

SES Heroes Rescued From Carrier Fees



Location

New South Wales

Local Implementation Partner

Simeon Kemp

Horizon Wireless

In 1955, in Australia's Hunter Valley, more than 40,000 people from 40 towns were evacuated as almost every river system in the state of New South Wales (NSW) flooded. After 24 deaths and 5,200 flooded homes, 58 of those beyond repair, 15,000 people were left homeless and acres of crops and thousands of livestock were destroyed.



The State Emergency Service (SES), an emergency and rescue service made up almost entirely of volunteers, was created in response to this devastating tragedy. Today's NSW SES consists of 232 units comprising more than 10,000 volunteers. Clad in distinctive bright-orange overalls, the brave SES volunteers are primarily responsible for flood and storm operations.

Recently the SES, looking to save money on their sizeable subscription fees to the public paging network, turned to long-time CommtechWireless customer the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS). The RFS employs their own series of paging transmitter towers that cover the entire state.

The SES, with their chief responsibility being flood rescue, realized that it would be a rare day indeed that saw both a fire and a flood in the same town. This meant the SES and RFS could share the existing paging transmitters without competing for bandwidth; and they soon approached Horizon Wireless to find out precisely how this could be done.

The system proposed by Simeon Kemp of Horizon Wireless employs a CommtechMessenger installation and a bank of modems. When an emergency message comes in to the central CommtechMessenger installation, a modem dials the RFS transmitter tower that is closest to the affected area using the TAP protocol. From there, the message is sent to the pagers of the relevant volunteers in the area.

The CommtechMessenger installation has, in effect, become the central hub of the SES' entire system. For even further benefit, the system can be expanded at any time to include the innovative Fusion Series, allowing volunteers to receive emails or SMS messages to their mobile phones.

By utilizing the existing, tried and true infrastructure of the NSW RFS and not having to pay subscription fees on the public network, the State Emergency Service can ensure the safety of NSW and save thousands of dollars every year.



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