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WELCOME

Welcome to the first ARRO Newsletter for 2005.

Happy New Year to all ARRO members and let us hope that it is a disaster free year for everyone. The events in Asia and Africa recently have shown just how vulnerable we are to natural disaster. Fortunately we have been lucky in Australia to not have such a huge tragedy on our shores and I am sure we all hope that continues.

In the meantime planning, training and exercising are all important aspects of being prepared for natural or man made disasters and ARRO will continue to be an important link in the rescue service aspect of preparedness.

AUSTRALASIAN AND WORLD CHALLENGE

This year the Australasian Road Rescue Challenge leaves Australia for the first time to be held in Hamilton, New Zealand, from 8th to 11th October. The event will also include the World Rescue Challenge from 11th to 15th October. Hamilton is about ninety minutes from Auckland.

The NZ event team is working feverishly to ensure the challenge is a huge success and some details are already available through their web page – www.ufba.org.nz

Keep checking the web site regularly for updates as information will be posted on the website as it becomes available.

HOLDEN CUTTING TESTS

ARRO recently had the unique opportunity to review the new Holden Commodore to be released in 2006. ARRO members and a range of hydraulic rescue gear were given access to prototype vehicles at Holden's Proving Grounds at Lang Lang.

The evaluation was a real eye opener with the rescue gear being presented with a wide range of new challenges as more and more developments in vehicle manufacture make them harder to access using traditional rescue gear.

Full details of the tests will be released when appropriate given the high level of confidentiality because our early preview of the new Commodore.



Holden should be congratulated for their willingness to consider road rescue ahead of release of the new vehicle rather than rescuers discovering, when it is all too late, that there are new challenges for road rescue crews.

WORLD RESCUE ORGANISATION SUB-COMMITTEE

A World Rescue Organisation (WRO) sub-committee will meet in Capetown, South Africa, in March to evaluate the suitability of South Africa to host the 2006 World Road Rescue Challenge. This will include establishing if South Africa has a viable organisation to organise and manage such an event.

The sub-committee consists of a representative from each peak body that has previously hosted a World Challenge, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the WRO.

SPONSORSHIP

Great news with both Chubb and Gore confirming their ongoing commitment to ARRO. We are indeed privileged to have such excellent companies supporting our organisation. Sponsorship has allowed ARRO to increase the support we offer to assessors to attend Australasian and World Challenges, teams to compete in the World Challenge, as well as support our role on the World Rescue Organisation.

ARRO is in the final stages of negotiation with a third sponsor and hope to be able to make an announcement soon.

ARRO EXECUTIVE MEETING

The next meeting of the ARRO executive team will be held in Adelaide 19th and 20th of February. One of the reasons for meeting in Adelaide is to evaluate the South Australian request to host the 2006 Australasian Road Rescue Challenge.

If you have any issues you would like raised at the executive meeting please contact the relevant ARRO committee member (listed on last page of this newsletter) or write to the Secretary.

WE ASKED AND YOU TOLD US

In the last newsletter the Technical Committee sought input from members about proposed changes to the various elements of the challenge. Excellent feedback was received from more than a dozen members around Australia and New Zealand. Although many were expressing their personal opinion, a number also expressed the official opinion of their agency. It is also worth noting that not everyone agreed with the issues that were proposed and some of the arguments presented were equally passionate but in opposing directions! In short, the feedback on asking for your opinion has been a great success and the Committee will continue to do this wherever possible.

And if we don't, then please do not be backward in coming forward. Your opinion and experience helps us to shape what is deemed best practice in the field of extrication in Australasia.

Specifically, here are the outcomes of the Technical Committee's deliberations on the subjects considered:

CHANGES TO LIMITED CLASS

The majority of feedback from members supported the concepts proposed in the last newsletter. Although two specific objections were noted, the committee agreed to make the changes described for the Australasian Challenge in 2005. Therefore, for the Limited class in 2005:

- Teams will only be allowed to use the equipment provided in the limited pit. No substitution will be allowed; teams will not be allowed to bring in anything similar to what is provided on the pit. For example, only the air chisel provided would be allowed, even if a team has their own which is more powerful.
- The only hydraulic rescue tool provided will be a battery operated combination tool.

The tool restrictions (or limitations) will only apply to the limited pit. Teams will still be encouraged, in the interests of innovation, to bring new and alternate tools and equipment for use in the unlimited and rapid pits.

These changes will be incorporated into the 2005 Challenge Rules before they are issued.

MEDICAL STANDARDS

Once again support for the proposed changes was strong with a couple of opposing opinions noted. Therefore the committee has agreed that for the 2005 Australasian Challenge, the assessors will be looking for team medics to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

- Primary survey;
- CPR;
- Haemorrhage control;
- Fracture management;

- Spinal immobilisation; and
- Oxygen therapy.

In short, medical assessors will be expecting teams to provide effective spinal immobilisation and appropriate oxygen therapy to casualties as well as the other basic first aid interventions.

As stated in the last newsletter, this does not preclude any team from entering because their agency protocols do not support this level of skill. In fact, the contrary is true. Such are strongly encouraged to participate as a composite in partnership with their local Ambulance Service providing the team medic. This truly demonstrates an integrated approach to the science of extrication.

MINIMUM PIT EQUIPMENT

Every year the host of the Australasian Challenge faces the daunting task of providing a large quantity of equipment for teams from around Australia and New Zealand to use in the pits, and every year there are always a couple of little glitches along the way. Following the 2004 Challenge in Melbourne, participating teams and the event management team were asked to review the recommended pit equipment list for its appropriateness. As a result the Technical Committee has developed an improved list. This list remains a 'recommended minimum', remembering that ARRO and all our participating teams rely heavily on the support of our hosts from year to year and without them the challenge and learning opportunity would not occur. The new list is posted on the web site. You will note that among a number of small changes there is specific inclusion of PPE for the casualty. From now on, all casualties will be wearing safety glasses at all times (not just relying on responding rescue teams to provide them), and, where necessary, other PPE. It is critical that in this training activity we consider the health and safety of all participants at all times.

ASSESSOR POLICY

All assessors and many other members would be aware that the Technical Committee has been revising the current Assessor Policy recently. This review is nearly complete and the new policy will be posted on the web site when completed. Some of the significant changes include:

- Ensuring that Assessors remain current, in a similar manner to your agency's expectations that you maintain your competency by regular attendance at training.
- Restricting assessors to only be current in one field (Command/Technical or Medical).
- Adding a code of conduct.

CHALLENGE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

As many of you who have attended more than one challenge will know, there is a significant amount of work that goes into planning and conducting the challenge and each year many of the people who undertake this task from the host agency have never participated before and so have a lot to learn during the lead up to the challenge itself.

To assist in this process, ARRO has recently developed a Challenge Management Guide for host agencies. This document is about 35 pages in length, not including attachments such as Challenge rules, team feedback from previous years, Assessor policy, risk management plan and position descriptions of event management team roles.

The document is regularly updated and will be posted on the web site soon.

THANK YOU TO MFB

As most members of ARRO would be aware, although an agency member, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) has not entered a team in the Rescue Challenge to date. They have, however, made a number of contributions to enhance the quality and conduct of the challenges over recent years. For example in both 1999 and 2004 when the challenge was conducted in Melbourne they have assisted with the loan of equipment and in 1999 with the provision of maintenance personnel. Most recently however, as part of their investigation of the benefit of the challenges the MFB asked for a copy of ARRO's risk assessment for the challenge, something we did not have at that time.

With the assistance of MFB staff, ARRO has developed a risk management plan for the conduct of the challenges that clearly documents all our strategies to ensure the safe conduct of the event and mitigation of any risks faced.

ARRO understands that the request for the risk assessment may have come from one or two key members of the MFB. Those individuals have, in their own way, made a contribution to improving the standard of road rescue service delivery around Australia and New Zealand.

CHALLENGE TIMETABLE GROUPINGS

Clayton Allison (Team Leader NSWFB Burwood) is a regular participant and contributor to the challenges. He has reviewed our process for drawing up the timetable in the context of grouping teams of similar standard together so they appear before the same assessors in the same class around the same time. That is, creating a process so that last years winners and runners up are back to back with each other.

As a result of his detailed submission, the Technical Committee has agreed to develop the concept further and trial it at the Australasian Challenge in New Zealand in 2005. Essentially teams will be grouped in to 3 groups and each

group will appear before the same panel of assessors in the same day. A new award will also be introduced for the best placed team in each class.

The concept is still under development and more information will be provided in future newsletters.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A bi-product of the development of a code of conduct for assessors will be a code of conduct for all members. It is anticipated that the draft Code will be put to members at the Annual General Meeting in 2005 for adoption. For more information or a draft contact Glen Maule on (07) 4639 9162 or gmaule@emergency.qld.gov.au

NEW WEB SITE

After nearly 12 months in development, the ARRO Executive is pleased to advise that as we go to press with this newsletter, we have a new web site about to be launched to members. The new web site contains all the old information that was available to members of the public surfing the internet, plus a number of restricted areas available only to current financial members of ARRO.

To gain access you will require a login and password. These have been forwarded to you with your copy of this newsletter. They are personal logins and you should keep your login and password secure like you would your banking details.

When you login to the member's area you will have access to information such as electronic copies of current and past newsletters, minutes of meetings and technical bulletins. Members will also be able to update their personal records and the web site will also remind you when your subscription is due, although for security reasons, we will not accept payment over the internet. You will have to download a renewal form and fax or post it back to the membership coordinator. Assessors will also be able to review and update their records of challenges they have worked at. Most importantly there will be a moderated discussion forum to allow all members to comment on and discuss issues of importance to them related to ARRO and its objectives.



The screenshot shows the ARRO website homepage. The header features the ARRO logo and the text "Australasian Road Rescue Organisation". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Mission & Vision, Challenge, Sponsorship, Merchandise, Links, and Contact Us. The main content area includes a login form with fields for Username and Password, and a "Login" button. To the right of the login form, there is a welcome message: "Welcome to the official Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO) website." Below this, there is a paragraph describing ARRO as the peak body in Australasia for the development of knowledge and skills in road crash rescue. Further down, there is a paragraph about ARRO's history, stating it was established as the Australian National Road Accident Rescue Association (ANRARA) in 1996 and changed its name to ARRO in 2003. The text also mentions ARRO's involvement in road rescue challenges and its commitment to improving rescue services. On the right side of the page, there is a collage of images showing rescue operations and emergency services. At the bottom left, there are logos for sponsors: Chubb, Holmatro, and Gore.

In addition, members of the technical and executive committees will have access to work areas where they can access documents relating to the projects they are working on. These can also be published in draft form on the web site for members to access and comment on during development.

Importantly, the new ARRO web site will signal the end of the printed and posted newsletter for most members. Any member who has an email address registered will in the future receive an email advising them to visit the web site and download the newsletter. This will save ARRO and its supporters a considerable amount in postage.

Please visit the web site, check your details and make sure they are correct, especially the email address, and give members of the committee your feedback on the new site. Our web address remains unchanged. It is www.arro.org.au

SES ROAD RESCUE CHALLENGE

The Victoria State Emergency Service held their State Road Rescue Challenge on 20th and 21st November, supported by ARRO assessors.

The challenge was held at the Fire Services Training Grounds at Carrum Downs.

The challenge was won by Morwell Unit, with Bendigo second and Bacchus Marsh third overall.

The challenge also provided an opportunity for three new assessors to shadow assess as their introduction to challenge assessing. ARRO is always looking to expand our assessor base and any enquiries regarding assessing should be directed to David Coldbeck (see ARRO Directory for contact details).



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