



NSW VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION Inc.

A.B.N. 68 767 393 968

State President Gary Raymond APM, OAM

Chief Inspector of Police (Rtd.)

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The Commissioner,
Productivity Commission.
Level 2/15 Moore Street,
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600
20th March 2009

ENQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GAMBLING INDUSTRY. SUBMISSION FROM THE NSW VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION Inc.

Dear Sir/Madam,

VRA ORGANISATION.

The NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc. (VRA) is composed of 72 rescue affiliates totaling 3,500 rescue operatives based in the coastal and rural areas of NSW providing day to day rescue services. The VRA is defined in the NSW State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989 as an Emergency Service. Our current corporate information is:-

NSW Associations Incorporations Act Registration Number YO520112

Australian Business Number ABN 68 767 393 968

NSW Charitable Collections Act Authority to Fundraise Number CFN 11724

Deductable Gift Recipient Number ABN 68 767 393 968

Registered Office, Inveresk, Narrandera NSW 2700

Email Address vrarsq@rescue.org.au

Website www.rescue.org.au

We have no paid staff although key office holders receive a small honorarium to cover expenses. We have no headquarters buildings and work from offices situated at our home addresses. This keeps costs down and enables all donated funds to go to local rescue squads for buildings, vehicles, vessels and rescue equipment. The NSW State

Government funds a small amount for insurances. NRMA is also a major sponsor for the VRA alongside ClubsNSW.

The VRA rescue squads perform land based rescue, motor vehicle extrication, deceased person recovery, sea search & rescue, vertical rescue, inland water & flood rescue, cave rescue, wilderness search & rescue, storm damage recovery, flood rescue, snowfields rescue, canyon & swift water rescue, diving, aerial search & rescue, emergency communications, animal rescue, chaplaincy & critical incident stress management services and emergency catering services.

This year we are celebrating our 40th Anniversary of service to the community of NSW. We are non-government and totally volunteer in our make-up. The affiliate squads are NSW Government Primary (first responder) accredited. As VRA President, I sit as a member of the NSW State Rescue Board, NSW State Emergency Management Committee and Australian Emergency Volunteers Forum.

VRA ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITY.

Since our formation forty years ago, we have recorded the following volunteer activity:-

356, 508 rescue missions performed
37,232 entrapped people extricated
849,944 times assisted the police, fire, ambulance, rural fire or state emergency services
4,690 deceased people recovered
11,057,033 operational hours performed
9,058,178 non operational hours (training, fundraising, public education & displays etc.)
20,117,911 total volunteer hours performed.

SUPPORT OF THE VRA BY THE REGISTERED CLUB INDUSTRY.

The Registered Clubs Industry through ClubsNSW has been a major sponsor for the VRA since 2006 having raised and donated \$40,000.00 a year totaling \$120,000.00 to the VRA so far with promise of continued sponsorship into the coming years if they can afford such sponsorship. This money has been used in Capital Grants to our affiliated rescue squads enabling them to purchase vital assets and rescue equipment. Without this ClubsNSW sponsorship the VRA would be sorely hampered in our ability to obtain life saving assets.

SPECIAL RESCUE EQUIPMENT PROJECTS.

For example in 2007, this donated money from ClubsNSW went to purchase Glass Management Kits for the road rescue squads throughout the State. These kits are used to protect trapped persons when rescue operatives are forced to break and contain glass to reach and extricate those people. Funds have also gone to purchase ascending and descending vertical rescue equipment for use by our cliff rescue squads both in the mountain areas, rural areas as well as the coast of NSW. The equipment is not only used on cliffs but also rescues from mine shafts, canyons, towers, silos, buildings and bridges. Hydraulic rescue equipment has also been purchased by the VRA using money raised by ClubsNSW. This equipment commonly called the 'jaws of

life' is used to spread, lift or cut materials entrapping people in all manner of situations especially transport or industrial accidents.

In 2008, further funding in sponsorship was given to the VRA. ClubsNSW contributing towards a new rescue vehicle in Inverell NSW, a rescue trailer to the NSW Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue, a rescue vehicle at Casino NSW, a resuscitation training manikin at Mudgee NSW, a rescue vessel boatshed at Woolgoolga NSW, vertical rescue equipment at Nambucca NSW, computer training equipment at Narrabri NSW and specialised rescue rope for the NSW Caves Rescue Squad. The funding contributes markedly to the effective and efficient volunteer rescue services throughout NSW.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIVIDUAL LOCAL REGISTERED CLUBS.

Individual local registered clubs have supported individual squads since 1980. The clubs have staged fund raising events such as trivia nights, auction nights, golf days, darts competitions, snooker competitions, bowls days, rescue display days, family carnivals, talent quests and much more. The money raised goes into supporting local rescue squads running costs. Although the rescue operatives give their time as volunteers, money is raised and used for fuel costs, communication costs, maintenance costs, recruiting drives and administration costs. Local clubs and their members have a personal commitment in equipping and maintaining their own rescue squads as they may need (hopefully not) such services one day themselves. This relationship between the VRA and the clubs are a close one because of their co-dependence.

Many rural farmers, glaziers and village businesses have been in financial crisis because of drought and the economic downturn. Local registered clubs have been filling the donation gap as the rural sector businesses become less able to sponsor rescue squads. The VRA squads also support the local clubs by providing manpower for other charity events in the community calendar. Members of the registered clubs also volunteer to help the VRA rescue squads in working bees around the squad's premises. This gives the members purpose and fellowship with the VRA without having to get involved in rescue work itself.

VRA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH CLUBSNSW HELPS WITH OTHER PARTNERS.

Father Chris Reilly's 'Youth Off The Streets' is a ClubsNSW partner as well as the VRA. ClubsNSW financially sponsor the program to help disadvantaged youth who are often neglected by their parents, rejected by the education system, past history of crime and addictions. The VRA partners with ClubsNSW and Youth Off The Streets to conduct excursions for these at risk youth to rescue stations in a program to connect the youth with the community. The program, funded by ClubsNSW, allows the youth to see rescue squads in action cutting up a damaged car in a road trauma hypothetical. The youth get to use the rescue tools, give 'victims' first aid and lift them out of the 'crashed vehicle' on spinal rescue boards. At mealtimes (sponsored by ClubsNSW) the rescue operatives get to interact with the youth as mentors encouraging them to make something of their future in the community. The VRA small vessels are also used to take the youth onto rivers and creeks displaying navigation, search and rescue techniques on inland waters. This three-way partnership between ClubsNSW, VRA and Youth Off The Streets is money well spent with the feedback from the youth involved being very positive towards their rehabilitation back into a meaningful life.

CLUB SERVICES TO VRA RESCUE SQUADS OTHER THAN MONEY.

Many of the VRA squads use registered club premises to hold events such as presentation dinners, conferences, training venues, charity balls, committee meetings and public relations displays. The clubs usually give their premises for no or very little cost to the squads. The clubs also cater at very low cost for VRA functions leaving the VRA finances to be directed into rescue itself rather than overheads in the form of fund raising costs. Many members find rest and recreation at registered clubs away from the rescue environment. Club family entertainment and indoor sporting facilities provide relief from the sights, sounds, smells and touches of rescue. The clubs also afford an environment where off duty rescue operatives can interact with family, friends and fellow members of their community in a safe and stress free place in a normal social interactive way. This assists them to defuse the affects of seeing and experiencing tragedy at the rescue interface all the time.

SUMMARY.

The NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc. is extremely grateful to ClubsNSW and all local registered clubs themselves for the financial and other ways of support they have given, are giving, and will give in the future providing the funding is available. Our support for the club industry and what they do for us and the community should be well known and we stand proudly with them.

Yours Sincerely,

Gary Raymond

Gary Raymond APM, OAM
President