Secretariat to look at relevant data that can be provided to jurisdictions on land SAR incidents, particularly relating to beacons, to support engagement and safety messaging with land based stakeholders.



## Session 9: Council Administration & Development

### Name of session

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Proposed amendments to the NATSAR Manual

NATSAR Council action table

Format of Council meeting

### Working paper(s)

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WP 9-1        NATSAR Manual Amendment schedule

WP 9-2        NATSAR Council Action Table

### Objective

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To address any administration matters to facilitate the efficient ongoing operating of Council and to determine the next meeting arrangements.

### Discussion points and outcomes

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#### **9.1 Proposed amendments to the NATSAR Manual**

The Secretariat presented WP 9.1, outlining proposed amendments to the NATSAR Manual since the last meeting. No questions were raised in relation to the amendments.

The Council agreed to the proposed amendments to the NATSAR Manual through the annual amendment cycle, which the Secretariat will incorporate into the next published edition in 2017.

#### **9.2 NATSAR Council action table**

The Secretariat advised that most of the actions in the table had been addressed throughout the course of the meeting and will be updated in the master copy that is kept in the member's area of the website. Additionally, updates were provided on the Action items including:

39/13 - a reminder to Council members that the SAREX template is available should they wish to update it, noting that this assists AMSA with its resource allocation.

39/15 – discussed the paper regarding data storage presented by QLD last year. The action was for Council members to provide feedback to Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead on data storage. The latest manual was updated with feedback accordingly and this action is now closed.

39/1 – the paper from WA on VHF ROIP capability will be submitted to the next SARTECH working group in August 2017.

39/9 – Noted the outcome from NATSAR 39 that the Council endorsed the concept of the Australian Police SAR Coordinator Disaster Response Activation Plan and agreed that Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke (AFP) will draft a letter to Commissioners and ANZPAA regarding the need to determine the appropriate mechanism to progress the plan.

38/6 - AMSA to confirm location and condition of existing DF units across jurisdictions to determine requirements for further production – AMSA advise this has been completed and if there are concerns to email the Secretariat who will arrange contact with Julian Mitchell. Action closed.

37/9 – regarding a report on trends relating to 'lost persons' for the Department of Health – QLD advised to close this action as this will be addressed through the work lost person behaviour.

### **9.3 Format of Council meeting**

Council members agreed to that the current structure and content of the meeting remains suitable, noting that the start and finish times of the annual meeting reduce travel costs.

It was also agreed that October was the most suitable time to host the meeting as it allows time to make progress action items before the end of the year.

### **9.4 Next Annual NATSAR Council Meeting**

Agreed that the letter of outcomes is a beneficial means of broadening the profile of the Council and its core business and therefore agreed to continue this process of sending a letter from the NATSAR Council Chair to each Commissioner and the equivalent at ADF. Key strategic outcomes will be highlighted and appreciation for the contribution of jurisdictional members.

Agreed the Secretariat will formally write to the AFP with regard their hosting role for the 41st NATSAR Council annual meeting in October 2017.

## **Actions**

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Nil

## Session 10: Any Other Business

Name of session

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Any other business

Working paper(s)

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Nil

Objective

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To address any other business tabled for review and discussion by the NATSAR Council.

Discussion points and outcomes

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### **Australia and New Zealand SAR Conference**

The Secretariat expressed appreciation to Superintendent John Todor for speaking at the Australia and New Zealand SAR Conference on behalf of the Council, presenting on the interoperability of Australian SAR System.

It was agreed that the Secretariat will continue working with the New Zealand SAR Secretariat on the arrangements for the Australia and New Zealand SAR Conference (24 May 2017, Jupiters Gold Coast) and that both the NATSAR Council and AMSA will be represented.

## National Search and Rescue Award

The 2016 National Search and Rescue Award was presented at the annual NATSAR Council dinner on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October during the annual conference. The 2016 awardees father and son, John and Innes Larkin of Mount Barney Lodge in Southern Queensland.

The Larkins were recognised for their great contribution to search and rescue in Australia, having assisted Police with over 400 Search and Rescue missions that have resulted in over 700 missing persons being recovered.

Nominations for the 2017 Australian Search and Rescue Award are now open until 30 June 2017 and can be made by completing the official nomination form (available on the NATSAR Council website [www.natsar.amsa.gov.au](http://www.natsar.amsa.gov.au)) and forwarding to:

Secretariat  
National SAR Council  
GPO Box 2181  
Canberra City ACT 2601  
[nationalSARcouncil@amsa.gov.au](mailto:nationalSARcouncil@amsa.gov.au)



## Attachment 1 - List of key outcomes agreed at the 40th NATSAR Council Meeting

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### NATSAR Council Strategic Development and Governance

1. Reviewed the Council's achievements from the previous 12 months as documented in the NATSAR Council Performance Report.
2. Noted the value of the annual NATSAR Council Performance Report for communicating with senior executives, and agreed to continue preparing this against the priorities outlined in the Business Plan and the Strategic Outlook. It was noted that the Performance Report will continue to be outcome focused in order to effectively communicate the positive impact of the Council's achievements.
3. Agreed to incorporate results of targeted media campaigns to demonstrate the positive impact on the Council objectives from effective search and rescue and safety messaging. This may include input from marine safety agencies on national campaigns for which the Secretariat contributes.
4. Confirmed the Strategic Outlook and Business Plan objectives and goals as the ongoing strategic framework for the NATSAR Council.
5. Agreed the initiatives for the Council to deliver in the 2016-2018 period and circulated the Business Plan to confirm these in session, which the Secretariat will distribute to members with the final statement of meeting outcomes.
6. Agreed to progress the revised Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) through the confirmed process to obtain Ministerial signature from the Commonwealth and each State/Territory.
7. Agreed on key processes to be included in the National SAR Council Charter, including procedures around the National SAR award, Council membership, and the rotational hosting arrangement for the annual Council meeting. The Secretariat will incorporate these processes into a proposed Charter and disseminate for endorsement during 2017.
8. Agreed for the Secretariat to revise the statistics collection approach in the annual SAR Operations report template and circulate to Council members for feedback at the first teleconference in 2017.
9. Agreed that the order of annual meeting rotation will be posted on the members' area of the website for ongoing visibility.

## National SAR Training

10. Noted the National Police SAR Manager's Course Report, presented by the Course Director (Sergeant Meacham King, NT Police), and agreed to each of the recommendations in the actions list, including the following:
  - a. Agreed that the Queensland Registered Training Organisation (RTO) will run the 2017 National SAR Managers Training Course in Canberra on behalf of the National SAR Council with administrative support from AMSA.
  - b. Agreed for AFP to request their Senior Executive waive the venue fee for future courses with a follow up letter from the NATSAR Council Chair if required.
  - c. Agreed to review the proposed 'student feedback form' and provide feedback through the Secretariat.
  - d. Supported the intention to have a NZ instructor at next years' Course on the provision that the course costs per student remain the same or similar to previous years.
  - e. Agreed that Directing Staff will continue to schedule their arrival in to Canberra to allow attendance at the NATSAR Council annual Working Group meetings for SAR Technology and SARMAP.
11. Agreed to establish a SAR Training Working Group to address a holistic approach to National SAR training for the future, incorporating the outcome from AMSA's organisational review about retaining RTO status.
12. Noted the efficiency and effectiveness of the online e-learning package to prepare students for the AMSA air search observer course. Agreed for jurisdictions to request access to the package should they be interested in the online course.

## National SAR Manual

13. Agreed to continue the merger of the National SAR Manual and Land SAR Operations Manual with the intention to distribute to members in mid-2017 and subsequent publication late-2017.
14. Agreed the proposed amendments to the NATSAR Manual through the annual amendment cycle, which the Secretariat will incorporate into the next published edition in 2017.

## Land SAR Working Group

15. Noted the paper on the Land SAR Coordination Working Group outcomes and agreed to the next steps documented in this paper, including:
  - a. Correspondence to the NSW Coroner outlining outcomes and progress to date with regard to land SAR incident coordination.

- b. Advice to the Police Commissioners regarding the completion and successful implementation of the Working Group outcomes in the post 40th NATSAR Council annual meeting letter.
  - c. Continuation of the Land SAR incident review process until June 2017 to ensure all SAR Authorities are working in line with the new procedure.
16. Secretariat to look at relevant data that can be provided to jurisdictions on land SAR incidents, particularly relating to beacons, to support engagement and safety messaging with land based stakeholders.

## SAR Technology

17. Noted the paper regarding the new 406MHz and 121.5MHz 'vehicle crash alerting' technology being proposed for introduction into Australia. The following outcomes included:
- a. Agreed for the Secretariat, on behalf of the Council, to prepare a paper outlining Australia's position on the technology for the upcoming Cospas-Sarsat Council meeting, December 2016.
  - b. Agreed for AMSA to correspond with the Head of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and National Emergency Communications Working Group (NECWG) regarding the proposed technology and report back to the Council as necessary.
  - c. Agreed that members will liaise with their jurisdictional representatives on the National Emergency Communications Working Group to confirm each State/Territory's position on this proposed device.
18. Noted the first convening of the SAR Technology Working Group, July 2016, involving the Directing Staff of the National Police SAR Manager's Course and agreed the following outcomes:
- a. Agreed that Directing Staff will continue to schedule their arrival in to Canberra to allow attendance at the SAR Technology Working Group meeting.
  - b. Agreed for the Secretariat and Working Group Chair, Sergeant Meacham King (NT Police), to develop a process for capturing and evaluating current and new technologies; and utilise the NATSAR Police Course to investigate whether technologies have possible benefits that might be applicable on a national level.
  - c. Agreed for Council members and Directing Staff to identify technologies that have possible national benefits to be presented at NATSAR 41.
  - d. Agreed for the SAR Technology Working Group to research SAR related mobile apps currently on the market with the intention to create an endorsed list of recommended functions for SAR apps. This list would then act as a benchmark and offer minimum standards or requirements for developers of future apps.

- e. Agreed to invite GIS/Google Earth mapping specialist to the next SAR Technology Working Group meeting in 2017 to discuss and review current mapping technologies relevant to national SAR capability.
19. Agreed that AMSA will continue its representation on the National CASA Working Group for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and provide considerations on behalf of the Council for input as required.
  20. Noted a presentation by AMSA on the functionality of SARWEB and its relevance to search and rescue capability. Agreed AMSA will email a list of current authorised users for SARWEB along with access details for those who would like to utilise it.
  21. Agreed that Neal Moodie from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) will continue to investigate how to raise the public's awareness of specific local marine weather information to help make safe decisions, and to develop an information package to update SAR Authorities on the best products for decision support tools and operational systems.
  22. Agreed that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will provide AMSA with research updates on laser flares and work together on the use of similar technology associated with ScanEagle and the Challenger.

## Medevac Evacuations

23. Agreed to establish a Working Group with representatives from all jurisdictions to develop a national policy on medical evacuation arrangements, in consideration of state arrangements for SAR and medical transfers. This will include clarity of the Commonwealth and State roles.

## National SAR Research

24. Agreed for separate correspondence to Commissioners seeking support of Police to provide data for the research on 'Unlocated Victims of Violent Crimes', noting that requests for advice from this research has already resulted in the location of three historic victims.
25. Noted the benefits of the research relating to 'Lost Person Behaviour' and agreed to investigate whether the information can be made available through a mobile app or something similar.

## SAR Coronial Process

26. Appreciated the presentation provided by Deputy Coroner Evelyn Vicker in regards the coronial process from a post-SAR incident perspective, particularly the types of considerations that are useful for SAR Authorities to be aware when an incident involves loss of life.
27. Noted the onus on SAR Authorities to provide sufficient evidence to coronial inquiries to ensure the Coroner has all the information and appropriate references required to make an informed decision, particularly any nuances that might be unique to the individual SAR incident.



## Australian Police SAR Coordinator Disaster Response Activation Plan

28. Noted the outcome from NATSAR 39 that the Council endorsed the concept of the Australian Police SAR Coordinator Disaster Response Activation Plan and agreed that Senior Sergeant Steve Cooke (AFP) will draft a letter to Commissioners and ANZPAA regarding the need to determine the appropriate mechanism to progress the plan.

## SAR Conferences

29. Agreed for the Secretariat to continue working with the New Zealand SAR Secretariat on the arrangements for the Australia and New Zealand SAR Conference (24 May 2017, Jupiters Gold Coast) and that both the NATSAR Council and AMSA will be represented.

## AMSA's Operational Risk Framework

30. Agreed that AMSA will provide an update on the Operational Risk Framework at the next National SAR Council annual meeting in 2017.

## Council Sponsorship/Grants

31. Agreed the Secretariat will investigate possible sponsorship and/or grant opportunities available to the Council, noting that jurisdictions' may have their own policy and procedures around corporate sponsorship that need to be considered.

## Next NATSAR Council Annual Meeting

32. Agreed the Secretariat will formally write to the AFP with regard their hosting role for the 41st NATSAR Council annual meeting in October 2017.