

# Exercise Huon

## Exercise need

The NSW Police Force Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit – Newcastle conducted a multi-agency training day on Wednesday the 10th of April 2024 involving resources from NSW Police Marine Area Command, Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) and the NSW Ambulance Service.

The need of the exercise is to build working relationships within the participating agencies and to improve interoperability at complex rescue scenes. Participating units are all regional based where there is a higher need to work together at rescue incidents.

The scope of operations involves the use of retired Royal Australian Navy minesweeper vessels berthed at the Thales facility at Carrington. Operations will include search and rescue, confined spaces and the use of associated equipment utilized by participating units. The training exercise will centre around 3 scenarios running concurrently with one another with groups moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 to Stage 3. Each scenario will have a safety officer allocated who will also carry out an after-action review to each group as they complete their task. Each scenario will have access to a heavy rescue vehicle. Scenario 1 will be assigned Police Rescue RES90, Scenario 2 will be assigned FRNSW TRV and Scenario 3 will be assigned Ambulance Heavy Rescue.

### *Stage 1 scenario:*

A patient has fallen unconscious whilst working in a confined space at a manhole located at the aft of the ship. The groups mission is to carry out monitoring of atmosphere from the entry point, don BA and access the patient. The patient will be stabilized and extricated using a tripod setup on the Vortex device that all services currently use.

### *Stage 2 scenario:*

A patient has fallen unconscious whilst working on the upper internal deck of the ship. Crews must access the patient and extricate them using the external ladder of the ship. Crews are to use the ladder slide technique when moving the patient from the upper deck to the aft main deck of the ship. This patient will then need to be evacuated by Water Police vessel which will come alongside at the beginning of the scenario.

### *Stage 3 scenario:*

A patient has fallen unconscious whilst at rest in the living quarters on the lower decks. A strong smell of gas was reported by other staff who were evacuated from the ship. Crews are to conduct gas testing as they carry out their search in BA. Once patient is located, they are to be evacuated to the aft of the main deck.

## Exercise aim

To safely carry out multi agency search and rescue operations and achieve key training capabilities for the participating units. The scenarios are focused on maritime confined spaces rescue.

## Exercise objectives

The 4 overall objectives of the Exercise were:

- Build working relationships within the participating agencies and break down organisational silos.
- Improve the awareness and understanding between agencies of capabilities and equipment.
- To develop and improve on rescue techniques in a marine setting where the participating agencies have rescue responsibilities within the port / coastal city of Newcastle.
- To test limitations of issued rescue equipment and identify any training or equipment shortfalls.



## Exercise outcomes

The exercise was approached by each participant agency with a positive attitude to achieve the outlined objectives.

All casualties were safely removed by teams that were comprised of multi-agency staff. Communication and teamwork shone through in each scenario.

Agencies were able to showcase pieces of equipment unique to their appliance such as Police Rescue demonstrating the use of the Power Ascender in line with the Vortex tripod.



## Exercise evaluation

There following lessons and insights were identified:

Insight/Lesson	
Radio communications worked effectively using ESO GRN channels. Police Radio Network officers are researching new technology to assist in confined and remote locations. There were issues identified with verbal communications for BA users.	Improve
Combining agencies into one team worked well. 'Silos' were broken down quickly to achieve the task. Team spirit was quickly established.	Sustain
Testing of equipment proved beneficial to team members who had not utilised pieces of equipment in confined locations.	Sustain
It was identified that in cordage and techniques differ amongst the three participant agencies. Given all are NSW agencies comment was made about the inconsistencies in equipment and training.	Improve

## Recommendations

1. That regular Multi Agency training be conducted to build on the lessons learnt and

to enhance the working relationships of participant agencies.

2. That information sharing on equipment and training continue between local agencies.

