



# State Rescue Board of NSW

**Annual Report 2019/20**

## Chair's Foreword

The State Rescue Board of NSW (SRB) is a statutory body constituted under section 42 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERM Act). The principal function of the SRB is to ensure the efficient and effective maintenance of rescue services throughout NSW.

This report has been compiled in accordance with section 49A of the SERM Act to describe the work and activities of the SRB during the financial year 2019/20.

This year's report highlights the work undertaken by the State Rescue Board during what have been challenging times for the entire community, and emergency service agencies in particular, including the devastating 2019/20 bushfire season and the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

During the significant 2019/20 bushfire season, the NSW RFS responded to 255 calls for immediate assistance due to impact from bush fires, resulting in the rescue of 51 people by helicopter.

Changes in land rescue incidents this reporting period reflect the changes in our day-to-day activity arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. A total of 11,371 land rescues were recorded during the reporting period. This is a slight increase from the 11,137 land rescue incidents during the previous reporting period. Activations for motor vehicle accidents decreased by 12.8 per cent as vehicular traffic decreased during the 3rd and 4th quarter of the reporting period. We saw an increase in "domestic" rescues (rescues in household settings), which increased from 3825 to 5751 – reflecting the increased time people spent at home. 4,079 coordinated maritime rescue incidents were recorded during the reporting period.

During the year, the SRB released the Member's Handbook. The Handbook provides information on the roles and functions of the State Rescue Board and how the Board conducts its business. The Handbook can be found on the Emergency NSW website at [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au).

The Board endorsed an amendment to the State Rescue Policy to reflect that established rescue agencies in other jurisdictions are recognised in NSW. This amendment recognises that units from other jurisdictions assisting in NSW will be activated via a communication centre (and will therefore already have accreditation) allowing for the closest units to seamlessly respond to rescue incidents.

NSW State Emergency Service and Fire & Rescue NSW co-hosted the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation, Australasian Rescue Challenge, in Dubbo in July 2019. This exercise involved 22 participating teams from across Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, who came together to share their experience and skills in Road Crash Rescue and Trauma Management.

Marine Rescue NSW continued to expand its capability through the establishment of its first offshore marine rescue unit on Lord Howe Island. This first dedicated marine rescue service on the World Heritage listed island will provide essential emergency response and safety for the island's boating community, including local residents, tourists, transiting sailors and the island's commercial/tourist boat industry.

On behalf of the Board I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone involved in providing outstanding rescue services to communities across NSW.

Commissioner Stacey Tannos ESM  
**Chair, State Rescue Board of NSW**  
5 November 2020

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## Section 1: Introduction

This report has been compiled in accordance with section 49A of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERM Act) to describe the work and activities of the State Rescue Board of NSW (SRB) during the financial year 2018/19.

The report has been produced by Resilience NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

### Role and Functions

The SRB is a statutory body constituted under section 42 of the SERM Act. The principal function of the SRB is to ensure the efficient and effective maintenance of rescue services throughout NSW. The SRB carries out its responsibilities through the heads of the agencies that provide the accredited rescue units and through the NSW Police Force, which is responsible for the coordination of rescue within the State.

In accordance with section 48 of the SERM Act, the SRB is required to:

- develop policies to promote the provision of comprehensive, balanced and coordinated rescue services throughout the State
- make recommendations to the Minister on policy matters relating to the provision of rescue services within the State
- review planning for single incident rescues within the State
- review and disseminate to relevant agencies technical information relating to rescue operations
- ensure proper liaison and coordination with federal and other state organisations in connection with rescue services
- provide advice and recommendations on the compatibility of rescue equipment, including communications equipment
- make recommendations to the Minister on the accreditation of rescue units (both permanent and volunteer) for participation in rescue operations
- make recommendations to the Minister on levels of Government support (including financial assistance under section 60 of the SERM Act) to volunteer organisations providing rescue services
- assist in the conduct of training exercises in rescue operations involving the various agencies concerned
- monitor the training standards of the permanent and volunteer services in rescue
- review proposals for amendment of legislation relating to rescue and make recommendations to the Minister
- make reports or recommendations to the Minister on any matter referred to the Board by the Minister.

Local Rescue Committees and Regional Rescue Committees are established under the SERM Act to assist the SRB in the exercise of its functions and, in particular, assist in determining whether the accreditation of a rescue unit to operate in the relevant local or regional area should be recommended to the Minister.

## Membership

Membership of the SRB is in accordance with section 43 of the SERM Act.

### Members

#### **NSW Ambulance (NSWA)**

Commissioner Dominic Morgan ASM

#### **Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW)**

Commissioner Paul Baxter

#### **Marine Rescue NSW (MRNSW)**

Commissioner Stacey Tannos ESM – Chair

#### **NSW Police Force (NSWPF)**

Assistant Commissioner Karen Webb APM

#### **NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS)**

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM (from May 2020)

#### **State Emergency Operations Controller (SEOCON)**

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Loy APM

Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys APM (from July 2019)

#### **NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES)**

A/Commissioner Kyle Stewart APM

Commissioner Carlene York APM (from October 2019)

#### **NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (NSW VRA)**

Commissioner Mark Gibson ESM

### Executive Support

Executive and Secretariat support to the SRB is provided by the Emergency Management Policy and Coordination team within Resilience NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet (Former Office of Emergency Management, Department Communities and Justice). During the reporting period, the Executive Officer of the SRB was Mr Sam Toohey.

State Rescue Board of NSW  
Resilience NSW  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
GPO Box 5434  
Sydney NSW 2001  
website: [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

## Meetings

The SRB plays an integral role in the delivery of rescue services to the communities of NSW. SRB meetings generally take place each quarter, with representatives from the NSWA, FRNSW, MRNSW, NSWPF, NSW RFS, NSW SES and the NSW VRA in attendance.

### Significant achievements or activities

- Approved the Regional Rescue Committees to undertake a further 3 region-initiated capability inspections per year. Increasing the level of capability inspections from 6 per year to 33 per year.
- The publication of the State Rescue Board of NSW Member's Handbook
- Undertook a review of helicopter search and rescue capacity on the NSW North Coast.
- Welcomed new members to the SRB:
  - Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys APM, NSWPF
  - Commissioner Carlene York, NSW SES.
  - Commissioner Rob Rogers, NSW RFS

### Rescue accreditation changes

The SRB considered and endorsed the following changes to rescue accreditation and progressed documentation to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for approval.

- FRNSW Regentville Station- application for pre-accreditation for FR
- FRNSW Eastwood Station- application for pre-accreditation for VR
- NSW RFS Louth Brigade – application for pre-accreditation for RCR
- MRNSW Lord Howe Island- Marine Rescue accreditation

## Section 2: Advisory Committees and Working Groups

The SRB has a number of advisory committees and working groups to assist with the exercise of its functions and provide advice on specific issues. During the reporting period two groups provided advice to the SRB; the Policy Advisory Committee, and Rescue Training Package Working Group.

### Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC provides advice to the SRB on rescue policy matters, accreditation applications and matters submitted to the SRB from rescue agencies and Regional Rescue Committees. The PAC generally meets quarterly, two weeks prior to the SRB meeting. The PAC is chaired by the Executive Officer of the SRB. Membership of the PAC comprises senior representatives from accredited rescue agencies nominated by the agencies' SRB member. Executive and Secretariat support is provided by Resilience NSW

### Rescue Training Package Working Group (RTPWG)

The RTPWG was established to develop a standard rescue training package encompassing GLR, RCR, VR and FR, to provide a baseline of skills and performance standards that operators must meet and maintain to be accredited to conduct rescue operations in NSW. The RTPWG is chaired by the Commander of the NSWPF Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit (RBDU). Membership of the RTPWG comprises senior rescue training officers from accredited rescue agencies. Executive and Secretariat support is provided by Resilience NSW.

## Section 3: Rescue Accreditation

Under section 48(1) (h) of the SERM Act, the SRB is required to make recommendations to the Minister on the accreditation of rescue units (both permanent and volunteer) for participation in rescue operations. Before the SRB will consider recommending accreditation, the need for a unit must first be established through the Local Rescue Committee and the Regional Rescue Committee. This aligns with the core emergency management principle that responsibility for preparation and risk management rests at the local level in the first instance.

The SRB made a number of recommendations regarding changes to rescue accreditation to the Minister during the 2019/20 reporting period. The recommendations are detailed on page 6 of this Report.

The [Emergency NSW website](#) contains information on accredited rescue units. The website is progressively updated as applications for accreditation and applications for deregistration are approved by the Minister. Information on the Emergency NSW website includes:

- Summary of Accredited Land Rescue Units
- Summary of Accredited Marine Rescue Units
- Summary of Accredited Flood Rescue Units.

## Section 4: Rescue Training

The SRB is generally responsible for the development and promulgation of rescue policy, the setting, promulgation and monitoring of standards of training, and for providing advice on equipment levels for all rescue units in the State. The SRB also provides support for multi-agency rescue exercises and training activities.

The training competencies for GLR, RCR, VR and FR are set by the SRB on advice from the PAC. The training standards are based on Public Safety Training Packages.

Marine Rescue (MR) training competencies are based on the Maritime Industry Training Package, supplemented by additional units from the Public Safety Training Package.

The minimum competencies and equipment lists required for GLR, RCR, VR, FR and MR are contained in the State Rescue Policy.

The SRB does not accredit individual rescue operators. The training of individual rescue operators to the SRB's rescue training standards and the recording and storage of information relating to qualified operators is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies.

The individual rescue agencies also determine currency, the process that recognises member's skills, training and capabilities, captured via operational activity or skills maintenance.

## Section 5: Government Funding

The NSW Government provides funding to MRNSW and the NSW VRA. Government agencies fund the provision of rescue services through their own budgets.

Financial information is reported in the individual agencies' annual reports.

Resilience NSW is responsible for providing and administering funding and its acquittal.

## Section 6: Rescue Agency Reports

### NSW Ambulance

NSW Ambulance provides emergency medical assistance with a team of highly skilled paramedics and intensive care paramedics providing pre-hospital care, medical retrieval and health related transport.

NSW Ambulance maintains six rescue stations and provides industrial, domestic, swift water and road crash rescue from each of these stations. Three of these units are also accredited for vertical rescue. All NSW Ambulance rescue appliances hold and provide shoring, trenching and heavy rescue capabilities.

#### Significant achievements or activities

- One completed full Rescue course – 10 new Rescue operators
- Significant support provided throughout bushfires across the State including remote area firefighting support.
- Upgrade of Cliff Edge machine to Arizona Vortex for all Rescue Units
- Replacement & upgrade of BA cylinders, airbags, battery powered drills & saws, portable lighting systems, chainsaws and concrete saws

#### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	6	0	3	0	6	N/A	6
Rescue operators*	98	0	98**	0	98	N/A	98

\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies.

\*\*All NSW Ambulance Rescue staff are trained in Vertical Rescue and used for Paramedic clinical access

### Fire and Rescue NSW

FRNSW are the principle combat agency for fire emergencies in designated NSW fire districts and for hazardous material emergency incidents across the state. The *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989* also specifies that FRNSW is to "carry out, by accredited rescue units, rescue operations allocated by the State Rescue Board".

FRNSW have a long history of rescuing people from non-fire related emergency incidents. FRNSW also provides support to other response agencies through the mechanisms of the EMPLAN and via various mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding.

#### Significant achievements or activities

While bush fires and the COVID-19 pandemic have had an impact on the operational tempo for FRNSW during the 2019 -2020 financial year, FRNSW were involved with:

- 5 Flood water strike team deployments by request of and in support to the SES
- 4,238 Motor vehicle accidents involving the extrication of victims, 1,647 animal rescues and 3,784 other non-fire rescues including industrial and vertical rescues



- Wollongong being the first FRNSW station to complete full accreditation inspection for in water flood rescue. Wollongong is now awaiting final Ministerial sign off. Four other FRNSW stations have RRC approval for pre-accreditation and are awaiting accreditation inspection.
- Dubbo, Lithgow and Broken Hill fire stations were trained and equipped from RCR to GLR standard

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	84	100	17	0	0	N/A	185**
Rescue operators*	1151	730	135	0	109	N/A	1900

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies. The total agency trained operators does not equal the sum of the individual operators, because some operators have more than one qualification*

*\*\*The total accredited units does not equal the sum of the individual units, because some units have more than one accreditation type*

## Marine Rescue NSW

Marine Rescue NSW (MRNSW) is the State's volunteer marine rescue service. It has more than 3,100 professionally trained and equipped volunteers based in 45 accredited units along the NSW coastline between Point Danger and Eden and inland on the Alpine Lakes and the Murray River, at Moama and now offshore on Lord Howe Island. MRNSW fulfils its mission of saving lives on the water through its core services:

- emergency search and rescue response
- operating the State's only Log On and vessel tracking service for recreational boaters
- monitoring marine radio communications along the NSW coastline around the clock to respond to distress calls from boaters in danger
- public boating safety education and advocacy

### Significant achievements or activities

- MRNSW crews launched 2,541 missions in 2019/20, including 778 in response to life-endangering emergencies, returning almost 6,000 boaters safely to shore.
- MRNSW radio operators handled 235,221 radio transmissions. A total of 67,632 vessels with 5,947 people on board Logged On for safety, including 19,402 via the MarineRescue App.
- MRNSW volunteers and staff provided essential operational and community support throughout the 2019/20 bushfire emergency. This included staffing regional Emergency Operations Centres; conducting NSW Rural Fire Service communications; answering calls to the Bush Fire Information Line and Public Information and Inquiry Centre; evacuation, transportation and resupply pre-deployment; assisting at emergency evacuation centres and opening rescue bases to individuals in harm's way. MRNSW units also supported the NSWPF Marine Area Command in a number of large-scale multi-agency Search and Rescue operations throughout the year, including searches for missing boaters, swimmers and kayakers over summer.
- MRNSW continued to expand its world-class rescue fleet. In 2019/20, ten vessels, worth \$3.1 million, were delivered to Marine Rescue Nambucca (Rescue Water

Craft), Lord Howe Island, Lemon Tree Passage, Newcastle, Tuggerah Lakes, Port Kembla, Sussex Inlet, Merimbula and Narooma (two Rescue Water Craft. Over 11 years, more than 100 new and refurbished vessels, worth more than \$24 million, have entered the MRNSW fleet.

- MRNSW is expanding its capability by establishing its first offshore marine rescue unit on Lord Howe Island. The unit gained pre-accreditation in 2019/20, with more than 25 members registered. The first dedicated marine rescue service on the World Heritage listed island will provide essential emergency response and safety for the island's boating community, including local residents, tourists, transiting sailors and the island's commercial/tourist boat industry. A former NSWPF Marine Area Command boat, Fearless, will be deployed to the unit in 2020/21 following a \$700,000 refurbishment and refit. Planning is advanced for the development of unit headquarters, a purpose-designed mooring and marine radio infrastructure.

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	45	45
Rescue operators*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1667	1667

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies*

## New South Wales Police Force

The NSWPF is the lead agency for law enforcement, coordination of search and rescue and has primary operational responsibilities for Bomb, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) response.

### Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit (RBDU)

RBDU provides leading-edge mobility & survivability with specialist rescue (vertical rescue, swift water rescue, general land rescue) services, specialist operational support, coordination of land search & rescue (LANDSAR) across NSW, a Counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) & CBRNE capability 24/7/365.

This is achieved through agile and highly trained RBDU teams across Metropolitan & Regional NSW working in hazardous, hostile and contaminated environments. RBDU operates throughout a range of contingencies, both domestically across law enforcement, emergency management and counter terrorism operations.

RBDU are located at Blue Mountains (Springwood & Katoomba), Lismore, Lake Illawarra, Newcastle, Goulburn, Bathurst, Western Region and Alexandria.

### Significant achievements or activities

- Development conduct and participation in Multi-Agency Search & Rescue Exercises (SAREX)
- Search, clearance & geospatial mapping of 2000 premises in support 2019/20 NSW Bushfire Emergency
- Research, development and implementation of Vertical Rescue electric ascender program

## Marine Area Command (MAC)

The MAC has state wide responsibility for coordination and control of all marine search and rescue incidents. MAC comprises eight sectors located at Coffs Harbour, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Broken Bay, Sydney, Botany Bay, Port Kembla and Eden.

The MAC area of responsibility is 200 nautical miles out to sea as well as the whole coastline of NSW. A total of 72 vessels, supported by 21 National SAR accredited officers are in operation, supported in search and rescue by 90 accredited MRNSW vessels. The MAC operates the State Marine Rescue Coordination Centre (SMRCC) at Sydney Water Police, Balmain and oversees 50 regional MRNSW bases and 3200 volunteers.

### Significant achievements or activities

- In the past 12 months the Command has taken delivery of seven new 20m Offshore Patrol vessels with all vessel acceptance and crew training now complete and fully operational.
- Over the next 12 months the Command will be anticipating the arrival of 4 x 10m Tactical RHIBs to replace the current vessels.
- The Command worked with MRNSW to secure a location and provide a vessel for the new Lord Howe Island Marine Rescue base. The MRNSW Lord Howe Island Unit will provide 30nm range coverage with the ex 52ft Police launch and an increased VHF radio coverage from the island to the mainland. The unit is planned be fully operational by mid-2021 and utilising the many commercial vessel operators already on the island.

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	8	0	8	8	8	9	41
Rescue operators*	110	0	110	0	68	135	423

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies*

## NSW Rural Fire Service

The NSW RFS is the world's largest volunteer fire service with over 72,000 members who provide fire and emergency services to approximately 95 per cent of NSW. The NSW RFS is the lead combat agency for bush fires in NSW.

Members of the NSW RFS attend a range of incidents and activities including bush and grass fires, house and structure fires, storm damage and bush fire mitigation.

The NSW RFS also provides a GLR, RCR, USAR Level 1 and helicopter search and rescue capability to support flood and fire operations, including an over water helicopter rescue capability.

### Significant achievements or activities

The NSW RFS continues to develop the Road Crash Rescue capability in areas outlined in the recommendations of the Review of Land Rescue Arrangements in NSW.

The NSW RFS designed and developed a Road Crash Rescue Vehicle based on the requirements of the State Rescue Board, in consultation with other rescue agencies and our volunteer members. The vehicle is a light 4wd vehicle and has also been adopted by the VRA as their light rescue vehicle.

The NSW RFS received RCR accreditation for Ellerston and Moulamein Rural Fire Brigades.

The NSW RFS provided a significant helicopter search and rescue response during the 19/20 fire season being on standby 220 times and responding to 255 calls for assistance resulting in the rescue of 51 people by helicopter. This included for the first time NSW RFS Volunteers being deployed in Australian Defence Force Blackhawks, MRH90 Taipans and MH60 Seahawk helicopters to undertake search and rescue operations.

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	1	2	0	0	0	N/A	3
Rescue operators*	18	56	0	0	0	N/A	74

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies*

## NSW State Emergency Service

The NSW SES is the combat agency for flood, storm and tsunami and has rescue capabilities in Flood Rescue, General Land Rescue, which includes Large Animal Rescue Operations (LARO), and Vertical Rescue.

The NSW SES is the largest provider of flood rescue services in NSW. All members are trained in flood rescue awareness and every NSW SES operational vehicle carries Level 1 flood rescue equipment.

The NSW SES responded to 1,542 Rescue activations in the 2019/2020 reporting period.

### Significant achievements and activities

The NSW SES has recently reviewed its suite of Flood Rescue Procedures.

NSW SES is the first emergency service in NSW to implement new radio technology in vehicles that will optimise connection to the Government Radio Network via mobile networks and satellite. To complement the deployment of new technology, NSW SES is also uplifting the radio skills of volunteers, ensuring they can confidently communicate with the State Operations Centre and emergency service partners during operations

During 2019/20 the NSW SES Fleet Replacement Program delivered 98 new vehicles and vessels to NSW SES Units, including the delivery of four Class 4 Bow Loader vessels and trailers, with another fourteen vessels planned for delivery in 2020/2021. The vessels have been designed and are equipped to enable effective on water response capabilities across flood operations including: evacuation of people and domestic animals, transportation of large items of equipment, resupply to isolated communities, and provide support to search and rescue activities. In its entirety the program enables the provision of 270 vehicles, 124 marine vessels and 95 trailers to NSW SES Units state-wide.

Three Medium Rescue Vehicles (MRV) were delivered across the State, with another 19 MRV and 6 Heavy Rescue Vehicles (HRV) planned for delivery in 2020/2021. In total 8 MRV have been delivered by the program up until June 2020.

NSW SES has continued to improve upon its flood rescue management capability. New doctrine has been developed to ensure greater preparedness, increased accuracy of available information during operational events and improve the organisation's ability to undertake evidence-based coordination, tasking and triaging to reduce response times.

The capability of NSW SES in Large Animal Rescue Operations (LARO) continues to be advanced. NSW SES members have been provided with opportunities to attend both internal and multi-agency LARO training activities to build their skillsets. To foster stronger relationships and improve LARO support across the community NSW SES has also provided other emergency service agencies with loan equipment for their LARO training activities.

NSW SES and Fire & Rescue NSW co-hosted the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation, Australasian Rescue Challenge (July 2019) in Dubbo. This exercise involved 22 participating teams from across Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, who came together to share their experience and skills in Road Crash Rescue and Trauma Management. In addition to the challenge, there was a learning symposium and workshops that provided participants an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in Road Crash Rescue.

The NSW SES participated in the Barrington Search and Rescue Exercise in September 2019. This exercise was managed by NSWPF with the Support of the NSW SES Bush Search and Rescue Unit. Multi-agency participants practiced their skills in remote area search and rescue in the Barrington Tops area with the continuation of the search for VH-MDX, a Cessna 210 which crashed in 1981. This exercise provided an opportunity for participants to work as a multi-agency team in a remote area using helicopters to access the search area.

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	72	0	28	96	72	N/A	268
Rescue operators*	424	0	164	230	117	N/A	935

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies*

### NSW Volunteer Rescue Association

NSW VRA is made up of specialist rescue operators working for their communities in over 52 locations across New South Wales. They are primary responders for Road Crash Rescue, General Land Rescue, Vertical Rescue, and many types of specialist rescue. The NSW VRA also includes Aerial Patrol, Remote Area Communications, Cave Rescue, Ski Patrols, Swift Water Teams, and other Rescue Support Teams.

#### Significant achievements and activities

Albury & Border VRA Rescue Captain, Paul Marshall, was announced as 2019 Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Awards Officer of the Year Working in a Volunteer Capacity and the inaugural winner of the 2019 Rotary Australian Emergency Service Community Awards Officer of the Year working in a Volunteer Capacity.

The NSW VRA assisted the NSW RFS during the 2019-20 bush fires. The NSW VRA completed 21,318 operational hours with the support of 225 volunteers from our GLR, Specialist and Support units. The NSW VRA assisted the NSW RFS with communications, logistics, Air Attack Support, Aircraft Radio Officers, Public Liaison Officer, Bushfire Information Line, GIS mapping, Safety Officer and Welfare & Chaplaincy.

### Accredited Rescue Units

Units and Operators	General Land Rescue	Road Crash Rescue	Vertical Rescue	Flood Rescue - On Water	Flood Rescue - In Water	Marine Rescue	Total
SRB accredited rescue units	40	0	20	0	0	N/A	40
Rescue operators*	338	0	85	0	41	N/A	464

*\*Individual rescue operators are not accredited with the SRB. The training of rescue operators to the SRB's training standards is the responsibility of individual rescue agencies*



## Section 7: Regional Rescue Committees

Local and Regional Rescue Committees (LRCs and RRCs) are established under section 48A of the SERM Act, to assist the SRB in the exercise of its functions. Each Committee assists in determining the need to recommend accreditation to the Minister for rescue units in their area. This aligns with the core emergency management principle that responsibility for preparation and risk management rests at the local level in the first instance.

RRCs are ordinarily chaired by the Regional Emergency Operations Controller and LRCs are chaired by the Local Emergency Operations Controller. Membership for LRCs and RRCs typically consist of senior representatives of emergency services organisations operating in the local area or region. Support for these committees is provided by the relevant Regional Emergency Management Officers and Local Emergency Management Officers.

### Central West and Far West Region

#### Regional Rescue Committee Meetings

The Central West RRC and Far West RRC is convened as a combined meeting. These Committees have combined for meeting purposes to alleviate additional workload and significant travel imposts on the members who are the same organisational representatives for both regions. The Committee met on 5 September 2019 and 17 December 2019 at Orange, 5 March 2020 and 4 June 2020 in Dubbo.

#### Key Issues

The RRC continues to monitor and adjust response arrangements and rescue unit areas of responsibility. These changes are required to ensure the availability of rescue resources to the community amid declining rescue operator numbers amongst the volunteer sector, particularly in those communities with declining populations and competing interests. All agencies actively continue to attempt recruitment in smaller communities.

#### Exercises conducted

- Field exercise Flamingo II was conducted at Parkes Airport, to exercise response to an on-airport aircraft incident.
- Discussion exercise Stock Cube was conducted at Narromine and Exercise Stock Man was conducted at Walgett. These exercises tested the rescue response to heavy vehicle incidents involving livestock.
- Discussion exercise MT Thuratt was conducted in Dubbo. This exercise reviewed the rescue arrangements under the SERM Act and *Mining Act 1992* to response to an incident at a gold mine
- Field exercise Water Bead was conducted at Orange Airport, designed to test the response to an on-airport aircraft incident
- Field exercise Bolt was conducted at Dubbo Airport. This exercise tested the airport emergency plan and rescue arrangements involving two aircraft colliding.

#### Accreditation changes

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

### Hunter-Central Coast Region

#### Regional Rescue Committee Meetings

The Hunter-Central Coast RRC met once, on 27 November 2019, during the reporting period.

### **Key issues**

No key issues were identified during the reporting period

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no multi-agency exercises conducted during the 2019/20 reporting period.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **Illawarra-South Coast Region**

### **Regional Rescue Committee Meetings**

The Illawarra-South Coast RRC met twice during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 12 September 2019 and 19 March 2020. Local Rescue Committees met 3 to 4 times during the year.

### **Key issues**

No key issues were identified during the reporting period.

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no multi-agency exercises conducted during the 2019/20 reporting period.

### **Accreditation changes**

Kiama Fire and Rescue Secondary GLR – accreditation cancelled by FRNSW.

## **New England Region**

### **Region Rescue Committee Meetings**

The New England RRC met four times during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 11 September 2019, 11 December 2019, 11 March 2020 and 10 June 2020. The meetings generally dealt with routine business and matters arising from LRC meetings. LRCs in the main effectively managed any issues of a local nature without the assistance of the RRC.

### **Key issues**

No key issues were identified during the reporting period

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no multi-agency exercises conducted during the 2019/20 reporting period.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **North Coast Region**

### **Regional Rescue Committee**

The North Coast RRC met twice during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 31 July 2019 and 25 March 2019.

### **Key Issues**

- The Committee monitored SRB Rescue Unit offline/online notifications to identify any systemic Regional or Local capability/capacity issues.
- The Committee is monitoring ongoing local issues with the Nambucca VRA GLR rescue unit having been offline for significant periods due to unavailability of trained and accredited rescue personnel. In the interim local rescue responses in the



Nambucca Valley area are being attended to by adjoining Fire and Rescue GLR and RCR Units as determined by NSW Police Radio ROG Rescue Coordinator.

### **Exercises conducted**

Large Animal Rescue Exercises were held at Port Macquarie, Wauchope, Macksville and Nambucca. These multi-agency training and awareness opportunities provided GLR Rescue Units and first responders an understanding of Large Animal Rescue management issues.

Regional marine search and rescue training was conducted at South West Rocks. This multi-agency exercise involved marine search and rescue training and theory on the first day with a search and rescue exercise on the water near Trial Bay on the second day.

### **Accreditation changes**

- Withdrawal of GLR accreditation from Buladelah VRA Rescue Unit due to the formal disbandment of the Unit.
- MRNSW Lord Howe Island Marine Rescue accreditation was endorsed by the Minister

## **North West Metropolitan Region**

### **Regional Rescue Committee Meetings**

The North West RRC held three meetings during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 14 June 2019, 18 October 2019 and 9 April 2020.

### **Key Issues**

There were no significant issues reported or discussed during this reporting period.

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no significant rescue exercises conducted.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **Riverina Murray Region**

### **Regional Rescue Committee Meetings**

The Riverina Murray RRC met three times during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 24 July 2019, 27 November 2019 and 25 March 2020.

### **Key issues**

There were no significant issues reported or discussed during this reporting period.

### **Exercises conducted**

- Hillston airport rescue exercise was undertaken to test the Carrathool Shire Airport emergency plan, remote area combat agency coordination and response to a major aircraft accident.
- Multi-agency rescue exercise "Buckinbong II" was undertaken to improve skills in remote area navigation, mass casualty, vehicle and aircraft recovery response. Approximately 40 combat agency and support agency staff attended the exercise over the two-day period.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **South Eastern Region**

### **Region Rescue Committee Meetings**

The South Eastern RRC met three times during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 27 August 2019, 25 November 2019 and 27 April 2020.

### **Key issues**

NSW SES South Eastern Zone LAR enhanced its Large Animal Rescue capability into high risk areas across the South Eastern such as Yass and Hilltops.

### **Exercises conducted**

Snowy Valleys & Snowy Monaro Local Rescue Committee's conducted a multi-agency rescue response based on scenarios relating to the Snowy 2.0 project

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **South West Metropolitan Region**

### **Regional Rescue Committee Meetings**

The South West RRC Committee met three times meetings during the reporting period. Meetings were held on 24 July 2019, 17 November 2019 and 18 March 2020.

### **Key Issues**

There were no significant issues reported or discussed during this reporting period.

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no significant rescue exercises conducted.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## **Sydney Metropolitan Region**

### **Region Rescue Committee Meetings**

There were no RRCs held during the reporting period.

### **Key Issues**

There were no significant issues reported or discussed during this reporting period.

### **Exercises conducted**

There were no significant rescue exercises conducted.

### **Accreditation changes**

There were no accreditation changes approved by the Minister during the reporting period.

## Section 8: Appendices

### Appendix A: Land Rescue Statistics

Under the *State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989* and the State Rescue Policy, the NSWPF is the central agency for coordinating rescue. In situations where the NSWPF itself is not the agency that calls out the rescue unit/s, the NSWPF is required to be advised by the activating agency at the first available opportunity. Details of these incidents are recorded within the NSWPF Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

The information about land rescue incidents is derived from the NSWPF CAD system. This is electronically recorded from every individual incident reported to the NSWPF and managed by the Rescue Coordinator (RCO) from the Radio Operations Group (ROG). The NSWPF CAD system has been established as the definitive list of all rescue incidents that occur in NSW.

#### Data Quality

This report relates only to land rescue services in NSW and does not contain any information about marine rescue services. The data in this report may also differ from agency specific information on rescues. Differences in agency data reporting may occur due to agency variations in collection processes from the NSWPF, lack of notification to the NSWPF of activations to rescues, or data collection variations. While the NSWPF calculates singular rescue incidents other agencies may collate statistics per the number of accredited and non-accredited units responding and attending rather than the singular rescue incident.

#### Key points for the 2019/20 reporting period

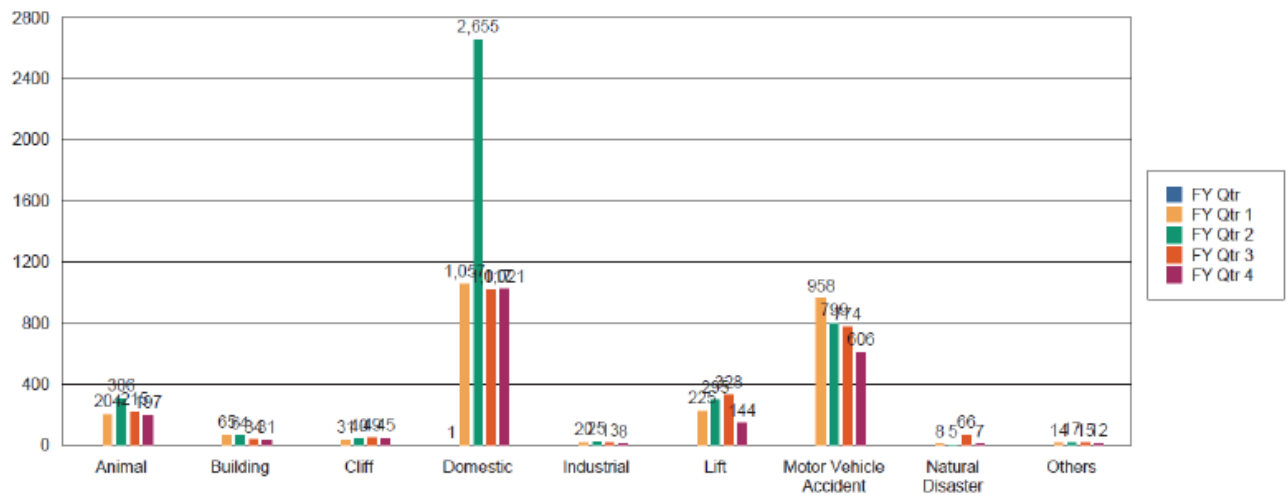
A total of 11,371 land rescue incidents were recorded by NSWPF. This includes 1,075 incidents where the rescue unit/s was subsequently called off. Rescue units are called off earlier when not required. Statistically there is a 2.1 per cent increase in overall activations from the 2018/19 report.

Motor vehicle accidents account for 27.6 per cent (3,137) of activations. Motor vehicle accidents decreased by 12.8 per cent across the state.

A breakdown of the rescue information has shown that domestic rescue activations have increased by 50.3 per cent.

#### Number of Rescue Incidents Attended by Major Incident Category

	FY Qtr 1	FY Qtr 2	FY Qtr 3	FY Qtr 4	Total
Animal	204	306	215	197	922
Building	65	64	34	31	194
Cliff	31	40	49	45	165
Domestic	1057	2655	1017	1021	5751
Industrial	20	25	13	8	66
Lift	225	295	328	144	992
Motor Vehicle Accident	958	799	774	606	3137
Natural Disaster	8	5	66	7	86
Others	14	17	15	12	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>2582</b>	<b>4206</b>	<b>2511</b>	<b>2071</b>	<b>11371</b>

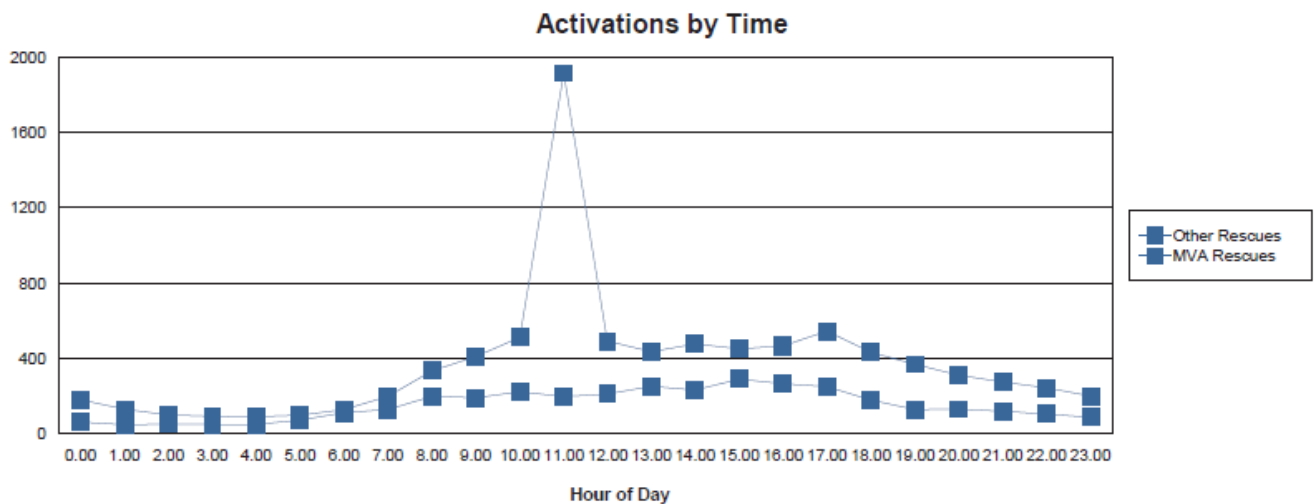


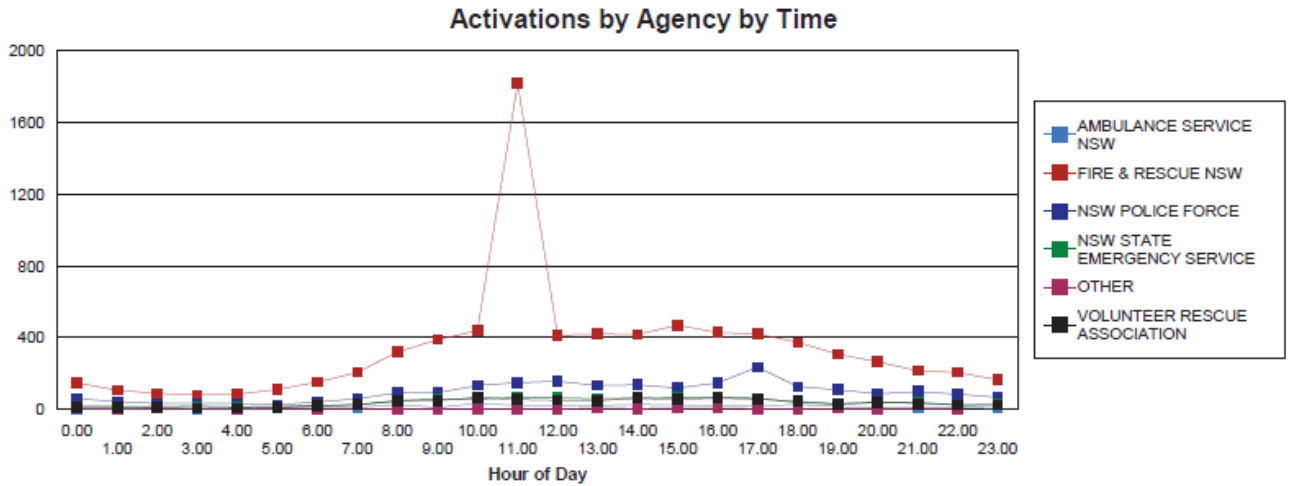
### Rescue call outs by time

The most active part of the 24-hour period is between 7.00 am and 10.00 pm, with significant increases from 11.00am- 12.00pm.

Activations for motor vehicle accidents account for roughly one third of all other land rescue activations for most time periods.

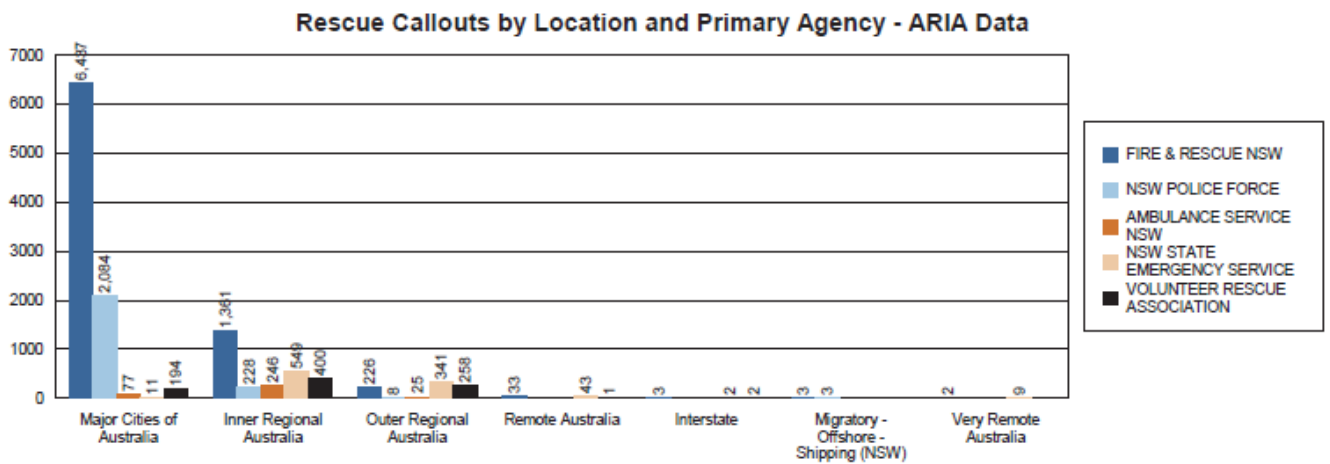
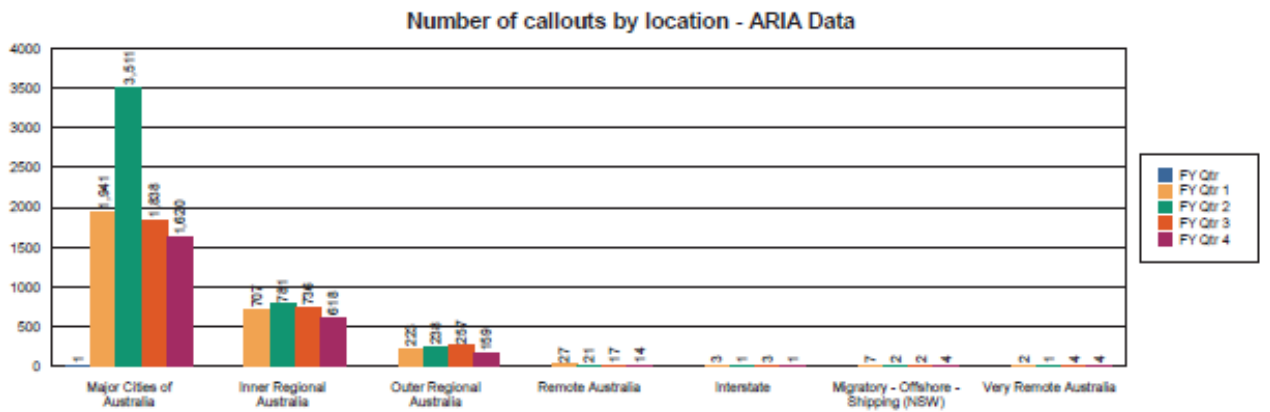
Rescue agency statistics across Metropolitan or Regional areas generally follow these same trends.





### Rescue call outs by location

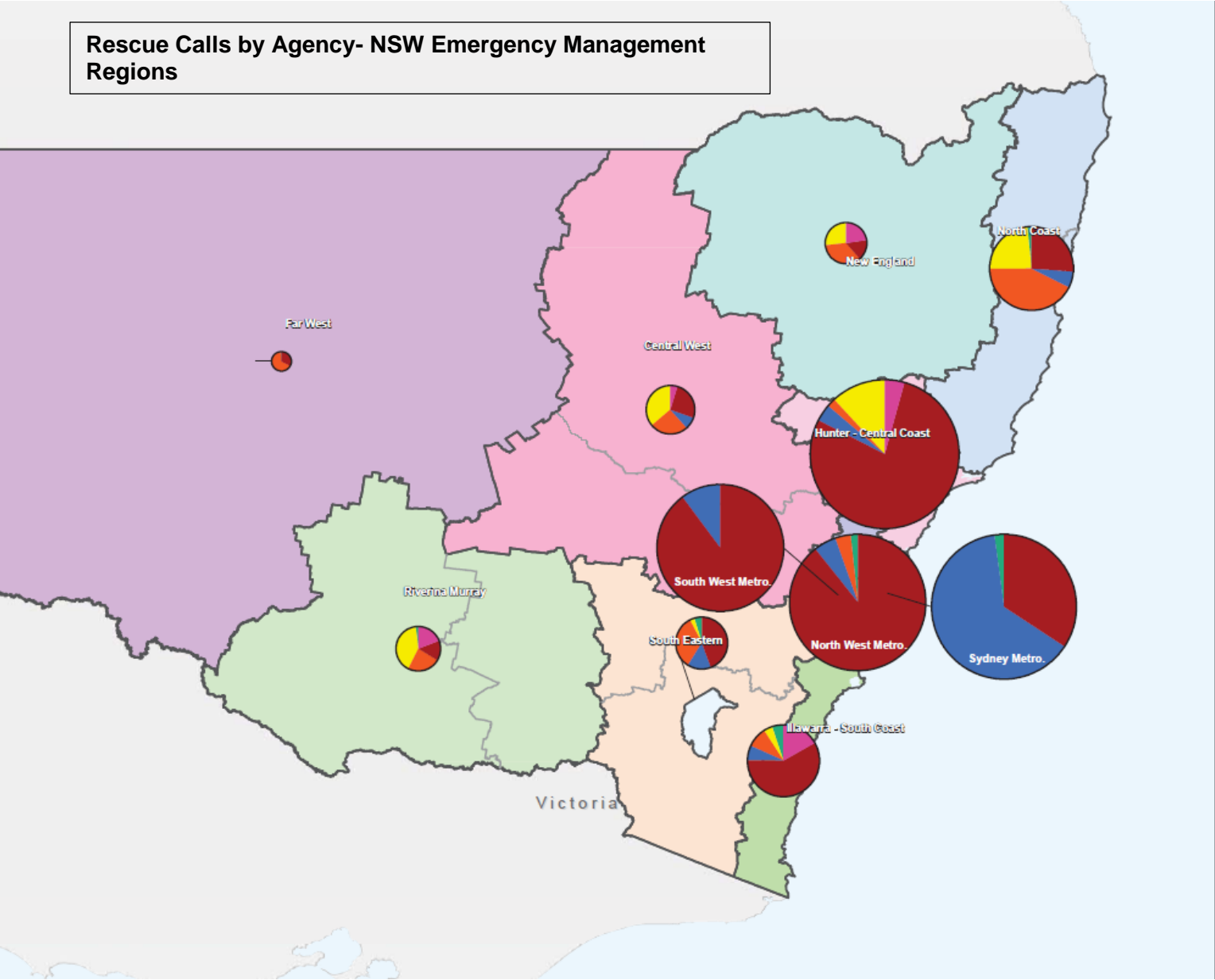
Based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia, 49 per cent of land rescues occurred in Major Cities, 25 per cent in Inner Regional and the remaining 26 per cent in Outer Regional and Remote areas.



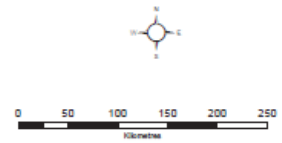
## Definitions and other notes

Term	Definition
<b>ARIA</b>	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
<b>Rescue Incident</b>	A specific situation that requires the activation of the rescue systems and arrangements.
<b>Rescue Incident Categories</b>	A rescue incident is an event requiring the dispatch of an accredited rescue unit to the effect the safe removal of persons or domestic animals from actual or threatened danger or physical harm.
<b>Rescue Incident categories</b>	Rescue incidents are recorded in the Computer Aided Dispatch system and are sorted into 17 Major Incident Type Categories and 146 Sub Incident Type Categories
<b>Motor Vehicle Accidents</b>	The Motor Vehicle Accident major incident type category may include single vehicle accident as well as accidents involving multiple vehicles. Separate sub categories are available to note collisions involving cars, Heavy Vehicles, buses, motor cycles and Dangerous goods.
<b>Domestic Major Incident Type</b>	This Major Incident Type Category includes incidents where a person or persons have become trapped in a domestic situation such as being trapped on roofs and trees or having limbs stuck in holes, drains machinery or other places.
<b>Rescue Call Outs</b>	A Rescue call out is the act of dispatching a specific rescue unit to a specific rescue incident. It does not include the dispatch of other emergency service units not accredited for rescue, such as Ambulance, Police or non-accredited FRNSW units.
<b>Extrication</b>	Extrication is the assisted release and removal of trapped people or domestic animal by specially equipped and trained emergency service crews, arising from incident reported. Extrication can occur at domestic incidents and Motor Vehicle Accidents. The CAD system is able to record if a unit performed an extraction or provided General assistance in the case of a GLR unit assisting a vertical unit
<b>General Assistance</b>	General Assistance is the provision of services and undertaking of acts to support the rescue of a person but does not involve extraction as defined above.

# Rescue Calls by Agency- NSW Emergency Management Regions



- Ambulance
  - Fire & Rescue
  - Police
  - SES
  - Volunteer Rescue
  - Other
- Emergency Management Regions**
- Central West
  - Far West
  - Hunter - Central Coast
  - Illawarra - South Coast
  - New England
  - North Coast
  - North West Metropolitan
  - Riverina Murray
  - South Eastern
  - South West Metropolitan
  - Sydney Metropolitan
  - EMR Dividers (Dual REMO)



Disclaimer: The information contained in this map has been provided in good faith. Whilst all effort has been made to ensure its accuracy and completeness, the data providers take no responsibility for errors or omissions nor any loss or damage that may result from the use of this information.

Prepared by: Emergency Information Coordination Unit,  
Special Services, OCS

Data Source: Resilience NSW, EICU  
Date: 06/05/2020

## Appendix B: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
CBRNE	Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives
CMWG	Capability Matrix Working Group
CWG	Capability Working Group
EMU	NSW Police Force Emergency Management Unit
FRNSW	Fire & Rescue NSW
GLR	General Land Rescue
HAZMAT	Hazardous material
IRDR	Industrial Rescue and Domestic Rescue
LandSAR	Land Search and Rescue
LRC	Local Rescue Committee
MAC	Marine Area Command
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
NATSAR	National Search and Rescue
NSW RFS	NSW Rural Fire Service
NSW SES	NSW State Emergency Service
NSW VRA	NSW Volunteer Rescue Association
NSWA	NSW Ambulance
NSWPF	NSW Police Force
PAC	Policy Advisory Committee
RBDU	NSWPF Rescue & Bomb Disposal
RCO	Rescue Coordination Officer
RCR	Road Crash Rescue
REMO	Regional Emergency Management Officer
REOCON	Regional Emergency Operations Controller
ROG	Radio Operations Group (Police Communications or VKG)
RRC	Regional Rescue Committee
RTPWG	Rescue Training Package Working Group
SAR	Search and Rescue
SAREX	Search and Rescue Exercise
SMRCC	State Marine Rescue Consultative Committee
SRB	State Rescue Board of NSW
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VR	Vertical Rescue