



Paddy Platypus' Northern Territory Adventure

Paddy was hatched a few years ago in one of the coastal rivers in New South Wales. By the time Paddy turned one, he was on his own and doing what platypuses do: foraging for food and digging tunnels and burrows.

Not too long after his first birthday Paddy was caught in a flood. As his home river continued to rise, and the water ran more swiftly, he managed to fight his way into a billabong. Hungry and exhausted, he sheltered there and waited for the flood to subside.

During this time, Paddy noticed there were boats being driven by people wearing orange overalls and serious expressions. He watched the people in orange overalls rescue other people, who like him, were stranded by the flood. He even watched them save someone who had tried to cross a nearby creek in a four wheel drive. It was then that Paddy decided he wanted to help, so once the floodwaters had gone down, he contacted the SES and asked if he could volunteer too.

Paddy found he was a natural as an SES volunteer. He was keen and reliable. He knew lots about his own river, and about how floods can behave. Soon he found he had another talent: he was great at getting people to learn and remember the things they could do to stay safer in floods and storms. Kids loved him, and so did their parents. Paddy's career as the SES mascot had begun.

Not too long after this, Paddy realised that there were people in other places in Australia that also experienced dangerous weather conditions. Paddy soon found his way to South Australia and, after hearing about the flooding in Alice Springs' Todd River, Paddy boarded The Ghan and travelled to the Northern Territory Emergency Service's Headquarters in Darwin.

Hopping off in Darwin, Paddy approached NTES and asked if he could help spread the message on how to stay safe in storms and floods to the people in the Northern Territory. The Director of NTES agreed that Paddy would be the perfect volunteer for the job and gave permission for Paddy to visit schools, community events and shows.

Today Paddy travels around the Northern Territory, helping NTES volunteers across the NT to spread the message that there are simple things everyone can do to stay safe in severe weather.

For more information on storm and flood safety, Paddy says "Call the NTES Public Education Officer on 8922 3630. We'll send you the information you need. You can also visit our Kids and Schools section on our website, www.emergency.nt.gov.au"