

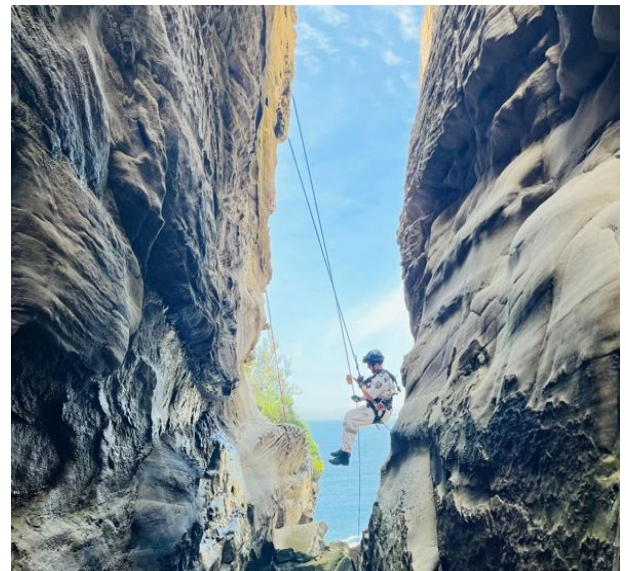


NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL

18 - 20 October 2023

Forty-seventh meeting of the Australian National Search and Rescue Council

Tasmanian Police
Command Centre,
Hobart, Tasmania



Figures 1,2 and 3 show NSW Police in a Search and Rescue operation.





NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL

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NATSAR Council 47th Annual Meeting Outcomes

Executive Summary

Australia's National Search and Rescue Council (NATSAR Council) met from 18 – 20 October 2023, at the Tasmanian Police Command Centre, Hobart. The meeting was chaired by Mark Morrow, Executive Director Response Division, Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Underpinning the three-day meeting were results of the *Environmental Scan: Search and Rescue in Australia* which was commissioned by AMSA on behalf of the NATSAR Council, and prepared by consultants ACIL Allen. The scan identifies two mega-trends already driving change for police forces – climate change and rapid changes in technology. These mega-trends are occurring in an environment when demand for SAR is changing, and at the same time there are changes in how SAR is supplied (delivered) to communities.

The scan also identified three broad implications for jurisdictional policing forces:

- Increased cost of delivering SAR
- Reduced availability of human resources
- Need to diversify assets and leverage capabilities of partners

The scan also identified six main risks and/or opportunities, noting these must be managed, at a time when there is an increase in frequency, complexity, and concurrency of SAR events:

- Improvements needed for data to support decision making
- Remaining adaptable in a dynamic authorising environment
- Leveraging partnerships to a greater degree
- Accessing suitably skilled workforce
- Fiscal constraints in operating budgets
- Leveraging technology to deliver improved capabilities

The scan's report recommends five priority actions for the NATSAR Council that were supported by jurisdictional police forces, in their roles as SAR Coordinating Authorities:

- Review the Intergovernmental Agreement
- Review the NATSAR structure to ensure it's capable of operating at a strategic level
- Elevate the profile of SAR to ensure the value to stakeholders is fully recognised
- Build strategic partnerships to leverage jurisdictions/national perspectives
- Improve engagement with industry and providers

Proposals for structural change will focus on ensuring the Council operates at a strategic level. An overview of the scan is at Attachment 1.

The Council congratulated recipients of the 2023 SAR commendations and awards.

The Council received annual SAR Activity Reports from each jurisdiction and noted the value of the discussions at an operational level. The Council also discussed the work of the Data Working Group, the Training Working Group, the Dive Working Group and the Technology Working Group. The Council noted the range of issues raised and agreed on the operational value of the Council's Working Groups. The Council noted the report of the National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee and agreed the important contribution volunteers make to the SAR system. The Council also noted the *New Zealand SAR Annual Report 2022-23*, and acknowledged the value of the trans-Tasman cooperation between Australian and New Zealand.

The Council also discussed a number of important operational issues, including Electronic Visual Distress Signals, Lost Person Behaviour Database including a new First Nations Persons component, and non-406 beacon alerting devices.

The Council thanked Tasmanian Police for hosting the 47th Annual Meeting of NATSAR Council.



Figure 1 - Photo from NATSAR Council 2023

Attendees

1	AMSA	Mark Morrow - Chair	Executive Director, Response Division
2	AMSA	Daniel Gillis	ARC Duty Manager, Chair Data Working Group
3	AMSA	Jo Fisher	Principal Advisor, Response Planning
4	AMSA	Janie Dexter	NATSAR Council Secretariat
5	AMSA	Mark Semmler	Senior Officer, Response Planning
6	AMSA	Peter McDonell	A/g Principal Advisor, Aviation Assets
7	AMSA	Natalia Komarova	Senior Advisor, External Relations
8	AMSA	Claire Cunningham (Wed & Thurs)	A/g Principal Advisor, Safety Liaison, Operations Division
9	AMSA	Catherine Rogers (online agenda item 7.1)	Organisational Change Manager Information Technology Services
10	AFP	Matthew Reynolds	OIC Specialist Response
11	AFP	Ashley Childs	Leading Senior Constable
12	AFP	Neal Griffiths	
13	ADF	Stephanie Power	Joint Personnel Recovery
14	ADF	Paul Carpenter (Thursday)	Officer Commanding 92WG
15	NSW	Anthony Brazzill	Chief Inspector
16	NSW	Ian Colless	Chief Inspector
17	NSW	Michael Smith	Senior Sergeant
18	NSW	Ryan Spong	Sergeant
19	NSW	Ray Rusby (online agenda item 4.8)	Chair, Dive Working Group
20	NT	Craig Garland	Superintendent
21	QLD	Ray Brownhill	Inspector
22	QLD	Gary Worrell	Senior Sergeant
23	SA	Jarrod Ayres	Officer in Charge Special Tasks and Rescue Operations Section
24	SA	Joshua Heinze	Senior Sergeant
25	SA	Robert Gregory	Chair, Technology Working Group
26	TAS	Robert Blackwood	Assistant Commissioner
27	TAS	Stephen Watson	Inspector
28	TAS	Bernard Peters	Sergeant

29	TAS	Callum Hebert	Senior Police
30	VIC	James Dalton	Inspector
31	VIC	Victor Velthuis	Senior Sergeant
32	WA	Darren Seivwright	Acting Assistant Commissioner
33	WA	Glenn Spencer	Inspector
34	WA	Gavin Radice	Inspector
35	WA	Craig Anderson	Chair of Working Training group
36	NZ SAR	Craig Rendel	Inspector
37	NZ SAR	Duncan Ferner	Director NZSAR Council
38	Marine Rescue NSW	Alex Barrell	Commissioner – Chief Executive Officer Marine Rescue NSW
Environmental SCAN – Thursday 1 – 3pm			
39	ACIL Allen	Amy Mehrton	Executive Director
40	ACIL Allen	Alan Smart	ACIL Allen Consulting
41	Special guest	Murray Kear (online)	
42	NSW	Peter Thurtell (online)	Deputy Commissioner
43	NT	Matthew Hollamby (online)	Acting Assistant Commissioner
44	QLD	Brian CODD (online)	Assistant Commissioner
45	QLD	Graeme Pettigrew (online)	Senior Sergeant
46	SA	Craig Wall (online)	Superintendent - Special Tasks and Rescue Group
47	WA	Jo McCabe (online)	Assistant Commissioner
48	DITRDCA	Megan Scott (online)	Assistant Secretary · Maritime and Shipping
49	DITRDCA	David Watson (online)	Assistant Director, Emissions and Policy Division
50	AMSA	Janet Hughes (online)	Senior Adviser Response Policy

Agenda

Formal Opening

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| | Chair |
| 1.1 Welcome and apologies | Chair |
| 1) List of attendees | Chair |
| 1.2 Adoption of agenda | Secretariat |
| 1.3 Actions table | |

Agenda Item 2: National SAR Award & Commendation recipients

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| | Secretariat |
| 2.1 Announcement of National SAR Award & Commendation recipients | |

Agenda Item 3: SAR Operations

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 3.1 Data Working Group Report | AMSA |
| 3.2 SAR Activity Report highlights | |
| NSW - Marine | NSW Police |
| NSW - Land | NSW Police |
| NT | NT Police |
| QLD | QLD Police |
| SA | SA Police |
| TAS | TAS Police |
| VIC | VIC Police |
| WA | WA Police |
| ADF | ADF |
| AFP | AFP |
| AMSA | AMSA |
| 3.3 National Analysis of SAR Activity | AMSA |
| 3.4 Observer Reports | NVMSARC |
| - National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee Report | NZSAR Council |
| - New Zealand SAR Annual Report 2022-23 | AMSA |
| 3.5 Coronial recommendations and findings review | |

Day 1 wrap up

Chair

Agenda Item 4: National SAR Arrangements and Strategic Developments

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------|
| 4.1 | Current emergency reviews - update | AMSA |
| 4.2 | Standards Australia & EVDS | AMSA |
| 4.3 | Non-406 beacon alerting devices | AMSA |
| 4.4 | SAR Asset Capability Equipment update | AMSA |

High stakeholder groups

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| 4.5 | Safe and Found initiative update | WA Police |
| 4.6 | a. Lost person behaviour database update | QLD Police |
| | b. First Nations lost persons behaviour database | NT Police |

NATSAR Working Groups

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.7 | SAR Technology Working Group Report | SA Police |
| 4.8 | Dive Working Group Report | NSW Police |

SAR Training

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 4.9 | National SAR Managers Course report, SAR Training Working Group and future coordination of SAR Managers Course | WA Police |
|-----|--|-----------|

NATSAR Manual

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 4.10 | Amendments to NATSAR Manual | Secretariat |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------|

Agenda Item 5: Environmental Scan

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| 5.1a | National Search and Rescue Council | ACIL Allen |
| 7) | Environmental Scan 2023 | |
| 5.1b | Report of the <i>Environmental Scan – Search and Rescue in Australia</i> | |

Day 2 wrap up

Chair

Recap of day two

Chair

Agenda Item 5 continued: Environmental Scan

5.1 Group discussion on actions and priorities coming from *Environmental Scan*
– *Search and Rescue in Australia* Chair

Agenda Item 6: Future planning

6.1 Structure of short term NATSAR Conferences – service providers and
external stakeholders Chair

Agenda Item 7: Governance

7.1 Digital Identity Pilot AMSA
7.2 Council Charter Chair
7.3 IGA Chair
7.4 Business Plan Chair
7.5 Teleconferences & Council 48 meeting Secretariat

Any other business

Chair

Wrap up & Meeting closure

Chair

Environmental Scan: Search and Rescue in Australia

- 8) The Council noted the draft *Environmental Scan: Search and Rescue in Australia* (the Scan) produced by ACIL Allen and thanked ACIL Allen for their work.
- 9) The Council acknowledged the impetus for this work stemmed from similar work undertaken by NZ SAR Council and acknowledged New Zealand for their foresight.
- 10) The Council noted that climate change and rapid changes in technology are two mega-trends driving change for SAR authorities and that, at the same time, demand and delivery of SAR is also changing.
- 11) The Council noted three broad implications for SAR authorities identified in the Scan:
 - a. Increased cost of delivering SAR services and managing resources
 - b. Reduced availability of workforce and skills across paid and volunteer workforce
 - c. Need to diversify assets and leverage capabilities of partners
- 12) The Council also noted the key risks and opportunities identified in the Scan:
 - a. Data – information that can improve decision-making and efficiency in real time
 - b. Authorising environment – increasing pressures and competing priorities limits decision-making abilities
 - c. Partnerships – existing data, platforms and technology that can be leveraged for SAR purposes
 - d. Workforce – access to a sufficiently sized workforce / multi-skilled in traditional and digital capabilities
 - e. Resourcing – fiscal constraints that impact ability to meet current and future needs
 - f. Physical resources – new assets and technologies that will improve effectiveness
- 13) The Council discussed and supported the five priorities identified in the Scan:
 - a. Review the IGA – the Council agreed there is a need to review the *Inter-Governmental Agreement on National Search and Rescue Response Arrangement* (IGA) to ensure the IGA embeds the Council's strategic role, alongside immediate and operational requirements, to more effectively respond to imminent risks and opportunities, as well as provide strategic direction to Council.
 - b. Review NATSAR structures – the Council agreed there is a strong need to provide for strategic national level discussions and decision making by appropriate level representation. Council agreed to restructure NATSAR Council to allow for both tactical/operational level discussions, and also provide an opportunity for strategic, national level discussions and decision making. The Council noted the benefit of a strategic, senior level group approving the Council's Strategic Plan.
 - c. Elevate the profile of SAR – the Council agreed that elevating the profile of SAR will strengthen SAR's role in Australia's emergency management arrangements and ultimately improve access to resourcing, technologies and capabilities. The Council agreed a national SAR database is a critical part to elevating the profile of SAR, and agreed on the importance of this work through the Data Working Group.

The Council noted the success of the media campaign led by AMSA earlier in 2023, aimed at promoting the profile of the national SAR awards, and agreed to explore further promotion of the SAR awards, as well as other ways to elevate the profile of SAR, both within agencies and externally.

- d. Build strategic partnerships – the Council agreed there is significant value in building strategic partnerships, including with other areas of government, to leverage capabilities and resources at the jurisdictional and national level. The Council agreed this needs to be considered as part of the Council reform structure.
- e. Engage and partner with industry and providers – the Council agreed there is significant value in better engaging and partnering with industry and providers and agreed this could be incorporated into the agendas of the Council and its Working Groups.

14) The Council also agreed on the importance of national cooperation on SAR, and the benefits that national cooperation can provide to all jurisdictions.

15) An overview of the Scan is at Attachment 1.

16) The Council endorsed the content of the Scan, noting that AMSA will work with consultants ACIL Allen to improve the infographics within the document.

Action: AMSA to work with ACIL Allen to further develop infographics within the *Environmental Scan* and circulate the final document to Council.

17) The Council agreed the Secretariat will develop a NATSAR Council reform package that includes review the IGA, Council Charter, Business Plan and meeting structure.

Action: The Secretariat to prepare a draft NATSAR reform package, including review of the Intergovernmental Agreement, Council Charter, Business Plan and meeting structure, for consideration by NATSAR Council.

Meeting Themes

18) In addition to the priorities identified in the Scan, the following general themes resonated throughout the meeting:

People:

- Attracting and retaining staff
- Changes to how people are volunteering
- Need to capture volunteer data
- Ongoing resource constraints

Technology:

- Increased reliance on technology
- Artificial Intelligence is an untapped resource
- Need for the sharing of technology and regular technology updates
- The challenges in collecting national SAR data

Causative factors:

- More extreme weather events
- An ageing population
- An increase in adventure activities



NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL

National SAR Council Awards and Commendations

- 19) The recipients of the 2023 Awards and Commendations, as voted by NATSAR Council, were announced. The recipients are listed at Attachment 2.
- 20) Council discussed how coronial-related nominations are considered in the award process. Council agreed the SAR award criteria would be expanded to include coronial findings/enquiries that had closed in that financial year, regardless of when the incident had occurred.

Action: The Secretariat will adjust SAR award criteria to include coronial enquiries that had closed in that financial year, regardless of when the incident had occurred.

National SAR Council Working Groups

- 21) The Council noted the following Working Group reports:
 - a. SAR Data Working Group – Chair, Dan Gillis, AMSA:
 - The current focus of the Data Working Group is to standardise national SAR data definitions, to develop a national approach to collecting and presenting SAR data.
 - While some broad national data can be observed, the collection of SAR data remains inconsistent across jurisdictions – this was evident in the data provided in the 203 SAR Activity Reports.
 - The Data Working Group is preparing a SAR Survivor Questionnaires for use in land, maritime and aviation SAR.
 - The Working Group will review the feasibility of a National SAR Database following the outcomes of the SAR Survivor Questionnaire review.

The Council discussed presentation of data in the *New Zealand Search and Rescue Annual Report 2022-2023*. The Council agreed an Australian national SAR database is critical to improve national efficiency and decision making, as well as elevate the profile of SAR. The Council noted multi-jurisdictional complexities in SAR data collection and agreed the Data Working Group's



progression of an Australian national SAR database is one of the Council's highest priorities.

SAR Technology Working Group – Chair Robert Gregory, SA Police:

- The focus of the Technology Working Group has been to identify and evaluate current and emerging technologies from an operational SAR perspective, for their utility to the SAR system.
- The Emerging SAR Technologies Register on the NATSAR SharePoint site is updated following Working Group discussion of emerging technologies.
- Key developments include:
 - Implementation of Iridium
 - Procurement of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) to provide a greater night delivery of stores capability
 - Engagement with the Royal Canadian Air Force regarding their introduction of a new fixed wing capability (Airbus CC-295 aircraft)
 - Aircraft Electronic Night Search Guidance additions to the National Search and Rescue (NATSAR) Manual
 - Updates on distress alerting devices including homing devices
 - Updates on Electronic Visual Distress Signals (EVDS)
 - Ongoing developments with the Search and Rescue Model Analysis Program (SARMAP)
 - Ongoing developments with Lost Person Behaviour
 - Progress on LifeSeeker for unmanned vehicles and continued barriers for its use amongst police agencies regarding privacy and warrants

Council noted there is an opportunity for AMSA to explore funding for national LiveSAR capabilities, such as, advanced satellite technology.

Action: AMSA to report back to Council on whether funding for LiveSAR capabilities could be expanded to incorporate advanced satellite technology.

b. Dive Working Group – Chair, Ray Busby, NSW Police:

- The Working Group's focus is on information and resource sharing, review of operational arrangements, training, and resources.
- Jurisdictional dive capability on the NATSAR SharePoint site is updated regularly.
- A National Dive Training Calendar has been established.
- Advancements include increasing ongoing use of diver held sonar, surface, and sub surface usage. Black water capability with head up display.
- There has been increasing requirement for search area tracking.
- The Group discussed technologies that allow both sub surface mapping and surface mapping of search areas for overlay to search coordinators.

- c. Training Working Group – Chair Craig Anderson, WA Police:
- The Working Group's focus has been to maintain a national course for police to provide a unified approach to SAR training across Australia.
 - Craig Anderson will maintain the role of Course Director and Working Group Chair until NATSAR Council agrees on future arrangements.
 - Council noted the significant work of WA Police and QPOL to maintain the running of the Managers Course since the retirement of Jim Whitehead from QPOL.
 - The Chair of the Working Group is conducting a review of course syllabus and competency to ensure delivery of best practice training.
 - The Working Group will prepare advice to NATSAR Council on proposed distribution of costs associated with the annual training course.
- Action: The Secretariat to remind Council members to complete the SAR Training Questionnaire provided in the meeting papers, with responses due to WA Police by 30 November.**

National SAR Council State/Territory Activity Reports

- 22) The Council discussed the SAR Activity Reports presented by each state, the Northern Territory, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. The Council noted the operational value of the discussion about the SAR Activity Report.
- 23) Council noted that many of the issues discussed with the SAR Activity Report presentations were consistent with the issues identified in the *Environmental Scan*.

National SAR Council Annual National Thematic Analysis of SAR Activity

- 24) Following the presentation of the jurisdictional SAR activity reports, AMSA provided a thematic analysis of national SAR activity highlighting national trends across the reports. The analysis identified the following common themes:
- Causative factors for SAR are common, including emerging factors such as natural disasters
 - All jurisdictions are enhancing capabilities, including personnel, response equipment and communications
 - There is an ongoing need for professional SAR training
 - There has been collaboration on SAR issues and events, at national and international levels
 - There is an ongoing need to raise safety awareness within communities, including through social media, television and radio campaigns
 - The use of new technology in SAR continues.

National SAR Council Annual Observer Reports

25) The Council noted the reports from observers:

- a. National Volunteer Marine SAR Committee – the Council noted the importance of volunteer contributions to SAR.
- b. New Zealand SAR Council – the Council noted the *New Zealand Search and Rescue Annual Report 2022-2023* and the benefits of being able to report national data. The Council also noted the importance of the Trans-Tasman cooperation between New Zealand and Australian SAR Authorities.

National SAR Council Interest Areas

26) Noted updates on the following:

- a. Coronial recommendations and findings - no significant recommendations or findings to report.
- b. Current emergency-related reviews, including:
 - the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies, being led by AMSA
 - Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response, being led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
 - National Emergency Management Stockpiles, being led by NEMA.
- c. Review of *Australian Standard AS 2092 Pyrotechnic marine distress flares and signals for pleasure craft* to include Electronic Visual Distress Signals (EVDS) being led by Standards Australia. Council noted the expected commencement of a public comment period later in 2024, and agreed to the following messaging for use in submissions to Standards Australia:
 - Whilst it is acknowledged there are benefits in moving to EVDS in the future, uptake of EVDS must be with consideration to maintaining the same levels of visibility and associated safety as pyrotechnic devices.
 - There is currently insufficient evidence to suggest EVDS operate or replicate the same standard as pyrotechnic flares, which places lives at risk.
 - The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS) applies to all commercial and recreational vessels. Annex IV of the COLREGS lists the distress signals which are to be used to indicate if a vessel is in distress and requires assistance. This list does not include EVDS.
 - Adoption of the US Coast Guard or Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) EVDS standards is opposed because these standards do not comply with IMO COLREG requirements.
 - EVDS are not internationally recognised distress signals and may not be recognised by crews of commercial ships in the vicinity.
 - Used in isolation, EVDS may provide a false sense of security.

- There are significant concerns about the effectiveness of EVDS in a search and rescue situation, in particular safety of life, and therefore EVDS cannot be endorsed as a suitable replacement for pyrotechnic flares on recreational or commercial vessels.

Action: The Secretariat will inform Council members of the public consultation period for the review of *Australian Standard AS 2092*. The Secretariat will also circulate the above messaging as agreed by Council.

- d. Non-406 beacon alerting devices: the Council noted that iPhone and Apple alerting devices are becoming common place and arrangements have been made with Apple, following discussion at the National Emergency Communications Working Group (NECWG), that geospatially allocates alerts to the appropriate SAR Coordinating Authority.

Action: Chair of the Data Working Group, Dan Gillis (AMSA), will contact NECWG to seek reporting data about the application and use of the alerting technologies.

- e. SAR Asset Capability and Equipment: the Council noted that AMSA has been building current capability, as well as exploring what aviation capability is currently available within the SAR system. AMSA will introduce a capability classification framework into the opportunity aircraft panel to enable a better understanding of capability, including search, rescue, support and airborne intelligence gathering.
- f. Safe and Sound initiative: the Council noted the WA Safe and Found initiative is a collaboration between the Western Australia Police Force and the not-for-profit MedicAlert Foundation. The initiative assists police locate vulnerable missing persons more rapidly by storing personal information ahead of time, reducing search time and saving lives.

Action: Dan Gillis (AMSA), as Chair of the Data Working Group, will liaise with WA Police to identify what SAR data may be available.

- g. Lost Person Behaviour database: Council agreed the Lost Person Database is extremely valuable to SAR efforts across Australia. Council noted this work has been led by QLD Police for a number of years and that new arrangements for maintenance of the database need to be found. Council agreed to establish a new Working Group to lead this work.
- h. First Nations Lost Person Behaviour database: Council noted the value of the First Nations Lost Person Behaviour database that had been developed by NT Police and agreed it would be incorporated with the Lost Person Behaviour database.

Action: QLD (Gary Worrell) to confirm capacity to lead the new Working Group that, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare recommendation(s) for the Council about how to best maintain the Lost Person Behaviour database and other similar work. VIC (Vick Velthuis) offered assistance. Council agreed the new Working Group will also consider maintenance of the First Nations Lost Person Behaviour database.

- i. The Council also noted the Annual Missing Persons Conference led by the AFP, and that there is likely to be links between the Conference and NATSAR Council's work.

Action: With support from the Secretariat and the AFP, Mark Morrow (Chair) to contact the convenors of the AFP's Annual National Missing Persons Conference to better understand any overlap between the Conference and the work of NATSAR Council.

- j. Digital Identity pilot for SARWEB: Council noted that AMSA was improving access to the SARWEB system and explained how NATSAR Council users of SARWEB can prepare for the pilot trial of the Digital Identity function.

National SAR Manual Amendments

- 27) The Council noted minor editorial changes had been identified for the National SAR Manual over the past year. Council agreed these suggestions, and any others received, would be considered by Directing Staff during the NATSAR Managers Course, before the Secretariat finalises a revised version of the Manual.

Action: The Secretariat to update the NATSAR Manual, in consultation with Directing Staff at the 2024 NATSAR Managers Course, with a view to circulating a revised Manual by early 2025.

National SAR Council Actions Table

- 28) The Council noted the status of outstanding actions:
 - a. *Secretariat to explore channels for broadened safety education messaging to out of area visitors. Ongoing*
 - b. *Secretariat to further explore national beacon disposal opportunities, similar to previous arrangements with Battery World contributing to a national push on correct beacon disposal. The Secretariat noted that service providers had been approached, including 'Mobile Muster', however a provider could not be secured. The Council agreed beacon disposal is a national issue, including within the ADF, but noted that AMSA does not have capacity to further explore options at this stage. Complete.*
 - c. *Members to consider how the Data Working Group can support the Council's need to deliver more measurable achievements and move towards more formalised reporting similar to NZSAR, noting the impacting factors identified from the Environmental Scan will assist in determining how the Council progresses with its future reporting. This work is a key focus of the Data Working Group.*
 - d. *Data Working Group Chair to lead the implementation of the standardised metadata definitions for national annual collection. This will include workshopping incidents that identify gaps within the methodology for ongoing development of the definitions. This work is a key focus of the Data Working Group.*
 - e. *AMSA to lead a review into developing an updated SAR Survivor Questionnaire with the aim of achieving national consistency where possible. This work is a key focus of the Data Working Group.*

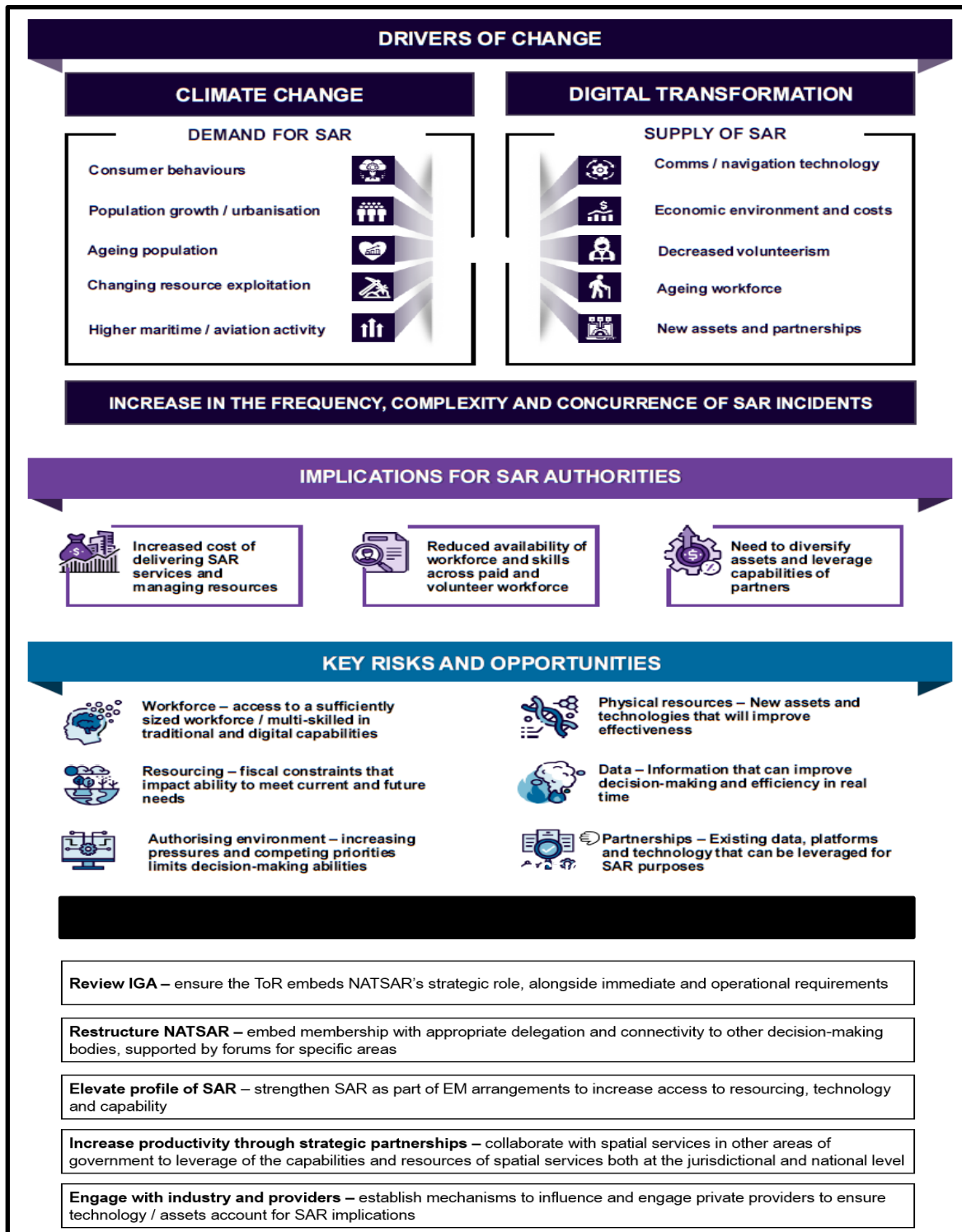
- f. *AMSA to utilise its membership on the SAR Data Working Group to consider how SAR Survivor Questionnaire data and analysis can be incorporated into reporting and benefit the Council. **Complete.***
- g. *Members to determine the most appropriate national volunteer group within the land emergency services sector to approach for potential NATSAR representation in future. This was discussed at Teleconference 3, September 2023. Council agreed the Secretariat would invite the National SES Operations Committee to be an observer on Council. **Complete.***
- h. *Kevin McEvoy, Manager ARC to represent the NATSAR Council's view on the Standards Review Project Committee for Australian Standard AS 2092:2004, ensuring representation of the risks posed to SAR personnel and SAR operations. **Complete.***
- i. *Jurisdictions to provide any available data on successful and unsuccessful searches involving indigenous persons to aid in the development of a new lost person behaviour category within the NATSAR Manual. **Complete.***
- j. *Northern Territory will provide Jim Whitehead available data around Indigenous lost persons to consider establishing a new lost person's profile due 7 February 2022. **Complete.***

Next meetings

29) The Council agreed to the following dates for upcoming meetings of NATSAR Council, its Working Groups and the NATSAR Managers Course:

• 31 October 2023 – Data Working Group – via teleconference
• 15 February 2024 – SAR Training Working Group – via teleconference
• 21 February 2024 – Teleconference 1
• 12 March 2024 – National Police SAR Dive Working Group – via teleconference
• May 2024 – Teleconference 2 (date to be confirmed at Teleconference 1)
• July 2024 – Technology Working Group – via teleconference
• August 2024 – Teleconference 3 (date to be confirmed at Teleconference 2)
• 19 - 30 August 2024 – NATSAR Managers Course – Canberra
• 16 - 18 October – NATSAR Council 2024 – Sydney, NSW

Overview: Environmental Scan: Search and Rescue in Australia



ATTACHMENT 2

2023 Australian Search and Rescue Awards

The NATSAR Australian Search and Rescue Awards honour individuals for their exceptional contributions to search and rescue in the Australian region. The 21 Australian Search and Rescue Award recipients for 2023, across three categories, are being recognized for their outstanding dedication and service.

Professional Search and Rescue Award

Recipients: NEMESIS crew in an offshore rescue of two people from a storm affected sailing boat. The crew consisted of:

- Senior Sergeants Michael Hrnjak and Michael Morris
- Sergeants Ryan Spong, Clint Brown, Iain Houlford and Joshua Lisle
- Leading Senior Constable's Bruce Tape and Brendan Nix
- Senior Constable's Lincoln Kilpatrick and Hayley Upton
- NSW Police Marine Area Command land based-team including Commander Joseph McNulty, Chief Inspector Anthony Brazill and their teams.

Nominated by Chief Inspector Anthony Brazill and Inspector David Carlin of NSW Police, the group received an award for their outstanding rescue efforts during an incident off the NSW Coast.

In August 2022, two men embarked on a journey from New Zealand to Brisbane on their 14.2m white fibreglass yacht. Equipped with new safety gear, a life raft, sail, and vessel rigging, they were in contact with NZ meteorologists monitoring weather conditions. Seven days into the voyage, they encountered a severe storm with winds over 80 knots and 6 to 8-meter seas, causing extensive damage to the yacht.

With electronic and engine failures, a cracked hull, and entangled sails, the sailors activated their EPIRB during the storm. The Joint Rescue Coordination Centre at AMSA's Canberra office received the alert and requested assistance from the NSW Marine Area Command, as the men were stranded about 180nm east of Lord Howe Island. The AMSA Response Centre redirected crude oil tankers, deployed aircraft for air support, and dispatched the NSW Launch NEMESIS and its crew.

Facing heavy seas and minimal sleep, the NEMESIS crew reached the yacht after a challenging 35-hour voyage. In darkness, they successfully retrieved the two men, one of whom had a serious injury. The rescue covered an unprecedented distance of 595 nautical miles, marking the furthest marine rescue completed by the Marine Area Command in Australia. The crew's dedication and professionalism, especially in the face of significant risks, were commendable.

Sergeant Spong, Leading Constable Tape, and Constable Upton were called up to accept the 2023 Professional Award on behalf of the courageous NEMESIS crew.

Professional Commendation Award

Recipients: Australian Federal Police representatives involved in the Kambah Pool rescue:

- Sergeant Reginald Dwyer
- Sergeant Elizabeth Swain
- A/Sergeant Andrew Craig
- Leading Senior Constable Benjamin Cox
- Leading Senior Constable Ewen Locke
- Leading Senior Constable Allan Bell

This group was nominated by Matthew Reynolds and Simon Henry of the AFP. The commendation was awarded for the officers' actions on Friday, September 20, 2022, when they were notified of an emergency at Kambah Pool, a popular spot on the Murrumbidgee River in the ACT. A person was trapped in the fast-flowing waters of the river.

Facing dangerous conditions with high water levels, rapid flow, and obstacles including trees and debris, traditional air rescue was deemed impossible. Officers Dwyer, Locke, and Cox devised a plan for a swift-water raft rescue. Navigating the treacherous river, they reached the distressed individual suffering mild hypothermia, fitting the person of interest with a Personal Flotation Device and Helmet.

Following an arduous raft journey, the officers safely brought themselves and the person of interest to the riverbank. A helicopter was then deployed to winch a paramedic to the riverbank, hoisting the individual to safety. Meanwhile, the officers hiked to find a secure crossing point back across the river.

Throughout the incident, the Air Support member played a crucial role in locating and visually monitoring the man and the maritime team. The commendation highlighted the team's exceptional efforts in securing and rescuing the individual from the swollen and flooded river. Sergeant Dwyer, Leading Senior Constables Cox and Locke were presented with the 2023 Professional Commendation on behalf of the broader group.

Non-Professional Search and Rescue Award

Recipient: Luke William Baldock from WA who assisted a man and two children from a dinghy off the WA coast.

In the coastal town where Mr Baldock lived, his ordinary day took an extraordinary turn on the 5th of May 2023. Walking the beach with his partner and their dog, Mr Baldock spotted the dinghy caught in fast-flowing waters and being dragged towards the ocean. Onboard were a male adult and two children, aged five and seven. Both children were wearing life jackets.

Without a second thought, Mr Baldock went to aid the vessel and its occupants. The dinghy was swamped. One child was thrown clear, while the other was beneath the upturned hull.

Mr Baldock swam to the dinghy and confirmed the safety of the first child before diving beneath the hull to rescue the other child. Mr Baldock guided both children to the safety of the beach, Mr Baldock then turned his attention to the adult.

Mr Baldock was nominated for the award by Paul Crawshaw from WA Police and Duncan Palmer from WA's Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The award was presented to Mr Baldock in honour of his outstanding courage and selflessness.

Non-Professional Search and Rescue Commendation

Recipient: Haylee O'Connell from WA who spent two years looking for her brother Luke.

Ms O'Connell received two nominations for this award, one from Ria Hardey & Luke Cosgrove and the other from Russell Johnston and Lucy Molloy.

In recognition of her outstanding efforts, Ms O'Connell received a commendation for coordinating a massive search operation for her brother, Corey O'Connell, who had been a missing person for almost two years. Ms O'Connell organized extensive searches in challenging weather conditions, including rain and heat, through thick bushland around Nannup, WA. Ms O'Connell actively participated in many of these searches, both individually and with small groups.

Ms O'Connell's endeavours sparked a significant response from the community, generating awareness and support. Ms O'Connell collaborated with emergency services providers, local community groups, and media to facilitate these efforts, all while balancing a full-time job. The commendation acknowledges the substantial time and effort she dedicated to this cause.

In a situation that is deeply personal, NATSAR Council thanked Ms O'Connell for her determination and strength.

Long-standing Contribution to Search and Rescue Award

Recipient: Sergeant Damian Anthony Bidgood, Tasmanian Police.

Sergeant Damian Anthony Bidgood was nominated for the 2023 Long Standing Award for Search and Rescue. Sergeant Bidgood was nominated by Sergeant Bernard Peters and Inspector Stephen Watson of the Tasmanian Police for 30 plus years of service.

Sergeant Bidgood began his career with search and rescue in 1992 when he joined the land search and rescue squad. Sergeant Bidgood is a qualified Rope Access and Rescue Trainer/Assessor (RARTA) with Tasmania police, which is the highest level of vertical access qualifications within Tasmania Police. Sergeant Bidgood is also a police diver with the Tasmania Police Dive Squad and qualified as a police dive supervisor in 1992.

Sergeant Bidgood qualified as a Search Mission Coordinator in 1994 and has instructed on the National Police Search and Rescue Course on several occasions. At the time of his nomination, he continued to operate as a police diver, dive supervisor, land squad member and search coordinator, and has amassed a significant number of successful rescues in that time. He is also a trained swift water rescue technician and boat operator.

Sergeant Bidgood moved into the airspace and completed initial Rescue Air Crewman training in 1994 with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. He was then an active air crewman as a police officer within the Tasmania Air Rescue Service until around 2019. He was the Crew Chief for Tasmania Police and Rotor lift Aviation, performing this role between 2001 – 2007 and 2013

- 2019. He is also a NVG Instructor. He has logged in excess of 2000 flying hours as an Air Crewman.

Sergeant Bidgood also attained many other qualifications during his career, has saved countless lives and has been awarded numerous commendations and awards.

From police dive supervisor to Search Mission Coordinator, Sergeant Bidgood's roles expanded. His aerial contributions with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter and dedication to saving lives earned him over 30 commendations and awards.

As a highly experienced and reliable member of search and rescue, Sergeant Bidgood has been called upon to attend a number of incidents in horrendous conditions and has a well-known reputation for finding that lost person due to his determination, wealth of knowledge of the Tasmanian coastline and wilderness, and bush/navigation skills. He has been a course director or instructor on many courses.

Sergeant Bidgood was awarded the 2023 Long Standing Award for Search and Rescue.

Long-standing Contribution to Search and Rescue Commendation Award

Recipient: Jeffrey Ronald Caldwell for 25 years' service with the Volunteer Marine Rescue Gladstone.

The 2023 Long-standing commendation was awarded to Jeffrey Ronald Caldwell. Mr Caldwell was nominated by Paul Thompson of Volunteer Marine Rescue Gladstone & Bernadine Bennett of Marine Rescue QLD.

Mr Caldwell's service has spanned over 25 years with Volunteer Marine Rescue Gladstone. Beginning as a Radio Operator, he later acquired Competent Crew and Skipper qualifications. During his tenure, he also served as Boat and Crew Manager for nine years. In 2018, Mr Caldwell was elected Vice President and subsequently became President in 2019.

A dedicated advocate, Mr Caldwell promoted Volunteer Marine Rescue Gladstone, fostering strong relationships with various agencies and organizations. Among his achievements was transformation of the squadron into a technology-based search and rescue service, implementing advanced systems for communication and record-keeping.

Mr Caldwell's commitment extended beyond administrative roles. He actively participated as a skipper and crew member in nearly 100 search and rescue activities, involving rescues from sinking vessels, medivacs, and searches for missing persons.

The Commendation recognised Jeff's extraordinary contribution to search and rescue with Volunteer Marine Rescue Gladstone.