

# Vol. 31 | No. 4| 2019



AI WARILD LETS THE STRETCHER KNOW WHAT IT IS IN FOR

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Front Cover Photo: Speleo Al Warild teaching SA cavers about Vertical Rescue Techniques. Flinders Rangers. 2019

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## ACRC NATIONAL WORKSHOP. TALKING ABOUT RESCUING CAVERS

Andrew Stempel

FUSSI Participants: Clare Buswell, William Cooper, Tania Wilson, Janice Chan, Thomas Varga and Andrew Stempel

Scout Caving Group Participants: Matt Smith, Callum Hue, Matt Brinkley.

*THE* Brian Evans (Co-ordinator of the Australian Cave Rescue Commission; ACRC), under the umbrella of the ASF, came up with an audacious plan. The mission: to get cavers from every state in Australia in the same room, to not only intermingle, but to discuss how we as cavers could better prepare for a national or international cave rescue event.

Not only did Brian succeed in getting ASF Club members from every state in Australia, but he managed to get some folks from New Zealand CaveSAR to join the conversation. All up there were 31 attendees representing every state in Australia (except the NT) and 2 from New Zealand, Oz Patterson and Chris Whitehouse.



Those Planning the Future of Cave Rescue in Australia. Photo: Deb Hunter

Cave rescue has been at the front of our minds lately due to the incredible international effort to save an entire soccer team from an adventure gone wrong in Thailand. We were lucky to have Adelaide local Richard Harris and his partner in cave diving, Craig Challen to share what they learned in their recent involvement in the Thai rescue.

The weekend included lessons learned from the Thai Rescue, anchor testing, the CaveSAR structure in NZ, current status of rescue organization from the various States, discussion surrounding rescue pre-plans, desktop rescue scenarios (unfortunately our group was unable to save Brian Evans from the cave) and discussion about the new ASF Minimal Impact Cave Rescue Code.

The last item on the agenda was a debrief: what's next? What can we do better? How can the ASF's ACRC help? This was chaired by the President of the ASF, John Cugley, and it was very clear that the ASF, through its ACRC, is committed to skilling up our membership in this area.

The weekend was a lot of "sitting around" - unusual for most cavers, but the knowledge gained was worth the sore bum. It wasn't all business; the group enjoyed a few pub meals together and the inter-club connections were a welcome treat.

## ACRC NATIONAL WORKSHOP. TALKING ABOUT RESCUING CAVERS

The discussions over the weekend prompted action from South Australians present, and subsequently the SA Speleo Council created a sub-committee to address some of the issues raised. The work is slowly getting underway, including the development of a cave rescue "call-out" structure for SA, cave rescue "pre-plans" for popular SA caves and the commitment to have more inter-club rescue trainings and exercises.



Clean Cavers Sitting Around a Table with Paper & Pens. Photo: Deb Hunter

Overall, this was a great event that sparked some action, especially in SA. Both FUSSI and the Scout Caving Group were very lucky that this event was held in Adelaide as multiple members were able to attend. Many thanks to the ASF and the ACRC as well as the skilled cave rescuers that attended the event for spreading their knowledge. Thank you to SCG for providing the venue, morning and afternoon teas and for all those who provided transport to and from the Airport. Well done!

## **RESCUING CAVERS IN THE DUST AND HEAT**

Authored by those named and stitched together by Andrew Stempel

ACRC Vertical Rescue Workshop. Mairs Cave, Southern Flinders Ranges, South Australia 20-22 September 2019.

Trainers: Brian Evans, Al Warild,

FUSSI Participants: Clare Buswell, David Mansueto, Tania Wilson, Thomas Varga, Edwina Virgo, William Cooper, Sarah Gilbert, Janice Chan, Neville Skinner, Nicole Schiller, Ken Smith, Andrew Stempel.

SCG: Matt Smith, Callum Hue, Heather Sieberti, Joel Dillon, and many others. Interstate attendees: Ruth Evans, Phil Maynard.

In the interest of a short introduction for a long report, last September we somehow managed to get a large number of South Australian and interstate cavers out to the Flinders Ranges to skill up on vertical cave rescue under the tutelage of Al Warild. This was a joint effort between the Flinders University Speleological Society Inc (FUSSI) the Scout Caving Group (SCG) and CEGSA with generous support from Brian Evans and the Australian Cave Rescue Commission (ACRC).

Below are the compiled accounts from various FUSSI members that attended the event.

### DAY 1: Learning the ropes. Rescue rigging, Tyroleans and Counterbalances.

Beginner's perspective on Saturday's learnings (Nicole)



Photo: Clare Buswell

FUSSI spent an interesting weekend at Mairs Cave in the Flinders Ranges learning from Al Warild about how to use counterbalance technique while rescuing injured cavers. The purpose of the counterbalance techniques is to use minimal gear and equipment and minimal muscle. We began the first day with a theory-based session where Alan took us through how to rig for a rescue using the counterbalance technique. The technique is used widely in Europe. The French are considered the pioneers of the technique.

The counterbalance rescue technique requires the cave to be rigged using a tripoint rigging system. This means that there will be three anchor points to carry the load equally. When rigging it is important to make sure that all three points have an equal load. This will determine whether you place the anchor points in a horizontal manner or in an equilateral triangle. If you have rigged the cave for rescue and you notice that one or two of the anchor points only are carrying the load, then adjustments need to be

made. If not all 3 rigging points are close to the cave, then you can use a tape to bring one anchor point closer to the other anchor points.

Once the anchor points are in place Alan then used a continuous loop to thread the rope through so that the rope remains taught and equalised [known as a self-equalising anchor Ed]. This allows for the load to equally distributed through the 3 anchor points. Once the anchor points are equalised a pulley can be attached to the rope.

Essentially now the counterbalance is ready so that you can attach the stretcher down the bottom and then a rescuer can attach themselves up the top and they can let themselves down on the rope. During the rescue, there is a controller that determines the speed and movement of the rescue. This is known as a basic counterbalance technique. When completing this rescue, it is important to try and get a counterbalance person who is within 10 kg of the



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other person's weight. In some cases when the counterbalance is lighter than the person who is being rescued then helpers at the bottom can pull on the rope to assist. The final scenario where a counterbalance technique can be used is when both rescuer and rescuee are down the bottom of the cave and the rescuer prussiks the rescuee out of the cave. In this case, whoever is heavier will be below. For example, if the rescuer is the heaviest the rescuee will be above them and vice versa.

Overall the session was very informative. There were more intricacies involved, however being a beginner caver and this being my first introduction to cave rescue this is what I took away from the weekend.



Practising Setting up the Tyrolean: Janice in the stretcher with Joel and Edwina looking on. Photo: Neville Skinner

### Learning new techniques and comment on comms (Edwina).

The instructional part at the beginning was good, and I found it interesting to see how much it differed to what I had been doing recently with rigging. A very different set of knots was used, and new techniques that I hadn't seen before. I would very much like to try these out some time, even if it's just rigging up something in the uni forest, just to get the practice, and experience of how things behave together, and how it all compares to the techniques I am used to.

The comms was a little disappointing, although only because we couldn't manage to get the through-ground radio working. I'd like to play around with this a bit more in the future, see what needs to happen to make it operational, what its limits are, figure out the technical side of how it operates, etc. It was also interesting to compare this to my experiences with the other through-ground radio (the one with the circular aerial), which I found to be very robust, versatile, and simple to get working. I also had a lot of fun operating as a counterbalance going up a pitch. Getting out the top was a bit tricky, but an interesting challenge, and one that I had fun accomplishing.

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### DAY 2: THE SIMULATION RESCUE

The rescue Begins/ Role of the rescue coordinator (Andrew).

The exercise started with eager cavers at the top of the entrance pitch (17m) into Mairs Cave. The report was of an injured caver not too far from the entrance pitch on the other side of a boulder field. The rescue coordinator swiftly divided resources into various teams. The cave was already rigged for caving, so a team, known as the RAT, (Rapid Assessment Team) with medically trained cavers entered the cave to report back the situation. The rescue coordinator managed the teams, which included: the RAT's team, a rigging team, cavers to help with patient transport, a topside rigging team, and the coordination of a counterbalance system and a human deviation.



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The role of the rescue secretary (Thomas).

On the day of the simulation, Ruth performed this role. Record the timeline of the rescue operation. (Time of callout, Rapid Assessment Team entry, main events and progress, exit of patient, exit of last person, etc). Record the medical feedback provided over time. Record rescue personnel cave entries and exits.

### Thoughts as part of the medical team/first in the cave (Janice).

As a medic that was deployed to be part of the first responder team and as a newbie in the search and rescue scene, it was an intriguing experience to say the least. My personal interest and professional interest have converged at last. My sole responsibility as a medic was my casualty who encountered a mishap whilst exploring the cave system. Lying helplessly on a slab of rock, idly waiting for assistance in full caving outfit was the state we found our casualty. We immediately proceeded with medical protocols to assess and stabilise our casualty in preparation for transport out of a vertical cave exit point.

Once we have fitted the casualty onto the stretcher, we then smoothly transport our casualty to the Tyrolean. The Tyrolean was an important system that was integral in this particular cave rescue due to extremely uneven rock surfaces that would compromise safety of all rescue personnel and comfort of our casualty, who was suffering from spinal injuries and possible fractures in his right arm and left hip (I really can't recall his supposed injuries in this one).

With help from all the rigging and hauling teams we managed to transport our casualty to the cave exit point where multiple rigging systems were set up and our human deviation awaited to receive the casualty.



Photo: Neville Skinner

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Communications with base were clear and the medics stayed with the casualty throughout the rescue scenario, until we are able to handover to the receiving medical team awaiting outside the cave. The medics should, by rights, Prussik/go up with the casualty instead of merely observing the casualty's slow ascent. They must continue assessing the casualty's vital signs/level of consciousness (LOC), during the ascent. Time is of the essence with injuries this serious! We may have been dragging up a dead body and not the injured otherwise.

#### Comments on the in-cave team and stretcher hauling (Edwina).

The in-cave part of the rescue was a great experience. There were a range of skills and skill levels present, and lots of different techniques being used. The different teams worked well independently, as well as part of the coordinated rescue as a whole. I really liked the way this was done, which was different to my previous experiences of rescue simulations, which had just operated as one big team (although admittedly these were such simpler, with no rigging needed).



Hauling the Stretcher Over Uneven Ground. Photo: Neville Skinner

My main involvement was with the stretcher haul, and I found it interesting to compare this to the stretcher haul I participated in on the Corra-Lyn rescue weekend last year. One major difference was a lack of calls when passing from one handle to the next, and I think it could have benefited from this to reduce jostling of the patient and make it smoother, with everyone a bit more aware of what was happening elsewhere. I witnessed a few cases where the stretcher was passed along before some people were quite ready, meaning that corner of the stretcher dipped. We shouldn't be calling 'wait' or 'stop' after an issue has occurred, but before it happens, so that it is prevented completely. To be clear, none of the resulting jostling was significant, and the patient was never at risk of being dropped or similar. This would just make it a bit more comfortable for them, which for someone in a lot of pain would make a big difference.

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### Building an underground Tyrolean (Andrew).

There was a "dip" in the cave with multiple boulders where hauling a patient through would be difficult. In the spirit of learning new skills and solving a problem, it was decided that we should create a Tyrolean traverse, to "zip" the casualty over the obstacle and then continue the stretcher haul.

The in-cave rigging team got to work and identified suitable anchors and using the skills we learned the previous day, were able to successfully traverse the patient. The in-cave rigging team then continued to help transport the casualty to the final obstacle, up and out the 17m pitch.



A working Tyrolean with medics either side of the patient, and haulers at the ready. Photo: Neville Skinner

### Notes on topside rigging (Thomas).

The rigging on the top consisted of two anchors. The first anchor was off the iron grid over the entrance that was level with the ground. This had a pulley and rope attached to it with one leg down to the stretcher and one leg for counterbalance. The second anchor was about four metres up on the cliff face near the opening in the grid. This also had pulley and rope attached with one leg down to the stretcher and another leg to a Grigri attached to Matt who was on the surface.

The rationale was that the first pulley and rope would be used as the initial counterbalance to bring Will up to the opening in the grid. At the same time the second rope would act as a belay line with the slack taken in via the Grigri. Once the stretcher was at the opening, the second rope would then take all the weight with Matt being the new counterweight. At this point the

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first rope was disconnected and the stretcher lifted up and through the opening. Once the stretcher was safely on the ground Matt would lower himself also with the Grigri to the ground.

Comments as the counterbalance and biscuit eater (Thomas).

Being dead weight ...

I had the all-important role of countering Will's weight following his usual breakfast. As Will was getting prepped at the bottom of the pitch and attached to the pulley line I positioned myself at the



top of the pitch near the pulley. Once the team at the bottom was ready, I clipped my cowstail to part of the structure (?), attached my descender to the rope and locked off. I then gently weighted the descender and started applying tension to the rope. Once I was hanging off the rope and felt in control, T unclipped my cowstail and slowly started walking down the wall. To take up the initial slack and to have the stretcher lift and pivot on its end I dropped about 6

metres before

Moving up the pitch: Joel, Will, Neville and Tania: Photo: Janice Chan.

I was actually taking the weight of the stretcher, Will. From there I descended a few more metres before I came in contact with the stretcher as it was coming up. This happened to be near a lip that the stretcher was going over and required some manual handling by Tania and Neville. While I was stationary, I changed over to ascenders in anticipation of having to later climb the 6 metres that I 'lost' at the beginning.

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Once the lip was negotiated, I continued my downward journey and had a brief encounter with Will as we passed each other. Given that I was heavier we seemed to be making good progress with very little effort. For the most part, I was either against the wall or against the fixed wire ladder and was able to control my descent on my own. The last 2-4 metres I was free hanging however and was at the point where Will had reached the top and stopped. While dangling mid-air I was provided by the bottom team one of Nicole's fig and walnut biscuits that I started munching on. For brief periods the top team would haul Will a metre or so higher which resulted in me having to prussik up the same distance in order to avoid landing on the ground and cease being the counterweight. This with a biscuit between my teeth.

Eventually the top team were satisfied that I was not needed as counter-weight anymore, at which point I climbed onto the fixed wire ladder and slowly released tension on the rope by standing up. Without the wire ladder I would have had to switch back to my descender and lower myself onto the ground. Once the rope became slack my role had come to an end.

### Role of the counter-balance controller (Thomas).

The role of the counter-balance controller is to manage the ascent of the patient. As potentially both the patient and the counter-balance person can be suspended in mid-air, the controller is able to pull on either side of the rope to move the patient up or down, or if necessary, to stop movement.

### Comments from the human deviation (Tania).

My thoughts on the 'Human Deviation':

- Overall, I think it is an effective way of handling a casualty over an edge with a minimal amount of equipment and in an 'in-cave' environment.
- It is a task that is not size/weight dependent.
- There was some difficulty in getting the pulley off the haul line. This I suspect was due to me 'cheating' and staying on my descender when I should have put my ascending gear on. I think the fixed ladder led to me being overconfident in my ability to move up and down the rope, because when I needed to undo the pulley there was myself, Will and Thomas all trying to occupy the same space/ladder rung at the same time.
- Apart from the pulley, it is a pretty labour un-intensive job...



Tania being a Human Deviation. Photo: Neville Skinner

Having said that, my task changed from Human Deviation to Casualty Attendant

almost immediately. I'm not sure if the difference in anchor locations for my line and the haul line caused the issue but things definitely did not go as Al had briefed me. It became apparent that Will was not going to travel nicely up the hole as Al had promised but rather spin in mid-

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air and smack his head into the wall repeatedly. So, I put on an ascender, undid the descender which Neville put tension on the rope for me (freeing up one hand), climbed the fixed ladder and tried to keep Will right-way-up. This was quite a labour-intensive job and especially as Will was in genuine pain, I was trying to do it quickly.

I would suggest/recommend that the foot support thingy in the stretcher always be used regardless of the nature of the injury. I believe a decision was made to leave it off due to the leg/hip injuries was supposed to have. If you were genuinely injured and suspended vertically the last thing you would be wanting is to have your private bits crushed when they don't need to be.

Also, it is important to remind your casualty to wiggle their toes (or do it for them).

#### The casualty experience... (Will).

Being a casualty in a rescue exercise is an experience that every rescuer should have at least once. In a real rescue situation, the rescuers have almost total control over the casualty and to be an effective and empathetic rescuer, it's important to know how that feels.

I don't know how I annoyed David enough to make him choose me as a casualty but that was my role in this exercise. My brief was to pretend that I had a fractured hip from attempting to free climb the cave and as I have had some experience pretending to be a casualty in SES exercises I decided to put my own spin on things by adding some light screaming and the appearance of a head injury.

I have nothing but praise for my crack medical team made up of Heather and Janice. They performed a thorough examination but given that it was an exercise they spared me the indignity of having my pants cut up, and then directed the transport team in getting me packaged into the stretcher with my arms out.

Even in a real rescue situation I would recommend leaving the casualty's arms out if possible. Aside from the necessity of the casualty being able to fend off the cave walls, it can make them feel more in control and less helpless.

After a fairly bumpy litter pass - something we may need to develop our skills in - I was attached to the Tyrolean and had a much smoother ride across the rest of the main chamber. I was then passed up to the bottom of the pitch and we waited for the top team to get ready for the counterweight up.

I was communicated to regularly with members of the in-cave team. I am a firm believer in the importance of casualty reassurance and communication. Even if the casualty is unconscious the team should be updating them on the situation and reassuring them of their safety. Even if the casualty cannot hear, it can serve to ensure the whole team knows what's going on and is confident in the plan.

Once I was attached to the counterweight and a belay line, I began to be raised up under the weight of the enormous Thomas. There were 3 attendants at different stages of the lift to keep me away from the walls and to give me a cuddle whenever I appeared to be uncomfortable. Or just whenever they felt like it, I suppose.

I also think that these attendants are essential if the counterweight system doesn't involve the counterweight ascending with the casualty. It can be an enormous comfort to have a person near the casualty to update them on the operation of the rescue. They can also be useful to keep an unconscious casualty's legs moving to avoid suspension trauma.

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Speaking of suspension trauma, I must talk about the only issue with the rescue. The ankle

and leg straps were not tightened - presumably to avoid exacerbating my hip injury - but it meant that all my weight was hanging on the two crotch straps. I don't think I need to impress on anyone how uncomfortable it is to have all your weight pressing on your marital vegetables, but I am available for a detailed description if anyone wants one...

Moving on, there were some delays in the ascension when attendants moved up with me and Thomas negotiated his way down past the stretcher, but I was eventually brought to the top of the pitch.

Getting me up and over the edge was surprisingly easy due to the belay line I was attached to and I was soon broken out of my chastity belt.

Overall, the rescue was an absolute success. I was in and out of the cave in less than 2 hours and no one was injured. I'll still keep whining about my crotch though.



William, rope wrangling or thinking about taking revenge! Photo: Janice Chan.

#### Other comments (multiple authors):

-An educational weekend.

-Very beneficial to learn about the counter-balance technique and to see how to set up a Tyrolean for a rescue scenario.

-Great that we could progressively build up to the final exercise by first practicing off the windmill, then with each other on the pitch and, finally, with a loaded stretcher.

-Due to lack of time and the number of people involved, some of the finer points were missed. Al had a wealth of 'been there done that' knowledge to share and I don't think we were fully able to tap into that.

-This was a good event and we should aim to do a joint rescue weekend every year.

## SAFETY HATS & RESCUES

Clare Buswell

The recent vertical training exercise run by Al Warild, Brian Evans from the ASF's ACRC, and attended by about 25 people, provided SA cavers with the opportunities to build skills and develop closer club ties. I am pretty sure that all had a great time, and that the entrance to Mairs' cave was never busier. It is this latter point that is worth a comment.

Busy cave entrances and particularly vertical ones are places where, lots of assumptions can and are often made, and where things can go wrong. Not only can the much-needed morning tea accidently fall down the pitch but with lots of people there are lots of distractions! It is here, that the importance of having a dedicated pitch-head safety person is critical. This is a person who stands back and looks at what has been rigged, its organisation, casts eyes over those going down the pitch and their gear. This is their *only* job! It is not rigging or getting others dressed as often happens on beginner trips, but to observe and call out problems.



Rigging at Mairs Cave. Photo: Janice Chan.

On this two day rescue this person was absent. Ropes and rigging needed to be almost everywhere given what was going to be practiced, but it lacked safe organisation. That is, ropes with knots on the end (a mandatory part of rigging), but then not attached to anything, just left lying around near the anchor so assumptions could form that it was attached to said anchor. Karabiners undone on beginner's SRT rigs, and the usual, 'oh, I've left behind....' None of this is to say that care was not taken, it was of course, but rather to raise the question of the importance of safety controllers, or whatever name you want to call them, being present at the top and bottom of pitches on such large training exercises and being allocated *within* the smaller teams.

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## SAFETY HATS & RESCUES

On the second day of training, safety seemed to improve. This was the dedicated day where the rescue simulation occurred. Safety checks were carried out by individuals, checking others gear. However, one has to ask, why was this not done on the previous day?



Training involves the same safety diligence as a simulation itself. Or to put it another way, your back-up anchor is as bomb proof as your first anchor. Always, no ifs, no buts. Thus, every time you are at a cave entrance, the same safety rules apply: your life depends on it as do those of your caving group.

The need to nominate safety controllers should be seen as the same as appointing the comms team, the rigging team, or the RAT team. *Within* those teams the appointment of a safety controller is important as it provides the final safety check: for example, that all is working, or

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## SAFETY HATS & RESCUES

checking that nobody is suffering from hypothermia or exhaustion. This person is not there to start a conversation about how something is done, but to act as a look out, to cast the final eye over the situation and to call out problems.



Whilst you may not understand what all this above rigging is meant for, you can easily see what goes where, if knots are correctly tied, if karabiners are done up and pulleys are running smoothly. Photo: Richard Bugg

There is no point rushing in to rescue an injured party or train to develop caver rescuing skills, if in your haste, you fall over at the entrance because of a failure to notice that the rigging team had not actually done up the karabiners attached the rope, or that one of your team members was running on empty.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FUSSI would like to thank Clare Buswell for coordinating and wrangling up the FUSSI crowd, Matt Smith for corralling the Scouts and supplying the delicious grub, Brian Evans (Coordinator, Australian Cave Rescue Commission) for making this all happen on the ASF side, and Al Warild for taking the time to share his knowledge with us South Australians.

I would also like to thank all of the participants that helped document this experience. Your contributions are much appreciated! This was a large effort by all and a smashing success for South Australian cavers. – Andrew,

### **GROWLLING SWALLET SAREX TASMANIA 2019**

Words Andrew Stempel. All Photos Richard Bugg.

FUSSI Participants: David Mansueto, Thomas Varga, Edwina Virgo, Tania Wilson, Sil Iannello, and Andrew Stempel. Brenton Clarke, Coordinator Technical Rescue and Safety, South Australian SES.

### 30 November 2019

In the wake of the ACRC National (Cave) Rescue Workshop in September 2019, Alan Jackson invited anyone who was interested to join the upcoming STC rescue exercise in Tasmania. The ACRC was also supportive of FUSSI attendance to give us the opportunity to show off our new CaveLink system (cave to surface comms).FUSSI jumped on the offer and sure enough we were on a plane to cross the ditch, leaving the warm and dry comfort of Adelaide for the cold and wet caves of Southern Tasmania.



Bright and early Saturday morning, about 50 individuals gathered on the main street in Maydena to head off to Growling Swallet for a full-on rescue exercise. The turnout was outstanding with participants from all over Australia, including rescue organizations such as SES. Alan gave a quick briefing and we were off in droves to flood Growling with cavers.

After squeezing vehicles into the petite

carpark and gearing up, we had a second longer briefing and were dispersed into various teams. There was a surface team and seven rigging teams. There was also an advance rigging team (to rig the cave for rescuer access) and an initial comms team to lay the Michie line. Each team was given a map of the cave and a card detailing their mission. with recommendations on what gear they consider for might their rigging objective.





Then the mass of rescuers began to enter the cave. There was a large traffic jam as all the rigging teams seemed to enter the cave all at once. None the less, my team reached our objective. What was not expected was how difficult communication was going to be as our section had two waterfalls that were just not using their inside voice! It took a while to develop a plan as we had to repeat ourselves 100 times until each idea was understood over the sound of rushing water.

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We then took to setting up our rigging. A Tyrolean with a counter balance haul system at the top to get the casualty up and over the two cascades. This took a considerable amount of time with constant re-thinking and changes after receiving "small hints" from Alan Jackson and Al Warild on their frequent check-ins.



David, Tania and Sil, were on other various rigging teams throughout the cave with their own obstacles to tackle. Edwina and Thomas were in charge of CaveLink. Edwina was on the surface and Thomas was running around with the underground unit. Our shiny new toy worked as



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advertised and a majority of the cavers were able to have a play and send a message or two (I believe there were multiple pizza orders attempted).



As the hours flew by, the cave was finally rigged, and rescuers fled to the casualty to begin the long haul out.



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This was great fun and it was a joy to see people still smiling after spending so many hours working in the dark, wet and cold.



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Success was seen in the early hours of Sunday morning. All in all, we spent roughly 13 hours underground. This was an eye-opening experience to see how long a rescue would actually take. If it took this long with 50 people ready to go at the entrance of the cave, then...?? Something to ponder.



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### Thoughts from Sil lannello.

I was based in team 7, my team was made up of cave members from FUSSI, VSA, Northern Caverneers, and STC.



Our team was stationed in International Chamber, our main aim was to set up two traverse lines (can't remember the correct term), which enabled the stretcher to move freely into the air, crossing a deep streamway channel and a waterfall. Both traverse lines required а counterweight system to be erected for the stretcher move to freely. We had a small team, so the assistance of other cave rescue participants was essential when the stretcher arrived. Prior to the stretcher arriving, our entire team except for our comms person, caved to the start of where the rescue began and assisted with the patient moving through the cave. The setup of other team areas was very impressive, given the underground terrain and challenging routes to get the patient out.

One member of our team was in charge of Comms, which was a challenging task to hear surface messages, due to the waterfall in our chamber. But our team checked in with the surface on a regular basis the best we could. We were supposed to set up a heat tent for the patient, but we ran out of time to have this ready. Our station was the end point of the cave rescue exercise.

Sunday was a massive clean-up effort at Alan's house complete with a BBQ. His yard looked like the Blue Water rope factory, with the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of metres of rope

going through the washer. The festivities were capped off with cake to launch the 2020 Australian Cave Animal of the Year, the cave cricket. Complete with a delightful poem by Sil.

Many thanks to STC, Alan Jackson and his many helpers for organising a very successful exercise. FUSSI members learned a bunch and was very excited to test out CaveLink in a rescue scenario. An additional thanks to Alan for his generous hospitality in providing some real estate for us South Australian's to crash.

Many thanks to Richard Bugg for the use of his wonderful photos for this issue of the FUSSI Newsletter. [Ed]

### OTHER NEWS

Bushfires burnt a lot of Australia's karst landscapes and we cavers have a task ahead of us to document the impacts.

### 2021 International Year of Caves and Karst

The below is a quote from the IUS IYCK20 website:

International years are typically organized under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) or the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Their primary purpose is to educate the public and celebrate important aspects of life and the world around us. They are a series of events by international teams that include partners from nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, businesses, and interested individuals. When the year is over, there is a great worldwide increase in appreciation for the year's topic, which often appears as increases in funding, better regulations, and protection of peoples and important areas.

The International Union of Speleology (UIS) is organizing the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) for 2021.

This IYCK Planning Guide will give you the information you need to organize events in your countries and raise the level of understanding and respect for caves and karst as globally important physical, ecological, and cultural systems. A successful IYCK will lead to new caves opened for exploration, and more funds and support for exploration, research, management, and protection, at levels we've never seen before.

See the IUS planning guide and associated pages at: <a href="http://iyck2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IYCK-Planning-Guide.pdf">http://iyck2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IYCK-Planning-Guide.pdf</a>