

## A Message from the Chief Executive



School is back after the Easter break and so are the winter rains and inclement weather.

The recent heavy rains and unruly weather have tested the mettle of our emergency services personnel to the fullest.

Saturday, 25 April was the busiest day for SES this year. Calls for assistance were spread across the entire State, with most of the calls for assistance within the metropolitan area.

It is times such as these that we are truly appreciative of the dedication and commitment of our volunteers who brave inclement weather and sometimes, dangerous and unpredictable situations to ensure the safety of our communities....

.... and to them we all say a sincere 'thank you'.

One way we can show our appreciation is through the Joy Noble Medal for outstanding service in volunteering. Nominations are now open and I encourage you to nominate worthy recipients from within our sector.

Every time disaster strikes our volunteers are at the forefront ready to put their lives at risk to defend community and property and awards such as this medal are a tangible way we can show our appreciation.

To support the work of our volunteers and to boost our search and rescue capacity, we recently commissioned two new state-of-the-art vessels - the 'Sea Rescue 2' and 'Sea Rescue 4' - bolstering SA Sea Rescue Squadron's fleet.

As a government, we rely heavily on the presence of our Volunteer Marine Rescue Associations to support search and rescue authorities in responding to emergencies and calls for help.

On Anzac Day, the nation honored our fallen heroes, those who paid the ultimate price to ensure our safety and freedom, and in the spirit of camaraderie that is so strong within this sector, volunteers and cadets participated in an ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil service.

My appreciation and thanks to all those who participated in this key community event, representing the sector in a show of solidarity and mateship.

Echoing the sentiments of such mateship are the valuable networks and partnerships that we form to look after those in the community. Recently two more collaborative initiatives have been established that draw on the collective knowledge and resources of State Government agencies in South Australia.

The Minister's endorsement of the State Water Safety Plan 2008 - 2010, and the announcement of SAFECOM's leadership role in implementing the Plan through the SA Water Safety Coordinating Committee, is a key initiative within SAFECOM. The Committee is a partnership between the Office for Recreation and Sport and a range of other government, non-government and not-for-profit organisations across the state.

The Plan will ensure that the safety on our waterways is maintained.

Additionally, we have also partnered with the Native Vegetation Council in developing a media campaign to ensure that South Australia's landowners are better prepared to face the dangers posed by bushfires.

'Cut down the impact of bushfires' is part of the CFS Bushfire Ready campaign to make our communities more resilient and better prepared in the event of bushfires.

As the fire danger season draws to a close and winter progresses, and the threat of a pandemic influenza outbreak looms, I urge you all to keep healthy, safe and dry.

Thank you.



# From the Board

Update from the SAFECOM Board meeting held on 30 April 2009.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Financial Performance

The sector's current financial position as at 31 March 2009 and the end of year forecasts were presented to the Board at April's meeting. The forecast remains consistent with previous months with all agencies expecting their end of year operating budget outcome to be balanced.

This is a positive reflection on our systems of budget management across the sector.

Consideration was also given to the Capital Expenditure Report, noting that the amount of capital expenditure necessary to complete major projects and annual programs is higher than desirable at this time of the year. With the end of financial year rapidly approaching, the Board noted the potential for underperformance and loss of capital.

The Board was informed that Treasury have approved the carryover of unspent capital funding for major projects and that while the annual programs are experiencing delays, they are expected to be completed within the financial year.

### Land for Emergency Services at Murray Bridge

At the March 2009 meeting, the Board requested SAFECOM investigate the current availability of land suitable for the establishment of an emergency services precinct at Murray Bridge. The concept has been adopted at Port Lincoln and Mt Gambier.

A report was considered which provided details of suitable land to accommodate a precinct style co-location of services. The Board has requested that the land be assessed in terms of its ability to meet the service delivery standards and other needs of each emergency service agency.

### General Items

The Human Services Report was noted, and the Board received information detailing annual leave balances and in particular, the number of staff with leave balances exceeding one year's entitlement.

The number of staff with excessive leave balances has reduced since 30 June 2008, but the Board reinforced that periods of work without leave are a risk to employee health and wellbeing generally.

The Board noted that Chief Executive / Chief Officer approval is required where employees seek to defer greater than two years leave entitlement. Information will continue to be made available to managers to support proactive planning and the management of leave balances.

# From the Board

## STRATEGIC SERVICES

### Portfolio Statements

As part of the State Budget and reporting process, each agency reports how funds were spent during the previous financial year and their performance against their targets, including highlights. In line with the Board's adoption of the common strategic planning framework of the six key focus areas; Leadership, Prevention and Community Preparedness, Operational Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Business Excellence, the Board agreed to structure the Portfolio Statements in the same way thus presenting to the Government a common approach to reporting budget expenditure.

The Board commended the collaborative cross-sector team who have achieved this outcome.

### Board Committees

Recently, the Board approved forming four Board committees to provide leadership and assurance in cross-sector issues. The four committees are; Strategic Thinking, Community Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR), Operational PPRR and Business Excellence.

The Board noted that the Strategic Thinking Committee, chaired by Wayne Thorley, has already met twice and that the terms of reference need to be developed for each committee and this will be done in conjunction with the relevant Chairperson.

### Emergency Services Delivery Standards

The development of Emergency Services Delivery Standards is a major project for the sector and will be a key tool for determining where to put our PPRR efforts to treat risk in the community. At a previous meeting the Board approved a project plan and terms of reference for the working party.

The Board re-affirmed its desire to develop standards and determined that a list of risk categories would be provided to Chief Officers for their approval. Each agency's current service delivery standards against these risks would be provided by each Chief to the Board for discussion.

It was decided that the working party would report to the Board and David Place would be the project sponsor and chair of the working party.

### Project Management Training

The Board and senior executives were invited to a special session on Project Management, as part of the roll-out of the SAFECOM Project Management Methodology. This will enable senior executives to understand the methodology to be used in SAFECOM and what to require from staff managing projects.

## SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

To further the sector's Strategic Direction priority of 'being accountable', a new reporting process has been established. Each agency is now required to prepare a monthly Highlight Report for the Board, aligned to the sector's six key focus areas for planning, budgeting and reporting purposes.

Some of the highlights for March are listed on the following page.

# From the Board

## SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS continued...

### COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

#### Leadership:

The second meeting of the Bushfire Task Force was held, chaired by the CFS Chief Officer.

#### Prevention and Community Preparedness:

CFS has met with Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) to develop a DECS School Closure Policy for upper extreme fire weather days. To date 63 Community Fire Safe meetings, 44 lectures at community meetings and 88 information and awareness meetings have been conducted by the CFS Community Education team to promote the Bushfire Ready message.

#### Operational Preparedness:

A project group has been established to investigate an Automated Vehicle Location and Status Messaging System. Fourteen new appliances and four refurbished bulk water carriers have been delivered.

### METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE

#### Leadership:

Testing is now underway on photovoltaic panels at MFS headquarters which are expected to deliver 30kW of power.

#### Prevention and Community Preparedness:

The Smoke Alarm Retirement campaign ([www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)) was launched in collaboration with the CFS. Fourteen fires in MFS districts and four in CFS regions were investigated.

#### Response:

The MFS attended 1620 incidents including 76 structure fires and 81 vehicle fires.

### SAFECOM

#### Leadership:

A draft framework for establishing and amending SAFECOM and across sector policies and procedures was developed and issued for consultation. The sector Learning and Development Committee reconvened.

#### Prevention and Community Preparedness:

Twenty-two media releases were issued by SAFECOM Public Affairs and a joint CFS and Native Vegetation Council media campaign ([www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) was developed to increase awareness, reduce bushfire risk and increase preparedness of landholders.

#### Business Excellence:

Work has begun on drafting a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between SAFECOM, SES and CFS to provide a clear direction for the Volunteer Strategy and Support (VSS) Branch.

### STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

**Leadership:** A draft MoU has been finalised with Victoria for resource deployments and cross-border activities.

#### Prevention and Community Preparedness:

The Community FloodSafe Project ([www.ses.sa.gov.au](http://www.ses.sa.gov.au)) is progressing well with the first school visits undertaken in the Marion Council area and 20,000 brochures distributed to participating councils and volunteer teams.

#### Operational Preparedness:

An Extreme Heat Communications Working Group has been established as per the recently approved SES Extreme Heat Communications Plan.

# Volunteers

## Be part of Phase 1 of the review of Volunteering Australia's National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations

### Have you had experience with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations?

If yes, then Volunteering Australia would like to hear from you.

The National Standards are undergoing a review and Volunteering Australia is inviting feedback through an online survey. Your feedback is vital to this review and we encourage you to take part.

Following an extensive national consultation process, the National Standards were developed and endorsed by Volunteering Australia in 1997. Together with the *Definition and Principles of Volunteering*, and the *Model Code of Practice*, the National Standards are considered one of Volunteering Australia's foundation documents, setting the benchmark for best practice and providing detailed guidance for organisations involving volunteers.

The National Standards cover the following aspects of volunteer involvement:

- policies and procedures
- management responsibilities
- recruitment
- work and the workplace
- training and development
- service delivery
- documentation and records
- continuous improvement.

A decade on since the National Standards were first introduced, and in a climate of development in the volunteering sector, it is timely to engage in a review process of the standards.

For more information about the National Standards, their development and the context of the review, visit the Volunteering Australia website at [http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01\\_home/home.asp](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01_home/home.asp)

Please take the opportunity to have your say and encourage others to participate in the process of review.

The survey is open until **25 May 2009** and can be accessed at:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UStkvaC\\_2b2u2VIVzFAFqZqw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UStkvaC_2b2u2VIVzFAFqZqw_3d_3d)

## 2009 Joy Noble Medal

### Do you know an outstanding volunteer in a government program?

The Minister for Volunteers is seeking nominations for the **2009 Joy Noble Medal** for outstanding volunteer service in South Australian government volunteer programs.

The Joy Noble Medal is a great opportunity to recognise the support of volunteers who have made an outstanding commitment and contribution to the South Australian community.

For more information about the Joy Noble Medal, or to nominate a volunteer, visit [www.ofv.sa.gov.au](http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au) or call (08) 8463 4437.

Nominations close **Monday, 18 May 2009**.

# Volunteers

## Remembering fallen heroes

Many cadets from the CFS and SES did our sector proud last month, when they honoured the significance of ANZAC Day and our fallen heroes. Groups of dedicated young people, their supervisors and supporters took part in ANZAC Eve Youth Vigils from 6pm on Friday 24 April in various locations around the state.

The ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil stems from the military tradition of 'holding ground' whereby a reconnaissance patrol would find and hold strategic position in preparation for the arrival of their army. This would often involve an all-night vigil, keeping awake on watch.

This year marked the 10th ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil held at the South Australian State War Memorial, and included young people from 15 different youth groups – including both SES and CFS cadets – 'holding ground' on the site for the 12 hours leading up to the Dawn Service. At 6am, they handed over to the Defence Force Catafalque Party who in turn 'held ground' during the Dawn Service and the ANZAC Day March.

ANZAC Eve Youth Vigils were also held at Marion, Morphett Vale, and Blackwood.

This year, the icy wind and rain couldn't dampen the spirits of the cadets, many of whom stood vigil wearing family medals.

Well done to all the cadets who represented the CFS and SES at the Vigils, maintaining at all times professionalism, reliability, and enthusiasm; bringing honour to the uniform and taking pride in their work.



## National Volunteer Week, 11 - 17 May

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in Australian communities and to say thank you to the more than 5 million Australians who volunteer.

South Australia has the highest volunteer participation rate in the nation. In the fire and emergency services sector alone over 18,000 dedicated South Australians tirelessly volunteer their time to protect the state.

NVW, from 11 - 15 May, offers an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of our sector's volunteers. Apart from thank you community service announcements (CSAs) appearing on ABC Radio, print adverts and volunteer profiles within selected metropolitan and regional papers, there are a number of activities planned throughout this period, including:

**Check It Out! 2009** - This joint initiative of the Office for Volunteers and various other South Australian community organisations, including the CFS and SES, gives the community an opportunity to 'check out' community organisations that offer volunteering experiences. Various CFS brigades and SES units will offer tours on Monday, 11 and Tuesday, 12 May.

**Volunteering SA Display in Rundle Mall** - On Monday, 11 May to kick off NVW, Volunteering SA will have a static display in Rundle Mall to celebrate South Australian's who volunteer, including volunteers from the CFS and SES.

Other activities to celebrate NVW will take place in regional areas around the state.

# Building partnerships

SAFECOM is about building safer communities. We continue to forge alliances and collaborative partnerships with government, non-government and not-for-profit agencies to ensure that the safety of the community is maintained, minimising the risk of loss to life, property and the environment, not only on the land but also in the vast oceans and other waterways.

## Maintaining safety on our waters

Water and water recreational sports are a big part of the Australian way of life. Too often the desire for enjoyment prompts us to become careless and less vigilant, resulting in loss of life, injury or damage to property.

Water safety is an important part of building community resilience and incorporates training and education, rescue and prevention, legislation and policy development. No one agency has complete responsibility for water safety with many agencies delivering water safety initiatives.

The vision for South Australia is to reduce the risk of drowning deaths, near drownings and injuries from water related incidents through an ongoing commitment to:

- Increase water safety skills and awareness in communities across South Australia.
- Public and private environments that are designed and managed to minimise the risks.
- The coordination and resource sharing by relevant government and non-government stakeholders to deliver high quality water safety initiatives.

Driven by the opportunity for water safety stakeholders to establish greater levels of collaboration, through information and resource sharing, the State Government, through SAFECOM in partnership with the Office of Recreation and Sport, established the South Australian Water Safety Coordinating Committee (SAWSCC) in 2006, to guide this state's response to water safety and encourage communication across the industry.

While South Australia has a very low rate of drowning incidents in comparison to other states and territories, the establishment of the SAWSCC is another strategy that builds on the good work being done by a range of government, non-government and not-for-profit agencies across the state.

Chaired by SAFECOM, membership on the committee includes Swimming SA, Surf Life Saving SA, Royal Life Saving SA, the South Australian Police, the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, the Department of Education and Children's Services, Boating SA, the SA Farmers Federation, Recreation SA, Kidsafe, the Local Government Association, Office of Recreation and Sport, and Volunteer Marine Rescue.

The latest initiative of the Committee is the development of the State Water Safety Plan 2008-2010 which has been guided by the SAWSCC and contributed to by a range of other industry and community organisations with an interest in water safety. It is a working document that will continue to evolve and reflect industry and community needs and trends.

In addition to the development of the Plan, the Committee is also in the process of establishing a website designated to water safety. This will include profiles of each of the Committee members, links to their websites and will provide the public with water safety information.

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis and is focused on implementing the strategies of the Plan with the support of the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Michael Wright MP.

South Australia is proud of its past achievements relating to water safety and the range of high quality water safety programs and services provided by various organisations who have made an important contribution to South Australia, maintaining a relatively low number of drownings throughout the years.

However, in 2007 and in the beginning of 2008, South Australia experienced a high number of drowning deaths and the risks associated with water safety are increasing. New arrivals moving to the state with limited experience in aquatic and coastal environments, a 'sea change' lifestyle trend, increased participation in aquatic activities, and more water bodies in urban environments, all increase the risks and justify an ongoing commitment to water safety.

# Building partnerships

## Managing native vegetation to minimise risks

The CFS and the Native Vegetation Council (NVC) have joined forces to launch a campaign to minimise the risks posed by native vegetation to the severity of bushfire.

The campaign comes in the wake of Victoria's devastating bushfires and outlines the steps that landholders can take today to clear native vegetation that presents a bushfire risk on their property.

The campaign features statewide radio and print advertising, a fact sheet and poster.

CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson says that bushfire safety is a responsibility that is shared by all South Australians.

"Everyone has a part to play in protecting lives and property against the threat of bushfire and where possible conserving native vegetation," Euan said.

The NVC's Presiding Member, Dennis Mutton said it was important to highlight the exemptions that exist in the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* which allows the clearance of native vegetation without the need for formal approvals.

"The State Government recognises that, native or not, if plant growth has the potential to threaten lives or property it must be managed," Dennis said.

Euan added that preparation is the key to surviving a bushfire and both the CFS and NVC can offer valuable and constructive advice to help landholders take the appropriate measures now to become Bushfire Ready.

Landholders who have native vegetation on their property can take the following actions today:

- Clear any tree branches that overhang your house or other buildings on your property.
- Clear native vegetation up to 20 metres from around houses (with the exception of large trees which will require approvals).
- Clear native vegetation up to five metres around property buildings such as sheds and garages.
- Clear native vegetation along property boundaries up to a depth of five metres to create a fire-break. In some regions of the state this can be 7.5 metres.

Further information is available on the CFS website [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



**Cut down the impact of bushfires.**

**Are you Bushfire Ready?**

**Manage native vegetation on your property, take action today.**

- ✓ Clear any tree branches that overhang your house or other buildings on your property.
- ✓ Clear up to 20 metres of native vegetation around your house. Make sure you exclude any big trees as they require clearance approval.
- ✓ Clear up to 5 metres of native vegetation around other buildings on your property such as sheds and garages.
- ✓ Clear the native vegetation from your property boundary to create a fire-break of 5 metres.

For more information visit the SA Country Fire Service website.

Printed March 2009

Government of South Australia  
Native Vegetation Council  
CFS

**www.cfs.sa.gov.au**



# Community safety

Together with its agencies SAFECOM consistently works to build and maintain the safety and resilience of the South Australian community through a range of activities including community education initiatives, training, collaborative partnerships and special campaigns.

## Strengthening our capacity to respond to marine emergencies

The sea change trend of today is seeing a substantial increase in the number of people living in coastal communities. Anglers are purchasing larger vessels and venturing further out to sea in search of their catch, and more and more people are spending recreational time cruising in yachts or undertaking other marine pursuits.

It is unfortunate, but remains a reality, that even through greater education and developments in sea safety, vessel reliability and communications, there continue to be accidents and incidents at sea which require a search and rescue response.

Each year, the Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) receives approximately 560 requests for assistance with some of these ending up in major search and rescue operations.

Recently the state's VMR received two 'new members' in to their service with the commissioning of two search and rescue vessels 'Sea Rescue 2' and 'Sea Rescue 4'. These vessels give a much needed boost to the marine rescue capacity of Adelaide's southern metro coastline and the Copper Coast.

Built locally by Clayton Marine, these vessels are 7.4 metres in length, powered by an inboard diesel motor and fitted with state-of-the-art electronics, navigation and safety equipment with the capability of being able to remain at sea for extended periods of time.

The purchase of these vessels was supported by funding of \$160,000 from the State Government through the Community Emergency Services Fund and from the Volunteer Marine Rescue Contingency Fund.

Speaking at the commissioning of the new vessels, Chief Executive Officer, SAFECOM, David Place said that the new vessels will substantially improve the capacity of the Sea Rescue Squadron. He also acknowledged the hard work done by both the members of the community and volunteers in the successful acquisition of the two new vessels.

"The SA Sea Rescue Squadron has a long and distinguished history of service to the boating community in SA and its evolution into one of the largest and most progressive VMR associations is strong evidence of the commitment and passion of its volunteers," David said.

"These successes would not have been possible without them," he said.



Above: Launch of Sea Rescue 2 at West Beach.  
Pictured L to R: Rev Matt Curnow, Comm Lindsay House, Peter Collins, David Place, Daryl Wright and Capt Gerry Dejong.



Launch of Sea Rescue 4 at the Copper Coast.

# Community safety

## Starting them young - students learn about bushfire safety

Students at Lock Area School have been learning about bushfire safety.

CFS Community Education Officer, Therese Pedler and Regional Prevention Officer John Probert were invited to the school in the aftermath of some incidents in the area.

In October last year the CFS held a Community Fire Safe session with some of the women in the area. Within a couple of weeks some of the women were impacted by a bushfire that started by lightning and the knowledge and training that they had received during their fire safety education held them in good stead.

It was shortly after these incidents that the school bus driver began to hear the young students making comments about bushfires such as, "I would just get out and run" or "I would get in the car when it got too bad to stay".

Prompted by these comments and recognising that education played a large role in safety, he liaised with the school principal and the CFS Community Education Unit to arrange for a visit from the CFS.

Therese and John divided their sessions into different age groups throughout the day.



Having fun whilst learning about bushfires.



Students enjoy learning about bushfire safety around their homes.



Students with their Bushfire Action Plans.

Reception to Year 3 students learned of the difference between good fires and bad fires with the help of puppets.

Twenty-five Year 4 to 6 students 'dressed up' in Personal Protection Equipment to learn how best to protect themselves and learn more about the dangers of radiant heat.

Year 7 to 8 students used science to explain bushfire behaviour, while the senior school students were urged to act as young adults and help the adults at home to become Bushfire Ready.

All students were given a Bushfire Action Plan and encouraged to write their name on it for ownership and take it home to work on with adults.

# Community safety

## Spreading the fire safety message in regional South Australia

The MFS services communities in 17 major regional population centres around South Australia, and views the promotion of community safety as an important part of their regional staff's workload.

Regional Training Officer, Jeff Steele has secured a regular radio spot on Gulf FM which has an audience covering the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula.

Jeff goes to air on the 'Darling and Bud' show on Thursdays from 9.15am for about 20 minutes.

In recent weeks he has talked about home fire safety information, ranging widely from retiring old smoke alarms to the fire dangers and issues surrounding electric blankets, deadlocks and blow in/ loose fill home insulation.

He's also promoted both CFS and MFS firefighter recruitment, and warmed the hearts of everyone with the story of MFS firefighter and CFS volunteer Pat Hill's effort in donating his family's mobile home to firefighters in Victoria.

Just before Easter he focused on safe driving messages and spoke about the MFS RAAP Program (Road Awareness and Accident Prevention Program) in an effort to stop the road toll climbing over the holiday period.

Jeff's future programs will focus on how fire danger in the home increases with the winter months coming.



# Protecting the community

## South Australia's wild weather keeps our volunteers busy

The recent wild weather that hit our state last week kept SES volunteers very busy.

The SES had 450 calls for assistance when the wet weather set in from lunchtime on Thursday, 23 April until early evening on Monday, 27 April. Two hundred and fifty of these requests were on Saturday, making it the busiest day for the SES so far this year.

SES volunteers were assisted by other emergency services personnel in responding to flooding, storm damage and falling trees.



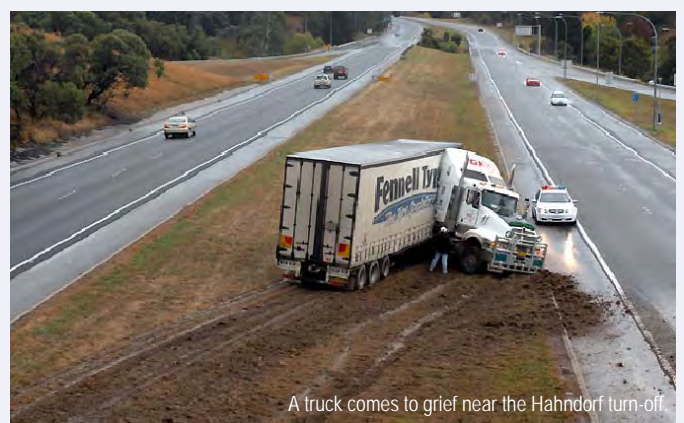
Above: King tide at Port Adelaide, taken from New Port Quays.  
Below: Car abandoned on Somerton Beach.



Above: Flooding in and around Fletcher Rd, Birkenhead.



Above: Beach front home at Riley's Point, just north of Wallaroo.



A truck comes to grief near the Hahndorf turn-off.



Right: Foreshore at Glenelg North and Adelaide Shores as the high tide and storm peaked.

All photographs sourced from Adelaide Now [www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au)