

# Wollongong City SES



# Annual Report 2009

## Wollongong City SES Unit

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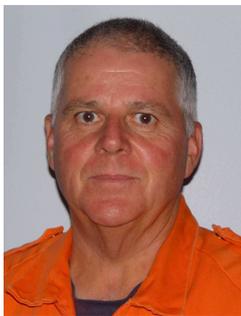
### Our Vision

*To build and support a safe and resilient community by providing versatile and utilised volunteers.*

### Our Mission

*To lead communities in managing floods and storms and help people in other emergencies.*

### Local Controller



Warren Helson

Retired School Principal

### Governing Legislation

State Emergency Service Act (Amended) 1989

### Our History

Wollongong City SES Unit was established sometime shortly prior to 1960 (no record of actual establishment date) and has resided in the current headquarters since 1982.

### What we do

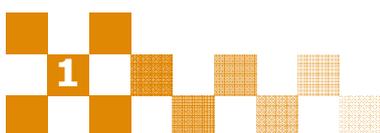
Wollongong City SES Unit responds and manages the SES combat roles of floods, storms and tsunamis.

The Unit also assists other agencies in their combat response roles such as bushfires, searches for missing persons and building collapse.

Wollongong City SES also is recognised through the Local Emergency Management Committee as a support resource for vertical rescue incidents within the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA).

### The Area

The Wollongong area consists of a population of over 185,000 and covers over 714 square kilometres in the Illawarra district of NSW. The population density is around 258 persons / square km. There is over 77,000 properties within the Local Government Area with an average of 2.39 persons per property.



## Introduction

Wollongong City SES Unit is located in a dedicated building on Wollongong City Council land in Montague Street North Wollongong. The Unit, one of the largest in the Illawarra South Coast Region, currently has 142 members in the following categories:

- 111 active
- 22 Probation
- 9 Reserve

The Unit is very active in the community and enjoys a great deal of support from Wollongong City Council. This includes a continuation of the allocation of an operating budget, well maintained vehicle fleet and increased liaison between Council and SES to coordinate resources during operational responses to floods, storms and tsunamis.

At the end of 2009 the Unit was informed that the joint Council and NSW SES submission for funding to the Federal Government was successful. Over \$300,000 has been made available to increase the size of the facility to provide more training areas for the increased volunteer numbers and also to store their vehicles, vessels and resources for use in the community. The NSW State Government will also contribute \$100 000 in FY09/10 to ensure that enhanced facilities are made available for the Volunteer members of the SES in this Local Government Area.

The Unit has had to turn potential volunteers away due to the existing facilities having reached capacity at over 120 members. Such a large number presents issues with regard to concurrent training and multi training activities. The Unit has addressed this in most part by adopting a very flexible and well communicated training program.

**Achievements** Some of the Unit highlights for 2009 include:

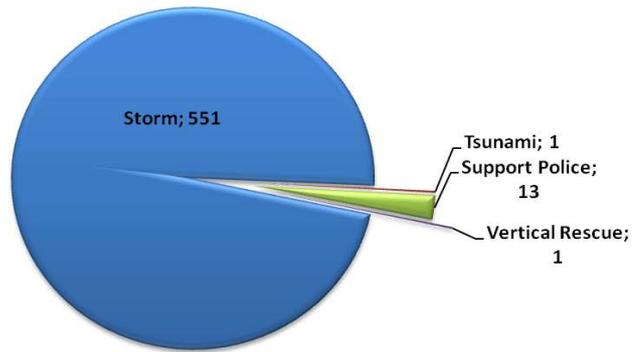
- Unit restructure in August 2009 to reflect the growing size of the Unit and to provide for better succession planning opportunities.
- Trialling Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) for the Service to test the viability for state wide utilisation.
- Recruitment of a dedicated catering Team Leader to achieve healthier meals for volunteers.
- Improvement of reporting to members through the implementation of activity reports for all activities and dissemination of weekly summaries and information.
- Establishment of a highly effective consultative Senior Management Team to guide planning, operations and administration.
- Improving the quality of our training through the implementation of structured team based training activities.
- Structured training calendar which allows for pathways of training to cater for individual as well as Unit needs.
- Improved ability to work effectively and efficiently with other agencies (Council, NSWFB, NSW RFS and NSW Police Force) during floods, storms and tsunami operations with mutually agreed Standard Operating Procedures.
- Trialling of Centralised Call taking for 132500 to ascertain viability of such a concept.
- Installation of automatic diesel backup generator to the local headquarters for emergency power should utility supply fail.
- Structured regular senior officers meetings to allow for member input into Unit decision making processes.

**Response Types**

The majority of the Unit's operational activity was around its combat responsibility of storms. The bulk of this was due to damage caused by rain.

Support to police included searches for missing persons and evidence searches.

**Operational Activity by Type**



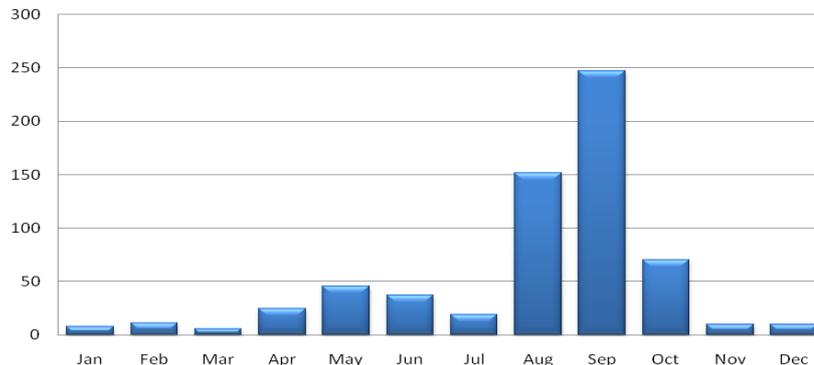
**Operational Periods**

Wind storms in May (90 km/hr), August (120km/hr) and September (90 km/hr) produced the greater portion of operational response requirements with the Unit averaging 36 hours for completion of all requests for assistance received.

A concentrated and intense storm cell dropped hail and rain in the southern suburbs of the LGA in October.

The September response (23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>) was the largest for the year.

**All Volunteer Activity By Month**

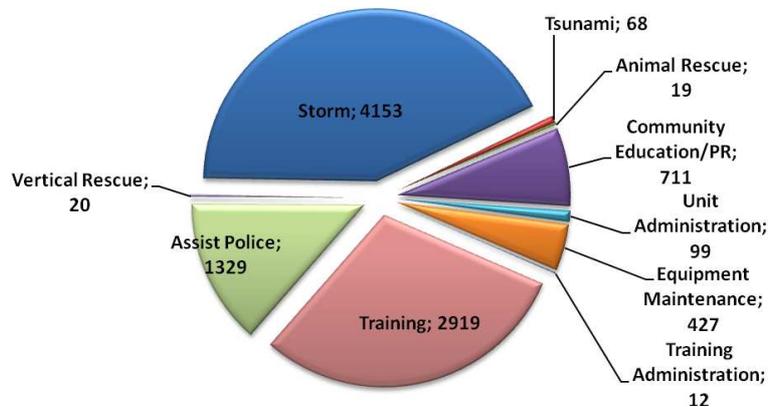


**Volunteer Hours**

As well as responding operationally, the Unit volunteers undertake other activities as part of maintaining operational readiness and capability. These are represented in the graph to the right.

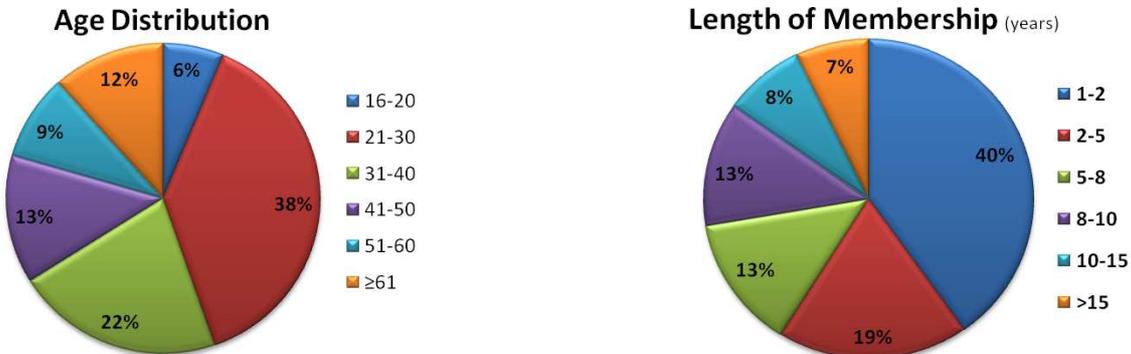
Note: Not all administrative hours have been recorded for the 2009 period.

**Volunteer Hours by Activity**



## Membership

The Unit ensures to manage reasonable attrition/retention rates due to limited space to facilitate large group training. The current management principle is to maintain membership at no greater than 120 members until more space and increased facility resources are provided.

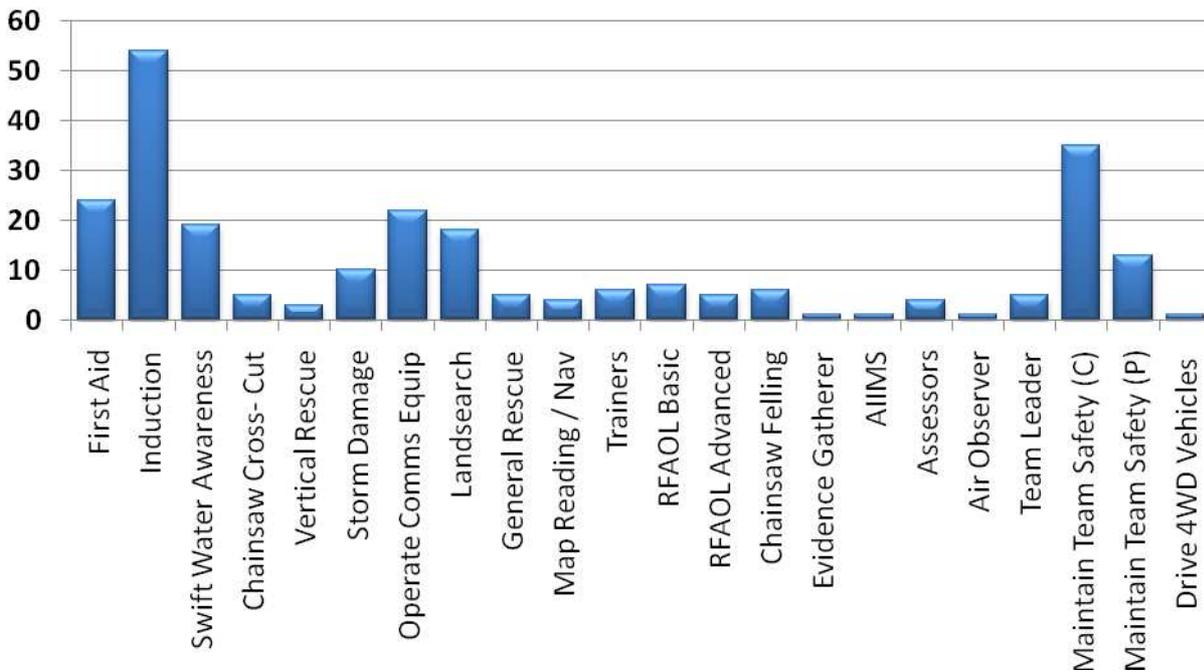


## Competencies

The SES is a Registered Training Organisation with the Vocational and Education Training Advisory Board and has issued the following Competencies and Statements of Attainment during 2009 at Wollongong Unit.

It should be noted that the Wollongong Unit has a high number of prospective members that wish to join the Unit however, the facilities and personnel required to train such numbers is limited. Work to improve this in a strategic sense continues in 2010.

## New Qualifications Issued



## Unit Financial Summary

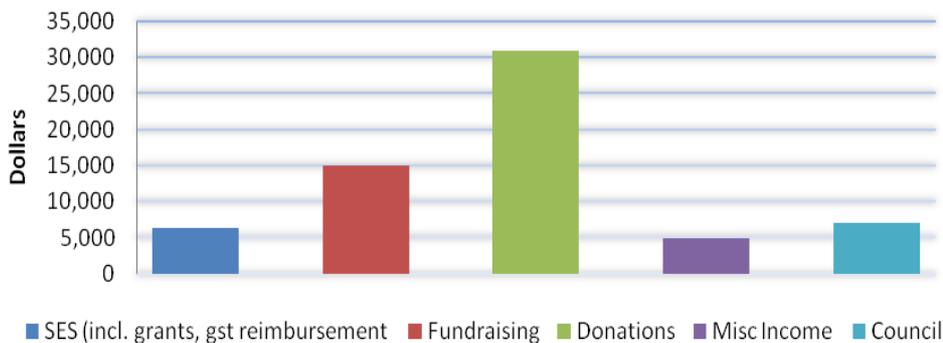
Wollongong Unit's financial year runs from 1 May to 30 April and the following tables reflect the financial summary for that period. All other information in this report is based on the 2009 Calendar Year.

	<b>2008-09</b>
Income	\$64,470
Expenditure	\$50,222

## Income Sources

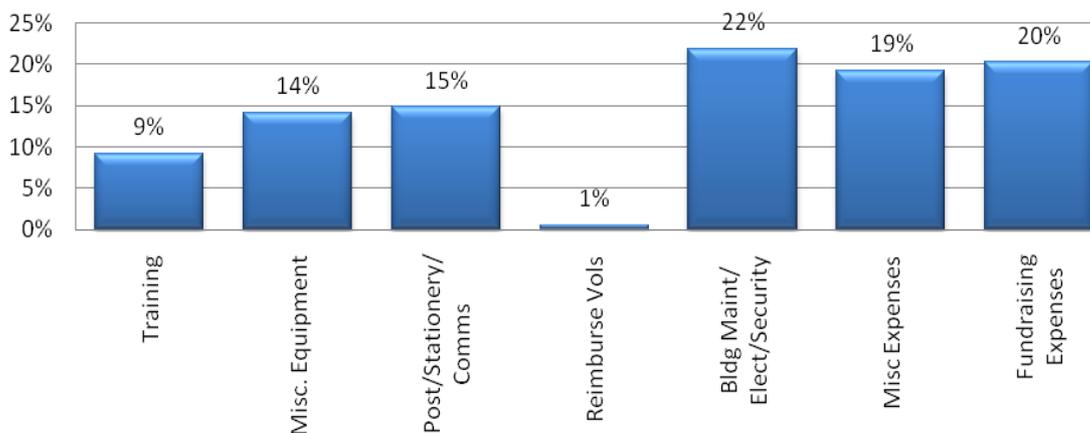
Donations and fundraising form a large part of the Unit's Income, made up for the most part, of money raised by the Unit using their creativity and initiative in providing useful items for purchase and also in providing their assistance to various Community and Council activities.

**Cash Income Sources**  
**1 May 2008 to 30 April 2009**



## Expenditure

**Expenditure Items**



## **Facilities**

The Unit is currently restricted within its current location as the accommodation does not fully cater for storage of resources including vehicles, vessels and other training requirements. This however has been addressed in part by a successful joint submission for an interim improvement as part of the strategic outlook.

Other critical upgrades that have been carried out to the facility to meet its operational needs include:

- Installation of a backup generator.
- Updating the Local Area Network at the Headquarters for improved connectivity and operational response.
- Updating of Telstra phone capability including hardware and contractual arrangement with Telstra.

The Unit is co-located with the Volunteer Rescue Association which in part does restrict its growth but is being managed at this time.

## **Equipment**

The NSW SES continues to invest in the Unit to ensure that they are appropriately resourced. Some of the key items that were distributed include:

- Capital expenditure enabled the SES to continue the flood rescue boat replacement program. Wollongong SES Unit has been provided with a new flood boat including a new trailer and motor.
- The Unit was supplied with Garmin Handheld and Garmin Nuvi in car GPS kits.
- In the 2009 calendar year NSW SES commissioned and now maintains all telephone systems including billing for landline and mobile phones.
- Provision of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) to enable trialling for viability for the Service.

## **Community Education**

The Unit undertook a number of community activities to not only support such events, but to raise the profile and provide safety information to the community. Such events attended include:

- Undertaking a school based cadet program at Dapto High School to involve teenage children in SES.
- A programmed school based visitation program to educate kids on SES roles.
- Facilitated Scout visitations to local headquarters to provide valuable experience to this group.
- Assist Wollongong City Council with Australia Day celebrations with site control.
- Participated in the Hospital Bed races and conducted all agency mascot races.
- All agency response planning for responses to Illawarra Fly.
- Participated in the Bunnings and Dulux displays to increase profile.
- Assisted in site management for the Caravan, 4WD and Camping Show.
- Assisted in site facilitation at the American Muscle Car Show at Towradgi.

## The Future – Our Targets

The Unit plan identifies a number of Key Performance Indicators for the Wollongong City Unit in 2010 some of which are:

### **Strategic Planning**

- Establish and maintain a Strategic Planning Group with Wollongong City Council involving:
  - Unit Representation
  - Region Representation
  - Council Representation
- Prepare annual report for Council with Region support

### **Unit Structure – Succession Planning**

- Succession development through:
  - Providing opportunities to attend development courses ie LAP, SEMC courses, Team Leader etc
  - Attend Controller Conference / Workshops
  - Attendance at LR / LEMC with Controller
  - Appropriate forums when available

### **Facilities and Vehicles**

- Unit determine and provide rationale on when additional vehicles made available and what type is best suited in line with Service definitions.
- Work with Region Business Manager to look at whole of fleet replacement plan for a 5 year period.
- Continue to provide representation to Wollongong City Council through the Strategic Planning Group on Unit needs to ensure Service Standards are achieved and planned for.

### **Training**

- Review the training needs analysis and identify areas that require additional / new skills.
- Complete action plan with Region support to address shortfalls.
- Provide opportunities for new and existing members in training.

### **Membership**

- Take opportunities to promote the Service and the roles the SES undertakes in the community.
- Plan for 'batch intakes' to allow the community to engage into the SES.

### **Other**

Other areas of focus include equipment planning, emergency exercise program, flood and storm response planning, reporting, membership enhancement and operational readiness.