

THE

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DRUM

The official publication of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services

ICMEX
Outer Edge '05

JULY 2005



Commissioner's message

2005 has moved quickly to the mid-year mark and provides an opportunity to reflect on recent achievements and the challenges ahead.

Our continued focus on crime reduction has paid dividends with another significant downward trend in reported crime for the financial year. Credit must go to police and support staff for their efforts, particularly in the targeting of repeat offenders. Our own research indicated that repeat offenders in the Territory were involved in high levels of crime, so it is pleasing to see the results on the board following our intelligence led approach.

More recently, work directed towards reducing the supply of illicit drugs into remote communities and to a Violent Crime Reduction Strategy has yielded good results. I look forward to the on-going results and overall outcomes of both projects as we strive to create a safer community.

The Tri-Service continues to develop its capability in counter terrorism. Many employees were involved in the recent exercise 'Outer Edge' and many more will take part in future training and other programs, all designed to enhance our ability to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from a terrorist incident.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Assistant Commissioner Grahame Kelly, Corporate Services Executive Director Audrey Ko and Emergency Services Volunteer Scott Morris, who were recognised for outstanding service to the community in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours.

Commissioner Paul White, NT Police
CEO Fire and Emergency Services

Squad 80 graduates

From former careers including veterinary nurse, bar attendant, drilling company manager landscape gardener and mechanic, the recruits from Squad 80 graduated as police officers at the end of March.

The 20 members of Police Recruit Squad 80 commenced training on 23 August 2004 and were posted to stations in Katherine (2), Tennant Creek (2), Alice Springs (4) and Darwin (12) following their graduation.

During the 28 weeks of police training, the graduates represented the NT Police in the Australia Day dragon boat races and assisted Community Policing with Blue Light Discos in the Darwin region.

The Rod Evans Memorial Trophy for the highest academic achievement in Squad 80 was awarded to Constable David Allan, a former RAAF member in Darwin, who will be stationed in Katherine.

Constable Andrew Baldwin, formerly of Canberra, received the Commissioner's Trophy for overall performance in academic, practical and physical training, as well as the Physical Training Trophy for outstanding ability in the physical training component of the course.

The Glen Huitson Medal for the most consistent application in all areas of training was presented to Constable Angela Jackson, a former sales assistant from New South Wales.



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The Drum is the official magazine of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

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FRONT COVER:

Decontamination shower during ICMEX 'Outer Edge 05'

BACK COVER:

NTES Volunteer during abseiling exercise in Alice Springs

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Cleaning up after Ingrid

Northern Territory Emergency Service volunteers set to work in the cyclone's wake

While many residents in the Darwin region were breathing a sigh of relief when Cyclone Ingrid tracked to our north in February, members of NT Emergency Services were gearing up to respond to the damage it caused in many coastal and island communities.

In a remarkable response to the devastation caused by Cyclone Ingrid, around 30 NT Emergency Services volunteers from the Palmerston and Darwin units were deployed to clean up efforts in Top End communities.

Just over a week into the clean up effort, the volunteers had accumulated more than 2000 hours of work at Croker Island, Milikapiti, Nguuu and Pirlangimpi.

Working from daylight to dark and often in heavy rain, the volunteers (in teams of two) were responsible for clearing trees (some of them with massive trunk circumferences) and debris.

David Hawke, the head of the Palmerston Unit and with 16 years' experience as an Emergency Service volunteer, led the six teams to travel to Croker Island, where the trees were denuded of any foliage.

Alison Heath, with 10 years' volunteering experience, was part of the three two-person teams working at Milikapiti, where their issues and damage were somewhat different.

"When we arrived, one of the males went and spoke to the men and I

went and spoke to the Aboriginal Health Workers and then everyone just got in and started working," said Alison.

"That was interrupted later in the week when the locals had to go and play their footy semi final, but that was good for them," she said.

As well as the teams who were deployed to the cyclone-affected areas, David paid tribute to those volunteers who worked in support roles from Darwin, often from 7 am to 11 pm.

"It's not just about the volunteers out on the ground," he said. "We wouldn't have been able to achieve what we did if we weren't getting the support from back in Darwin, so they were a vital part of what we achieved,"

"And us being able to do what we did in those communities goes even further than that – it's because of the efforts and understanding of our employers, colleagues and customers. It flows right through the Darwin community because us being over there and not performing our normal roles has an effect on many people."

Some of the volunteers are self-employed, so their service affected their own businesses and incomes, while some other volunteers were not paid from their normal jobs while taking time away to serve others as a volunteer.



Northern Territory Emergency Service volunteers active in post-Cyclone Ingrid operations

Sandy Alp
Alison Bevege

Louise Blackadder

Chris Blackham-Davison

Andrew Buczak

Chris Castine

Tom Collins

Jason Cornell

Geoff Cook

Mick Duell

Seth Dugdell

Peter Fuller

Patty Gabelish

Suzzi Graney

David Hawke

Alison Heath

Rebecca Leach

Neil McDonald

Andrea McKey

Andrew Peacock

Tracy Rowe

Ian Smith

Dan Sneddon

Jon Thomas

Karoline Walter

Udo Wiebelskirner

BELOW: Volunteers were thanked for their efforts at a reception at Parliament House



Neale bowled over by award

The recipient of the 2004 Rotary Police Officer of the Year is known for his serve.

But for Brevet Sergeant Neale Carlon, the serve is on the tennis court, not for barking down orders at junior officers.

The A grade tennis player – who represented New South Wales in younger days – was a deserving, winner of the annual award from a high calibre of applicants.

Joining the NT Police Force in 1987, policing has taken Neale across the Northern Territory – from Tennant Creek to Katherine, from Ali Curung to Mataranka.

“I’m extremely grateful to my family and friends for providing strong support. They know what policing involves and understand the difficult duties and family life being interrupted by callouts and extended hours,” he said.

“I love the territory lifestyle and so do my kids. They’ve had unique experiences checking croc traps, working with parks and wildlife staff and becoming involved in community events.”

Now the Officer in Charge of Batchelor station, Neale patrols a district that sees thousands of visitors flock to every year.

“Certainly in the position I have now at Batchelor station I have a great district to patrol, which includes the Perron Islands and Litchfield National Park that contains beautiful swimming holes and waterfalls,” he said.

Neale, who enjoys the bush life, has taken the opportunity for numerous relieving duties as Officer in Charge at Ali Curung, Maranboy and Mataranka. He highly recommends bush policing to any officer considering life outside the major town centres.

Neil has worked in General Duties, CIB, Traffic Section, Prosecutions, Community Policing and Territory Response Section during his career.

He has been responsible for the investigation of fatal motor vehicle accidents, run anti-theft operations at tourist locations, coordinated searches for missing people, provided protection for dignitaries and was part of the Peter Falconio and Matt Page investigations.

Neale said his career as a police officer had provided him with ups and downs.

“You go through a range of emotions with people, through attending jobs such as motor vehicle accidents, drownings, thefts and missing people. It feels good when I know I’ve been

able to help someone through a traumatic situation and that’s obviously one of the great parts of the job,” Neale said.

Neale was surprised to be nominated for the Rotary and Community Police Officer of the year. He thanked the Rotary Club of Darwin for the award and the people who nominated him.

When Neale is not working, he enjoys an active lifestyle, whether it be fishing with his son, playing golf, squash or tennis ... or lawn bowls with the community in Batchelor.

As an ‘A’ grade tennis player, Neale represented NSW on a tour to the USA in 1977 and won two gold medals in New Zealand at the Police Games in 1989.

Policing is something that plays a role in his family with sister, Lorraine, is a Senior Sergeant in NT Police as well.

And Neale does not intend to rest on his laurels from now on – he has already indicated that in the future, he would like to work in a welfare position to use the skills gained throughout his career and personal experiences to help other members.

BELOW: Commissioner Paul White, Edith McGuinness, Gloria Jones and B/Sergeant Neale Carlon



Administrator's medal for Bernie

The fact that Senior ACPO Bernie Devine received 20 of the 37 nominations for the Administrator's medal recently is a testament to the esteem in which he is held by colleagues and members of the community.

Bernie, 54, was the recipient of the Administrator's medal, presented at the graduation ceremony for Squad 80 in March.

His commitment to indigenous people outside of his duties and the personal time he spends positively interacting with the Indigenous Community have been a significant factor in being recommended for the award.

Bernie is involved with the Larrakia Association and the Larrakia Dance Group at ceremonies and with Arts and Crafts. He also coaches Indigenous youths in AFL, Weightlifting and the Rugby Union "Dingo's". During the Arafura Games, he assisted as a sports trainer in basketball.

Bernie is regularly involved in providing mentoring duties to new members, both Constables and ACPOs. He assists with training courses for ACPO recruits and also education and guidance to

youths within Darwin schools, with the assistance of School Based Constables. He is involved with regular liaison duties with community elders at Bagot Community and One Mile Community to address issues and community concerns.

Prior to being appointed as an ACPO in 1999, he worked for Australia Post (then PMG) from 1966 to 1999. He was originally stationed in Katherine before transferring to Darwin and has performed an integral role in the

Public Place Patrols in the Darwin area, reducing anti-social behaviour.

Married and with four children, Bernie has demonstrated a dedication and commitment to his work due to the professional way he conducts himself while performing his duties.

BELOW: Proud recipient of the first Administrator's medal, Senior ACPO Bernie Devine receives a kiss from wife Tina. Photo courtesy NT News.



Humpty Doo open for business

The Humpty Doo Police and Fire Complex was officially opened with a family day in late February.

The \$2 million facility has been warmly welcomed by residents of the rural community and thousands turned out on the day for an opportunity to tour the facilities of the complex.

The police station's shopfront is providing policing services seven days a week - from 10 am to 6 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 4 pm on weekends. It is staffed by a Sergeant

(Officer in Charge) and six other officers.

Response patrols operate from the station on a combination of day or evening shifts and after-hour services continue to be provided from Palmerston Police Station.

The Fire and Rescue Service area has four full-time officers based at the complex Monday to Friday from 8 am to 6 pm. After hours response for the rural area is provided by the Palmerston Fire Station and the five local volunteer brigades from within



the rural area. Two vehicles - a 3000 litre tanker; and a Toyota Landcruiser with grass-fighting ability are also located at the fire station.

The fire station is also the home for the NTFRS Hazard Abatement Officer, who is a focal point for rural residents regarding hazard reduction issues in the rural area.

Mountie tours Territory

By Sandra Mitchell

Policing in Canada was compared to policing in the Northern Territory as a visiting Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superintendent toured the Territory in March.

Superintendent Russ Mirasty - one of 16 000 sworn police officers in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) - was in the NT on a four week exchange program.

An officer with 28 years experience in the RCMP, Supt Mirasty, said the exchange reinforced his knowledge of the similarities and differences in policing by the two agencies.

He said the basic entrance requirements were fairly similar between the two forces, and while it is not a requirement that officers be bilingual for entry to the RCMP, they may need to be bilingual depending on where they want to work.

“It’s encouraged and there are two official languages – English and French,” Supt Mirasty said.

He had already had the opportunity to learn something of Territory policing from Supt Greg Dowd, of Palmerston, who travelled through Canada on a seven week exchange program late last year and said the two forces dealt with strikingly similar situations in many instances. He was hosted by Supt Dowd during his visit.

“Exchanges have always been a bit of a two-way thing and

I certainly learnt from Greg while he was in Canada,” said Supt Mirasty.

“There are a lot of similarities in terms of police work and in environment. The differences are in how we address those challenges and the legislation we work under.

He said the isolation factors were the same, for instance in the far north of Canada compared to the outback areas of the Northern Territory.

Supt Mirasty brought a vast range of policing experience to his visit – he has worked in six different provinces, with postings in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

He has worked in Aboriginal Policing Services in the administrative area, was a police dog handler for 10 years, completed a remote detachment early in his career, and is now in a strategic management role as Criminal Operations Officer, overseeing all criminal operations within the province of Prince Edward Island.

During his visit, Supt Mirasty visited island and remote communities in the Top End and Central Australia. His wife, Donna, joined him at the end of the visit for his last week in the NT and they then had a week together in NSW.

BELOW: Superintendents Mark Christopher, Russ Mirasty and Greg Dowd



ICMEX 'Outer Edge 05'



September 11 2001 saw the dawn of a new era of security awareness for the western world

Who said it couldn't happen in Darwin?

September 11 2001 saw the dawn of a new era of security awareness for the western world with the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York by terrorists associated with the Al Qa'ida network.

Subsequent to that and closer to home for Australians was the bombing in Bali on 12 October 2003 which saw the deaths of 202 people, including 88 Australians.

The Commonwealth and all jurisdictions across Australia have undergone massive changes in the way we work to prevent, prepare, respond, and plan to recover from acts of terrorism.

This includes involvement by all police and other emergency response agencies/organisations in both local and National Counter Terrorism Exercises.

Having been a major participant in a MJEX (Multi-jurisdictional Exercise) Mercury 04, in March 2004, which tested high level coordination to simultaneous attacks across a number of states/territories, the Northern Territory hosted its own ICMEX (Investigation and Consequence Management) Exercise in April 2005.

The exercise was designed to test



operational response and multi-agency coordination in the event of a terrorist bombing attack involving a chemical warfare agent, resulting in mass casualties.

Commander Graham Waite, Superintendent Michael Stevens, Sergeant Steve Martin, Fire Officer (District Officer) Geoff Barnes, and Senior Sergeant Andy Pusterla formed the nucleus of a small but highly creative and motivated exercise writing/management team which worked feverishly over a six month period to put the exercise together.

The island of Gevaar does not create much interest from Territorians. Maybe because the island doesn't really exist. However, this fictitious country, played a significant role in the Northern Territory's largest ever counter terrorism exercise, 'Outer Edge 05', that was played out in Darwin over four days in April.

To date, 'Outer Edge 05' was the largest counter terrorism deployment exercise conducted in Australia for a chemical, biological or radiological incident.

Unrest in the politically-unstable
(cont'd over)

“It was on 3 November 2001 that Usama bin Laden first ‘legitimised’ Australia as a specific terrorist target. Since then, Australia has been mentioned on eight separate occasions by bin Laden or his deputy, al Zawahiri or the terrorist leader in Iraq, al Zarqawi. We have also been mentioned in numerous website statements assessed to be genuinely linked to either al-Qa’ida or to al-Zarqawi.” (Address of ASIO Deputy Director-General Security in Government Conference, Canberra, Tuesday 10 May 2005)

pseudo nation and a desire to strike out at Australia prompted a declared terrorist organisation to plan and activate a terrorism attack on Darwin by targeting a large public event – the Outback Expo at the Darwin Showgrounds.

Exercise ‘Outer Edge 05’ cost more than \$500 000 to create and run but according to Exercise Director Bruce Wernham, it was worth every cent.

More than 350 staff from the Tri-service participated in the exercise. However, including personnel from Health and Community Services, St John Ambulance, Red Cross, the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Defence Force, up to 800 responders were involved.

“The exercise was a credit to all those people involved. It put all staff from within and outside the Tri-service under tremendous pressure

as they would be in a real life major incident,” Mr Wernham said.

“Importantly, it may not be terrorism related. It may be a building collapse or earthquake that requires the seamless coordination of a first class response from emergency services and exercises like ‘Outer Edge 05’ are important to test our capabilities.”

An exercise management team of up to 50 people from a range of government and non-government agencies worked for six months in the lead up to the exercise to ensure it was as realistic as possible.

Careful planning and implementation was required – even to the point where “victims” from the Outback Expo explosion were made up to resemble the injuries that would be suffered in a real incident.

Superintendent Michael Stevens, of

NT Police’s Counter Terrorism Unit, said testing the National Counter Terrorism Plan and NT plans for handling a chemical, biological and radiological incident and the interaction with national agencies was important.

“We expected that issues would arise from our collective interagency response, that was the purpose of the exercise - to identify whether there are gaps in our processes, plans, training and capability. We identify what these issues are, then implement strategies/measures to address any shortfalls,” Supt Stevens said.

“The Northern Territory – as have other jurisdictions – have received a large amount of new equipment and undergone extensive training with the emphasis on increasing Australia’s counter terrorism capabilities.”

“This exercise tested this new





“The crusader Australian forces were on Indonesian shores, and in fact they landed to separate East Timor, which is part of the Islamic world.” (Extract of transcript of video message from Usama bin Laden - broadcast November 3rd 2001 by Al-Jazeera satellite television channel)

equipment and allowed more people to understand the issues that emergency services would face in a terrorism incident.”

During the exercise, many facets of an emergency response were tested in a whole of Government approach. These included:

- establishment of forward command posts at Stuart Park and the Showgrounds
- decontamination processes at the Showgrounds and Royal Darwin Hospital
- identification, registration and

treatment of victims at the Showgrounds and the Royal Darwin Hospital

- the establishment of a 24-hour Police Operations Centre at the Peter McAulay Centre
- the establishment of the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS) overseen by the Red Cross
- the deployment of various NTPFES units with specialist CT capabilities
- testing and employment of emerging technologies
- operating with government and non-government agencies who have never traditionally been involved in CT exercises previously

Supt Stevens said in addition to the main ‘deployment’ phase of the exercise, four DISCEXs (or discussion exercises) were conducted to prepare agencies in dealing with these sorts of events,

and thrash out the issues following the practical phase.

“The Northern Territory – as with other states – needs to be prepared to handle a terrorism incident,” Supt Stevens said.

“While there has been no change in the terrorist threat level against Australia including the Northern Territory since September 11 2001, prevention through effective intelligence and information exchange, and being prepared is our best form of defence”.

“Although a range of issues were identified during the exercise as requiring further action, personnel from all participating agencies should be proud of the commitment and professionalism they displayed during what were totally new and untried circumstances”.



Petrol sniffers

One of the most disturbing changes to law and order problems in Alice Springs has been the increase of petrol sniffers in the town By Theresa Kuilboer

While it is acknowledged that petrol sniffing is primarily a health issue and not a law and order issue, in Alice Springs it has led to a marked increase in criminal damage incidents and incidents of interfere with motor vehicles.

This trend has been particularly noticeable in the northern end of town, with one car yard experiencing more than 250 incidents this year alone.

To combat this, police have been liaising closely with business owners in the area – especially those who are vulnerable to petrol sniffers such as car yards and automotive workshops.

The Crime Prevention and Reduction Unit has been tasked with ensuring Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits on these properties have been undertaken and business owners are encouraged to follow up on their recommendations to limit the risk.

Another tactic employed by police

in Alice Springs is running special operations to identify sniffers and target offenders. Since the establishment of the Tactical Unit - led by Senior Constable Chris Brand - in March, the team has mounted covert and overt operations targeting sniffers.

They have identified a core group of approximately 30 sniffers, mainly living at Hoppy's Camp, opposite the Northside Shopping Centre. This camp is also located opposite several car yards on the Stuart Highway, making it a preferred base for petrol sniffers.

During one of their covert operations, the TAC team identified sniffers as young as five, and one 18-year-old mother of a nine-month of baby. These children were identified as being at risk and this information was provided to FACS who now have the ongoing management of them.

Between 19 March and 18 May, the team made 76 arrests and identified numerous juveniles in need of

care. Several of the arrests were in connection to the ongoing problem of sniffers breaking into petrol tanks at car yards in an attempt to get their supply of petrol.

Police also followed up their observations by meeting with relevant Aboriginal organisations in an attempt to resolve the problem.

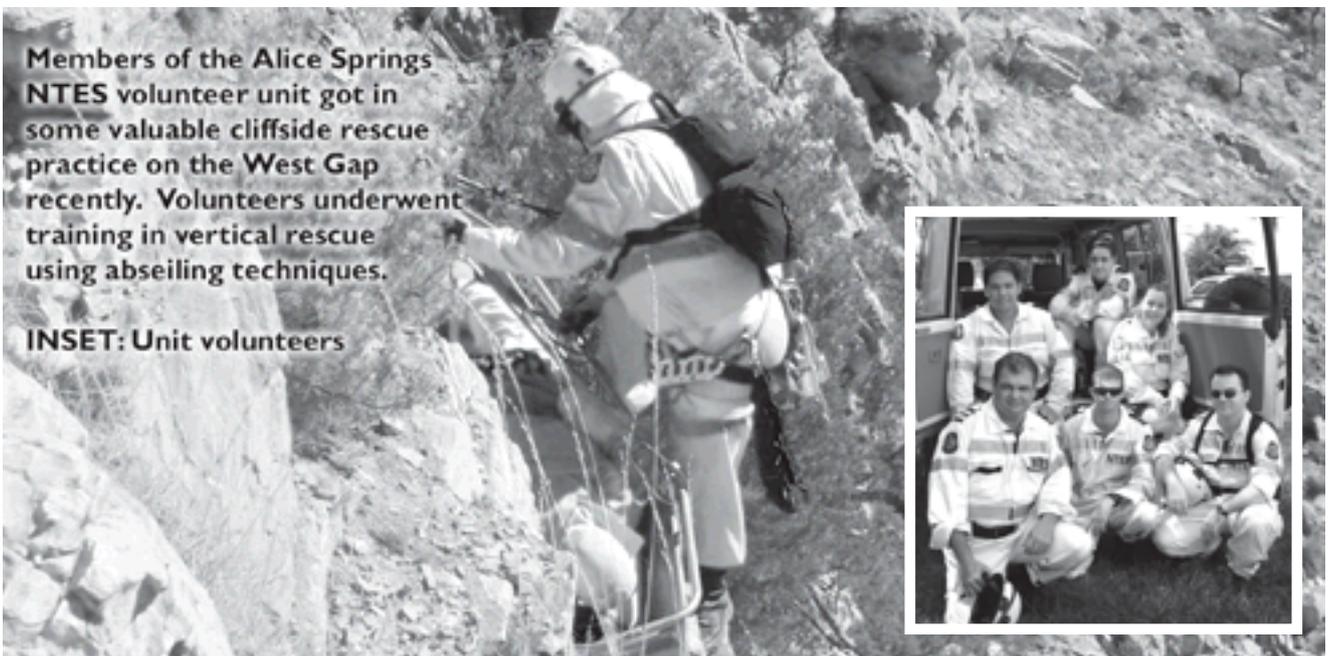
Having identified that many of the sniffers have come in to Alice Springs from remote communities where petrol is more difficult to obtain, police have liaised with Aboriginal organisations such as the Return to Country program, to assist these people in returning to their communities or to outstations where support is available.

Police recognise that petrol sniffing is an ongoing problem, therefore targeted operations like those using the TAC team will continue, as will liaison with other stakeholders in the community.

Abseiling to new heights

Members of the Alice Springs NTES volunteer unit got in some valuable cliffside rescue practice on the West Gap recently. Volunteers underwent training in vertical rescue using abseiling techniques.

INSET: Unit volunteers



Keeping Alice Springs City Safe

The introduction of City Safe has been one of the success stories in combating anti-social behaviour in Alice Springs By Theresa Kuilboer

City Safe is loosely modelled on the Darwin version, whereby hot spots for anti-social behaviour are targeted through the introduction of special police units to patrol high-volume areas.

The Tactical Unit was introduced in Alice Springs in March, primarily in response to continuing anti-social behaviour problems in the CBD.

The team is made up of eight members whose main function is to target hot spots and provide support for other units. Led by Senior Constable Chris Brand, the



ABOVE: On patrol in the Todd Mall

unit has largely been responsible for a marked decrease in anti-social behaviour in the CBD at weekends. In fact, since its establishment there have been no incidents of assaults in the CBD during the target periods.

The unit targets prime social activity periods when people are out and about on Friday and Saturday nights. The main focus of their patrols are from the top of the Todd Mall to the hospital area – an area where general disturbances occurred most often after closing time at two of the most popular night spots for young people.

Sen Const Brand proposed a “City Safe” concept to senior management when he was first tasked to head the TAC team, and with their support, the team has virtually wiped out incidents of disturbances and assaults in the CBD on Friday and Saturday nights.

Sen Const Brand believes this is largely due to the highly visible police presence and the targeting of drunks and potential offenders before the trouble starts.

“Previously, most of the police activity on Friday and Saturday nights was responding to reports of drunks and fights in the Gap Road area outside Melankas after closing time,” Chris said.

“When we started City Safe we set up a Command Post using the marked IVECO van at the 24 Hour Store opposite Melankas to maintain a highly visible police presence. From there we mounted foot patrols, bicycle patrols and vehicle patrols in the CBD throughout the night. During our patrols we would do walk-throughs of licensed premises, as well as patrols through the Mall and bicycle patrols of known trouble spots like laneways and car parks.

“At closing time our members maintain a high-profile presence outside the licensed premises to ensure potential trouble makers and drunks are encouraged to head home before any incidents occur.”

Sen Const Brand and his team have also been able to provide valuable intelligence to the RIO by noting any people of interest to police who are in the area. Juveniles are particularly targeted and, with the assistance of the Youth and Night patrols, are taken home before they can get into any trouble.

The reaction to the patrols from business people since City Safe was established has been extremely positive.

“We liaise with business owners on an on-going basis, and the feed-back we’ve received has been extremely positive,” Sen Const Brand said.

“They have all commented on the change in the atmosphere in the

CBD and have all attributed that change to the more visible police presence City Safe has been able to provide.

“Some restaurant owners have even been able to increase the size of their Al Fresco dining areas in the mall because patrons are no longer hassled by drunks and groups of juveniles. This, in turn, has led to increasing revenue for them, so they are more than happy with the police presence.

“We’ve also been able to enlist their cooperation in leaving lights on at their premises after hours and many of them have also cooperated with the Crime Prevention and Reduction Unit after CPTED audits on their properties.”

The use of the TAC team has also led to freeing up general duties police to respond to other incidents outside the CBD more efficiently. The team is also mobile enough to be able to provide support outside the CBD should it be required, and have been instrumental in mounting several special operations at other times.

The success of City Safe has vastly improved the quality of life for patrons and business people alike in Alice Springs and continues to provide a valuable support resource for other units in the region.

Stories from the Alice

Emergency Response Officer at Watarrka National Park (Kings Canyon) By Theresa Kuilboer

A permanent Northern Territory Emergency Service response facility has been established at Watarrka National Park at King's Canyon Resort.

In it's 2005 Budget, the Territory Government allocated \$200 000 a year for the facility with the funding to be spent fitting out the old ranger station, ongoing wages, communications equipment, maintenance, accommodation and training.

In April, long-time NTES volunteer Graham Missen was appointed as Watarrka's first permanent Emergency Response Officer.



Graham has been a volunteer with NTES for the past 14 years and in May, he and his partner Barbara Rittner (also an NTES volunteer) moved to Kings Canyon to take up the new position.

Graham said he was looking forward to the new challenge the appointment offered and aimed at raising awareness of the Watarrka Volunteer Unit.

"I am very pleased by the appointment and am looking forward to working with the communities at Watarrka," Graham said.

"The establishment of a permanent NTES presence in the area has come at a time when volunteer rescue workers have been kept increasingly busy with emergencies and rescues. In April, for instance, volunteers were called to assist with 14 emergencies in the one week.

"With more than 260 000 visitors to Watarrka National Park each year, there has been increasing pressure on the existing volunteers who respond to emergencies. In 2002 NTES established a small volunteer unit at Watarrka made up of staff from Parks and Wildlife, Kings Creek



ABOVE: Chief Minister Clare Martin, Barbara Rittner, Graham Missen, Nina Missen (Graham's daughter) and Police Minister Paul Henderson

Station and Kings Canyon.

"They have been required to assist at more than 40 incidents in the past 12 months including three deaths. I hope that the establishment of a permanent NTES presence will benefit both tourists and locals alike and I look forward to working there."

Part of Graham's role will be to train local Volunteers and Volunteer units throughout the area including Kulgera, Hermannsburg and Mt Ebenezer.

Volunteer receives first Certificate III

Veteran volunteer Geoff Cook of the NTES' Darwin Volunteer Unit was awarded the first Certificate III in Public Safety (SES Rescue) on Tuesday 31 May.



Geoff Cook with his Certificate III in Public Safety (SES Rescue)

The awarding of the certificate makes Geoff the highest 'officially' qualified volunteer in the Northern Territory after having undergone extensive assessment for recognition of prior learning.

Geoff has been with the PFES for over 22 years as a volunteer emergency service member and auxiliary fire fighter. He has served in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek where he has responded to a variety of tasks including storm damage, floods, land & sea searches, road accidents, HazMat incidents and most recently went to Croker Island to assist cleaning up after Cyclone Ingrid.

The Certificate was issued to Geoff by Volunteer Training and Administration Officer, Steve Twentyman in a surprise presentation during a Unit training night. Steve stated it was a great pleasure to present Geoff with the first such award and looked forward to many more.

NTES Volunteers wanting to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning, should contact Emergency Service Training Unit Training Officer Mark Cunningham at the PFES College for details and application forms.

Eggs-emplary big breakfast

By Ian Hasleby

There were hundreds of free chocolate Easter eggs for the children and dozens of egg and sausage sandwiches for the hungry motorists along the Stuart Highway outside the Darwin Showgrounds at the Easter Safety Big Breakfast.

The 'Big Brekkie' was a combined Police, Fire and Emergency Services road, marine safety and home security campaign to remind Territorians of their responsibilities on the waves, the roads and highways and in the neighbourhood over the holiday long weekend.

The Fire and Rescue Service were at their active best when demonstrating the 'jaws of life' rescue equipment and it served as a sober reminder to all drivers of the need to pay special attention to their speed, alcohol consumption, fatigue factors and the use of seat belts by everyone in a vehicle when travelling at Easter.

Marine and Fisheries Enforcement Unit members at the 'Big Brekkie' reminded boaties of the need to carry standard safety equipment and

observe the rules of boating when out fishing or cruising to ensure a trouble-free weekend on the water.

The Crime Prevention and Reduction Unit promoted the benefits of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and the need for all residents going away at the weekend, to adopt simple and effective home security measures.

Superintendent Bob Rennie told the media the Territory had recorded a fatality-free Easter last year and police would be encouraging drivers to stay alert and be mindful of the driving conditions and adjusting to the wet roads.

Police wanted motorists to stop at the 'Big Brekkie' and reflect on their driving habits to keep death and injury off NT roads and pay special attention to speed, alcohol, fatigue, seat belts and unroadworthy vehicles over the Easter holiday period.

While some motorists appeared to be wary of what had the appearance of a potential huge RBT site, with flashing lights and police vehicles,



ABOVE: Members from AIU take a break

those who saw the advertisements or listened to the radio took the opportunity to enjoy a free breakfast. That breakfast was only made possible by the generous sponsorship of a number of businesses, including Westralia Meats, Fresha Eggs, Parmalat (Pauls), Woolworths, Big W and Territory Party Hire.

The cooking skills of some recruits "volunteered" from Squad 82 proved extremely popular and the breakfast proved a great success.

And even more pleasing was the fact that the roads remained fatality free – for the second year in a row.

BELOW: Recruits from Squad 80 cook up a storm



North from Alaska

Alaskan firefighter Rod Harris is enjoying a climate change

While being a firefighter is something Rod Harris has always wanted to do, he could not have known that six years into that career he would travel to the other side of the world to spend 12 months with the NT Fire and Rescue Service.

Rod – a firefighter from Anchorage, Alaska – is learning the ropes at Darwin Fire Station, after taking a 12 month exchange, changing places with Phil Karlhuber.

Rod, his wife, Jami, their 12-year-old son Mackenzie and two daughters Rachael, 10 and Megan, 6 arrived in Darwin in March – and they have been overwhelmed by their welcome.

“The house is really comfortable and there’s a pool for the kids,” said Rod. “It’s been great hitting all the markets and everyone’s been super - the neighbours are coming and introducing themselves and the kids are meeting the neighbourhood kids.”

The family also experienced an Aussie morning tea, put on by colleagues at NTFRS soon after their arrival.

“It will show our ignorance, but when they picked us up we were expecting just an actual cup of tea,” said Rod. “When we got there, there was a whole lot of food and a whole lot of people to greet us – it was fantastic.”

Rod said it was too early to comment on the differences between the two fire services, but described firefighters as similar around the world.



“Firefighters are firefighters – they’re all great people. We’ve travelled around the US and Canada and found the mentality is the same wherever you go.”

Rod has been a firefighter with the Alaskan Fire Department for six years. Before that he worked in the construction industry, while studying at night at college taking fire science classes.

He achieved his dream of becoming a fireman and is now looking forward to a year in the Territory.

The children are attending school, Mackenzie is playing rugby and Rachael wants to play netball, while Megan’s spending lots of time in the pool.

As for non-work activities, Rod already has a clear idea of what they want to do.

“We want to do a lot of fishing and camping in the local area – the kids are really interested in getting outdoors. Jami and I want to do a trip to Adelaide this year and see the wineries in the Barossa Valley and we’ll also look to visit Bali while we’re so close.”

JESCC weight loss challenge

The 12-week JESCC weight loss challenge resulted in the total loss of 24 kilograms and 60 centimetres for its participants. The idea was the brainwave of Auxiliary Gabrielle Wolfe, who decided to enlist the support of others in attempts to improve her health and lose weight.

“I thought it would be easier if I had others taking the same challenge as me, so I asked around and we started the challenge with 11 of us about four weeks ago,” Gabby said.

The nature of the work of Auxiliaries posted to the Communications Centre means they spend many hours, whether on day or night shift, without physical activity.

“I think all shift workers would understand the effect of shift work on your body and general health, with changes to sleep patterns and eating patterns during night work,” Gabby said. “I believe that the fitter you are, the better you are able to handle shift work,” she said.

The nature of the work of JESCC also means staff members are dealing with members of the public, who are often under extreme stress when calling for assistance or to report incidents that have occurred.

The winner was Mel Henman with a loss total of 8 kgs and 26 cms from her hips, waist, biceps, thighs and bust.

The formula for measuring the loss was a combination of kilos and centimetres, with 1 cm = 1 unit and 1 kg = 1 unit.

Runners-up in the challenge were Jacquie Meggitt, with 23.5 units, Lee Millar, 19.5 units and Kim Muir, 17 units.

The challenge received strong support from several businesses, through donation of prizes at the end of the challenge. The major prize was a year’s membership from the PCYC for the Gymnasium, while vouchers and goods were also donated from Healthy Life at Casuarina, Video Ezy Nightcliff and Northlakes Family Chemist.

The work of members of the NTPFES is often stressful and difficult, which comes as no surprise to those at the coal face delivering the services. In previous months the members of the NTPFES have been recognised and praised by members of the public and the Commissioner for their work and efforts on behalf of members of the public.

Australia Day

18 February – Praise for members of the Mounted Police section from the Darwin Dressage Club for their participation in an Australia Day Event.

“I’d also like to emphasise the fantastic impression made by your police officers. They were very professional, approachable and gracious. I saw many people, especially youngsters, who stopped to talk and pat the horses ...”

Roadside assistance

4 March – The Commissioner responded to a letter from a woman who was provided roadside assistance by two officers (one male and one female) during the busy morning traffic on 21 February.

“While travelling to work, city bound along Bagot Road my rear wheel punctured on the ramp leading on to the Stuart Highway. As you can imagine there is possibly not a worse place in Darwin for a lone female to be stuck in morning traffic. Fortunately the police were called and quickly diffused a potentially dangerous situation by placing their vehicle with flashing lights on behind mine and changing the wheel for me.”

Cyclone Ingrid

16 March – Praise for Nhulunbuy Police for their efforts for the community during Cyclone Ingrid. In a letter from Yirrkala Dhanbul, the Chairman was full of praise for the efforts of officers. “They supported our local disaster relief team with confident advice and post cyclone we saw him (Tony Fuller) on the chainsaw leading his team in the

cleanup. We realised we can truly have confidence in our local law enforcement as they all did whatever had to be done.”

Adelaide River murders

21 March – A letter from the DPP praised the work of Det Sgt Greg Lade, Det Snr Const Isobel Cummins and Snr Const Amanda Ruzsicska for the work on the prosecution of two males for the Adelaide River murders.

“Mr Lade and Ms Cummins, having prepared the excellent brief, then did everything possible to support the prosecution in its preparation for and conduct of the trial ... Their professional competence throughout was obvious and their cheerful approach to what was, in fact, quite a difficult process was appreciated ... I should also add, and it is not an afterthought, that the forensic work, preparation and evidence of Senior Constable Amanda Ruzsicska was of the highest order.” A Commissioner’s Letter of Recognition was presented to all three members.

Driver says thanks

Undated – A letter from a woman whose husband had been convicted of drink driving and who had herself narrowly missed a speeding sign by becoming aware of her speed in a school zone.

“I believe that as a family, we escaped with the lightest of consequences from our silly actions earlier this year and our experiences have woken us both up quite significantly. I

would just like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to your officers for the excellent job that they do in all aspects of their work to keep us all safe.”

Positive feedback

13 May – Praise for Police Auxiliary Grant Menzies, from a caller to the Call Centre on 3 May.

“(Auxiliary) Menzies was attentive to the situation, offered positive feedback, allowed the instance to be told without constant interjection, treated the matter with a serious and compassionate tone, did not treat the matter with contempt or unimportance, was true to his word in returning calls at the time stated and followed up with a further telephone call to check that all was to our satisfaction.”

Bus crash

23 May – Praise for police who attended a school bus crash at Coolalinga from a parent of one of the children.

“No parent wants to experience the anxiety of a child involved in a bus accident, but the trauma was minimised due to the wonderful consideration and care (my daughter) received from Police at the accident scene. I am indebted to the kindness, consideration and wonderful response from your officers on Friday afternoon. They worked diligently with ambulance officers to assess all children and reassure them during a very upsetting time.”

Prince Charles’ visit

Undated – An email from the Department of the Chief Minister praising police for the assistance in Alice Springs during the visit of Prince Charles.

“Your guys did a great job with a smile, despite some of the last minute hiccups thrown our way. It’s great to see our police be such good ambassadors for the Territory.”

RIGHT: Sgt Glen McPhee leads the way for Prince Charles



