

# Bulletin

ACT State Emergency Service



DCOSES

Wed, 13 June 2007

ACTSES Helps with NSW Natural Disaster

Twenty members of the ACT State Emergency Service (ACTSES) have returned from the Hunter region of NSW following a deployment to assist the NSW State Emergency Service with flood evacuations and storm damage cleanup.

Task force 1, under the command of Deputy Chief Officer Bren Burkevics, was deployed on Saturday, 9 June 2007 to Newcastle but diverted to the city of Maitland to assist with flood evacuations in various parts of the city after predictions that the Hunter River would breach levee banks.



Task force 1 team leaders Matt Butters, Adrian Manning, Rebecca Noble and Stephen Loiterton receive a brief from the NSWSES Deputy Local Controller of Maitland Unit.

Upon arrival at the NSWSES Maitland Unit, the four ACT teams were briefed and tasked to distribute flood advisory notices through door knocking in areas of Maitland close to the Hunter River. ACTSES teams worked in difficult weather conditions with continual rain throughout the evening.

On Sunday, the Hunter River was expected to peak at a height that could result in levees that surrounded the city being overtopped. To ensure the levees were fully sealed, ACTSES crews were re-tasked from their storm damage repair duties to the railway station where they worked to seal floodgates with plastic and over 6,000 sandbags.

"It was difficult and labour intensive work with sandbags weighting up to twenty kilograms", said Woden SES Unit Team Leader Adrian Manning.



ACTSES teams assist to build a sandbag wall against floodgates in preparation for the flood peak. Photo: Rebecca Noble.

On Sunday afternoon the NSWSES issued an evacuation notice for areas of East Maitland due to the predicted flood peak. The ACTSES task force took responsibility for evacuating a major part of East Maitland and this saw the four SES teams hit the streets to distribute the evacuation message to all property owners and residents.

On Monday morning, the ACTSES teams returned to Newcastle City unit to continue storm cleanup operations before being relieved at lunchtime by task force 2 under the command of Operations Officer SES Graham Ible. Task force 2 will continue storm cleanup operations in the Newcastle City area before being relieved by task force 3 on Thursday under the command of Training Officer SES Colin Malone.

The task forces to the Hunter region have provided all SES members with new experience and knowledge of major flood and storm operations including large-scale evacuations. Many of the storm repair jobs are highly technical and require chainsaw operators to utilise the skills they have acquired through completing intermediate tree felling training.

Additional photos of the activities undertaken by task force 1 are attached to this bulletin. Further information on the duties of task force 1 is available from the DCOSES on 6207 8628.

ACT State Emergency Service  
PO Box 104 Curtin ACT 2605  
123 Carruthers St Curtin ACT 2605  
Ph. (02) 6207 8451 Fax. (02) 6207 8217  
www.esa.act.gov.au

A member of the ACT Emergency Services Agency





*Flood waters encroach on major roads in Maitland.*



*ACT & NSW SES teams work to seal the flood gates at the Maitland railway station. Photo: Rebecca Noble.*



*ACTSES Team Leaders working from a forward command post to develop a plan to distribute evacuation notices to residents and property owners in East Maitland.*



*ACTSES members rest in East Maitland prior to the distribution of evacuation notices.*



*SES teams working in the Newcastle City area faced complex and difficult storm damage repair jobs. Photos: Rebecca Noble.*





*The damage caused to property by falling trees was extensive with the costs already expected to exceed two hundred million dollars (Canberra Times, 13/6/07).*

*Photos: Rebecca Noble.*





*Members of ACTSES Woden & Belconnen Units outside of NSWSES Maitland Unit. Photo: Rebecca Noble.*



*ACT task force 1 preparing to leave Newcastle (note "borrowed" NSWSES overalls)*

- Back row (L-R) Mark Hallam, Stephen (Rowdy) Loiterton, Marlana Butters, Wally Blumenfeld, Peter (Plod) McEncroe, Joe Briguglio, Robert Hamon, Rebecca Noble, Kris Cochrane, James Dyer, Anthony Kohn, Bren Burkevics*
- Front row (L-R) Mary Haggerty, Sean Quercini, Matthew Butters, Alex Bondarenko, Adrian Manning, Shae McAuley, Rebecca Pond*
- Absent Michael Hayes*

